



Readiness
Sustainer

**Maj. Gen.
Polly A. Peyer**

Commander
Warner Robins
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Readiness Sustainer

Q & A

Delivering and Sustaining Combat-ready Air Power—Anytime, Anywhere

Major General Polly A. Peyer Commander Warner Robins Air Logistics Center

Major General Polly A. Peyer is commander, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, Air Force Materiel Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. She is responsible for worldwide logistics support for C-130 and C-5 transport aircraft, F-15 fighter aircraft, and U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, as well as support for remotely piloted vehicles, Air Force helicopters, air-to-air missiles, surface motor vehicles and high-technology airborne electronics, avionics and electronic warfare requirements. Other responsibilities include comprehensive logistics support and sustainment for the E-8C Joint STARS and the C-17 transport aircraft. The center is one of three Air Force air logistics centers and the largest single-site industrial complex in the state of Georgia.

Peyer entered active duty as an enlisted member in July 1975 and was commissioned through Officer Training School, Lackland AFB, Texas, in March 1977. She received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University and a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Her military education includes in-residence attendance at Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Peyer has commanded at squadron, group and wing levels. She has held major command and headquarters-level positions and was formerly the military assistant to the acting secretary of the Air Force. She is certified in Life Cycle Logistics, Level III, by the Acquisition Professional Development Program. The general served as the director of logistics, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii, with collateral duties as the director of logistics for Joint Task Force-519.

Peyer was interviewed by MLF Editor Jeff McKaughan.

Q: Could we start with a broad brush look at the ALC as far as its organization, size and mission?

A: The mission of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center is to deliver and sustain combat-ready air power—anytime, anywhere. We provide sustainment and depot maintenance for C-130, C-5, C-17, F-15 and U-2 aircraft, Air Force helicopters, Air Force avionics systems, and aircraft software systems and small arms. Our work force encompasses more than 19,000 people—military, civilian employees and industry partner contractors—spread across the center and our four wings. Together, we follow, support and maintain these aircraft and systems from the day they're accepted from the manufacturer to the day they're decommissioned. Our nation and allies put their faith in us, and we deliver as promised.

We, along with our associate units like the 5th Combat Communications Group and the 116th Air Control Wing, are heavily



involved in supporting the joint team in our overseas operations. Team Robins has deployed more than 500 people to Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas of operations this year alone, and we've had more than 15,000 men and women deploy in support of operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom since September 11, 2001.

Robins Air Force Base is the largest single-site industrial complex in Georgia, with an annual economic impact of more than \$3.9 billion. Obviously this is a mission that's important not only to our national defense, but one that helps support our surrounding communities and the state as well.

Q: Has the size of your work force been relatively constant, and what do you think that work force will look like a year from now?

A: Our work force has been fairly stable for several years, and all indicators point to it remaining so in the near future.

Human capital strategy is one of our focus areas. By focusing on recruitment, development, retention and incentives, we're able to maintain a work force with the skills, knowledge and ability to support our many and varied missions. And we're always looking at new initiatives to ensure we're prepared to handle

future assignments. Of late, we have placed more emphasis on work force replenishment, acquiring the next generation of highly skilled employees from our many rich local recruitment sources. We're also continually looking to employ new programs that strengthen our partnerships and provide mutual benefits to the Middle Georgia community and Robins Air Force Base. Some of the programs, such as our 21st Century Partnership initiatives, Robins Representatives for Career Opportunities [RRCOs], Youth Apprentice Program [YAP] and Cooperative Programs, are already paying dividends.

The 21st Century Partnership supports and provides a community perspective that acknowledges the military value of Robins Air Force Base and the military value of the Middle Georgia community. We have assigned RRCOs to our local high school districts [including private institutions], where we go in to schools and talk about the many different career opportunities in the aerospace industry. Our YAP focuses on providing junior and senior students opportunities to work on Robins for short periods during the summer. And our many cooperative partnerships with college and universities provide students the opportunity to seek careers on Robins Air Force Base upon graduation.

We have also increased the opportunities for work force development for those who require specialized certification for their positions. Defense Acquisition University [DAU] taught 12–17 classes annually at Robins until October 2007, when DAU established a satellite campus at Middle Georgia Technical College. Having this satellite campus saved us a half-million dollars in temporary duty costs in 2008. DAU is also partnering with Macon State University to include DAU contracting courses in its degree programs to build a pool of well-trained, work-ready individuals.

