

The Yankee Doodle
14 November 1966

Combat Controllers Link C-130 to Target

They can parachute, fight, direct air traffic, control and mark drop, landing and, extraction zones and operate and repair radios.

It's a special breed of airmen who wear the blue beret— singling them out as Combat Controllers.



At Mactan two of these specially trained experts aid C-130 crews to qualify in the Container Delivery System.

Left; A1C Miller and SSgt Morris aid C-130 pilots.

SSgt. Phillip Morris and A1C Ulysses Miller, 7th Aerial Port, Naha AB, Okinawa, are helping to make it possible for the 463d Troop Carrier Wing to be the first operationally qualified unit in the use of CDS.

To accomplish their task, Sergeant Morris and Airman Miller begin their day attending the air crew briefing. Conducted by a CDS qualified C-130 pilot, the 20 minute briefing familiarizes the pilots and navigators as to their routes, altitude, speed, time over target and type of drop.

The Combat Controllers attend the meeting to clarify any questions that might arise concerning the ground markings, point of impact or any zone information.

After the briefing is concluded, Sergeant Morris and Airman Miller head for the drop zone, located Northeast of the runway.

The two specialists then place cerise and orange 2 1/2 X 8 feet panels in the zone. Seven panels mark the release point at the leading edge of the zone, two of them at the point of impact.

Right; Airman Miller adjust special panel marker



Next the Combat Controllers check out their radio equipment, consisting of UHF and VHF frequencies. The radios are housed in a specially built truck with high voltage transmitters and receiving units.

Another necessity at the zone is recording the wind direction and velocity.

During the Mactan CDS missions two 463d TCW aircraft make two practice runs each for familiarization with the zone.

Then, after the flight crews are satisfied with their practice runs, each aircraft flies a 30 minute pattern and final approach.

When the first aircraft is 10 miles out the pilot radios the Combat Controllers and the Mactan tower for clearance— at five miles out Sergeant Morris will either give the clearance or adjust the time on target.

During the final minutes of the mission the controllers provide wind information for the drop. If the controller happens to sight any aircraft in the area he notifies the pilot.... at Mactan, air traffic is controlled by the tower.

When the aircraft is approximately one-and-a-half minutes out Airman Miller throws a smoke bomb, either yellow or white for go, or red for cancel, in the impact area. The smoke gives the navigator a chance to make any last minute adjustments.

After the first container hits the ground Airman Miller rushes over and paces the distance from the point of impact to the unit.

Release of the six containers is made at 750 feet.... the Combat Controllers have done their job....

Every two weeks 7th Aerial Port rotates its TDY Combat Controllers to Mactan, but the 463d TCW crews can be assured that Sergeant Morris' and Airman Miller's team members at Naha are all professionals.....