# FUNCTIONS OF AIR MOBILITY SUPPORT

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Air mobility support—command and control (C2), aerial port, and maintenance as well as forces at en route locations—are tasked to provide these services, but can also be augmented with additional functions (such as combat support, aircrew flight equipment, and intelligence) to create a more robust throughput and support capability. The level of support throughout the Global Air Mobility Support System (GAMSS) can be tailored to match the mission requirements. Additionally, deployable air mobility support forces can expand the GAMSS at existing locations or establish capabilities where none exists. Deployable air mobility support forces are designed for short-term deployments.

## Command and Control Systems

The air mobility enterprise provides its own C2 systems to plan, flow, and track air movements and provide in-transit visibility (ITV) of equipment and passengers. Communication requirements may include various radio and satellite communications systems, and mobility mission planning and execution systems supporting their airfield operations as well as those of supported air mobility aircrews that may transit or operate from their location.

Among the most important services that GAMSS provides are ITV and flight following. Commanders depend on accurate, timely ITV of assets to efficiently manage those assets and associated supporting operations. Consequently, the effectiveness of the GAMSS relies significantly on the integration of C2 data into a comprehensive ITV picture. (NOTE: In selected cases, Air Force Special Operations Command special tactics teams can provide limited initial capability for both air traffic control and aircraft reporting.)

The COMAFFOR and staff should have contingency C2 plans, using mission type orders and other types of distributed command and control, in the event of degraded communications in a contested environment against a peer- or near-peer adversary.

## Aerial Port

An aerial port is an airfield that has been designated for the sustained air movement of personnel and materiel. The GAMSS possesses a robust aerial port capability. In order to be responsive as a throughput network, fixed en route aerial port operations are sized to ensure a minimum throughput capacity is maintained at all times, based not on steady-state workload, but on established planning factors. Deployed aerial port operations, on the other hand, are usually sized to meet the forecast workload requirements of the operation they are supporting. GAMSS units are designed to establish and operate air mobility terminals and have the ability to onload and offload a set number of aircraft based on forecast workload requirements. In addition, GAMSS aerial port specialists establish marshalling yards and traffic routing for cargo, aircraft servicing, passenger manifesting, and air terminal operations center services. GAMSS aerial port personnel are also responsible for the transmission of movement manifests and ITV data.

### The Aerial Port Role in Vietnam

*The aerial port role was critical in tactical airlift. In the Tet Offensive and siege at Khe Sanh in 1968, aerial port facilities were saturated. Aircraft were delayed for loading or unloading; the limiting factor was not aircraft or aircrews, but the ability of the aerial port to move the cargo. It became apparent to tactical airlift personnel that the Air Force must maintain an active, progressive aerial port nucleus capable of rapid expansion and able to meet requirements of contingency operations, even as US forces withdrew.*

**—*Tactical Airlift in Southeast Asia*, a Project CHECO (Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations) Report, 1972**

## Maintenance

The ability to provide basic maintenance at all times, particularly for airlift aircraft, is critical to the air mobility enterprise. Designed primarily to support air mobility aircraft operations, en route maintenance units are not intended to provide sustainment maintenance. In addition, the contingency response wing provides mobile GAMSS maintenance capability comprised of mostly cross-functional maintenance specialties designed to provide aircraft marshalling, parking, refueling, and limited aircraft repair capability. When specialized aircraft repair capability is required at a contingency location that exceeds the core capacity at the site, a maintenance recovery team (MRT) can be deployed to accomplish the repair. MRTs are normally sourced from the aircraft's home station, or as coordinated between air operations centers with assigned mobility forces. As a rule, planners and units receiving maintenance augmentation from

GAMSS forces should consider supplementing maintenance capability as soon as practical to ensure continued operations.

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