



309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group



309 AMARG

Renewing the Force...

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D-M's 355th LRS; maintaining the "muscle" that keeps AMARG strong

Occupying a modest-sized building on a busy corner inside 309 AMARG, is a satellite cadre of vehicle maintenance specialists assigned to Davis-Monthan's 355th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Despite the size of their operational footprint and small strength in number, this 7-person team's undertaking is monstrous. Labeling their section "vehicle management," this efficient mix of self-taught and military-schooled mechanics repairs a variety of AMARG's heavy equipment vehicles--from tractors, dump trucks and flight line bobtails to heavy duty tow vehicles and general purpose vehicles. The shop's output runs from 20-30 vehicles per month.

"We maintain the muscle that keeps AMARG strong," said Tech. Sgt. Harold Evans, the NCOIC responsible for their maintenance activities at AMARG.

Moving aircraft around AMARG's 2,600 acre facility requires a severe-duty four-wheel-drive tow tractor, called the MB-2. According to Sergeant Evans, the vehicles are unique to the Air Force, there are only four, and the Group owns all of these 50,000 lb. "Behemoths."

"These vehicles have individual quirks and we try to learn most of them over time," said Sergeant Evans, pointing to the large pieces of an MB-2's axle in work. "They're rare and so are many of the parts we need to keep them going," he said.

Chasing new parts to replace the old and worn obsolete ones is just one of their many responsibilities. Working under the NCOIC's deadlines, the team performs complete engine, transmission, cylinder and axle rebuilds, making a simple flat tire swap a welcomed respite. Each of these jobs may take between 20 and 30 hours to complete.

According to Evans, there's a vast difference from our vehicle management workers and the mechanics downtown. The local mechanic is told what fixes are to be made by the customer, but that's not so at the 355th LRS.

"Every vehicle brought to us is given a bumper-to-bumper safety and operational inspection," said Evans with pride. "Every punch item on our pre-induction list is fixed before that vehicle is put back into operation. There's absolutely no question as



Team members of the 355th Fighter Wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron take a brief moment from their shop floor activities at 309 AMARG for a photo op. From left, Manuel Portela, Tech. Sgt. Neil Wells, Harris Thompson, Tech. Sgt. Harold Evans, Senior Airman Justin Murray, Airman First Class David Fortune and Staff Sgt. Stephen Fornander.

to whether we're going to make the repair or not."

No matter what size vehicle, when it's rolled out of repair or maintenance, it's given a 355th LRS stamp of approval and a LRS-team guarantee. A guarantee developed from three separate quality control checks; upon receipt; upon completion of work; and at final departure.

This shop doesn't have the luxury of making different sections responsible for safety and hazardous waste programs, workflow, parts acquisition and individual or centralized tool kit management. They're governed by their "do-it-themselves" attitude and tackle every duty with technical competence.

Though not a frequent occurrence in the Arizona desert, large vehicles can and do

become bogged down by mud as a result of heavy rainfall. In these instances and others, the team transforms into "mobile maintenance," responding to the field for vehicle recoveries.

"It took us a full two hours to get a forklift out of a very sticky situation," said Mr. Harris Thompson, a former Marine and a mechanical technician here for 23 years. "The ground gave way in the desert and the forklift was situated in a hole. We had to use blocks of wood and a lot of other useful items to wedge it back out. It was backbreaking."

The shop refers to this forklift's resurrection as "the miracle recovery."

According to Sergeant Evans, his team has a cohesive camaraderie created by "two of the greatest civilians" with the willingness and dedication to train and lead the new "G.I.s" on the diagnostics and repair of equipment. Evans gives his team all of the credit for their mission's success. "They never push back and always try to stay on track. I've never seen the end of their duty day signaled by a time clock," Evans said.

Periodically, Col. Tom Schneider, 309 AMARG commander, visits the shop floor where this reliable crew unstoppably works on the Group's large and complex vehicles.

"We're all very impressed with his leadership style, he's a very sharp commander and it makes us feel proud that we can contribute to his mission," said Sergeant Evans. "We look forward to pulling the wrenches and continuing to do our very best to serve AMARG."

Stored B-52G “Stratofortresses” still purposeful despite their age

Technicians assigned to AMARG’s 577th Commodities Reclamation Squadron (577 CMRS) dropped everything this month, except their tools, to jump on an immediate request for windows from stored B-52G bombers.

Two windows were immediately shipped to the bomber’s depot at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., and seven additional windows departed for Oklahoma within a few days.

With a replacement value of \$4,463.71 each, these 9 windows will replace damaged ones on the B-52H-model bombers undergoing programmed depot maintenance (PDM).

PDM is a complex, scheduled overhaul which may include repair, fabrication, rebuilding, and modification.

Pictured right, Mark Antoniotti, 577 CMRS, uses a man-lift to reach the window of 58-0023. The 51-year old bomber has been stored at AMARG for more than 16 years. Inset, Bill Amparano, prepares the window for removal by removing the preservation material called Spraylat.



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Visiting AMARG? Interesting sights abound on the hour-long tour

AMARG, commonly referred to as the "Boneyard," is a 2,600-acre facility serving as home to 4,000 military aircraft, representing 70 different types of weapon systems.

The mission to sustain both U.S. and allied warfighters consists of five elements; aircraft regeneration (returning aircraft to flying status); aircraft overhaul (depot-level maintenance); aircraft storage; aircraft parts reclamation; and aircraft disposal.

In 1946, the Army Air Force chose Tucson, Arizona as a host for this facility primarily for its optimum weather. The dry climate minimizes corrosion of the aircraft in storage. Also, beneath the topsoil is a clay-like sub-layer called "caliche." This extremely hard subsoil allows AMARG to tow and park the planes on the desert floor without constructing



parking ramps.

You may visit AMARG and witness its diverse activity by taking a public tour offered by the Pima Air & Space Museum. The museum is located at 6000 E. Valencia Road and tours embark from the museum Monday through Friday.

Additional details are available on the Museum's website:

<http://www.pimaair.org/view.php?pg=16>.

Enjoy your visit!



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