



MOVERS & SHAKERS

EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

By John Likakis

SPOTLIGHT ON

BRIGADIER GENERAL C. MCCAULEY VON HOFFMAN

U.S AIR FORCE, OGDEN AIR LOGISTICS COMPLEX, HILL AIR FORCE BASE, UTAH



Courtesy of U.S. Air Force.

BRIGADIER GENERAL C. MCCAULEY VON HOFFMAN

U.S AIR FORCE
OGDEN AIR LOGISTICS COMPLEX
HILL AIR FORCE BASE, UTAH

On the eastern shores of Utah's Great Salt Lake, just north of Salt Lake City, lies a sprawling complex of hangars, revetments, bunkers, and offices. Dominated by a single 13,500-foot runway, Hill Air Force Base is home to the Ogden Air Logistics Complex. More than 8,100 people labor here to keep aircraft, such as the A-10 Thunderbolt II, C-130 Hercules, F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-22 Raptor, and F-35 Lightning II, in fighting trim.

The scope of the Ogden Air Logistics Complex (ALC) is not limited to Hill Air Force Base. Its responsibilities range much

farther afield and incorporate such diverse units as Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona, and the Minuteman III missile silos beneath the plains of the northern Midwest. Yet Hill is where aircraft come for heavy, depot-level maintenance, engineering upgrades, and even airframe rebuilding. It also is the center of significant management and oversight of numerous software maintenance and upgrades for aircraft, missiles, and support systems.

U.S. Air Force Brigadier General C. McCauley von Hoffman took over command of the ALC in July 2019. Of the

Brigadier General von Hoffman's career has taken to her many different postings, which helped prepare her to run the Ogden ALC. Its responsibilities span the globe and touch on almost every platform the U.S. Air Force operates.

Lt. Gen. Donald Kirkland, Air Force Sustainment Center commander, passes the guidon to Brig. Gen. C. McCauley von Hoffman, incoming Ogden Air Logistics Complex commander, during a change of command ceremony July 19, 2019, at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.



Courtesy of U.S. Air Force.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- Defense Superior Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal with silver oak leaf cluster
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
- Air Force Achievement Medal
- Joint Meritorious Unit Award
- Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device and 5 oak leaf clusters
- Air Force Organizational Excellence Award
- Southwest Asia Service Medal with two bronze stars
- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Korean Defense Medal
- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Air Force Expeditionary Service Medal with gold border
- Kuwait Liberation Medal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Kuwait Liberation Medal Government of Kuwait

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.



▲ A-10 Thunderbolt IIs are shown here undergoing depot-level maintenance. The airframe's age poses a challenge for Ogden, and its vintage software adds a whole other dimension to the sustainability puzzle.

Even famous airplanes come to Ogden for some TLC. The Blue Angels' C-130 support aircraft, popularly known as "Fat Albert," is shown nestled in scaffolding to allow maintainers easier access.

seven units under her command, six are based at Hill. Davis-Monthan serves as home to the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, and the 309th Missile Maintenance Group present at Hill also has personnel distributed among the four active Minuteman III bases in the United States. In addition, elements of the 309th Aircraft Maintenance Group are based at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas, and the 309th Electronics Maintenance Group manages the Support Center Pacific in Kadena, Japan.

With oversight of this many different units spread far and wide, even seemingly minor issues can escalate into major problems. Most people would find it daunting to run an organization this large and diverse.

General von Hoffman's opinion after 9 months on the job? "I love running the ALC!" she says. During the course of our interview, her abiding enthusiasm for what she does and pride in the team she works with was evident at every turn.

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A DIFFERENT PATH

Growing up in Mississippi, von Hoffman planned to be a lawyer. "I wanted to go to Vanderbilt and then on to law school" she says. "I joined AFROTC (Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps) to pay my tuition there." A U.S. Air Force career was not part of her original plan.

"I really didn't like ROTC. I thought I would graduate, do my required 4 years of service, and then go on to law school," she told us. However, Hoffman discovered that active duty in the U.S. Air Force was far different from the ROTC. In short order, she "realized that the Air Force was a perfect fit."

Like most highly successful people, von Hoffman's path crossed with other professionals who inspired, encouraged, and educated her. One of her earliest mentors was retired Chief Master Sergeant Harold McGough, who ran a supply warehouse she was assigned to as a second lieutenant. "He was a perfect role model," she recalls. "He

wouldn't let me get away with just saying 'I don't know' when he asked a question. He made me go find the answers in the regulations. He was an excellent coach and mentor."

Another individual who played a strong role in von Hoffman's career was Colonel Margaret Timmons, the U.S. Air Force's first female transportation officer to attain the rank of colonel. Timmons notably balanced a successful Air Force career with raising a family, as, indeed, von Hoffman has done. She and her husband Mitch have three daughters. The youngest recently graduated high school, making the couple "empty nesters now," she says.

A more recent mentor was Brigadier General Steven Bleymaier. According to von Hoffman, "My first introduction to depot operations was from 2015 through 2017, when I served as Mobilization Assistant to the Ogden ALC with General Bleymaier. He was a great mentor, and it was a great learning experience, preparing me well for my current role as commander."

FROM CUSTOMER TO VENDOR

The path to Brigadier General has taken von Hoffman through many assignments. While her official biography does not read quite like an exotic travelogue, it does include overseas assignments in the United Arab Emirates and South Korea as a flight commander of fuels flights, as well as a stint in Germany as a flight commander in sortie generation and support flights.

