

# The Chronological History of the C-9A NIGHTINGALE



***COVER CAPTION: The C-9A has had three paint schemes during its lifetime. The original in 1968 had "U.S. AIR FORCE" on the side near the nose. The 1984 revision moved the service name to the upper portion of the side of the aircraft near the tail and changed it to "UNITED STATES AIR FORCE." In 1999, "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" replaced the service name, and the traditional Air Force "star and bars" logo on the engine was eliminated. The aircraft's traditional white, gray, and black colors and red cross on the tail remained standard on all three. On 12 February 2001, the Air Force directed the removal of the Red Cross from the service's C-9A fleet.***

*CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE*

# **C-9A NIGHTINGALE**



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# A Chronological History of the C-9A Nightingale

The C-9A is a twin-engine, T-tail, medium-range, swept-wing jet aircraft used primarily for Air Mobility Command's aeromedical evacuation mission. It is the first jet aircraft specifically designed for the movement of litter and ambulatory patients. This flying hospital replaced the C-118 Liftmasters and C-131A Samaritans as well as the C-130 Hercules and C-141 Starlifters as the Air Force's primary means of medical transportation and evacuation.<sup>1</sup>

The C-9A is fitted with special equipment including a hydraulically operated folding ramp for patient handling; ceiling receptacles for securing intravenous bottles; a special care area with a separate ventilation system for patients requiring isolation or intensive care; vacuum and therapeutic oxygen outlets; an electrical system for the use of cardiac monitors, respirators, incubators, and infusion pumps; a medical refrigerator for whole blood and biologicals; commercial airline-type seats for ambulatory patients; a special control panel to allow the crew director to monitor cabin temperature, therapeutic oxygen, and the vacuum system; and an auxiliary power unit.<sup>2</sup>

The Nightingale can cruise at speeds in excess of 500 miles per hour and possesses a range of 2,000 miles.<sup>3</sup> It can carry a maximum of 40 litter or 40 ambulatory patients, as well as multiple combinations of both. A normal crew consists of a flight crew of three (pilot, co-pilot, and flight mechanic) and a medical crew of five (two flight nurses and three aeromedical technicians).<sup>4</sup> All C-9A pilots receive their flying training at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The initial training course runs for two months and includes three weeks of ground school classes and six days of simulator training. Nurses and aeromedical technicians attend the United States Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. There, they receive six weeks of didactic and "hands-on" training. Courses provide nurses and aeromedical technicians with the fundamental skills necessary to operate as aeromedical crewmembers in any of the United States Air Force aeromedical evacuation aircraft.<sup>5</sup>

What follows is a chronological history of the Nightingale, from its preinception to the present.

## ***1963***

**Apr 63**

The Office of the Secretary of Defense requested a modernization study of the aeromedical evacuation fleet. The Fokker/Fairchild Hiller F-27 and Douglas DC-9, or equivalent, were suggested. The F-27 was rejected, despite being less expensive. An updated study was to be resubmitted after 1 July 1965.<sup>6</sup>

## ***1964***

**Jun 64**

As a follow-up to the submittal of April 1963, the Military Air Transport Service continued to provide updated information to Headquarters United States Air Force and presented a briefing that reemphasized the urgency of aeromedical modernization needs. The presentation pointed out the deficiencies and existing limitations of the current airlift capacity and frequency of service. The Military Air Transport Service stressed the need for a medium-weight jet aircraft with adequate space, weather radar, and modernized very high frequency (VHF) communications.<sup>7</sup>

## ***1965***

**15 Apr 65**

The findings and recommendations of the Military Air Transport Service, together with Headquarters United States Air Force revisions, were published in the form of a comprehensive study. However, no replacement for the C-131A followed.<sup>8</sup>

## ***1966***

**16 May 66**

The Special Subcommittee on Military Airlift of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives recommended the immediate modernization of the fleet by

acquiring an Air Force-recommended jet aircraft, such as the DC-9 or the Boeing B-737.<sup>9</sup> A jet aircraft would reduce costs and increase efficiency over propeller-driven aircraft for intratheater missions.

**29 Jul 66**

The Department of Defense agreed to initiate modernization in January 1967 and approved expenditure of \$34 million for the purchase of 8 aircraft plus initial spares.<sup>10</sup>

**Fall 66**

Competition for the contract began. Known as the CX-2 Program, requirements for the aircraft were as follows: it must be capable of operating under extreme climatic temperature and humidity conditions and be operationally independent of ground support; it must have a cruise speed of MACH .75 or higher and a cruise altitude of 30,000-35,000 feet, with a guaranteed range of 2,000 nautical miles; and it must be capable of carrying 40 ambulatory or 30 litter patients, or a combination of both.<sup>11</sup>

## ***1967***

**31 Aug 67**

The Air Force awarded a \$28.7 million contract for off-the-shelf DC-9 aircraft to McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Corporation, Long Beach, California. The Air Force selected the D-9 rather than the B-737 or the British Aircraft Corporation's BAC III. The contract called for 8 C-9As to be delivered, beginning in August 1968, at the rate of one per month. The total was later changed to 12 aircraft before a final total of 21 aircraft was chosen. The contract also called for Medical Suitability Testing to ensure a standard and aeromedically acceptable interior.

