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REENGINEERING THE AIR TRAVEL PROCESS

by

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Preface

As a transportation officer, I have been continuously amazed at the amount of money the DOD spends on commercial airline tickets for duty travelers when there is less expensive military air transportation available that could be used instead. I eventually discovered that most members do not take advantage of organic air transportation because they are unaware it is available; the base TMO is likewise cut out of the information loop in this area. The following paper outlines a reengineering concept for this process that I believe can increase the use of military air and save money as a result.

I could not have completed this paper without assistance from a number of people. I would first like to thank Lt Col Ken Lynn, my ASCS faculty research advisor and a fellow transportation officer. Lt Col Lynn's guidance on the direction my paper should take and his suggestions for research sources are largely responsible for the final product. In addition, I would like to thank a few specific individuals who shared their time and expertise with me so that I could refine my concept into a workable proposal. I received insight into the TMO world from 1Lt Tim Pertuis, Ms. Carolyn Woolf, and Ms. Mary Hall. Ms. Linda Conyers and Mr. Lawrence Rose provided me with critical information about the civil service. Finally, the assistance of Ms. Gail Van Winkle, Capt Joseph Farron, and 1Lt Bill Bowers was invaluable in helping me to understand the important computer issues. I offer a heartfelt thanks to these individuals and to everyone else who lent their expertise to my endeavors. This paper would have been impossible without you.

Abstract

Every year, Department of Defense (DOD) travelers make thousands of trips that include air transportation. The vast majority of travelers use commercial air for their travel, even when there may be military air options available at greatly reduced cost to the taxpayer. The current process for arranging passenger travel does not allow for or encourage the use of these organic options because the visibility over them does not exist at the base Traffic Management Officer's level. This paper will recommend a reengineering effort that will provide travelers with a consolidated list of all travel options, with the ultimate aim of reducing travel costs. The reengineering will be modeled after the process currently used at the Joint Movement Control Group (US Transportation Command), and will rely upon the Global Transportation Network as its centerpiece. The paper will explore the feasibility and costs associated with this concept. It will further explore and suggest strategies for encouraging commanders to actively support the program. The goal of the paper is to present a workable process that can be implemented with minimum costs and complication at the base level Traffic Management Office. This process will help to assure maximum use of already-existing organic airlift, and thereby reduce taxpayer costs.

Chapter 1

Overview

Every year, DOD travelers make thousands of trips that include air transportation. The vast majority of travelers—especially within the CONUS—use commercial air for their travel, even when there may be less costly military air transportation options available. The widespread failure to seek and utilize the most cost-efficient method of travel is a function of the standard air transportation procurement process now in use by the base Traffic Management Officer (TMO). Because this process provides the TMO with very limited visibility over most forms of organic air transportation, less expensive transportation opportunities for moving duty travelers generally go undiscovered and unutilized. However, the technological means now exist to provide the required visibility to the TMO, thereby creating a unique opportunity to change the system. This paper presents a proposal to reengineer the air transportation procurement process in order to reduce government travel costs.

The first step in reengineering a process is understanding the process itself. Most commanders—and even many transportation professionals—do not have a comprehensive knowledge base about air transportation or its impacts on unit budgets. Chapter 2 of this paper will therefore provide an overview of the three main sources of air

transportation available, describing the ground rules for their use and depicting the current process for procuring a seat on each.

Chapter 3 will introduce the Global Transportation Network (GTN), a new technology that makes the effort to reengineer possible. This chapter will address what GTN is and why the United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) created it. The chapter will describe some key capabilities of GTN, concentrating on its ability to identify organic sources of air transportation, which were previously unavailable to the TMO.

Chapter 4 will present the actual reengineering proposal. The reengineering effort will be modeled after the centralized movement control concept used at TRANSCOM's Joint Movement Control Group (JMCG). Following a short explanation of the JMCG concept, this chapter will integrate the three separate processes described in Chapter 1 into a single process; the new process will ensure that all potential air transportation sources are considered, allowing the unit commander to use the least costly option.

Because change usually creates new challenges, Chapter 5 will focus on implementation. This chapter will not only identify issues and obstacles that will hinder the adoption of the new process, but will also recommend an implementation strategy to overcome them. The strategy will focus on the need to preclude new costs and to minimize opposition to the program. The strategy will recognize that the traffic management field is itself in flux right now, and that additional process changes may be required if the reengineering is to succeed in the long run. The end goal of the reengineering is to create a workable process that will assure the most efficient use of the taxpayers' resources.

