



1941-1942



1942-1948



1948-1966



1966-1992



1992-Present

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

The Air Mobility Command originated on 29 May 1941 when the Army created the Air Corps Ferrying Command (ACFC) to fly American-built aircraft to Great Britain. Shortly after the United States entered World War II, ACFC was redesignated as Air Transport Command (ATC) on 20 June 1942, with responsibility for the movement of high-priority cargo and passengers as well as aircraft ferrying. At its peak in 1945, ATC operated more than 3,000 major transport aircraft and moved an average of nearly 200,000 tons of cargo and 80,000 passengers each month over a worldwide system. The Hump Airlift, which began in 1942 to fly supplies over the treacherous Himalayan Mountains from India to allied forces in China after the Japanese cut the Burma Road, was the most famous ATC operation during the war. Besides helping to defeat Japan, it proved the value of mass strategic airlift in support of military operations.

After World War II, rapid demobilization and meager funding reduced ATC to a fraction of its former size. All strategic airlift in the new Department of Defense (DoD) was consolidated under the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) effective 1 June 1948. Twenty-three days later Soviet forces severed the land routes into Berlin from the West. MATS played a major role in the Berlin Airlift that broke the blockade, furnishing airlift expertise, aircraft, and maintenance support.

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 found MATS initially unprepared to move large quantities of troops and equipment to the war zone. Starting with less than 60 aircraft in the Pacific when the war began, MATS was soon managing a long-distance airlift to Japan of 175 C-54s and 60 four-engine transports chartered from the commercial airlines. By the time of the truce on 27 July 1953, MATS had airlifted 214,000 passengers and 80,000 tons of cargo to Japan and transported 43,196 casualties to the United States for further treatment.

President John F. Kennedy's adoption of the military strategy of flexible response in 1960 gave great impetus to the development of airlift forces. So did the Vietnam War, which transformed what had been essentially a transportation service in the 1950s into a strategic combat airlift force by the 1970s. Reflecting these changes, MATS was redesignated the Military Airlift Command (MAC) on 1 January 1966. Strategic and tactical airlift was consolidated under MAC in 1974-1975, bringing nearly all DoD transport aircraft under a single manager for the first time. MAC also became responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, first as a specified command in 1977, and then as the air component of the United States Transportation Command in 1988.

Through countless humanitarian and crisis airlifts, joint deployment exercises such as Reforger, Team Spirit, and Bright Star, and combat operations such as Urgent Fury in Grenada, Just Cause in Panama, and Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf, the command lived up to its vision, "Proud MAC: Support America Can Always Count On."

A new era in air power history began on 1 June 1992, when the Air Force reorganized by inactivating MAC and the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and formed from the elements of these two historic organizations the Air Mobility Command (AMC). AMC melded a worldwide airlift system with a tanker force that had been freed from its strategic commitments by the collapse of the Soviet Union. While AMC does not possess all the Air Force's mobility aircraft, it is the lead command for airlift, air refueling, and aeromedical evacuation, and provides operational guidance to other commands.

The men and women of AMC successfully demonstrated their skills in both peace and war in the 1990s. On four occasions from November 1997 through December 1998, air mobility aircrews deployed additional troops and equipment to Southwest Asia in response to threats from Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein. In 1999, AMC's Airmen helped end Serbian repression in the province of Kosovo.

Since the years following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on America, AMC has completed more than 875,000 airlift sorties supporting overseas contingency operations such as Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, Odyssey Dawn, Inherent Resolve and Freedom Sentinel. These organic aircraft and contracted commercial aircraft operating in the AMC system transported more than 25 million passengers and 15 million tons of cargo. During this same period, KC-135 and KC-10 air refuelers transferred approximately 19.78 billion pounds of fuel (2.95 billion gallons) while aeromedical evacuation crews conducted 50,000 sorties resulting in 235,000 patient movements. The command's aircrews have also responded to humanitarian needs in the former Soviet Union, Turkey, Honduras, Haiti and Afghanistan.

AMC has been able to achieve operational successes and implement national objectives quickly in part because of the responsiveness of its aircraft fleet while it is in the midst of major change. The Air Mobility Command accepted its first C-17 Globemaster III on 14 June 1993. The C-17 replaced the aging C-141 fleet, whose last aircraft was retired on 6 May 2006. The Globemaster III can deliver twice the cargo as a C-141 for the same operating cost. Meanwhile, AMC's largest airlifter, the C-5 Galaxy, is undergoing a Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program to make the aircraft more reliable. The first fully modernized Super Galaxy, designated the C-5M, was delivered into the command in February 2009. A new tanker aircraft to replace the command's aging fleet of KC-135s is AMC's "number one" acquisition priority. To this end, the Air Force announced the award of the tanker contract in February 2011 and projected the first fully equipped flight of the KC-46A, designated Pegasus, in 2017. Additionally, at the end of 2011, the C-130J had been added to the Air Force active-duty inventory, and each "J" model will provide a 40 percent increase in performance capability over the C-130H.

From the time the inactive SAC was redesignated and activated as the Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) in 2009, the Air Force Historical Research Agency had periodically proposed consolidating AMC with MAC and Air Combat Command (ACC) with the Tactical Air Command (TAC). This consolidation would justify AMC's use of the MAC emblem and would give AMC an additional 51 years of honorable service. It would also align three of the Air Force's current operational commands (AMC, AFGSC and ACC) with three of its traditional operational commands (MAC, SAC, and TAC).

On 1 October 2016, upon approval of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Air Force consolidated AMC with MAC. This action allowed AMC members to trace the organization's genealogy back to 1941, instead of beginning in 1992. AMC also now shares in the honors and campaign streamers earned by MAC. All of this does not lessen the creation of AMC in 1992 which still highlights the merger of AMC's airlift and aeromedical evacuation with SAC's air refueling force creating the strong mobility team that has been so successful in meeting today's global peacetime, contingency, and humanitarian missions.