The normal basing was 12 aircraft at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, while Pacific Air Forces at Clark Air Base, Philippines, and United States Air Forces in Europe, Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, each received 4 aircraft. One aircraft (67-22586) was lost in a crash near Scott Air Force Base on 16 September 1971.<sup>12</sup>

**20 Oct 67**

Medical Suitability Testing began at McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Corporation in Long Beach, California. Participants included several civilians, enlisted members, and officers testing various areas of the aircraft.<sup>13</sup>

## ***1968***

**18 Jan 68**

The first static display of the C-9A was held at the 50th Anniversary of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.<sup>14</sup>

**17 Jun 68**

McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Corporation hosted C-9A rollout ceremonies. Major General Harry E. Goldsworthy, Commander of the Air Force Systems Command's Aeronautical Systems Division, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, accepted the C-9A from Donald Douglas, Jr., President of Douglas Aircraft Division. Lieutenant Colonel Mary Ann Tonne, Chief Nurse of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, named the C-9A the Nightingale. The name came from Florence Nightingale, a British nurse who pioneered improved military nursing during the Crimean War. While C-9A number 67-22583 engaged in a fly-over, 67-22584 emerged from a



***The first C-9A transport at roll-out ceremony hosted by McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach, California.***

flightline hanger. Elsie Ott Mandot, who in January 1943 during World War II was the first nurse to fly transcontinental with patients (and for this received the Air Medal), christened the aircraft.<sup>15</sup>



*Lieutenant Colonel Mary Ann Tonne, Chief Nurse of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, takes a patient's blood pressure aboard the C-9A. She is credited with naming the aircraft the "Nightingale."*

**10 Aug 68** The first C-9A (67-22584) landed at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, piloted by the commander of the Military Airlift Command, General Howell M. Estes, Jr.<sup>16</sup>

**2 Oct 68** The first operational mission was completed on this date. Carrying patients from the north central and Rocky Mountain areas, the twin-engine jet departed from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, for stops at Buckley Field, Colorado; Travis Air Force Base, California; and Kelly Air Force Base, Texas. The aircrew completed the mission that night, compared to the two days it would have taken when flying older aircraft.<sup>17</sup>



## ***1969***

**20-21 May 69** The C-9A flew its first combination aircrew route familiarization and offshore introduction mission. The mission transited Guantanamo Naval Air Station, Cuba; Kindley Air Base, Bermuda; Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico; and Howard Air Force Base, Panama.<sup>18</sup>

**Jun 69** Brigadier General Harold F. Funsch, Military Airlift Command Surgeon, led a 16-man crew on a C-9A tour through Europe. The aircraft reaped praises from more than 1,200 medical and flight personnel. Static displays were held at Rhein Main Air Base, Furstenfeldbruck Air Base, Wiesbaden Air Base, and Stuttgart, Germany; Naples, Italy; and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe near Brussels, Belgium.<sup>19</sup>

**Nov 69** Four pilots reached the 1,000-hour mark in the C-9A. Major John W. Chancey, Major Roland E. Martin, Major Henry R. Parnell, Jr., and Major George G. Banks each received a Certificate of Achievement for logging over 1,000 hours in the “flying hospital ward.”<sup>20</sup>

## ***1970***

**31 May-  
8 Jun 70** One 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing C-9A flew its first scheduled missions to Puerto Rico; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Goose Bay, Labrador; and Torbay, Newfoundland. The crew flew an entire route in one day, a mission that took previous aircraft three to five days to accomplish.<sup>21</sup>

**19 Nov 70-  
9 Sep 71** The C-9A aircraft established a new Air Force record of 1,282 consecutive on-time home station departures during this period.<sup>22</sup>

**21 Dec 70**

McDonnell Douglas delivered the first of a new buy of nine C-9As to the Air Force. Deliveries continued through September 1972. As of this date, the average monthly operational readiness rate, from the inception of service, was 90.8 percent, according to Air Force figures.<sup>23</sup>

## ***1971***

**23 Mar 71**

A C-9A set a new military record for the number of patients moved in one day, a total of 96 persons, (24 litter patients, 64 ambulatory patients, and 8 non-medical attendants).<sup>24</sup>