Chapter 2

Movement Methods

There are currently several methods of air transportation available for a duty traveler. However, commanders in all services generally suffer from a fundamental lack of education about those methods. Most travelers and commanders remain unaware of all the military air travel options available to them or of the guiding policies for their use. To truly be an effective manager—of resources, people, or mission requirements—a commander must understand the potential means for moving his people and the advantages and limitations of each.

Operational Support Airlift

The use of ***Operational Support Airlift*** (OSA) for moving duty passengers is one of the DOD's most advantageous, yet least understood programs. Each service has its own fleet of small to medium aircraft used for the rapid transport of passengers and cargo, such as Air Force C-21s, Navy C-9s, and Army C-20s. These aircraft have a wartime support mission to fulfill, and like their larger cousins in Air Mobility Command (AMC), they need to train for a minimum readiness level. This training creates an air transportation by-product that DOD users can access. At one time, each service managed its fleet independently; overall system efficiency was therefore low. Congress began to look hard at OSA management in the mid-1990s, with an eye toward standardizing

scheduling and requesting procedures and reducing the size of the fleets. Therefore, the 1995 Commission on Roles and Missions recommended fleet reduction and centralized management under TRANSCOM as part of the OSA restructuring initiative.¹ Thus was born the Joint Operational Support Airlift Center (JOSAC), a unit aligned under the TRANSCOM J-3.

JOSAC has a simple charter. It first ensures crew training for wartime requirements, and then provides DOD passenger and cargo support for emergency patients, carrier air wings, TDY/DV travel, critical parts movements, inspection teams, and recruiting.² JOSAC is truly a joint organization: all the personnel and all the aircraft assets are treated exactly alike. JOSAC's structure today is based on a validated number of aircraft and their associated annual training hours.³ JOSAC schedules for a total fleet of 391 aircraft, 262 of which are currently assigned and flown from 101 locations in the CONUS. The Army owns 131 of the aircraft, the Air Force 58, the Navy 54, and the Marines 19.⁴ JOSAC is responsible for the efficient use of the air transportation capacity provided from crew training. In essence, the agency matches user needs with an allotment of hours: "Each Service justifies its flying hour program on its wartime training and proficiency needs. After withholding training, maintenance and OCONUS hours, each Service passes the remaining CONUS flight hours to JOSAC for scheduling. This is typically 80% of the total."⁵ This partnership ensures that the services' primary goal of crew training is met, but also allows JOSAC to provide the DOD community with more opportunities to utilize OSA lift capacity.

JOSAC manages by aircraft size. Schedulers are assigned to either the Large or Small Cell. Once a mission goes operational, the Execution Cell takes over and

maintains visibility of the aircraft for all the legs of a mission. There is extensive interaction between cells to ensure problems are solved optimally. The Small Cell manages travel requests for individuals and groups of eight or less. These requests are usually assigned to C-21, C-12, T-39, or UC-35 aircraft. The Large Cell handles requests for nine or more passengers, and uses the larger aircraft in the OSA fleets, such as C-9s and C-26s. The Execution Cell uses an FAA Aviation Situational Display to monitor all missions in real time and to redirect them when required.

JOSAC is purely a scheduling function; the air transportation requirements are provided from the field. Any DOD employee on funded travel orders can request support from JOSAC. A field unit has merely to fill out an AF Form 3908 and forward it to the assigned “validator.” The validator, which may be located at base level or at the MAJCOM, acts as an intermediary for the JOSAC, verifying the duty status of the traveler, and assigning a priority code to the request depending upon the particulars of the travel.⁶ JOSAC uses three priorities: “Priority 1 requests are only for emergencies or direct support of operational forces including peacetime contingency forces. Priority 2 requires compelling reasons that cannot be satisfied by other means. Required use passengers are typically 4-star officers. Priority 3 passengers can fly if more cost effective than the commercial travel costs, or if empty seats are available on a mission already scheduled. If assets remain [JOSAC] will schedule non-cost effective missions in order to smoothly fly out each service’s proficiency flight hour program.”⁷