She has commanded a maintenance squadron and a maintenance group (the 908th at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama), and she has extensive experience in logistics and force support. The latter includes serving as a mobilization assistant to Major General Stacey Hawkins, when he commanded the Ogden ALC. After a brief posting to Langley, Virginia, as Mobilization Assistant to the Director for Logistics, Engineering, and Force Protection, von Hoffman succeeded Hawkins as commander at Ogden. (Hawkins, continuing his own remarkable career, is now Director of Logistics, Civil Engineering, Force Protection, and Nuclear Integration at the Air Force Materiel Command Headquarters in Dayton, Ohio.)

With that kind of background, von Hoffman was well-prepared for



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commanding the Air Logistics Complex. Yet, there still were elements of the job that she found surprising, especially in the context of the breadth and scope of work the ALC is responsible for.

One example she cited is overseeing a contingent of 1,500 software engineers, writing or modifying code for everything from 1970s vintage A-10 Thunderbolt II systems to brand-new Lockheed Martin F-35 systems. Ensuring those engineers have the resources they need to produce effective software on schedule is challenging, to say the least.

A more mundane, but important role, is dealing with corrosion, not only of airframes, but also of fixed assets, such as system components in the Minuteman III base silos. Some have been in place for nearly half a century. Finding, mitigating, and preventing more corrosion is vital to keeping assets operational.

Her background running maintenance organizations helps von Hoffman now that she's on the other side of that equation.

"The maintenance groups are our customers," she explains. "So we make sure

we maintain constant communication with them."

That level of communication makes it possible for some of the U.S. Air Force's oldest legacy platforms to maintain high levels of mission readiness.

"With older systems," von Hoffman points out, "some parts become very hard to find. The Air Force has very resourceful supply chain personnel, who can usually locate what's needed. And we work closely with suppliers and [the] Defense Logistics [Agency], which also helps. Sometimes, we just have to reverse-engineer a component, when there's no other choice."

FLEXIBLE PROCESS, RIGID STANDARDS

At General von Hoffman's level, involvement with the countless details of running such a large and diverse organization could be overwhelming. One key to effectiveness in such a role is building outstanding support teams at every level.

"I have incredible leadership running the day-to-day activities to keep the ALC's

missions viable and constantly improving," she tells us. "I meet with each production group every month to review their business metrics and productivity constraints." Again, clear and consistent two-way communication is essential, as is confidence in her team members.

"We don't have the habit of suffering in silence. I embrace open communication and want to engage early to resolve emerging constraints in any area. But I also empower leaders at all levels to network and resolve problems at the lowest level practical. When I see this happen, I'm amazed at the power and collective influence our people have to keep such a big organization moving forward."

KEEPING WHAT'S NEEDED IN STOCK

Given the ALC's role in maintaining and sustaining so many systems, running out of parts and supplies can have detrimental down-stream effects for unit readiness around the world. As in the old adage that proper planning prevents poor performance, von Hoffman and the ALC have well-developed processes. The



organization has the versatility to effectively support existing airframes, take on new projects (including new aircraft types), and keep necessary consumables and parts properly stocked.

"Parts are one of our biggest constraints," says von Hoffman, "so our working relationships and continuous feedback to our parts suppliers in the Defense Logistics Agency and other supply chains are key to keeping our missions moving forward. For consumables in particular, we manage these through a contractor."

"Many of the consumables used in our maintenance process are provided by a contractor. The program is called 'industrial prime vendor,' or IPV. IPV dispenses thousands of items to our line personnel using point-of-use machines that are placed near every maintenance dock and shop area."

The machines not only help with inventory control (contractors can remotely access the machine, so they can fill demand based on usage), but also support maintenance efficiency. The types and quantities of items needed are dispensed to comply with maintenance tasks listed on work control documents. According to von Hoffman, "This level of discipline was a cultural change to our operations and point-of-use billing yielded tremendous cost savings for the Depot."

A DIFFERENT ENEMY

At the time of our interview, the world was struggling with the coronavirus pandemic. Much of the U.S. civilian population was sheltering in place to slow the spread of the contagion. But the mixed civilian-military workforce of the ALC represents the epitome of "essential workers" — they literally keep our U.S. Air Force flying. So how did the ALC respond?

"We're constantly developing our playbook in response to this," von Hoffman says. "Right now, we've gone to split shifts with different workday lengths in order to help create conditions for effective social distancing in work settings, where people have to physically be at work. And we have shifted as many people as possible over to telework — working from home electronically. It took a while, but we're definitely getting the hang of it."

"We also have quite a large civilian workforce," she continued. "We need to take into account their health, especially those employees who might have any at-risk conditions as defined by the CDC. Right now, we have about 12 percent of our civilian workforce staying at home as we work around this problem."

While the ALC's response to the pandemic is still evolving, von Hoffman is encouraged about ground gained, noting, "We're a lot smarter about this now." Changes to the response plan are being communicated across both the military and civilian workforce using every means available, even some social media.

All of this has helped to keep everyone up to date on the current response posture and what their role in that might be. "This is an extreme example of how we have to be adaptable and agile in response to something that's constantly changing," she aptly notes.

OUT OF UNIFORM?

After 31 years in the U.S. Air Force, von Hoffman is eligible for retirement. But she is not thinking about that yet. And mandatory retirement as an air force general is still more than a decade away.

"I love running the ALC! I want to finish my assignment here, and then, well . . ." Asked what she would pick as her next assignment, her answer was decisive: "To continue running the ALC."

At the same time, the general has outside interests. She serves on the Board of Governors of the Davis County (Utah) Chamber of Commerce. (Hill Air Force Base is one of the largest employers in the state; its economic impact both locally and statewide is enormous.) She also is an avid athlete who takes advantage of opportunities to get out and exercise in Utah's breathtaking settings.

Commanding the Ogden Air Logistics Complex is a far cry from her intended career as a lawyer. But the "perfect fit" C. McCauley von Hoffman found in the U.S. Air Force has led to a fine career for her, and admirable service to the United States of America.