Q: What are the challenges doing depot-level maintenance during a time of high OPSTEMPO?

A: Supporting our warfighters is a top priority. With the operations tempo so high and the demands on our aircraft and systems at record levels, we work hard to ensure every aircraft is available.

One example of that is the recent discovery of cracked barrel nuts on C-130 wings, a problem that had the potential of grounding the entire fleet of this aircraft that is so vitally important to our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our maintenance professionals in the 402nd Aircraft Maintenance Wing discovered the problem and reported it immediately to engineers in our 330th Aircraft Sustainment Wing, who came up with a plan of action. Within a few days of discovering the problem, inspection and repair procedures were distributed worldwide. When research showed there was a shortage of replacement nuts in the supply inventory, we worked with our industry partners to ramp up production so the aircraft were back in the air in minimum time.

Another way we're working to support the warfighter is through a new program we're in the process of standing up for the C-130 fleet called high velocity maintenance [HVM]. In today's maintenance world, aircraft receive isochronal inspections at home station on a regular basis, but only receive depot-level maintenance every five or six years depending on the model, and that maintenance can take up to eight months—valuable

time the aircraft is lost to the warfighter. When an aircraft is input for scheduled depot maintenance, its condition isn't completely known, and that sometimes causes even more delays when unexpected repairs have to be made.

Instead of completing periodic depot maintenance [PDM] on the entire aircraft every five to six years, the aircraft will come in approximately every 18 months, and our maintenance teams will focus inspections and repairs on only one section of the aircraft at a time. There will be three cycles consisting of wings, fuselage and empennage, and a cycle to swap out flight controls and paint the aircraft. Under the HVM concept, C-130s will concurrently undergo isochronal inspection during each cycle. We estimate this new system could increase aircraft availability for in-theater use by 14 percent.

Q: Have you gone out to the commercial MRO community to see how they do business and to see if any of their techniques and practices could be brought inside your house as a way of operating?

A: We have in the case of several systems WR-ALC is responsible for. For instance, we are converting our C-5 maintenance philosophy from component fly-to-fail to the commercial Maintenance Steering Group [MSG]-3 systems. In the C-130 world, one promising practice is the high velocity maintenance process used by commercial airlines. We want to reduce the amount of time aircraft spend undergoing heavy maintenance, and the airline practice of more frequent but more rapid maintenance cycles looks very promising. We hope to improve aircraft availability by 14 percent, and we begin verifying our HVM process with the C-130 this summer.

We've also worked closely with our allies in Israel, Japan and Saudi Arabia to review best practices regarding depot maintenance of the F-15.

With our unmanned aerial systems, our contract and concept is based on performance-based logistics, and our program is supported by contractor logistics support. We tell the contractor what we need, not how to provide it, and encourage our CLS contractor community to bring the best industrial practices and partners to bear in supporting all elements of depot-level sustainment, supply chain management, engineering support and configuration management based on the best value for the Air Force.

The 402nd Maintenance Wing routinely interacts with private industries to benchmark some of their techniques and practices, and share some of our own. An example of such interactions is in the software arena, where workshare partnerships have resulted in more integrated teams that enable the sharing of best practices in both directions. The need to constantly improve value to the customer is a shared mission objective and provides a natural setting for genuine process improvement.

Also, with respect to safety and our voluntary protection program, we have deliberately visited and looked at contractor operations such as Delta Airlines to gain ideas for optimizing the safekeeping of our most vital resource: our work force. Sharing of best practices is paramount today. Everyone must work together in order for all to succeed.

Q: What are some of the unique challenges of maintaining older weapons systems like the C-5, C-130 and F-15?

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A: During the 1970s, Air Force aircraft had an average age of approximately nine years. Today, the fleet's average age is approaching 25 years. Also, because of the increased operations tempo, we're flying those older aircraft harder and more often than ever before. According to estimates, up to a third of the entire fleet is either unavailable or operating on a restricted basis at any given time due to maintenance problems, such as fatigue and corrosion and supply issues. Cracks caused by stress and fatigue have been discovered in the C-130 center wing box, which would, if left unaddressed, potentially cause catastrophic in-flight failures. Some center wing cracks have been addressed through inspection and repair; however, a full center wing box replacement is needed on many C-130s to prevent permanent grounding of the aircraft.