**27-28 Mar 71**

A C-9 Nightingale aircraft commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Neil Leeper airlifted Dr. Claude Fly, the American agricultural advisor to Uruguay released by terrorists after he experienced



***A C-9A over the St. Louis Arch, located near the aircraft's home at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.***

a heart attack while in captivity. The move was from Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, to Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.<sup>25</sup>

- 21 Apr 71** Military surgeons general of armed forces from many countries traveled aboard a C-9A from Cleveland, Ohio, to Colorado Springs, Colorado. During flight, they were briefed on the aeromedical evacuation mission.<sup>26</sup>
- 6 Jun 71** Reservists from the 932d Aeromedical Airlift Group, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, completely manned aeromedical evacuation mission 1137. Previously, only mixed crews of reservists and active duty had flown missions.<sup>27</sup>
- Jul 71** C-9A number 67-22585 became the first C-9 to log 5,000 flying hours.<sup>28</sup>
- 16 Sep 71** C-9A number 67-22586 crashed near Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, while engaged in a training mission. The three pilot crewmembers, Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd M. Clore, Major Aubrey L. Akin, and Captain James L. Rhame, died in the crash. This was the first fatal accident both in the history of the C-9A as well as in the 23-year history of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing.<sup>29</sup>

## ***1972***

- 15 Mar 72** The C-9A flew its first operational mission in Southeast Asia.<sup>30</sup>
- 7 Jul 72** A C-9A transported Alabama Governor George C. Wallace from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to Montgomery, Alabama, and to the Democratic National Convention in Miami, Florida. Governor Wallace had been partially paralyzed by a would-be assassin's bullet while campaigning in a Laurel, Maryland, shopping center on 15 May.<sup>31</sup>

## 1973

**29 Jan 73**

General Lucius D. Clay, Jr., Commander in Chief of Pacific Air Forces, approved the use of the C-9A for South Vietnam evacuations.<sup>32</sup>

**4 Apr 73**

C-9As participated in Operation Homecoming, a mission based upon the premise that each returning prisoner of war from Vietnam would require individual medical attention. The aircraft's hospital-like environment controlled their transition from captivity to a free society by permitting a graduated return. The C-9As transported 367 returnees to medical facilities near their families.<sup>33</sup>



*Medical personnel carry a litter patient up the C-9A's hydraulically operated folding ramp, a feature unavailable on commercial aircraft.*

## ***1974***

**10 Feb 74** A C-9A from the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing airlifted the crew of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Skylab IV mission from San Diego, California, to Houston, Texas, after the crew had finished spending 84 days in space on 8 February.<sup>35</sup>

**21 Feb 74** A C-9A piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Jack B. Compton, 11th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron commander, made the 100,000th aircraft landing recorded at Buckley Air National Guard Base, Colorado. Colorado's lieutenant governor and other dignitaries met with Colonel Compton after the mission.<sup>36</sup>

**Fall 74** Personnel from the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing Operational Training Division collaborated with operational training personnel from Headquarters Military Airlift Command on a proposal for the installation of a six-axis visualator for C-9A pilot training at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. That same year, Flight Safety International, a private company based at Long Beach, California, that had provided simulator training to the 375th since 1968, submitted a proposal for a C-9A visualator to be installed in the Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, area. This simulator would reduce training flight hours, freeing the airplanes to fly more operational missions.<sup>34</sup>

## ***1978***

**25-26 Feb 78** In two urgent C-9A missions, the 11th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron and the 57th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron crews airlifted 14 burn casualties from a train derailment disaster at Waverly, Tennessee. The train had derailed as a result of a propane rail tank explosion. The Nightingales transported the burn victims to burn centers at Birmingham, Alabama; Louisville, Kentucky; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Durham, North Carolina.

These missions led to two important developments in aeromedical evacuation procedures. First, the possibility of other disasters like the one at Waverly spurred efforts to help civilian organizations speed their requests for United States Air Force air evacuation response. Second, the USAF Directorate of Transportation provided the commanders of the 375th's four aeromedical evacuation squadrons with a list of burn care centers in the United States. The American Burn Association approved the list.<sup>37</sup>

**15 Apr 78**

In response to a botulism epidemic in Clovis, New Mexico, the severity of the disease, and the resulting lack of space at civilian hospitals in Clovis, a C-9A Nightingale airlifted 11 victims of the virus from Clovis to medical facilities in Albuquerque. According to the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Georgia, the epidemic was the second largest outbreak of the disease since health officials had begun tracking cases of botulism in 1899. The C-9A's quick response to the botulism outbreak in Clovis was credited with helping avert a civil disaster of major proportions.<sup>38</sup>

