The Aerospace Maintenance And Regeneration Center
AMARC
...A Diamond in the Desert
Supplement to the Desert Airman
Issue 13
Sep 2, 2004

Experience makes the difference

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Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center
Public Affairs

When a family care doctor says, "It looks like a problem with the appendix," patient and doctor start looking for a surgeon to remove the organ and restore the patient's health. When the Air Force issued an immediate time compliance technical order (TCTO) on F-4 and QF-4 main landing gear, the BAE Systems, Information and Electronics Integration Center in Mojave, Calif. called in experts of their own – they turned to AMARC.

Concerns about F-4 landing gear resulted after a German crew landed at Holloman AFB, N.M. During a post-flight inspection, maintenance crews found that the side brace actuator had separated from the main gear. Normally, the actuator, shaped like a pick-up truck's shock absorber, holds the main gear down and locked. Failure of the actuator on landing, could have resulted in catastrophic collapse of the main gear with serious damage to the aircraft and risk to the aircrew. Result, the TCTO.

According to Jim Fitzsimmons, F-4 hydraulics mechanic, the procedure to accomplish the TCTO is relatively simple, but they made the right decision asking AMARC to do the job. "There's an art to it, and we have the right expertise. We're knowledgeable about the parts, the cleaning, the preparation, and returning everything to the original state," said Jose Cuevas, F-4 mechanic.

Four F-4s at BAE Systems required completion of the TCTO before their next flights. While BAE Systems supported the AMARC team by towing aircraft and providing required materials, Mr. Cuevas noted that field work presented challenges of its own.

Mr. Jim Fitzsimmons, F-4 hydraulics mechanic, removes the side brace actuator from the main landing gear of an F-4 Phantom.

"Being in the field complicates things," he said. "You have only the items you brought with you, no access to all your familiar tools. You just don't have all the amenities you're used to at home."

Nevertheless, the AMARC team, which included corrosion specialist Jake Lozano and Lonnie Johnson, performed flawlessly.

Mr. Fitzsimmons explained that as a result of the TCTO, all F-4s now receive the inspection as part of their routine maintenance. To date, about 25 percent of the aircraft inspected have needed main gear replacement as a result of cracks discovered on or around actuator pinions.

"This check could be lifesaving for our pilots," Mr. Fitzsimmons said. If the gear fails on landing, it could drop the plane onto its wing with potentially catastrophic results.

When compared to contractor support cost, AMARC's efforts are easy to measure in terms of savings to the taxpayer. The real difference doesn't have a price tag. "Experience is the key, and AMARC has the experience," said Mr. Cuevas.

"The Quality of a Person's Life is in Direct Proportion to their Commitment to Excellence"

Maintenance discipline; more than pride in workmanship

By Chief Master Sgt. Gregory R. Barnes
Maintenance Superintendent, AMARC

As I look across the 2600 acres of aircraft stored here at AMARC, I think about the history behind each aircraft and how many maintenance hours went into keeping them flying safely through the years.

More than 4,300 aircraft—symbols of freedom, strength, determination, obligations, frustrations, and accomplishments—grace these desert grounds. These aircraft represent what went right in aircraft maintenance.

Individual maintainers are often directed to "do the right thing," but maintenance discipline reaches beyond the individual. We achieve proper maintenance discipline as a team, and only as a result of the conscious efforts of every member of the team. Individually, a technician makes a conscious effort by doing his or her best, taking pride in quality workmanship.

For the overall team, maintenance discipline results from meaningful and relevant maintenance policies coupled with active management and supervisory involvement.

The responsibility to ensure availability of serviceable tools and equipment to halt unsafe workarounds or shortcuts rests on the supervisors' shoulders.

Reporting and documentation requirements are also examined to ensure contribution to maintenance discipline rather than siphoning away valuable resources and direct labor time.

Even during the best of times, we must constantly ask ourselves: are we performing our jobs correctly?

Are we following all regulatory guidance? Are there better ways to accomplish our mission? Are team members trained appropriately? Are we following up as required?

Discipline takes work, and in aircraft maintenance there are no holidays.

Good discipline and work ethics apply across every Air Force military and civilian specialty, as any mishap could cost lives or waste valuable resources.

The aircraft we maintain and regenerate at AMARC are testaments to the years of exceptional dedication, service, and diligence of aircraft maintainers past and present. The long, productive, and safe service lives of these national assets clearly represent maintenance discipline at its best.

Motivated people; our most powerful force

Col. Lourdes Castillo, *AMARC Commander*

Our most powerful force and strongest resource is our people . . . the greatest asset of any organization. Leaders ask this fundamental question: "What motivates my people and turns on their natural enthusiasm to succeed, produce, and to help the team?"

