



309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group



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USAF regenerating T-38s; Super Guppy employed to move 'em out

Fifteen T-38A aircraft returned to AMARG last year after the end of a lengthy lease to the Republic of Korea's Air Force are leaving again. Their more recent departure is due to U.S. Air Force plans to regenerate and reutilize the jets in support of the F-22 Raptor's Red Adversary program.

The "Talons" will incrementally depart Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in pairs on board NASA's Super Guppy, a platform originally built in the 1980s for the European Space Agency and acquired by NASA in 1997 to support Space Shuttle and International Space Station cargo requirements.

The Super Guppy's services are available to all government agencies and by utilizing this one-of-a-kind method to transfer the air frames almost completely intact, the Air Force eliminates aircraft disassembly and crating costs.

Loading the Super Guppy is a quick and smooth operation from the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base flightline. AMARG and NASA personnel ensure the staged T-38s are safely lifted and securely placed onto a NASA-engineered shipping fixture (fashioned for two T-38s and tailored for



Guppy transport), and professional air transportation teams assigned to Davis-Monthan's 355th Logistics Readiness Squadron fluidly load the aggregation.

The first couple of two-ship T-38 deliveries occurred mid-December with the Super Guppy scheduled to make six additional flights into Davis-Monthan for the remaining 11 aircraft.

NASA's flying "arc" delivers the T-38s to the Air Combat Command's T-38 Centralized Repair Facility located at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico for regeneration. With T-38 System Program Office oversight and support, the T-38s are fully inspected and made flight worthy in approximately 70 days.

According to Mr. Stephen M. Brannen, the ACC T-38 Program Manager at Langley Air Force Base, Va., the overhauled T-38s will serve as a suitable, low-cost adversary air platform for the Raptor and help increase F-22 pilot combat readiness as more sorties can be dedicated to core missions versus flying F-22 against F-22.

"This initiative saves valuable F-22 combat training hours and service life on fifth-generation aircraft and does not take away from readiness," said Mr. Brannen.

Though the F-22 has already trained and flown against visiting F-16 and T-38 flying squadrons, these T-38s will provide on-station adversary support at Langley and elsewhere.



Above, NASA representatives and AMARG personnel lift and secure two T-38A aircraft onto a specially designed shipping fixture engineered for the Super Guppy's cargo bay. Left, the Super Guppy's hinged nose opens to accommodate the two jets placed nose to wing for shipment to the Air Combat Command's T-38 Centralized Repair Facility at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico where they will be regenerated for flight.

Up, up...and over; former Top Gun trainer moves to Naval Reserve Center

The compact, once highly-maneuverable TA-4J "Skyhawk" and former Top Gun aggressor still bearing its squadron's feared red star and camouflage paint scheme, was briefly airborne again last month as it was lifted over the fence and placed with the Navy's Operational Support Center (NOSC) in Tucson.

According to Mr. Tim Horn, director for the Naval Inventory Control Point's local Field Service Office (FSO) here, the entire project to transfer the vehicle, to include the final lift, was flawless.

"This was an extremely well-coordinated effort between the Navy's FSO, the NOSC and AMARG's 578th Storage and Disposal Squadron, especially their rigging, towing and aircraft movement teams," said Mr. Horn. "Despite the small size of the aircraft, the lift had to be carefully done with precision," he said.

Bureau number 153526, one of the very last TA-4J-models to retire here, was transferred by the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Pensacola, Fla. to the NOSC under a long-term loan agreement. In return

for the air frame's placement, Naval Reserve Center personnel agree to maintain and forever preserve the integrity of the aircraft as long as it remains on loan.

In a complimentary e-mail to everyone involved in the transfer, Commander Ross Orvik, commanding officer of the NOSC, wrote "the new jet's call sign would temporarily be "Viper," named after the "Top Gun" movie's aggressor fighter of the same model aircraft and paint scheme." "My personal thanks to the crew who did their normal expert work in getting the jet here on time," added Commander Orvik.

The NOSC held a dedication ceremony for the new static on January 9, 2011 and revealed that the aircraft would permanently be named "Natasha," a call sign chosen by the NOSC Commander's "SeaBees."

Though this jet no longer taunts and hones the adversarial warfare skills of Naval aviators, it will continue to serve as a regal reminder of the significant role it played in support of the United States Navy's Fighter Weapons School.



Rigging, motorpool and towing personnel, assigned to the 578th Storage and Disposal Squadron, combined talents to execute the precision lift of a TA-4J "Skyhawk" over the fence for placement with the Navy's Operational Support Center located on South Wilmot Road in Tucson. The TA-4J still bears the Navy's Fighter Weapons School aggressor squadron's paint scheme. From left, Mr. Ralph Chaney (crane operator), Thomas Chavez, James Ackerson, Dennis Varney, Jonathan Atchison, Jeff Schilling, Philip Kovaric, Michael Armstrong, and Van Clouse.

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History preserved, last stored VC-140B “JetStar” placed on display at LBJ Ranch

Lockheed JetStar, serial number 61-2490, retiring to the desert in 1987 and once a smaller flying complement to Air Force One, is now on permanent display at the Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch in Johnson City, Texas.

In a recent letter to AMARG, Mr. Russ Whitlock, superintendent of the Department of the Interior's Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas, describes the significance of this VC-140B to the Ranch and its dedication ceremony held on 27 August, 2010, the day marking the 102nd anniversary of Lyndon B. Johnson's birth.

Mr. Whitlock writes “President Johnson's daughter, Luci Baines Johnson, was on-hand to speak of her memories flying on board this aircraft. Also on hand for the dedication was retired Brigadier General James U. Cross who piloted the aircraft to and from the LBJ Ranch on many occasions. General Cross stated that the JetStar was President Johnson's favorite aircraft.”

According to a National Park Service news

release, LBJ traveled on a Boeing 707 for most trips when he was president, but the larger plane could not land at the ranch because the 6,300 foot

asphalt airstrip was not long enough. However, a JetStar could land and taxi to within 200 yards of LBJ's Texas White House.

Mr. Whitlock's letter continues, “Your gracious support enabled the National Park Service to return the aircraft to a historic location where it helps us to explain the important role jet aircraft provided to the President of the United States,” and concludes with “Thousands of visitors will enjoy and learn about the aircraft and its importance through the years.”

The government-to-government transfer of the VC-140B was coordinated between the National Park Service and the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

“We at the National Museum of the United States Air Force were very pleased to work with our partners at the National Park Service and provide the C-140B for the LBJ Ranch and the thousands of Americans who visit the LBJ Ranch each year,” said Mr. Terry Aitken, senior curator for the museum.

Additional information on the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park may be found at <http://www.nps.gov/lyjo/index.htm>.



In a letter dated December 22, 2010 from the National Park Service, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas, Mr. Russ Whitlock, Superintendent, sends his appreciation to AMARG for their support in the government-to-government transfer of JetStar VC-140B, Serial Number 61-2490, from the National Museum of the United States Air Force to the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. This smaller version of Air Force One was utilized by President Lyndon B. Johnson during his presidency to make trips to the LBJ Ranch from Washington, D.C. Describing the photo above, Mr. Whitlock writes, “The aircraft is a significant feature on the historic landscape and sits at its historic “ready position” just as it did throughout Johnson's vice-presidential and presidential terms.”

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