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Dyess sets record mission capable rates

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By Master Sgt. Bill Lincicome
7th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

6/10/2003 - DYESS AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (ACCNS) -- When the 7th Bomb Wing B-1 Lancer maintainers and operators surpassed Air Combat Command's monthly mission capable rate two months in a row in June and July 2002 -- the first time in wing history -- officials called it "a huge success."

But that accomplishment was just the beginning. In May, the wing recorded a 76.1 percent monthly MC rate, marking the 12th

straight month Dyess has eclipsed the command standard of 67 percent and becoming the first B-1 unit to accomplish this.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment," said Col. Tom Bell, the 7th Bomb Wing vice commander. "It really demonstrates the incredible team effort put forth by our Air Force."

Mission capable rates are determined by the percent of a unit's assigned aircraft that are ready to perform missions, said Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Fournier, 17th Operations Group maintenance superintendent. If an aircraft is down for maintenance for too many days, it is counted against the rate. A higher MC rate means a higher availability of planes for training missions as well as real-world combat commitments.

"It also translates to less pressure on the maintainers," Chief Fournier said. "V



Airman 1st Class Lacy Foss and Tech. Sgt. Robert Hawkins perform a visual inspection of a B-1 Lancer accessory drive gear box at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. Dyess maintainers and logistical support personnel have exceeded Air Combat Command's mission capable rates for an entire year -- a first for any B-1 unit. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Tracy Reisinger)

have more parts on the shelf now, have less cannibalization actions and less weekend maintenance duties. Morale is the highest it's been in years."

These successes have been several years in the making, the chief said. Recent more funding was put into the B-1 program trying to address parts and logistics issues for the fleet. It has taken this long for the system to catch up, but now that funding has translated into more parts on the shelf. He said that all the B-support facilities at various bases have focused on what those operating the system in the field have needed.

The successes being enjoyed by the maintenance community at Dyess are the result of a "huge team effort," said Lt. Col. Richard Kosanke, the 7th Logistic Group deputy commander. "The elements of logistics -- the money, people and equipment -- have come together, and focused on meeting the mission needs."

According to base officials, one key teammate in Dyess' MC rate success comes from the hard-working men and women at the Air Logistics Center at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. The ALC provides logistical support for the Dyess B-1 maintenance community such as helping to ensure the necessary parts are available to Dyess maintainers when they need them.

"This is a huge success for us," Chief Fournier said. "So many pieces — the parts, the people, and the dedication by the people and leadership — came together to make this happen."

Those elements go beyond the base boundaries, Chief Fournier said.

"It's the entire B-1 community," he said. "It's everyone from the (Air Logistics Center at Tinker) all the way down to the maintainer on the flightline."

Colonel Kosanke stressed that the MC rates are only part of the success story Dyess.

"When you look at the facts that the experience level of those who work on the aircraft has gone down and the aircraft has aged, and we're still able to provide a quality aircraft and consistently maintain the stats we're seeing, that's huge," he said.

Part of the 7th LG's "back to basics" approach has been working with the 7th OG on aircraft scheduling. The two groups have worked to revise how airplanes have been scheduled to fly, resulting in "fresh tails" for use every day.

"This has allowed for more quality maintenance," Colonel Kosanke said. "It's provided the flightline better opportunities to maintain the airplanes."

"The communication lines are more open which translates to more action," Chief Fournier said. This allows the weapon system to fulfill expectations from when it first came on line.

"The B-1 is as supportable as any other aircraft in the Air Force inventory," the

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chief said. "It's quickly becoming the weapon of choice for theater commanders."

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