Our F-15s have experienced a problem with longerons, which are critical structural components. This problem did not manifest in the original testing of the F-15 design, but as we fly aircraft beyond their original design life, we must continually go back and re-analyze, re-test and try to predict where problems will occur in the future so that we can proactively inspect and perform maintenance to ensure their structural integrity.

The F-15E is planned to fly through 2035, while the F-15C/D is scheduled to be retained through 2025. As a result, we are re-accomplishing the structural tests, running them up to three times longer than the original design testing. This accelerated aging provides us information that is used to help define their future PDM requirements.

But the Air Force is also investing in modernizing aircraft to help extend their life cycles. Good examples of this are the C-130 Center Wing Box Replacement program, which will add years to the service life of these aircraft. Other programs, such as the C-5 Reliability Enhancement and Re-engineering Program and C-130 Avionics Modernization Program, will add increased capabilities to these older platforms as well as replace obsolete parts.

Still, we have seen substantial increases in unpredictable aircraft repair hours above planned hours. F-15s average approximately 1,500 more hours per aircraft than were programmed, much of which is for correcting incoming defects, correcting defects in the center and aft fuselage areas, and electrical defects. We are also exceeding the planned package hours in C-130s and C-5s—the extent of which is still being analyzed.

Q: How green do you consider the maintenance and sustainment aspects of the center's work? Are there ways to do the kind of work you have to do and be environmentally friendly?

A: We are, first and foremost, good environmental stewards. Yes, there are some processes inherent in our mission where we use chemicals that could be environmentally hazardous, but we constantly strive to maximize the use of alternative substances and processes whenever possible, and ensure those agents are not released into the environment where alternatives aren't feasible. And we've been very successful in our efforts.

One example is the elimination of hexavalent chromium, which was used to pre-treat C-130 and C-5 aircraft during the painting process and the Commodities Maintenance Group's

plating process. Our high velocity oxygenated fuel [HVOF] initiative will reduce the use of hexavalent chromium in the plating shop through a new plating process using inert gases such as nitrogen and argon to apply a powder coating to parts. The C-130 and C-5 system program offices introduced a nonchromated pre-paint process within the corrosion control flight. The old process consisted of washing the aircraft and chemically removing the corrosion, followed by a hexavalent chromium conversion coating for corrosion protection and surface adhesion. This process produced a large hazardous liquid waste stream and required large amounts of personal protective equipment [PPE] to prevent injuries to the workers. The alodine replacement product called PreKote is a nonchromate conversion coating that eliminates hexavalent chromium in the waste stream and, most importantly, eliminates the hazardous chemical exposure to the work force. It's also saving the taxpayers in excess of \$1 million each year.

Indeed, purchasing less hazardous materials not only minimizes personnel exposure while in use, but saves taxpayers' dollars by avoiding hazardous waste disposal fees on the back end. With this in mind, we implemented a Green Procurement Program at Robins AFB. The presidential-driven program mandates that all acquisitions must consider the environmental impact of the material, product and service along with its performance. In 2008, Robins Air Force Base spent more than \$600,000 in green

purchases from recycled paper to aircraft coatings. In 2008, we also purchased 173,000 gallons of biodiesel [B20], saving almost 35,000 gallons of fossil fuel consumption. Our Green Buys for Blue Skies Green Procurement Program is so successful that the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive will present Robins Air Force Base with the 2009 White House Closing the Circle Award.

Additionally, the wheat starch media blast project for depainting F-15 radomes is expected to reduce air emissions [VOCs, methylene chloride, methanol] by as much as 88,000 pounds per year. Chemical strippers are currently used for this process.

We also have our Advanced Power Technology Office, which is researching new and greener ways of doing business. In fact, we recently partnered with the City of Macon, Ga., to test a new hybrid garbage truck. We're all aware of hybrid cars, but now we're using hybrid technology in much larger vehicles. We have high hopes that this test will show that it's feasible, and that it will spread beyond the Air Force and into widespread use around the country. Our APTO is also researching possible uses of hydrogen fuel cells, solar power and other forms of renewable energy.

Q: I understand that the center is now involved in sustainment of several unmanned aerial systems. Are they handled much like any other system, or are they managed differently than other fixed wing platforms?

