



## As U.S. defense focus broadens, so does 309 AMARG's scope

By Col. Thomas Schneider  
309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group Commander

More than 60 years ago, President Harry Truman signed the Air Force into existence as a separate military service. From the White House, he had the unique perspective to see the impact of American airpower on the closing days of World War II. Control of the skies over Europe and the Far East meant free reign for allied ground forces. Truman understood that airpower was essential to the preservation of our liberty and vital to the trade and commerce of a peaceful world.

The end of WWII saw tens of thousands of combat aircraft retire from service to the country. Planners within the U.S. government took into account the negative effect the flood of retiring military aircraft placed on civil aviation at the end of WWI--shutting down the American aircraft industry for many years. Policymakers set in motion plans to rapidly demilitarize and scrap the majority of warbirds in order to return their metals to a United States hungry for material goods after years of war rationing.

The facility that became the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and

Regeneration Group was established for exactly that purpose. The extremely hard "caliche" soil and dry climate proved ideal for storing, preserving, reclaiming and scrapping those military aircraft. As the new facility broke down

aircraft, it earned its lasting nickname--the "Boneyard."

Since their inception, the Boneyard and the Air Force have grown.



The B-29 Superfortresses shown above have since departed AMARG, replaced with more modern airframes, just as 309 AMARG's mission has evolved to meet the challenges of the future.

Our nation's commitments during the 1948 Berlin Airlift and the Korean War saw the return from storage hundreds of spare parts. Our predecessors made that happen. The B-29s and C-47s are long gone, as are successive generations of aircraft, but AMARG's mission has proven relevant throughout the decades.

As our Air Force grew during the 1950s and 1960s, racing forward in research and development, moving from first to third generation jet aircraft

in a decade, and taking the first fledgling steps into space, the Boneyard grew as well. By the end of the Vietnam War, this facility stored more than 6,000 aircraft, 1800 more than the present day.

Our Air Force has grown and evolved to meet the challenges of the future, fulfilling the obligation to protect America, deter aggression, assure our allies and defeat

our enemies.

Likewise, 309 AMARG has grown to support aircraft from all of our armed services and from a number of government agencies. Our people have broadened the organization's horizons from the very beginning--moving forward from storing, preserving and disposing of old aircraft, to reclaiming parts, to restoring aircraft to operation, and now to include depot-level maintenance in support of overflow needs at our air logistics centers.

Today's workload includes: C-130 Programmed Depot Maintenance; A-10 Service Life Extension; F-4 regeneration and F-16 regeneration for Air Combat Command's Full-Scale Aerial Target Program; regeneration of aircraft (C-130, F-16, P-3, T-37, etc.) for foreign military sales; reception and preservation of 250-400 aircraft per year; disposal of 300-400 aircraft per year; and the pulling/inspecting/shipping of 18,000 parts per year!

Capable, experienced, hard-charging members of the 309 AMARG team, like their predecessors, have stepped up to the plate to answer the challenge and the call throughout AMARG's 63-year history. Although our nickname suggests

old airplanes weathering in the desert, 309 AMARG and the people who make this outstanding organization work, is in fact a vital element of our Air Force, our Department of Defense and of our nation.



309 AMARG today, a vital part of our nation's defense.



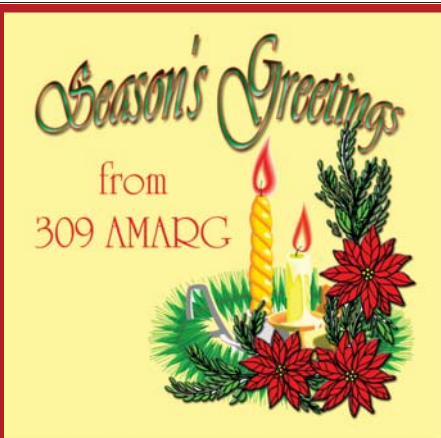
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## What remains of the Starlifter

Pictured left, a local contractor, Huron Valley Fritz (HVF-West), utilizes a mobile shear to segment a C-141 "Starlifter" into smaller, more transferable sections. The pieces are trucked to HVF-West for hammer milling. Once milled, the 130,000 pounds of scrap metal is sold to different foundries in the U.S. for rendering into useable items such as car parts and golf clubs.

HVF-West removed 10 C-141 "Starlifters" from 309 AMARG in November for final destruction on behalf of the Department of Defense. AMARG performs a partial demilitarization and de-hazard on the aircraft prior to this final elimination.



*Below, a dismantled A-10 "Warthog" fuselage is carefully lifted from maintenance modules and guided onto a custom-built shipping fixture by personnel assigned to the 577th Commodities Reclamation Squadron (577 CMRS) and 578th Storage & Disposal Squadron (578 SDS). The fuselage departed Monday for Boeing's St Louis facility where it will serve as a 3-D model providing a wing attachment interface for the production of new enhanced wing assemblies. Boeing was awarded an A-10 Wing Replacement Program contract to manufacture 242 A-10 wing assemblies.*



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