Once the validator determines that the travel request qualifies for OSA, the validator uses a computer system called JALIS to forward the request to JOSAC. There it is farmed out to the Large or Small Cell, as appropriate. The schedulers then compare

travel requirements with available assets and generate missions that will support the passengers with the highest movement priority. As a rule, JOSAC begins scheduling large team travel fourteen days prior to the requested travel day and the cell will send a message to the validator to confirm or deny the mission a full ten days before scheduled travel, allowing the users ample time to make alternative plans if necessary. Small team travel requests are worked seven days prior to the requested travel day and missions are usually confirmed at least four days before the requested travel day. Overall, the JOSAC is averaging a support rate of 75-80 percent (90 percent for priority 2 and 65 percent for priority 3) and cancellations of confirmed flights are extremely rare.⁸ JOSAC believes it can use the available lift even more efficiently if more potential users are brought into the system: “The total number of passengers supported by JOSAC scheduled missions has reached a monthly average of over 38,000. Even at that we still have excess capacity. If we can see more requests we can consolidate more passengers on existing missions.”⁹

Commanders need to be aware of this opportunity, and should submit the AF Form 3908 to their validators whenever they are sending people TDY within the CONUS. A key misperception about OSA is that missions are only scheduled for DVs. On the contrary, “use of MILAIR by other than senior officials is not restricted.”¹⁰ JOSAC will schedule missions for routine duty travelers because it is in the government’s own best interest to do so: sending an OSA aircraft to a destination for a couple of travelers—of any rank—is more cost effective than sending the travelers commercial because the OSA flying hours have *already been funded and must be flown*. Any passenger transport capacity produced in the process of flying the hours therefore really is free to the government. More to the point, the travel is free to the passenger’s unit since passengers

on OSA aircraft are not charged for the travel; a commander who fails to submit an AF Form 3908 is essentially foregoing the potential to save his budget the cost of an airline ticket. Unfortunately, few commanders are even aware this potential exists.

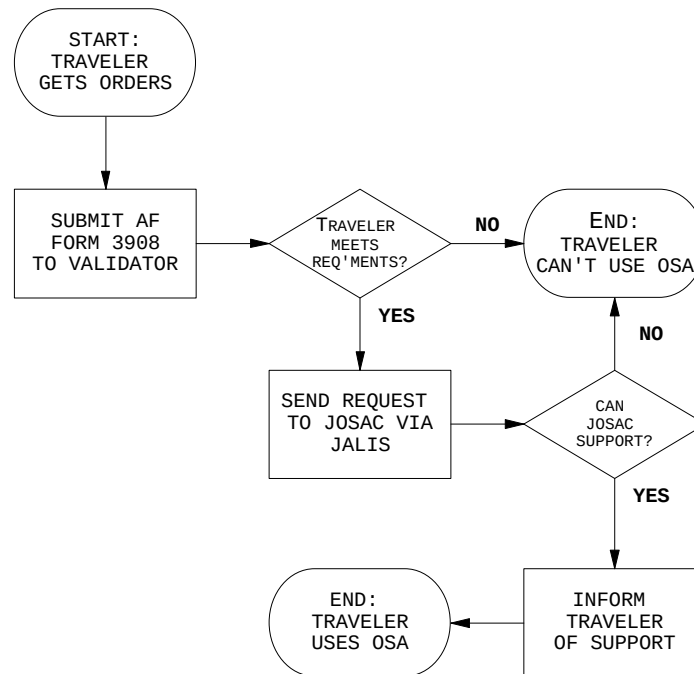


Figure 1 The JOSAC Process

Duty Standby Passengers

While JOSAC serves as the DOD's management agency for OSA missions, AMC is the single air transportation manager for all other organic or procured military air transportation. As a result of the hours AMC flies to maintain readiness, airlift capacity is created which can be used to move cargo and passengers. As a rule, cargo has priority since it generates greater revenue and tends to be more appropriate for military aircraft than passengers, which can often be moved via commercial means just as easily. On occasion, passenger seats do become available on AMC cargo-coded missions. These seats are not scheduled ahead of time, but result from a less than full load of cargo. Duty

travelers in the vicinity of an AMC terminal always have the option to seek out opportune military air by registering as ***duty standby passengers***. AMC directives note that “duty standby passengers without reservations may present themselves for a number of reasons. Every effort must be made to assist these passengers.”¹¹ More often than not, these travelers received orders at the last minute and have not yet arranged transportation at all. They have reported to the terminal hoping to get a military flight or, if none is available, to get assistance with onward transportation. AMC is committed to getting the maximum utilization out of every mission flown and has directed that “aircraft commanders, air terminal operators, and senior travelers must ensure seats are made available when there are no official impediments to their release.”¹²

