Teammates -- This month, the LeMay Center highlights **air mobility** in support of Operation JUST CAUSE as our Doctrine Paragon.

On December 18, 1989, President George H.W. Bush directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to execute operations to establish control of Panama and remove General Manuel Noriega from power. The invasion began with a *Joint Forcible Entry*, an airborne assault by special operations forces onto strategic installations in Panama. US Army Rangers, Special Forces, and soldiers from the XVIII Airborne Corps boarded C-130, C-141, and C-5 aircraft at multiple locations across the United States to fly directly into combat in Panama.

The attack led with an initial round of precision strikes and electronic attacks by EF-111s and F-117s. Next, nearly 1,300 Rangers parachuted from air mobility aircraft onto multiple objectives across the country. The Rangers were soon followed by 2,700 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division (82AD), who conducted an airborne assault onto the capital's international airport and assisted the Rangers in seizing its control. Over 110 airlift aircraft & multiple air refueling aircraft moved this force into combat. The airborne operations over Panama represented the largest night combat airdrop since World War II.

Among those forces parachuting onto the airport was a tactical airlift liaison officer (TALO), now designated as air mobility liaison officers (AMLO), in support of the 82AD. His mission was to support efforts to clear the runway, accomplish drop zone surveys, and communicate when the runway was ready for aircraft. The airfield was cleared and capable of receiving aircraft just two days after D-day. The TALO was instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition from *airdrop* missions to *airland* missions which could safely supply more equipment and supplies to the troops on the ground. Following the capture of General Manuel Noriega, the TALO also coordinated the redeployment of 82AD forces and equipment.

Why it Matters Today: US Air Force Air Mobility Command (AMC) aircrew still train to conduct Joint Forcible Entry operations to achieve military objectives. Additionally, AMC provides on-call airlift to transport the Immediate Response Force (IRF) of 82AD troops from Fort Liberty, North Carolina to crisis situations anywhere in the world. This was recently demonstrated with the deployment of the IRF to Hamid-Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan to support Operation ALLIES REFUGE and the noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) to airlift refugees out of danger. When US forces seize or reinforce positions at contested airfields with Rangers or the IRF, they are supported by AMLOs and Expeditionary Air Ground Liaison Elements (EAGLES) to provide air mobility expertise to Army, Marines, and Special Operations units. Additionally, AMC deploys forces from the 621st Contingency Response Wing to austere airfields or locations where support for AMC's global air mobility operations is insufficient or nonexistent.

Teams from the 621st can perform quick-turn aircraft maintenance, airfield management, passenger and cargo movement, command and control, threat assessment, force protection, air traffic control, weather, airfield systems maintenance, finance and contracting. As our Air Force develops Agile Combat Employment (ACE) TTPs for dispersed and austere locations, the people and capabilities AMC brings to bear will allow us to win the fight to get into the theater and the fight to sustain ourselves in combat.

For more information on air mobility, check out the latest Air Force Doctrine Podcast episode "*Lessons Learned in Doctrine - Ep 8 - AMC/CC GEN. MINIHAN: Beyond the manifesto, mobility as the joint maneuver force, risk as an art, and leadership*" available at www.doctrine.af.mil and on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music, and DVIDS. (AFDP 3-36 *Air Mobility Operations*)

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