## ***1979***

**27 Mar 79**

A C-9A (71-10875) from the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Clark Air Base, Philippines, flew the first C-9A mission to the People's Republic of China (PRC), landing at the Hung Chiao Airport, Shanghai. The crew gave the attending physician, Dr. E. V. Wong, and his staff from the PRC a tour of the C-9A before transporting two patients to the United States Air Force Hospital at Clark Air Base.<sup>39</sup>

**25 May 79**

Members of the Italian folk dancing group "Gruppo Folkloristico Angelica" were injured in a bus accident in Greece. Because of the close relationship between the civilian community and Aviano Air Base, the Mayor of Aviano requested assistance from Colonel James W. Dearborn, commander at Aviano Air



*Three crewmembers of the first C-9A Nightingale aircraft to visit the People's Republic of China stand in front of the Bank of China, Hung Chiao Airport, Shanghai, on 27 March 1979. The crewmen, who were stationed at Clark Air Base, Philippines, are (left to right): Major Elpedio Basa, Chief, Operations, 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron; Lieutenant Colonel Fred D. Galey, Commander, 20th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron, aircraft commander; and 1st Lieutenant Michael Coker, 20th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron, copilot.*

Base, Italy. A C-9A Nightingale aircrew from the 435th Tactical Airlift Wing and a medical crew from the 2d Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, flew 18 injured members home to Aviano, Italy.<sup>40</sup>

**26 Jun 79**

Captain Christine E. Schott qualified as a C-9A aircraft commander, the first woman to do so in the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing.<sup>41</sup>

**19-20 Nov 79**

On 4 November, about 500 Iranian militants seized the US embassy in Iran and took about 90 hostages, including some 65 Americans. 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing C-9As airlifted the 3 Americans released on 19 November and the 10 released on 20 November.<sup>42</sup>



*Captain Christine E. Schott, 11th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron, at the controls of a C-9A Nightingale aircraft. She was the first woman in the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing to become an aircraft commander.*

## **1980**

**25 Apr 80**

Five servicemen who had been injured in an aborted rescue attempt for the hostages in Iran were flown by C-9A aircraft from the Middle East to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The rescue mission was called off due to equipment failure, but 8 Americans were killed and 5 injured during the pullout in a collision between a helicopter and a transport plane.<sup>43</sup>

**8 Jun 80**

A C-9A flown by Military Airlift Command's first all-female aircrew launched from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The crewmembers were: Captain Susan R. Regele, Captain Christine E. Schott, Captain Catherine D. Young, Captain Patricia A. Boland, Staff Sergeant Michele L. Varney, Senior



Airman Linda M. Sappington, Senior Airman Marilyn C. Bates, and Airman 1st Class Genita E. Martino.<sup>44</sup>

**12 Jul 80**

375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing airlifted one of the 53 American hostages held in Iran since the takeover of the US embassy in November 1979. The hostage, released because of deteriorating health, was initially flown to Zurich, Switzerland, for medical treatment, but on the same day, he was transferred by C-9A to the Wiesbaden Regional Medical Center, West Germany.<sup>45</sup>

## *1981*

**20 Jan 81**

Two C-9A Nightingales, bedecked with yellow ribbons, assigned to the 435th Tactical Airlift Wing and accompanied by medical crews from the 2d Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, flew to Algiers, Algeria. There, the C-9As picked up the 52 former hostages who had been released by Iran after 444 days of captivity. The two aircraft airlifted the released Americans to Rhein-Main. Each C-9A carried 26 former hostages, 11 crewmembers, and 9 State Department representatives.<sup>46</sup>



*Two 435th tactical Airlift Wing C-9As at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, preparing for the flight to Algiers, Algeria, to pick up 52 former hostages who had been released by Iran after 444 days of captivity.*



*Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, personnel and the press cheer as the 52 freed Americans depart the C-9As. The former hostages were accompanied by medical crews from the 2d Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.*

The two Nightingales landed at Rhein-Main at 0444 local time, where the freed Americans were greeted by a large crowd of their fellow countrymen and more than 1,500 media representatives from 253 international news organizations. On 20 January, former Secretaries of State Cyrus R. Vance and Edmund S. Muskie flew from Washington DC to West Germany to greet the former hostages. Former President Jimmy Carter followed the next day and informed the former hostages of the many diplomatic efforts to secure their release. C-137 Stratoliners operated by MAC's 89th Military Airlift Wing at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, transported both parties, and on Sunday, 25 January, a C-137 from the 89th brought the 52 Americans home to the United States.<sup>47</sup>