For the most part, attempting to travel as a duty standby requires a great deal of flexibility, primarily because the availability of seats is so unpredictable. Furthermore, most AMC flights are to, from, or within an overseas area, and all of these channels charge the traveler’s unit at a set “tariff rate” that is about the same as the commercial airlines’ rate; the passenger is therefore not getting a free flight. On the other hand, missions within the CONUS do not have tariff rates associated with them so passengers flying on these legs do save the unit money. Every commander whose unit is close to a terminal should require his personnel to at least call the terminal the day of travel just in case there is a mission with extra seats going to the right place, especially if the travel window is not hard and fast. One other reason a commander might consider using the duty standby approach is convenience for the traveler: many commercial channels are not collocated with the traveler’s military destination, so the passenger will have to endure excessive customs clearance and ground transport times above and beyond the long flight

time itself. In these cases, a commander may believe the direct routing—not to mention the better security—makes his funds better spent on an AMC aircraft. In any event, though, duty standby passengers are always subject to losing their seats at the last minute to make room for revenue-generating cargo.

AMC missions are scheduled and managed with the Global Decision Support System (GDSS), a program generally available at base level to only a few key users, such as the Command Post or Current Operations. GDSS also provides data about relevant AMC missions to the passenger terminals. The base TMO, however, has “no formal interface with the base passenger terminal.”¹³

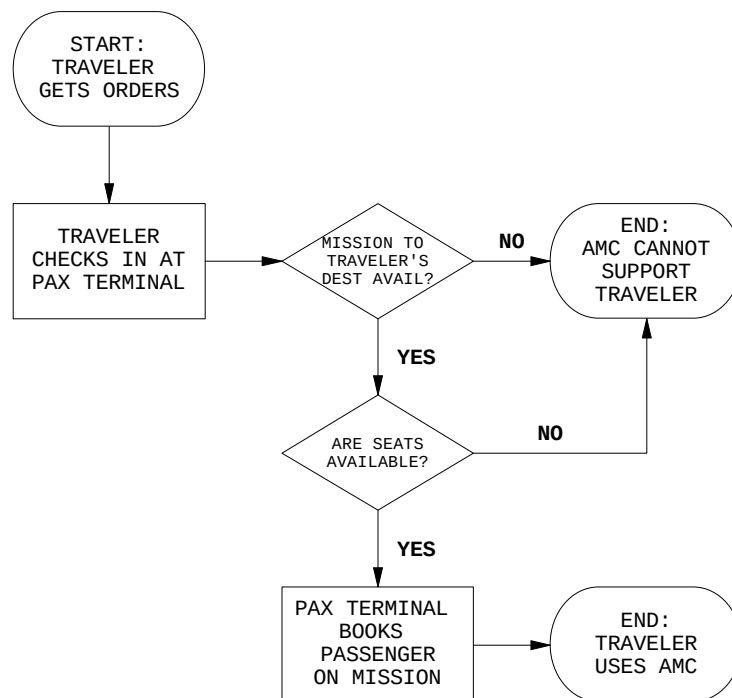


Figure 2 The Duty Standby Process

TMO Managed Modes

AMC also provides aircraft to operate several *dedicated passenger channels*, and the TMO does have visibility over these missions. AMC-owned aircraft are used for

channels to unusual destinations such as Johnston Atoll in the South Pacific. These channels are established to meet a validated demand for sizable numbers of duty passengers, such as government contractors rotating into or out of Johnston. Passenger channels operated by organic military aircraft are generally referred to as Category M (Cat M) flights and the seats on these missions can be booked and reserved well in advance, just like on a regular airline.

