

3rd 58th Airfield Operations Battalion

A short history

3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment had its beginning at Echterdingen Army Airfield as the 16th Air Operations Detachment in 1961. After 26 years of operations, moves and realignments, the Battalion became known as the 3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment in 1987.

In 1990 the Battalion deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield, subsequently participating in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, where it received campaign streamers for the Defense of Saudi Arabia and Liberation of Kuwait. The Battalion also had a significant role in Operation Provide Comfort I & II in Turkey and Northern Iraq.

The Battalion was reassigned to the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade and headquartered in Wiesbaden in June, 1993. The Battalion provided both tactical and fixed base airfield operations and air traffic services in Hanau, Ansbach, Grafenwöhr and Wiesbaden airfields in support of V Corps.

Operation Joint Endeavor, in 1995, found the Battalion deploying a Ground Controlled Approach section to Bosnia-Herzegovina supporting NATO's Implementation Force. In 1999 the Battalion operated in the Balkans, the Mediterranean coastal region, Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf handling over 350,000 aircraft movements, which included multi-national forces and multi-service aircraft, without incident.

With the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom imminent the Battalion deployed three companies to Kuwait in 2003. Charlie Company, 3-58, was sent to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2005 providing air traffic services in support of the Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team. Other elements of the Battalion provided humanitarian relief to Pakistan following their devastating earthquake in 2006.

In 2007 the Battalion was reorganized and re-designated as the 3rd of the 58th Airfield Operations Battalion and set up their base of operations at Storck Barracks, Illesheim, Germany.

3-58th Airfield Operations Battalion was deployed once again to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at Basra Airfield. They provided tactical and fixed base air traffic services in support of multinational forces. They returned to Germany in 2010 and resumed supporting aviation operations and training at Hohenfels and Grafenwöhr training areas.

Deployment to Afghanistan in 2012 found them supporting Operation Enduring Freedom once again. The Battalion was split between two different airfields in two different RCs, FOB Tarin Kowt in RC South and FOB Farah in RC West. For providing exemplary service in these two locales they were awarded the Air Traffic Control Unit of the Year award from the Army Aviation Association of America. The Unit returned to Germany in early 2013.

Following these deployments, 3-58th Airfield Operations Battalion was heavily relied on by the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade to support training missions in Grafenwöhr and Hohenfels, where aviation elements continued to train for combat deployments. In the year 2014, the Battalion found themselves sending teams to Hungary in support of U.S. and Dutch forces for Operation Saker Falcon and to Poland and Lithuania in support of Operation Baltic Air. The Battalion has stayed consistently engaged in training and support by providing preeminent airfield operations services to multiple agencies and Nations.