**Mar 81**

Headquarters Military Airlift Command and the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing Surgeon released a policy ordering each C-9A medical crew to advise all personnel aboard each

aeromedical evacuation flight that smoking should be kept to minimum. They would also briefly explain why there was not aeromedical evacuation flight that smoking should be kept to a each C-9A medical crew to advise all personnel aboard each a separate section for smokers and non-smokers. It was impossible to completely separate the two because patients had to be seated based on how much attention they needed from the nursing station.<sup>48</sup>

**2 Sep 81**

Major Jack W. Jones, Chief, Aeromedical Evacuation Division, Office of the Military Airlift Command Surgeon, suggested that all of the C-9As in the Air Force should be equipped with an inertial navigation system package. In 1981, C-9As were not equipped with enhanced navigational aids, and, when operating over large expanses of water, navigation errors sometimes occurred.<sup>49</sup>

**2 Dec 81**

The Military Airlift Command's Directorate of Maintenance Engineering notified the 374th Tactical Airlift Wing that inertial navigation system (INS) capability would be provided for the three C-9As at Clark Air Base, Philippines. With INS, the C-9As would be able to serve the greater western Pacific



*This C-9A, with the original paint scheme, over Clark Air Base in the Philippines was equipped with an inertial navigation system to better serve the greater western Pacific theater.*

theater, circumvent severe weather conditions, and use less fuel than the C-141s. C-141s were flying routes that could have been covered more economically by C-9s equipped with an INS package. Previously, C-9As had to fly indirect routes in order to utilize external navigational aids.<sup>50</sup>

## ***1982***

**25 Jun 82** A C-9A flew to Senegal, Africa, to provide aeromedical evacuation support for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration space shuttle mission. A Medical Service Corps officer and an anesthesiologist from the Weisbaden Hospital in Germany augmented the basic medical crew.<sup>51</sup>

**17 Sep 82** A commercial DC-10 passenger aircraft crashed in Malaga, Spain. Passengers suffered first- and second-degree burns as well as smoke inhalation. A C-141 transported the patients to McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, where some of the patients were carried aboard a waiting C-9A Nightingale aircraft, which transported them to Boston, Massachusetts, and Buffalo, New York.<sup>52</sup>

## ***1983***

**22 Apr 83** A C-9A airlifted two individuals injured in the bombing of the Beirut Embassy in Lebanon on 18 April. The Nightingales flew the patients to Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, after which the injured were taken by ambulance to the nearby Wiesbaden Regional Medical Center, before continuing to the continental United States.<sup>53</sup>

**23 Oct-  
9 Dec 83** Within three hours of notification of the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, a C-9A Nightingale remaining overnight at Adana, Turkey, diverted to Beirut and airlifted the first group of injured Marines to Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany. The bombing killed 241 Marines. The C-9A was

assigned to the 435th Tactical Airlift Wing. The 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing medical crew came from the 2d Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, which like the 435th, was stationed at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany. In all, 78 patients were airlifted on 7 missions, 5 C-9 and 2 C-141.<sup>54</sup>

**25 Oct-  
19 Nov 83**

During Operation URGENT FURY, 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing C-9As flew 32 patients on 6 missions. After Grenada experienced a leftist take-over, President Ronald Reagan ordered an invasion to protect United States interests as well as stability in the Caribbean. The operation provided a rare opportunity for assessing the interface of tactical and domestic aeromedical evacuations with combat forces in action.<sup>55</sup>

## *1984*

**25-29 Apr 84**

The 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing's 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron from Clark Air Base, Philippines, supported President Ronald Reagan's trip to China with a dedicated C-9A and a crew on 24-hour alert status.<sup>56</sup>



*The new C-9A paint scheme in 1984. Note that "U.S. AIR FORCE" is eliminated near the nose and replaced by "UNITED STATES AIR FORCE" on the upper portion of the side near the tail.*

**11 Jun 84** The first C-9A to receive the new paint scheme arrived at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, after programmed depot maintenance. Also, the “U.S. Air Force” markings were removed and replaced with “United States Air Force.”<sup>57</sup>

## ***1985***

**19 Jul 85** General Thomas M. Ryan, Jr., Military Airlift Command Commander in Chief, and Brigadier General Vernon Chong, Command Surgeon, proposed a no-smoking policy aboard all aeromedical evacuation C-9A missions. The ban applied to all passengers, patients, attendants, and crewmembers.<sup>58</sup>

**Dec 85** General Duane H. Cassidy, Commander in Chief of the Military Airlift Command, and senior US military leaders in Europe agreed to incorporate continental United States C-9A aircraft into the European war plans. C-9As would move patients between third- and fourth-echelon medical care facilities in a relatively low-threat environment of rear areas, away from combat zones. They would not operate into austere airfields or on roughened runways that contained minimal repairs after experiencing an airfield attack.<sup>59</sup>

