

## 439 MAINTENANCE GROUP



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

439 Maintenance and Supply Group established, 19 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to Active Service, 1 Apr 1951  
Inactivated, 3 Apr 1951  
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952  
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957  
Disestablished, 27 Sep 1984  
Reestablished, redesignated 439 Logistics Group, and activated in the Reserve, 1 Aug 1992  
Redesignated 439 Maintenance Group, 1 Oct 2002

### STATIONS

Selfridge AFB, MI, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951  
Selfridge AFB, MI, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957  
Westover ARB, MA, 1 Aug 1992

### ASSIGNMENTS

439 Troop Carrier Wing, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951  
439 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957  
439 Airlift Wing, 1 Aug 1992

### COMMANDERS

Col. William B. Anholt  
Col Oreste Varela  
Lt Col William R. Kountz

Col Kerry Kohler  
Col Daniel Counts

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

## **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Oct 1999-30 Sep 2001

1 Oct 2001-30 Sep 2003

1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2007

1 Jul 2007-30 Jun 2009

## **EMBLEM**



Group will use the wing emblem with the group designation in the scroll.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The Air Force is paring down the number of locations where vital maintenance on its fleet of giant C-5 aircraft is performed. When the consolidation is complete, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., will continue to be the location — one of only three in the Air Force — of a regional isochronal inspection dock responsible for keeping the aircraft in the fight. The C-5 isochronal inspections were performed at eight sites: Westover; Dover Air Force Base, Del.; Travis AFB, Calif.; Lackland AFB, Texas; Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; Martinsburg, W.Va.; Stewart Air National Guard Base, N.Y.; and Memphis, Tenn. By 2012, Westover is expected to assume responsibility for performing half of all C-5 minor isochronal inspections across the entire Air Force.

The work will include Air Force Reserve Command, regular Air Force and ANG C-5s. Lt. Col. William R. Kountz Jr., 439th Maintenance Group commander, said Westover is primed and ready to assume the role. "The facilities we have here and our proximity to Dover have put Westover in a prime position," said Colonel Kountz, who commands more than 700 maintenance workers and oversees all of the maintenance performed on the base's 16 C-5B aircraft. "Also, since we're the only base in AFRC to have the B model C-5 and we are converting to the M model, it's a better fit for us as an airlift-oriented base."

Taking on newer and more difficult challenges has become part of the job for many of the workers in the isochronal inspection dock, where living by innovation is the order of the day. Regionalized Isochronal Docks Air Force plans to consolidate its isochronal inspection docks call for Dover AFB to assume full responsibility for C-5 major inspections, relieving all other bases including Travis of that work load. Martinsburg will take over for Stewart ANGB and Memphis. Westover will be responsible for C-5 minor inspections for the entire fleet. The shift is a good example of total force integration in action, said Capt. Robert Dossman, maintenance flight commander at the isochronal inspection dock at Westover.

"The regionalized isochronal inspection dock has done very well at working as an integrated team," he said, citing a culture of process improvement, resource management and a desire to excel. "We have created several benchmarks to improve the process, and we have shared these with our RISO partners in the Air National Guard and active duty." Captain Dossman said the people working at his dock have increased their productivity and reduced the average number of days it takes them to complete an inspection from more than 50 to less than 20. "We're taking 19 days now on average to fully inspect and repair the aircraft," he said, adding that recently his crew was able to send a plane through the process in as little as 15 days. "And that 15-day aircraft had more than 1,200 discrepancies we had to repair." While discrepancies can range from minor superficial problems to major mechanical issues, Captain Dossman said his team treats every ding and dent seriously.

"That's how we streamlined the process flow from 50 to 19 days," he said. The captain said that using Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century and LEAN techniques allowed his facility to map out the entire maintenance process several times, which resulted in a markedly improved work flow. "We did it by approaching the entire inspection as a repeatable process, regardless of the tail flash or owning agency," he said. By the Numbers Although the average number of flow days for the isochronal dock now stands at 19, things haven't always been that way. Senior Master Sgt. Lee Hareld, maintenance flight superintendent at the isochronal inspection dock, said as recently as 2008 the average number of maintenance flow days was 50, more than double the current number.

Sergeant Hareld said a lack of manpower and a slow flow of supplies contributed to the high number. Manning increases in the isochronal dock helped bring that number down. The dock crew comprises more than 100 people, including Reservists serving on active-duty orders, air reserve technicians, regular Air Force members and civilians. Sergeant Hareld said they all meld together in a large team spread over two shifts spanning seven days each week. He said the process will improve when the isochronal inspection dock receives an all-weather tail enclosure. Sergeant Hareld noted that while the regionalized isochronal inspection dock concept dates back to 2005, the actual implementation started at Westover in March 2008.

At that time, two additional bases — Lackland and Wright-Patterson — actively and aggressively supported the C-5 mission for AFRC. The three bases competed for the limited resources that will soon flow solely and freely to Westover. Sergeant Hareld said that additional personnel and equipment will only make the process of inspecting and fixing the aircraft more efficient. Westover and Lackland continue to complete minor inspections. Wright-Patterson completed its last inspection in early 2010, Sergeant Herald said. He said while Lackland is slated to phase out of its C-5 isochronal inspections by the end of 2010, Westover is continually increasing its work load and is ahead of the target to assume full responsibility by 2012.

Next year, Westover expects to increase the number of C-5 aircraft serviced from 22 to 26, Sergeant Herald said. The Task Tracker Tracking the flow of C-5 aircraft through the isochronal inspection dock is a full-time job. Captain Dossman credits Tech. Sgt. Jason Reynolds with creating a workflow tracker that has helped him monitor the maintenance process and allocate resources more accurately while managing the flow of parts and other resources to the planes. Captain Dossman said tracking the number of hours and resources, as well as the personnel distribution, dedicated to each aircraft while it cycles through the maintenance process has allowed his team to streamline the process by employing best practices and constantly evolving.

The “task tracker” developed by Sergeant Reynolds has been lauded by Air Mobility Command, and it is on its way to becoming the standard for tracking minor inspections. Colonel Kountz said the regional isochronal dock “solidifies us as a total force partner in the C-5 community. It’s good for us and keeping us in the fight.” 2010

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.