



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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### **Increased maintenance equals new C-17 test station**

A new C-17 automated test station hitched a ride on the latest Boeing delivery to Charleston AFB Feb. 19, arriving just in time to help out with increased maintenance requirements here.

The number of aircraft parts, called line replaceable units, flowing through the 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron's Avionics Integrated Systems Element has more than doubled since stage operations began in January, said Staff Sgt. Bill Phreaner, AIS shop chief.

"The new stations decrease the run time on some parts by about 50 percent," he said. "That means we can test, repair and get these parts back to supply faster for flightline support."

AIS members are working around the clock to keep up with the workload, Phreaner said.

"We're stretched to the max right now, with workload versus manning," Phreaner said.

Even though two technicians from McChord AFB, Wash., augment the eight military and 11 civilian members of the shop, it's still rough, he said.

"We couldn't do this at all without the team effort," Phreaner said. "The Air Reserve Technicians and civilians in the shop are the glue that holds it all together, because they are the ones who have all the experience."

Since the first of the year, the AIS shop saved the Air Force \$41 million in repair avoidance costs, and \$43 million retest okay costs, Phreaner said.

The new test station is the third of five scheduled to be delivered here, said Walter Allen, senior Boeing AIS engineer scientist.

"Boeing was going to deliver it last year, but the base worked out an agreement for the company to hold on to it," Allen said.

Boeing engineers held the station at Long Beach to help them reconfigure the testing programs used to troubleshoot C-17 parts, Allen said.

"When Charleston and McChord agreed to let Boeing keep it, it was on the condition that if a surge happened, like what is happening now, they would give it up," Allen said.

The AIS personnel and Allen contacted Boeing Feb. 14 to let the company know they needed the station. With the delivery of a new C-17 scheduled for Feb. 19, the decision was made to send the station along for the ride.

"This is really special," Allen said. "We made the request Friday, and they made it happen by Wednesday. There was a tremendous amount of coordination and cooperation between the Air Force, the C17 System Program Office and Boeing to make it work."

The delivery marked the first time one of the \$1.1 million test stations was delivered via C-17, according to Allen.

**(For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter at 963-5589. Story by Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter, 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Public Affairs)**