

Commander's Column

Thank you from the 108th CRG

By Maj. Richard E. Friendlich, 108th Global Mobility Squadron Commander

This is an article about the 108th Contingency Response Group. But it's also meant as a "thank you" to the members of the 108th Wing for your support as we stood up over the last three years. And a sample of what we can offer back to the 108th.

By now, the abbreviation CRG is less of a foreign term, but I realize that its inner workings may still be a mystery. So here are the basics. The CRG is a highly expeditious microcosm of an air wing split across two squadrons: The Global Mobility Squadron (ramp operations, maintenance, C2, aerial port, communication) and the Global Mobility Readiness Squadron (security forces, mission support, medical).

CRGs (six active duty and two Guard) act as the bridge between the seizure force and the 'established air base' force modules. CRGs have increased their scope of responsibility over the years from just opening the runway and airfield to include operating an airbase as a whole. In addition, CRGs are responsible for facilitating the follow-on force commander's vision for establishing the base, its infrastructure, security and relationship with a host nation.

The CRG has three main focus areas: First, humanitarian relief efforts either alone or as part of a Joint Task Force with the Army. Second, CRGs have non-com-

batant evacuation operations, and third, contingency operations.

And the bonus fourth item, thanks to our scalable nature, is that we're also heavily involved in world-wide airfield surveys, airshows, and other specialized support operations.

In September, the CRG completed Eagle Flag 2011, a week-long joint-field exercise hosted at Lakehurst by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center. To a CRG (Guard or active duty), Eagle Flag is the equivalent to an ORE or ORI. The exercise tested our ability to deploy as a combined unit with 55 Army personnel to support USTRANCOM's vision of an Army and Air Force Joint Task Force-Port Opening element. For the CRG, this meant surveying the airfield and integrating air and surface lines of communication, establishing joint logistics reception, staging, onward movement of cargo and integration to the end user. The 108th excelled at this exercise, breaking a number of previous CRG exercise records.

More important than our success were the reasons behind it; namely the support we received from the Wing and the get-it-done, out of the box thinking that many of our members learned prior to the CRG.

Now I'll return to where I started with what we can do for you. Active duty CRWs have the luxury of drawing from



a large pool of personnel to cover their missions. While we are set to do the same with the Kentucky Air National Guard's CRG, there's nothing like having an expanded pool of contingency-ready personnel within the Wing. For those people pleased with their work but wishing to spice things up, we offer training and expeditious opportunities. Likewise, for shops feeling a crunch at times and wishing they had temporary help, we have many members that would benefit from what your shops have to offer. In other words, our wing has additional resources, personnel, and opportunities than you may be aware of.

If any of these ideas have sparked your imagination for how we can contribute to your mission or career, we'd be glad to hear them.