

552nd COMMODITIES MAINTENANCE SUPPORT SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

552nd Commodities Maintenance Support Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

552nd Commodities Maintenance Support Squadron keeps bearings rolling, help keep warfighters flying safely

Tucked deep within Bldg. 3001 is an 8,000-square foot clean-room facility whose crucial mission is known by few. The 552nd Commodities Maintenance Support Squadron Bearing Shop performs Level I, or reclamation, overhaul maintenance on bearings for 12 weapons systems and engines. A bearing is a device to allow constrained relative motion between two or more parts, typically rotation or linear movement. "The bearing shop is an important shop in the depot maintenance overhaul process," said Don Ngo, 552nd CMMXS Bearing Shop engineer. "We provide a critical component for the aircraft. We are the biggest bearing overhaul facility in the Air Force and without us, planes won't fly." Melvin Lovings, bearing shop supervisor, agreed. "Without us, there wouldn't be any turnin' and burnin,'" he said, referring to the shop's motto: "We keep them turnin' and burnin'." "The criticality of a bearing is pretty high. Without bearings, Air Force flight missions will definitely be at a standstill." Approximately 20,000 bearings pass through the shop in a given year, which equates to 80 to 100 bearings per day. Unless deemed a "high priority," bearings are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Level I consists of cleaning, inspection, dimensional measurements, and dynamic testing, if required. When bearings arrive in the shop, they demagnetized, cleaned, visually inspected, nondestructive tested, if necessary, and sometimes, repaired, which may include buffering, a cosmetic mend. While the process is overseen by Mr. Lovings, it is his crew of 11 personnel that do the nitty-gritty work. They are trained to know each bearing's unique size, shape and requirements. "We don't just spin bearings," Mr. Lovings said. "It's much more complicated." Todd Taylor works in the shipping room of the Bearing Overhaul Shop, preparing finished bearings for customers. After cleaning and inspecting, bearings are sealed in bags to protect against the smallest contaminants. Once a bearing is overhauled, it is reassembled, tested, preserved, packaged and returned to the customer. The total process turnaround time is less than three days, Mr. Ngo said.

Mr. Lovings said it takes the average bearing staffer five years to become a "bearing overhaul expert." But, the average tenure of a 552nd CMMXS bearing shop technician is a year; many of the personnel, who had a combined 30 years of experience, retired in the past year. But, Tinker's management isn't worried. They are teaming up with an industry expert to provide additional technical training for Level I and II, or refurbishment, in bearing overhaul and repair processes. The on-going effort will increase the bearing shop's workloads as well as the capability to perform Level II repair. There are a total of four levels of bearing rework. Levels III and IV are restoration and remanufacturing, respectively. October 1, 2010

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.