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78TH AIR BASE WING



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78th Air Base Wing



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2009

542ND COMBAT SUSTAINMENT WING



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542nd Combat
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742nd Combat
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Mr. William Best
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A: As the designated system sustainment manager [SSM] for the RQ-4 Global Hawk, the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper, the center is excited to be right in the middle of the UAS transformation. Although we are executing the process of transitioning sustainment for the latter two UAS programs, we are actively sustaining the Global Hawk weapon systems today.

Yes, there are many similarities to sustaining manned and unmanned systems. Sustainment of all weapon systems is governed by Department of Defense and Air Force regulations to ensure consistency of life cycle management processes. An airframe is an airframe, and payloads are payloads. It doesn't matter if there is a pilot sitting in the aircraft or not—the sustainment concepts are the same.

There are some sustainment requirements inherent to only UASs. As you know, UASs were made possible due to significant advances in navigational systems, data links, computer processing and sensor technologies. One area where UASs are different is the engineering associated with the data links and hardware used to control the aircraft. In manned systems, mishaps may ultimately be mitigated by a human operator. Because UASs do not have a human on board, there are unique safety concerns and issues. Therefore, UAS enabling technologies must be sustained in a manner to ensure acceptable margins of safety are maintained. Moreover, as new technologies emerge, robust integration and interoperability are critical to ensuring safe advancement of UAS capabilities throughout a UAS life cycle.

From a maintenance perspective, we expect a seamless transition into the sustainment realm. We are posturing ourselves to be the Center of Excellence for avionics repair for all UAVs. We're positioned to activate the workload via public-private partnerships, if needed.

Q: Is all of your work performed here at the center, or do you ever need to remote teams for projects or longer-term efforts?

A: While we perform the majority of our center workload on station, we don't limit ourselves to a mission solution set of only here.

We deploy depot field teams to help repair damaged aircraft at other locations, as was the case of a C-5 at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Our teams temporarily repaired a damaged wingtip so the aircraft could be flown here for permanent repairs. We also deploy teams to install some modifications and to perform unscheduled depot-level maintenance, and we utilize contractor facilities around the world to meet our mission. For example, nine F-15 PDMs per year are accomplished at Korean Airlines in Gimhae, South Korea. Rather than ferrying the aircraft across the Pacific, it's much more economical to accomplish the PDM at KAL.

In addition to aircraft maintenance, our software maintenance group works closely with industry partners in Long Beach, Calif., and Melbourne, Fla., to facilitate workload activation for C-17 and our joint STARS programs.

The foreign military sales community also performs work at approved centers around the world, including here at Robins. Choice of work locations depends on customer requirements and available MRO facilities to satisfy customer cost, schedule and performance objectives.

Q: Is defense acquisition getting it right and building more life cycle management controls into the front end of procurement contracts? Is there more that could be done?

A: The defense acquisition system is incredibly complex, and is continually reviewed and improved. The acquisition community is taking positive steps in getting it right, to include attracting quality acquisition personnel and providing enhanced education and training to both military and civilian staff involved in acquisition so they are equipped with the tools and experience needed to do their jobs well. Is there more that could be done? Always.

As you are probably aware, most of a weapons systems' cost is realized after the system is procured and fielded. We can do better at improving life cycle management early in the acquisition cycle. While there have been improvements in the acquisition process concerning life cycle management and procurement of logistical support, in this period of tight budgets and hard decisions on what and how many aircraft to acquire, a concerted effort is required so we don't short ourselves. The Air Force and, indeed, the Department of Defense are placing more emphasis on life cycle management. Secretary Gates has stated that acquisition reform is one of DoD's top priorities, and improving life cycle management plays a big role in acquisition reform.

Q: Any closing thoughts?

A: We have a strong team here at Robins. When you look at our associate units like the 116th Air Control Wing, 5th Combat Communications Group, Defense Logistics Agency and our future joint units from the Army and Marine Corps, you can see right away that Robins is much more than just a depot. Team Robins as a whole is on the front lines of today's joint fight, and we bring the fight to the enemy every day. Team Robins also includes members outside our gates. We have an outstanding relationship with Warner Robins and our Middle Georgia communities, and they support the base and the men and women who make it run. It's that kind of support that helps make Team Robins one of the best installations in the Air Force.

