

Maintenance Process changes unchain depots

Multitasking is often considered a good business practice, but some **U.S. Air Force** repair depots in France and the U.S. found that focusing on one task shortened their turnaround times. Changing business processes brought big benefits, including 30 to 40% reductions in repair times.

The **Oklahoma City Air**

on one task and moved through these jobs sequentially. That is true even though resources are sometimes idled. Following the project flow concepts shortens the time spent maintaining aircraft.

"We changed from 1200 tasks to 270 tasks and went from a 150-day calendar to 100 days including our buffer,"

Overhaul. His group works with B-52s and B-1s, among others.

One benefit of the approach is that timetables can be established and maintained. Additionally, workers know what they will be working on, so they are better prepared.

"We've adopted a full kitting concept, so we can get everything ready for the tasks that arise for the next five days. Knowing which tasks we're going to focus on decreases work in progress," Radkowski said.

When unexpected problems threaten timetables, so-called buffer teams are called into play. These personnel can be deployed to add manpower and prevent major backlogs.

Turning planes around quickly is difficult with new aircraft, but the challenge is even greater on older planes.

"When they come in for routine maintenance, we often find many additional problems," Jezegou said.

Though Tinker and SIAE are military operations that maintain military aircraft, they face competition from private contractors who are providing more services for government entities. That puts pressure on them to reduce costs.

"Depots are a huge investment," said C. Sridhar, Strategic Services Vice President at Realization Technologies. "If you can squeeze more throughput, you can gain significant benefits."

Terry Costlow



Maintenance on France's C-160s is handled sequentially so they are out of the shop and back in the air in less time.

Logistics Center Tinker Air Force Base and France's **SIAE/AIA Clermont-Ferrand** both adopted project-management techniques provided by **Realization Technologies**, which provides software as well as consulting services. Realization focuses on the critical chain, contending that efficiency can be increased by focusing on the orderly completion of critical tasks that must be completed before other steps begin.

While that may sound counterintuitive, workers at these two operations improved throughput when they focused

said Julien Radkowski, Deputy of the SIAE/AIA C-160 Maintenance Unit. That group maintains aircraft in the C-160 fleet of the **French Air Force**.

Work in progress was slashed 40%, added Joel Jezegou, Head of the C-160 Maintenance Unit. That translates to two additional mission-ready aircraft at any time.

Similar results were seen at Tinker AFB. "Over two years, we saw a 40% reduction in work in progress. We get the planes back to them much sooner," said Kevin O'Connor, Deputy Director for Maintenance Repair &