## ***1986***

**7 Nov 86** In PROJECT HOPE, the 31st Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and the 300th Military Airlift Squadron (Reserve) at Charleston Air Force Base joined the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing on a mission sponsored jointly by the United States State and Defense Departments to airlift 15 children from earthquake-stricken San Salvador. A 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing C-9A Nightingale transported 12 of the children from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to a Shriners Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>60</sup>

## ***1987***

**May 87**

A missile attack from an Iraqi warplane killed 36 United States Navy crewmembers aboard the USS *Stark* as it maneuvered in the Persian Gulf. Along with a C-141, a C-9A Nightingale transported injured personnel to medical facilities in the United States.<sup>61</sup>

**23 Sep 87**

For the first time, a Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, C-9A deployed to West Germany as a part of the annual REFORGER (Return of Forces to Germany) exercise. This was a major strategic exercise to demonstrate America's commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in wartime or crisis situations that involved the army and air forces of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. The C-9A's successful mission involved transporting simulated battle casualties and other patients from Germany to Great Britain.<sup>62</sup>

## ***1989***

**9 Feb 89**

A C-141 assigned to the 437th Military Airlift Wing, Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, brought 37 Armenian children and young adults seriously injured in a 7 December 1988 earthquake from Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. The children had been taken to Rhein-Main from Moscow and Yerevan several days before. A 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing C-9A Nightingale airlifted 12 children and their escorts from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to hospitals in Buffalo and Syracuse, New York, for gratuitous medical treatment.<sup>63</sup>

**22 Dec-89**

**14 Feb 90**

During Operation JUST CAUSE, the contingency to oust military dictator General Manuel Noriega who was aligned with drug trade and to restore democracy in Panama, C-9A missions were flown daily from San Antonio, Texas, to 16 destinations throughout the United States. In all, the Nightingales transported 256 military patients to their home units for further medical treatment or convalescent leave.<sup>64</sup>

## ***1990***

**21 Jun 90** A C-9A from the 375th Military Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, airlifted seven burn patients to Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas. The victims suffered burns from a fire on the USS *Midway*.<sup>65</sup>

## ***1991***

**27 Feb 91** C-9As deployed to Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, South Carolina, to await orders to support Operation DESERT SHIELD and Operation DESERT STORM during the Persian Gulf War. Patients returning stateside were fewer than anticipated, so the C-9As were not needed.<sup>66</sup>

## ***1993***

**16 Oct 93** The *City of Belleville*, a C-9 belonging to the 375th Airlift Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, transported a US Army pilot, Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Durant, from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, his home station. Injured following the downing of his helicopter and 11 days of captivity in Somalia, CWO3 Durant had been medevaced on non-AMC aircraft from Mogadishu, Somalia, to the Army Regional Medical Center at Landstuhl, Germany, on 15 October. A C-141 medevac flight next took him from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to Andrews. A medical crew from the 57th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Scott Air Force Base, cared for Mr. Durant on the mission from Andrews to Fort Campbell. While onboard the aircraft, Durant was awarded the Purple Heart and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.<sup>67</sup>





*375th Airlift Wing C-9A on the ramp at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.*

**21 Oct 93**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) requested C-9A support to transport 4 shuttle astronauts and 28 mission support personnel from Edwards Air Force Base, California, to Ellington Field in Houston, Texas. NASA medical teams wanted to conduct evaluations on the crew immediately after a mission to determine the effects of space flight. This required the shuttle crew to be transported lying prone.<sup>68</sup>

## ***1994***

**23 Mar 94**

An F-16D Fighting Falcon jet fighter collided with a C-130 Hercules transport while both were attempting to land at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. The explosion and resulting fire killed 23 United States Army paratroopers and severely injured 83 others who had been training nearby. One C-9A was diverted from Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, to Fayetteville, North Carolina. A second C-9A flew from Scott

Air Force Base, Illinois. Both aircrews reconfigured the aircraft to carry eight-litter tiers before transporting 20 severely burned victims to Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, for specialized treatment at the Army Burn Center at nearby Fort Sam Houston. Debris from the F-16 fell on a parked C-141 and on Army forces waiting to board the Starlifter for an airborne training exercise. The resulting fire killed at least 20 and destroyed the C-141.<sup>69</sup>

**5 Oct 94**

A C-9 aircrew, assisted by an 11-person neonatal team from Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, transported a 19-day-old infant from Omaha, Nebraska, to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, for heart transplant surgery at Children's Hospital in St. Louis. US Senator J. Robert Kerrey (Nebraska-Democrat) requested the medevac mission. A C-9 crew on a routine mission to Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, was tasked en route to pick up the team at Wilford Hall and take it to Omaha. Because of the long crew day, a second C-9 launched from Scott Air Force Base to bring the baby and medical team to southern Illinois from Nebraska.<sup>70</sup>