Another positive aspect about this installation is the way we are taking care of our people and resources. We have embraced Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st century. We are constantly looking at our processes to find ways to do things better. We're also fully involved with the Voluntary Protection Program, which is a Department of Defense initiative to decrease workplace injuries, illnesses, lost workdays and federal worker compensation costs through management commitment and employee involvement. Basically we've asked that everyone be their own safety manager to help reduce hazards in the workplace. We have involved everybody from the youngest airman to our most senior leaders in VPP, and it is paying dividends in reduced accidents and incidents.

All of this is part of our focus on what I call P³I [P cubed I], which stands for people, process, performance and infrastructure. We know we need to focus on and improve in all of these areas to ensure we remain a viable industrial complex far into the future.

Of course, one thing hasn't changed, and that's our people. We have one of the brightest, most talented and most motivated work forces you will find anywhere.

I am honored to be the commander of this incredible team. ★



People First— Mission Always

WARNER ROBINS AIR LOGISTICS CENTER

As an integral part of the world's most respected air and space force, the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center is dedicated to the mission of delivering and sustaining combat-ready air power ... anytime, anywhere. We are recognized as a world-class leader in developing and sustaining the war fighting capability of the Air Force, the Department of Defense and our allies.

Our motto is "People First—Mission Always."

The center provides various aspects of cradle-to-grave weapon system management, sustainment, metrology and calibration services, and integrated logistics support for fighter, airlift, reconnaissance, special operations, and combat search and rescue Air Force aircraft.

Similar support is provided for electronic warfare equipment, avionics, missiles, aircraft propellers and vehicles of various types. WR-ALC also conducts emergency software programming for Air Force, DoD and allied electronic warfare systems.

WR-ALC manages more than 200,000 items that represent the full range of avionics functions and technology, including aerospace communications and navigation equipment, airborne munitions and gun directing systems, target acquisition systems, and all airborne electronic warfare equipment.

With almost 24,000 military, civilians and contractors working on Robins Air Force Base and an annual economic impact of almost \$4 billion, the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center plays a vital role in our national defense.

402ND MAINTENANCE WING

The 402nd Maintenance Wing is composed of a 7,600-member team managing a \$1.7 billion budget. It manages depot-level maintenance production and manufacturing facilities and laboratories to restore Air Force aircraft and equipment to serviceable condition. The wing is responsible for providing sustainment of avionic and electronic warfare systems, programmed depot maintenance for the C-17, C-130, F-15 and C-5 weapons systems, and unprogrammed depot-level maintenance for crash or battle-damaged aircraft for the Air Force and other services.

The wing supports more than 130 million lines of software code on more than 40 unique weapons systems, repairs

components, manufactures parts, provides retail logistics support for Air Force Material Command's worldwide missions, and manages infrastructure programs. The wing supports customers in all branches of the armed forces and more than 30 allied nations.

330TH AIRCRAFT SUSTAINMENT WING

With 1,600 personnel and an annual budget of \$9.3 billion, the 330th Aircraft Sustainment Wing consolidates responsibility for sustainment management of more than 3,000 aircraft. The wing manages the Air Force's fleet of C-130, C-5, C-17, F-15, U-2, MQ-1 Predator, MQ-9 Reaper, RQ-4 Global Hawk, E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), and the Air Force's rotary wing aircraft with a total value of more than \$200 billion.

The wing oversees programmed depot maintenance, modernization and modification programs, spares procurement and repair for these aircraft. Other systems in the wing's portfolio include the Distributed Common Ground System; special operations forces/combat search and rescue aircraft; and intelligence, information, command and control equipment. The wing supports acquisition program managers and is responsible for engineering, worldwide logistics, weapons system readiness and wartime sustainability sup-

port to DoD and foreign military sales customers.

542ND COMBAT SUSTAINMENT WING

The 542nd Combat Sustainment Wing brings together more than 2,800 people with a budget of \$4.4 billion. The wing installs, distributes, modernizes and sustains combat systems for DoD and foreign military sales customers. It is responsible for life cycle management of more than 800 systems valued at \$56.2 billion, and contracts in excess of \$8 billion.

The wing's portfolio includes electronic warfare and avionics systems, support equipment, vehicles, basic expeditionary airfield resources, life support systems, automatic test systems and equipment, missiles and weapons, and the U.S. Air Force Metrology and Calibration Program. It is also responsible for technical and engineering data procurement, management and sustainment; initial provisioning support for new systems and equipment; establishing buy and repair requirements; initiation of procurement action for replenishing spares, equipment and services; technical assistance and engineering support; and overseas depot-level repairables, modification and overhaul requirements.

