

DISPATCH



AIRLIFT

Inside

- ▶ New fence / 2
- ▶ Promotions / 5
- ▶ Lab accredited / 11
- ▶ Physiologist / 15

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Better, faster, safer, cheaper

Phoenix Star means product improvement

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437 AW Public Affairs

When someone spots a piece of equipment on an aircraft or even test gear that has a deficiency or problem, and they can come with an improvement that is better, faster, cheaper and safer, chances are they have met with one of the four individuals in the Phoenix Star office in the 437th Logistics Group.

The "Star" in Phoenix Star stands for supportability, technology, availability and reliability. Its origins go back about five years when Air Mobility Command standardized the name to avoid confusion. The office, administratively under the Quality Assurance section of the 437th Logistics Support Squadron, supports the entire group and is responsible for ensuring product improvements through deficiency reports, technical order improvements (AFTO Form 22), and proposals to modify aircraft or equipment.

In short, if someone has a better way to improve the weapon system or technical orders in the group, then the Phoenix Star folks are the ones that look at it before it is sent up the chain-of-command or approved locally. Since October 1996, the office has processed 4,962 deficiency reports. Other programs of improvement such as the Modification Proposal Program which consists of improvements such as modifying aircraft panels or changing a step in technical data.

Phoenix Star is also the 437th Logistics Group focal point for what was once called the suggestion program, now renamed as the IDEA program which stands for Innovative Development Through Employee Awareness. In 1999, the group saved \$149,157 and \$6,022 in awards for their approved IDEAS. All IDEAS are submitted through the IDEA Program Data System at the following web address: <https://ideas.satx.disa.mil>.

"We're in the product improvement business



Senior Airman Jerome Susson

Senior Airman Shawn Bonine, a crew chief with the 437th Maintenance Squadron, inspects a C-17 wing slat track. Slats on the C-17 were improved through the Phoenix Star program.

which is different from process improvement that is handled by the Quality Assurance folks," said Master Sgt. Levi Bennett, NCOIC of Phoenix Star. "People bring the information to us for review. We review the request for correctness and ensure that people can understand what they are trying to improve or fix and then we enter it into our

database. Our database is tied in with the Systems Program Office at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio." Once the request is forwarded off-base for consideration, the Phoenix Star folks work hard to keep the requestor apprised of the status of their request.

see **Phoenix Star**, page 2

Hurricane season begins; exercise tests base's preparation plan

By Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe
437th AW Public Affairs

Although memories of evacuating for Hurricane Floyd may seem distant for some people, hurricane season began June 1.

The base tested its plan for handling a major hurricane June 5-6. All agencies on base took part, according to Master Sgt. Dave Hunt of the inspector general's office, which scripted the exercise and acted as an evaluation team. The exercise began with a hurricane three to four days out. The Crisis Action Team and Survival Recovery Center were

activated for the exercise, as were group and unit control centers, Hunt said.

Agencies followed their hurricane checklists as the simulated hurricane made landfall. In the wake of the storm, the recovery process began.

"I think it went very well," Hunt said, following the exercise. "We looked at lessons learned from past



events and adjusted our checklists as needed. I think we're about as prepared for a storm as we can be, and we'll continue to improve our plan."

Hurricane season continues through Nov.

30. According to the National Weather Center, in an average season, there are 10 named tropical storms of which six reach hurricane strength. His-

torically, most tropical storms and hurricanes occur during August, September and October.

The 1999 season was above normal with 12 named storms, of which eight became hurricanes. Five of these tropical cyclones made landfall in the United States:

- Hurricane Bret in southern Texas
- Tropical Storm Dennis in North Carolina
- Hurricane Floyd in North Carolina and paralleling the mid-Atlantic states into New England
- Tropical Storm Harvey in South Florida

see **Hurricane**, page 2