## **1995**

**14 Jul 95**

Members of the 11th Airlift Squadron and the 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron transported members of the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* in a C-9A from Kennedy Space Center in Florida to Ellington Field in Houston, Texas. The shuttle members, returning from the Russian Mir Space Station, included two Russian cosmonauts and one American astronaut.<sup>71</sup>

## **1996**

**29 Jun 96**

Rodeo is the Air Mobility Command-sponsored biennial event which tests the flying and support skills of competing aircrews, combat controllers, aerial porters, security police, and maintainers. Beginning with Rodeo 96, held between 21 and 28 June at McChord Air Force Base, Washington, aeromedical

evacuation crews, like C-17 crews, participated for the first time. Twenty-two aeromedical evacuation teams used three types of aircraft; four of those teams used the C-9A Nightingale. The 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron won “Best C-9 Crew.”<sup>72</sup>

**22 Oct 96**

In a goodwill effort, a C-9A Nightingale responded to a cargo aircraft crash in Manta, Ecuador. At least 20 people were killed and 60 seriously injured. The C-9A flew to Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, to pick up doctors, nurses, and medical technicians. Upon arrival, the teams treated victims in the coastal areas of Manta, Portoviejo, and Guayaquil.<sup>73</sup>

**27 Nov 96**

A 375th Airlift Wing C-9A crew picked up an 11-member neonatal intensive care unit from Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. It then flew them to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to pick up a newborn infant girl with lung problems. The team used an inflight extra corporeal membrane oxygenation machine to allow the infant to bypass her heart and lungs and transported her to the St. Louis Children’s Hospital for further care.<sup>74</sup>

## ***1997***

**22 Apr 97**

President Bill Clinton toured flood-ravaged cities near Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, to assess damage and to commend community efforts. Nearly 60,000 residents were forced out of their homes when the Red River crashed through temporary clay levees and sandbag dikes. A C-9A and two Air National Guard helicopters air-evacuated some 45 critically ill patients to hospitals in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, area.<sup>75</sup>

**9-23 Jun 97**

For two weeks, the 932d Airlift Wing (Reserve) and its 73d Airlift Squadron, stationed at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, took over full-time C-9A aeromedical evacuation missions from the 375th Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base. This PHOENIX

PACE program, implemented by General Ronald R. Fogleman on 1 January 1993 when he was commander of the Air Mobility Command, gave the 932d Airlift Wing a chance to train under full-time conditions and allowed the 375th Airlift Wing to take care of personal and local training requirements.<sup>76</sup>

**7 Aug 97**

A 30th Airlift Squadron aircrew and its C-9A Nightingale departed from Yokota Air Base, Japan, to deliver medical supplies to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The supplies were for victims of the 6 August Korean Air jetliner crash near Won Pat International Airport, Guam. Eight burn victims from the crash of Korean Air Flight 801 returned home to South Korea aboard the C-9A Nightingale.<sup>77</sup>

## ***1998***

**Apr 98**

Members of the 86th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, delivered the first baby in squadron history during a routine medical evacuation flight. The 75th Airlift Squadron C-9A Nightingale aircraft and crew were flying pregnant women from Olbia, Sardinia, to Naples, Italy, when one woman went into labor. Edgar Phillip Santana was delivered in perfect health in only 38 minutes.<sup>78</sup>

**21 Jun 98**

For the second consecutive Rodeo competition, the 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron won the trophy for best C-9A team.<sup>79</sup>

**13 Aug 98**

After 12 Americans perished in a terrorist bombing of the United States embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, on 7 August, a C-17 assigned to the 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, returned the remains of 10 American victims to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. On 12 August, a C-5 from the 436th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, returned the body of an eleventh victim, Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Sherry Lynn Olds, from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to Dover. A C-9 assigned to the 375th Airlift Wing,

Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, took Sergeant Olds' remains from Dover to Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, for internment at her hometown, Panama City, at her family's request. The twelfth American victim, married to a Kenyan, was buried in Kenya.<sup>80</sup>

**26 Aug 98**

A C-9A crew departed Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, to evacuate patients from Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, before Hurricane Bonnie struck the East Coast. All patients moved required altitude restriction, intravenous fluids, oxygen, and cardiac monitoring.<sup>81</sup>

## ***1999***

**17 Mar 99**

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary held ceremonies marking the accession of the former Warsaw Pact countries into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Allied Air Forces Central Europe Commander General John P. Jumper, accompanied by an entourage of about 20 North Atlantic Treaty Organization military officials, traveled aboard a C-9A Nightingale to attend the ceremonies.<sup>82</sup>