It is responsible for center-level mission/business area management and oversight of supply chain activities and processes applicable to product support. The wing pro-

vides Air Force representation to the DoD Automatic Test Systems Management Board and the Joint Panel for Aviation Support Equipment.

78TH AIR BASE WING

The 78th Air Base Wing is the host organization of Robins Air Force Base and includes about 3,500 people. Its primary mission is to provide well-trained, ready forces to support any contingency operation that requires support from the members of Robins Air Force Base. The wing provides the backbone for every mission on the base.

The wing is also responsible for every service associated with a large base including force protection, medical services, airfield operations, facility operations and maintenance, property management, civilian and military personnel management, communications, mobility, supply, transportation and services functions for more than 28,000 active duty members and their families, civilian employees and retirees. The wing manages multiple roles in combat support, including processing and deploying troops. It also serves as a point of embarkation for many Army personnel leaving the United States for contingency operations. ★

For more information, contact MLF Editor Jeff McKaughan at jeffm@kmmidiagroup.com or search our online archives for related stories at www.MLF-kmi.com.



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By **KELLY FODEL**

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The Warner Robins Air Logistics Center provides combat capabilities for Department of Defense warfighters and allies, through the sustainment and deployment of combat ready forces. *Military Logistics Forum* is taking a closer look at how the center's customers do business with them, and how industry can do business with the WR-ALC.

Divided into four distinct wings, the WR-ALC is always working to serve its primary customers: the Air Force and the warfighter. The 330th Aircraft Sustainment Wing oversees programmed depot maintenance, modernization and modification for the C-5, C-130, C-17, F-15, U-2 and E-8C aircraft, as well as the Air Force's fleet of helicopters. The 402nd Maintenance Wing manages depot-level maintenance production and manufacturing facilities for C-5, C-17, F-15 and C-130 aircraft. It also manages software and avionics and provides ready expansion to meet emergency and surge needs. The 78th Air Base Wing provides support facilities and equipment for all associate units, and is responsible for logistics and mission support for Robins Air Force Base. The 542nd Combat Sustainment Wing deals with the design, installation and sustainment of electronic warfare, avionics support, equipment, vehicles, missiles and weapons needed in war and peace.



Donna Frazier

Donna Frazier, director of Business Operations for the 402nd Maintenance wing, says from a depot maintenance perspective, their wing's responsibilities are basically fourfold. The Wing has four primary groups that perform work under the 402nd umbrella, including an aircraft maintenance group, a commodities maintenance group, electronics maintenance group and a software maintenance group.

"When you think of depot maintenance at Warner Robins, it is those four things. Those four things—that is where we get direct contact with our customers in the field. Whether it is the supply source that takes our items that we repair and put it in a warehouse ready for the warfighter, or if it is truly the warfighter sitting on a ramp accepting an airplane when it comes back," Frazier said. "If I could best describe how we do what we do ... we get an airplane that rolls down the ramp, we tear it back to bare bones. We handle the corrosion issues, we handle any repairs or modifications to that aircraft, we put it back together and we put it back in the air with wheels up."



The level of maintenance capabilities at Warner Robins ALC keeps several of the Air Force's main transports—the C-17, the C-5 and the C-130—modernized and meeting operational standards. [Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force]

In 2009, the planned output for the 402nd will be 200 aircraft. That includes 80 F-15s, 62 C-130s, 22 C-5s and 36 C-17s. "That is a lot of airplanes," Frazier said. She calculates that the work on these aircraft will add up to about 7 million hours of work for their wing's 7,000 employees.

Frazier says the 402nd Maintenance Wing coordinates with suppliers and industry on two different levels. They are the supplier of piece parts to help tear down and rebuild all of their components, via the Defense Logistics Agency. Industry also provides a valuable service from a technical data standpoint. Engineering support from industry partners helps the wing in making the proper repairs and modifications. She notes that in the case of the C-17, they actually do work direct for Boeing, through the depot maintenance partnership arena.

"We are actually providing a product back to Boeing, who in turn provides it to the warfighter."

