

# 5<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Theater Aerial Delivery Company (5<sup>th</sup> QM) History

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*“I will be sure – Always”*

The mission of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command is to provide logistical support to the U.S. Army European (USAREUR) Theater of Operation. Within the 16th Sustainment Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command lays the 5th Quartermaster (QM) Detachment: USAREUR's only asset for providing theater aerial delivery support. This relatively small U.S. Army unit has a theater wide responsibility in which it fulfills lengthy support commitments to units in Italy and England and all stops in between.

Based in Kaiserslautern, Germany, riggers from the 5th QM are often deployed to five or six locations simultaneously while supporting requirements of the rest of the theater. Temporary duty deployments are their way of life. An integral part of the 66th Maintenance Battalion, which in turn is part of the geographically widespread 29th Logistical Area Support Group, 5th Quartermaster soldiers are responsible for a varied mission menu.

The detachment's most visible mission is providing for the airdrop of supplies and equipment to all USAREUR units during training or conflict. The detachment has a capability of 50 short tons a day. 5th QM is also charged with providing personnel parachute support to Pathfinder Platoons and Special Operations Command, Europe, and they maintain the MJK-5 ejection seat parachute systems for all OV-1 Mohawk reconnaissance aircraft in the theater.

With a myriad of commitments across the continent, the 5th Quartermaster riggers have numerous opportunities to train with NATO airborne units. Jump wings of numerous European countries adorn the chests of these riggers, showing their willingness to increase their individual proficiency by meeting the standards of their NATO partners' airborne rating requirements. Various members of the unit have received German, Dutch, and Belgian jump wings during recent years, with several qualifying for all three nations' badges.

Semiannually, the detachment sends 15 personnel to Burtonwood Army Depot in England. There they perform in-storage inspections on more than \$25 million worth of operational project stocks of aerial delivery equipment. Biannually, another team of 15 soldiers inspects Prepositioned Material Configured to Unit Sets (POMCUS) at Burtonwood. At several locations in the European theater, 5th QM soldiers pre-rig supplies for use in contingency and exercise

operations by tactical units. This relatively new mission stretches the abilities of the detachment and is a welcome challenge to the riggers.

The detachment also regularly deploys a self-sufficient personnel parachute repack team to the Royal Dutch Military Academy in Breda, the Netherlands. There, they support the annual training requirements for the cadets at the academy. The unit also participates in an annual training opportunity provided by attendance at the French Commando School in LaRousse, France. At the school, students participate in a course designed to build a soldier's self confidence and overcome fears of dangerous obstacles. More than 25 graduates of the Command School are currently on the unit roster, and 15 riggers are scheduled to attend training each year.

There are always challenges for the riggers from Kaiserslautern. The unit is now at work developing a training timeline. This would support all major training exercises projected by V and VII Corps which would require airdrop support during a wartime scenario. The detachment is working to strengthen its working relationships with all of the units it will support, no matter the contingency-- no matter the location, on the European continent.

Whatever the mission, with its airborne heritage punctuated with the names of combat jumps by the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion in Algeria on November 8, 1942 to the 173rd Airborne Brigade's February 22, 1967 jump at Katum, Vietnam, the 5th QM Detachment strives to be true to the last line of the Riggers Pledge: I will be sure--Always.