**29 Apr-  
29 Jul 99**

The 375th Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, deployed its C-9 named *City of Mascoutah* to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to help handle US casualties that came out of Kosovo. Approximately 20 personnel deployed, half active duty and half from its Air Force Reserve affiliate, the 932d Airlift Wing, also at Scott. During its stay at Ramstein, the aircraft and crew were attached to the United States Air Forces in Europe, augmenting the five C-9s stationed there. According to Colonel Bradley S. Baker, 375th Airlift Wing commander, "This is the first time we've done this since we got the C-9s here" in August 1968. The airplane and crews returned to Scott on 29 July 1999.<sup>83</sup>

**2 May 99**

A C-9A transported three former Army prisoners of war, Specialist Steven Gonzales and Staff Sergeants Christopher

Stone and Andrew Ramirez, to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, from Zagreb, Croatia. They had been captured by Serbian forces while patrolling in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, during Operation ALLIED FORCE. Members of the 86th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron who flew aboard the mission assisted the men.<sup>84</sup>

**4 Jun 99**

A C-9A from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, flew an urgent aeromedical evacuation mission to Haiti to bring eight critically injured sailors back to the United States following a truck accident. This mission earned Wing Aircrew of the Quarter as well as the 1999 Fifteenth Air Force Aircrew Excellence Award presented during the Fifteenth Air Force Commanders' Conference at the annual Solano Trophy banquet at Travis Air Force Base, California.<sup>85</sup>

**16-30 Jul 99**

C-9As from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, teamed up with aeromedical specialists in the US Navy and member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for JOINT TASK FORCE Exercise 99-2 in the Atlantic Ocean area. The joint-service training exercise helped develop the type of aeromedical evacuation expertise needed to support the Aerospace Expeditionary Force concept.<sup>86</sup>

**15 Oct 99**

The C-9A program manager, Don Beyer, 375th Logistics Support Squadron, announced that the Air Force's entire fleet of C-9A Nightingales would be given a new external appearance. The new outward look, which required repainting, removed the designation "United States Air Force," replaced it with "United States of America," and eliminated the traditional Air Force "star and bars" logo. The aircraft's traditional white, gray, and black colors remained. In 1999, C-9As were assigned not only to the Air Mobility Command but also to the United States Air Forces in Europe and the Pacific Air Forces. The aircraft of all three major commands were painted differently. C-9s had previously been repainted when permanently reassigned among the three commands. The new, standardized pattern of external design eliminated



*The C-9A's third paint scheme. The new outward look, which required repainting, removed the designation "UNITED STATES AIR FORCE," replaced it with "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," and eliminated the traditional Air Force "star and bars" logo from the engines. The aircraft's traditional white, gray, and black colors remained.*

the requirement for repainting to match other aircraft in theater. The Nightingales would be repainted during programmed depot maintenance at the aircraft's primary contractor, Lockheed-Martin, Greenville, South Carolina. Every C-9A underwent large-scale depot maintenance every five years. Repainting was a 10-day-long process.<sup>87</sup>

## **2000**

**5 May 00**

A 375th Airlift Wing C-9A transported members of the 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and 932d Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, to participate in Rodeo 2000 at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. More than 100 teams from the active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command, and Air National Guard, as well

as allied nations, compete in the biennial event in areas such as airdrop, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, security forces, and short-field landings. For Rodeo 2000, a new event was added to the aeromedical evacuation competition. The Aeromedical Evacuation Obstacle Course required the team to transport one casualty by litter through various obstacles using proper body mechanics and proper lifting techniques. This event was added in addition to C-9A pre-flight, configuration, enplaning, aeromedical emergency scenarios, and medical equipment pre-flight and operation. The aeromedical evacuation team from Scott placed second.<sup>88</sup>

**21 Oct 00**

On 12 October, the explosion of a bomb-laden terrorist boat tore a large gash on the port side of the US Navy destroyer *USS Cole* as it stood anchored in the port of Aden, Yemen. The explosion occurred on the destroyer's port side near the main dining area killing 17 sailors and wounding 39. On 21 October, a 375th Airlift Wing C-9A transported one of the *USS Cole* injured survivors on the final leg of her journey from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to Norfolk Naval Air Station, Virginia.<sup>89</sup>

## ***2001***

**12 Feb 01**

The Air Force directed the removal of the Red Cross emblem from the service's C-9A fleet so the aircraft could be used for missions other than aeromedical airlift. International law, as prescribed under the Geneva Convention, restricts using C-9As marked with the Red Cross to medical missions. Units operating C-9As were given until January 2002 to complete removing the Red Cross markings in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. The area of the tail where the Red Cross had been displayed would be left void of markings to allow the emblem to be reapplied in the event of a military contingency or a wartime operation.<sup>90</sup>



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