While many businesses contract work with the WR-ALC, there is an entire office devoted to fostering partnerships specifically with small businesses. The staff at the Small Business Office works to enhance acquisition opportunities for small companies, in support of the Air Force mission, and serve as the initial point of contact for businesses seeking contracting opportunities with WR-ALC. Kathy Cames is the director of the Office of Small Business Programs at WR-ALC.

"We work with our customers on the base, as they are procuring and needing items. The other part of what we do is actually try to aid and counsel the small businesses themselves," Cames said. "We teach them how to do business with the Air Force—how to position themselves."

Cames mentions that any company that desires to do business with the government must follow a few steps in order to be eligible for contracting. First, all companies must be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR). A company can register with the CCR by going online to www.ccr.gov. Companies should also utilize the small business development centers and the procurement technical assistance centers. These resources are extremely helpful in providing assistance in



Jim Grant



Kathy Cames

creating a business plan, getting registered in the CCR, and getting any details complete before presenting a plan to the Small Business Office at WR-ALC. Companies can learn more about small business development centers and the procurement technical assistance centers by visiting www.sba.gov and www.aptac-us.org/.

After getting the basics out of the way, Cames' office will assist the small business in finding specific opportunities at the base that match their talents and abilities. They also provide special consideration to businesses owned by minorities, service-disabled veterans, and other disadvantaged groups. It is also helpful for the company to check out Fed Biz Opps (www.fbo.gov). This Website serves as a virtual marketplace where the federal government advertises all of its current requirements.

Cames says her office's small business goals are set by the Air Force Materiel Command. The yearly goal for 2009 states that 31.86 percent of contract work should go to small business. "We've seen a big increase in our goals this year," Cames said. She says construction is a great area for small businesses seeking contract work at WR-ALC, as well as engineering and advisory/assistance services.

On the other end of the spectrum, dealing with much larger companies, is Jim Grant, chief of contracting for the 330th Aircraft Sustainment Wing, which is responsible for the sustainment of all aircraft at Robins.

"Predominantly, most of our work is with the original equipment manager [OEM] so a high percent of our workload goes back to the OEM because they have the special expertise to the job. A third party would not have that expertise," Grant said. "Anytime that we can be competitive, we want to."

Grant says they awarded \$3.743 billion in FY08, to 249 different manufacturers. That was for 4,524 different actions, including modifications, contracts, orders, etc. The largest award was \$297 million, to Alenia North America, issued by C-130 for contractor logistics support.

Grant said, despite the many details that must be attended to when looking at the broad spectrum of work at WR-ALC, they always keep one thing in mind: who they are serving through their efforts. "We always think of our customer here at Robins as being the warfighter. That is who we ultimately are trying to support. It takes a team to do so, and it takes a team of a lot of different functions." ★

For more information, contact *MLF* Editor Jeff McKaughan at jeffm@kmiediagroup.com or search our online archives for related stories at www.MLF-kmi.com.

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Hill AFB Programs – 34 Systems/Subsystems

- VDATS, Versatile Depot ATS (Major subsystems)
- GMATS: Minuteman ATE
- A-10: Depot Level LRU and SRU ATE
- F-16 DATS: Digital Subsystem for F-16 Depot ATE

Tinker AFB Programs – 63 Systems

- VDATS, Versatile Depot ATS (Major subsystems)
- B-1: I-Level Advanced Digital Test System (ADTS) ATE
- B-1: Depot Level LRU and SRU (EPCAT) ATE
- C-17 D-CATE: I-Level and Depot ATE

Robins AFB Programs – 61 Systems

- VDATS, Versatile Depot ATS (Major subsystems)
- ARC-190: RADCOM (ARC-190, 164, 186, 230, AAQ-17/19)
- A-10: Turbine Engine Monitoring System (MATE 390)
- B-1: I-Level Advanced Digital Test System (ADTS) ATE
- CARA: Combined Altitude Radar Altimeter Common ATS
- C-17 CATE: I-Level and Depot ATS
- C-130/KC-130: Northrop Grumman Radar ATS
- F-15 RADTS: DRS Radar ATS Spectrum Core
- Sniper ATP: Lockheed Common Core ATS (CCATS)



If You Knew...

The location of all of the parts that were needed to service an aircraft, which vehicle you needed without walking the entire yard, the precise location of every tank in the refurbishment process, and the location of personnel during an emergency evacuation... you could optimize processes across a network of organizations to yield efficiencies that decrease operational costs, search time and strengthen safety and security.

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