

379th Air Expeditionary Wing supports

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For Airman 1st Class Daniel Stone, it was an amazing adventure. “Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be flying into the heart of Africa, helping flood victims,” said the loadmaster assigned to the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. “It’s something I’ll never forget.”

Deployed to the loadmaster from Dyess Air Force a half of last weekend Hercules aircrew flood relief Ethiopia.

Airman Stone aircrew that was in support of Force – Horn of a i r c r a f t David Bruton, South west days of flying Missions in

desert for the first time, the the 39th Airlift Squadron at Base, Texas, put his year and loadmaster training to test when he and a C-130 was called to help airlift supplies to Gode,

is part of a six-person tasked to fly missions Combined Joint Task Africa. Led by commander Capt. the crew left Asia for several in Africa. Africa originate

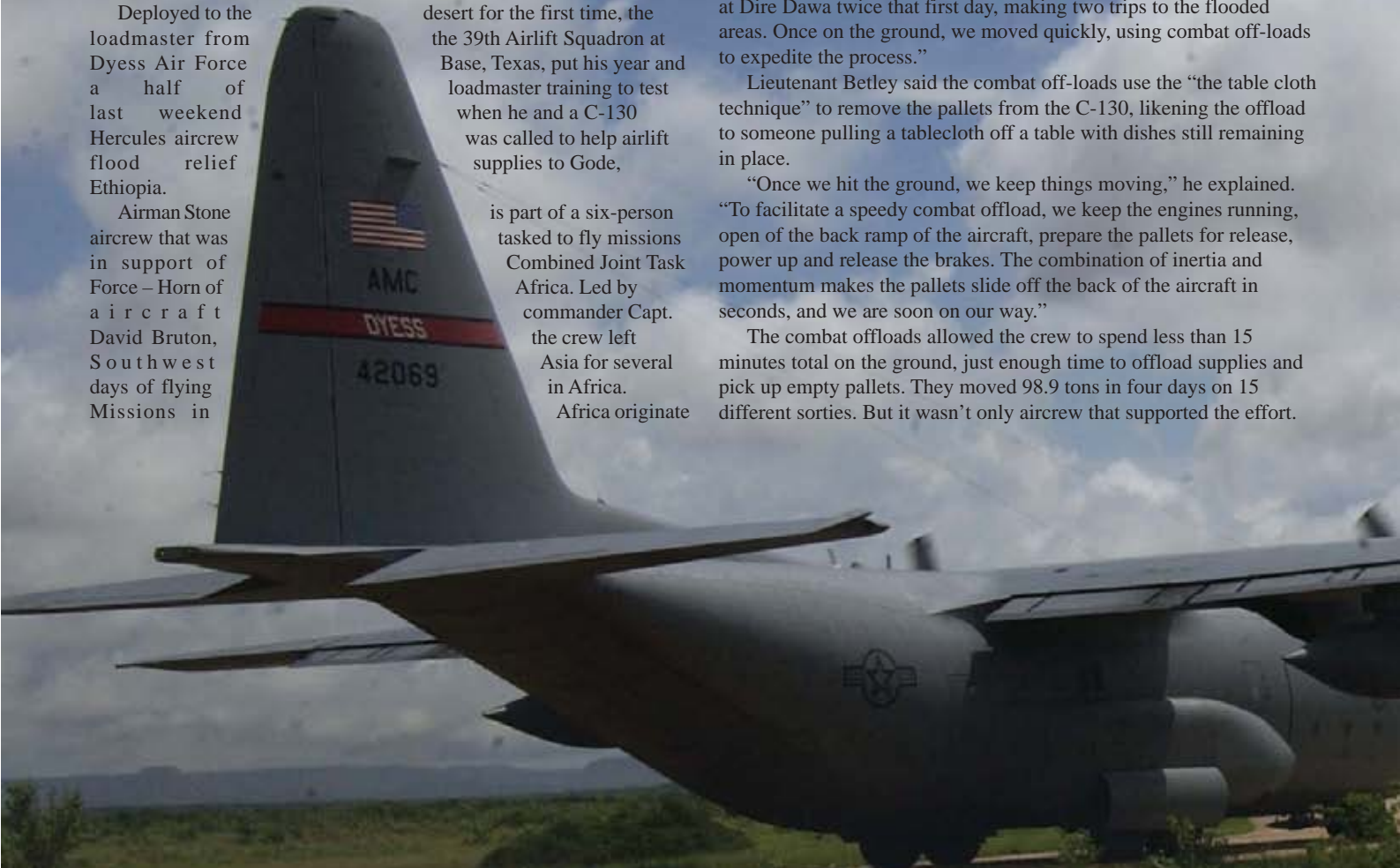
from the CJTF-HOA headquarters at Camp Lemonaire in Djibouti. Most of the time they fly routine channel missions and deliver supplies to Kenya, Ethiopia and other countries. But when heavy rain and flooding hit Ethiopia last week, the C-130’s mission took on even greater significance. The 746th crew was tasked as the first aircraft responders when the roads were too washed out for vehicles to drive.