There is no simple answer, but by creating the right setting we can develop a positive, motivating environment for our people. People join an organization for personal growth. They have needs, which they hope to fulfill through organizational membership.

As leaders, we interact with the members of the organization to build trust, understand who they are, and earn their support. Values, beliefs, and customs may differ from group to group, but all people have similar personal needs. As leaders we must understand these needs because they are powerful motivators.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs relates that all people are driven to find basic safety and security for themselves and their family before they move on toward meeting higher goals. According to Maslow, once "basic deficiency needs" are met, then a person can act more unselfishly. As long as we are motivated to satisfy these higher aims, we are moving towards growth and toward self-actualization. Consciously or unconsciously, safe, secure, and happy people set priorities to fulfill higher needs. It's the responsibility of leaders to help each team member meet their basic needs, so they can move beyond what is essential and focus on loftier goals.

If we accept the basic tenets of Maslow's theory, we can use this information to be better managers and supervisors. It shows us that there are opportunities to further motivate employees by paying attention to management style, creative job scheduling, compensating for events, providing a safe working environment, and by utilizing team-based projects. Good leaders can also increase motivation by planning social events, recognizing achievement, making employees feel appreciated and valued, and by providing them with exciting challenges and the opportunity to reach their full career potential.

In our environment, if we are unable to fill the needs of our members, they will most likely leave the organization. Therefore, leadership styles must be examined to determine whether or not they encourage motivation. Do the leaders of the organization have a positive attitude? Because that is a must in a leader. Morale is a direct reflection of leaders' attitudes, and morale directly impacts individual and group motivation. Have you ever heard the saying that the attitude of an organization reflects the attitude of its leader? Not only must a leader be positive, but also determined to change negative experiences of the group into positive opportunities for individual growth.

Since each member is equally important to the success of the organization, we need to make sure all are treated as such. Respect each member for his/her abilities. Everyone has something positive and important to contribute. At times, even a small bit of encouragement from the leader can significantly increase the motivation of a member to the benefit of the entire organization. The first step—and perhaps the most personal one—is for leaders to make an effort to know each member by name. Yet, as leaders of a military organization, it's equally important to never forget the delicate balance required between being friendly and getting the job done!

There is no switch that instantly motivates people. When leaders create an environment that meets the needs of organization members, a more highly motivated group will follow.

Dress for success

By Doreen Wells, *Director of Maintenance, AMARC*

A recent article in *U.S.A. Today* spoke about candidates for jobs wearing jeans, purple sweat suits, and spike heels or sneakers. Other applicants aren't afraid to show pierced body parts and spiked hair. Still others chewed gum or showed up in rumpled clothes or with their pants falling down. According to the article, the outlandish dress cost some candidates the job.

Does it really make a difference how you dress and act? In many cases, it does.

I'll never forget the gentleman I interviewed for a management analyst position. He had been out of work for a few months and wanted to show me why. He took off his jacket, unbuttoned his shirt and started to pull down his pants (this is a true story) to show me the scar from a boat propeller that had injured him. He didn't get the job needless to say.

Neither did the young lady in a bright red skirt so short and tight that she could hardly sit down! Why? Because in the business climate I worked in at the time, appearances did matter. In other environments it isn't as important. However, it does make sense to dress your best for the interview, regardless of the dress code at the organization.

If you're in doubt about how to dress for an interview, it is best to err on the side of conservatism. It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Remember, you are marketing a product — yourself — to a potential employer, and the first thing the employer sees when greeting you is your attire; thus, you must make every effort to have the proper dress for the type of job you are seeking.

Will dressing properly get you the job? Of course not, but it will give you a competitive edge and a positive first impression.

Adm. Shahid Karimullah, Chief of the Naval Staff, Pakistan Navy (right) is briefed on aircraft storage and regeneration processes by Col. Lourdes Castillo (left) during a visit to AMARC.

AMARC regenerates first B-1B

As part of the House and Senate Fiscal 2004 Authorization Bill, team AMARC and maintenance crews from the 654th Combat Logistics Support Squadron (CLSS) from Tinker AFB, Okla., partnered to regenerate the first B-1B Lancer. After two months of flight preparations, the B-1B departed for Dyess AFB, Texas in late August. "The aircraft was in great shape," said Technical Sergeant Jerome Howard, CLSS team chief. "Very little maintenance was required beyond the required time change items due on this aircraft." The Lancer, Serial No. 86-0097, entered storage in April 2003 under the Air Force's B-1B migration plan.