“In the first day alone we delivered 49,000 pounds of supplies and food to Gode,” said 746th copilot 1st Lt. Adam Betley. “We loaded-up at Dire Dawa twice that first day, making two trips to the flooded areas. Once on the ground, we moved quickly, using combat off-loads to expedite the process.”

Lieutenant Betley said the combat off-loads use the “the table cloth technique” to remove the pallets from the C-130, likening the offload to someone pulling a tablecloth off a table with dishes still remaining in place.

“Once we hit the ground, we keep things moving,” he explained. “To facilitate a speedy combat offload, we keep the engines running, open of the back ramp of the aircraft, prepare the pallets for release, power up and release the brakes. The combination of inertia and momentum makes the pallets slide off the back of the aircraft in seconds, and we are soon on our way.”

The combat offloads allowed the crew to spend less than 15 minutes total on the ground, just enough time to offload supplies and pick up empty pallets. They moved 98.9 tons in four days on 15 different sorties. But it wasn’t only aircrew that supported the effort.



Tech. Sgt. James Cope, loadmaster with the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, prepares to release pallets containing food relief supplies for people affected by the flood in Gode, Ethiopia.

Submitted photo

s flood relief operations in Ethiopia

“This was the greatest teamwork I’ve ever encountered in the Air Force,” said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Slaughter, a flight engineer with more than 10 years service. “We had the cops and maintainers joining in to help the effort. Everyone pitched in.”

As a 379th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron fly-away security team, Staff Sergeants Rodger Jackson and Shawn Belles and Senior Airman Christopher Saydeh, stepped out beyond their normal assigned duties to assist with the humanitarian efforts.

“We knew every second counted and people’s lives were at stake, so we did whatever we could do to help,” Airman Saydeh said.

The security forces specialists normally focus on ensuring the plane, people and cargo are secure. But on this trip they also carried water jugs, tarps, medical supplies and food, and helped prepare the aircraft for the emergency missions.

When the crew stayed overnight at Addis Ababa, the FAS team slept on the plane, protecting the Air Force asset and cargo as temperatures dipped below 50 F.

Maintainers also played a key role. 1st Lt. Matthew Goldsmith credits 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chiefs Staff Sgt. Erik Wood and Senior Airman Louise Bennett for making the missions happen.

“If it’s in the air, maintenance put it there,” said Lieutenant Goldsmith, explaining how the crew chiefs worked around the clock to keep the aircraft flying.

“They were still on the flight line five or six hours after every

flight,” said Airman Saydeh, who watched the crews work late into the night as they guarded the aircraft. “They wanted the plane to be ready to go the next day.”

Loadmaster Tech. Sergeant James Cope said combat offloads, like the ones done in Gode for flood relief, are harsh on the plane.

“Our crew chiefs spent hours maintaining the aircraft. They were fixing engines, changing the nose wheel tire and main tires, and fixing the landing gear brakes,” said Sergeant Jackson.

“Everyone just came together to make sure the mission got done as expeditiously as possible.”

“We had security forces assisting chiefs cleaning the flaps and pilots cleaning cargo seats and windows,” said Sergeant Slaughter “Wherever you looked, people were making it happen. It was unity at its best.”

In total, the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Airmen would fly eight of the nine days they were supporting CJTF-HOA. Their efforts didn’t go unnoticed by senior leadership.

“The crew from the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron amazed me with their professionalism and responsiveness,” said Col. Marc Luiken, CJTF-HOA Air Component Coordination Element. “The Ethiopia humanitarian relief mission to Gode was a great example of the flexibility and agility airpower brings to CJTF-HOA. I’m incredibly proud of the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Airmen and their accomplishments.”