AMC also manages several regularly scheduled passenger channels called Category B (Cat B) missions. Cat B channels are operated by contracted charter airlines such as Tower Air or American Trans-Air. As the single manager for DOD airlift, AMC negotiates with the carriers to provide a given number of seats on regularly scheduled round-trip service between specified CONUS and overseas airfields. Contracts are let for six months at a time; channels and seat requirements are adjusted periodically to meet projected transportation demands provided by the theater commanders. Outbound Cat B missions generally terminate at a major overseas airbase, but originate out of commercial terminals such as Seattle or Baltimore-Washington International airports. AMC personnel process passengers through small operating locations at these sites. Cat B routes have been set up to serve the overseas locations that have a constant and very heavy flow of duty passengers, on both TDY and PCS travel status. Instead of buying individual seats from commercial airlines for all of these passengers, the government consolidates its requirements into full planeload moves, and thereby saves money. Base transportation managers are required to utilize Cat M and B flights before seeking commercial alternatives, assuming such alternatives even exist.

The central managers for Cat M and B seat management are the four AMC Passenger Reservation Centers (PRC). These four centers—located at Scott, Rhein-Main, Hickam, and Yokota—handle travel requests on a regional basis. When a passenger reports to the base TMO for ticketing, the TMO communicates the travel request to its regional PRC either electronically or via telephone. If there is a Cat M or Cat B flight that meets the traveler's requirements, and if there are still seats available, then the traveler is booked against the mission and is given a confirmed reservation for the flight. The passenger's only responsibility is to be at the departure location at the scheduled time.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the cost of the seat is billed against the traveler's unit funds at the published passenger tariff rate for the channel.

The four PRCs are linked to one another, to 100 of the world's busiest TMO locations, and to the AMC commercial gateway locations, through a system called GATES. GATES is the military equivalent of a travel agent's commercial reservation computer system, and it provides real-time access to Cat M and Cat B missions.

When Cat B or Cat M cannot meet the needs of the traveler, the vast majority of duty passengers are moved by commercial means through a program called **GSA City Pairs** (See Appendix A). This program has been around for a long time, but in recent years has grown in scope and scale for a variety of reasons. For many years, the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) were responsible for managing the acquisition of commercial tickets for duty travelers. In 1994, however, General Ronald Fogleman, Commander-in-Chief, TRANSCOM, realigned responsibilities for managing air passenger travel within his command, primarily as part of a strategy to shore up the viability of the Civil Reserve Airlift Fleet

(CRAF) program. General Fogleman directed that “AMC will assume responsibility for interface with the General Services Administration.”¹⁵ The realignment was just one part of a sweeping overhaul of commercial ticketing within DOD designed to lower system costs for DOD travelers.

The current City Pairs program is based on a government pledge to send all of its commercial business to the City Pairs carriers at the contracted City Pair rates. The GSA’s FY96 Annual Report provides a good summary of why the City Pairs contracts benefit the government: “Negotiated agreements with 18 airlines will save up to \$2.4 billion on discounted airfares on 6,100 routes in FY 1997. GSA’s FY 1997 agreements with 18 airlines offer airfares approximately 62% below regular coach fares, with no advance purchase required, no penalties, no blackout periods and no Saturday night stay-overs.”¹⁶

There is already a regulatory process in place to ensure commercial ticket purchases meet all legal obligations. The process starts with the base TMO. “The Wing Commander appoints a Traffic Management Officer who will be responsible for meeting official travelers’ requirements, including reservations and ticketing; is the functional point of contact with Commercial Travel Offices; and arranges transportation for DOD travelers (AFI 24-101, Para 1.19.10).”¹⁷ The TMO manages the entire transportation process, using DOD guidance to determine the most appropriate means of transport for a given situation. It is important that travelers understand that this guidance is binding upon them in most cases: “Travelers *must* comply with procedures for official travel outlined in AFI 24-101, ‘Passenger Travel,’ 1 Oct 95 and DOD 4500.9R, Defense Transportation Regulation, Part I, ‘Passenger Movement,’ Aug 96. These directives

mandate use of government contract carriers, rates, and itineraries to meet travelers' mission requirements. First-choice cost-effective service is defined as use of city-pairs for travel within the United States. For travel to, from, and between overseas areas, Air Mobility Command (AMC) procured airlift services (Cat B) are given first consideration before commercial contract carriers.”¹⁸

Once the TMO decides that City Pair travel is appropriate, a contracted ticketing office (CTO)—commonly such organizations as Rogers Travel, SATO, or Carlson Wagon-Lit—issues the tickets in accordance with the City Pairs contract, using an airline ticketing system such as SABRE or APOLLO. Currently, virtually all CONUS passengers who report to TMO qualify for and are issued City Pair tickets. The traveler's unit is charged for the tickets at the contracted rate.

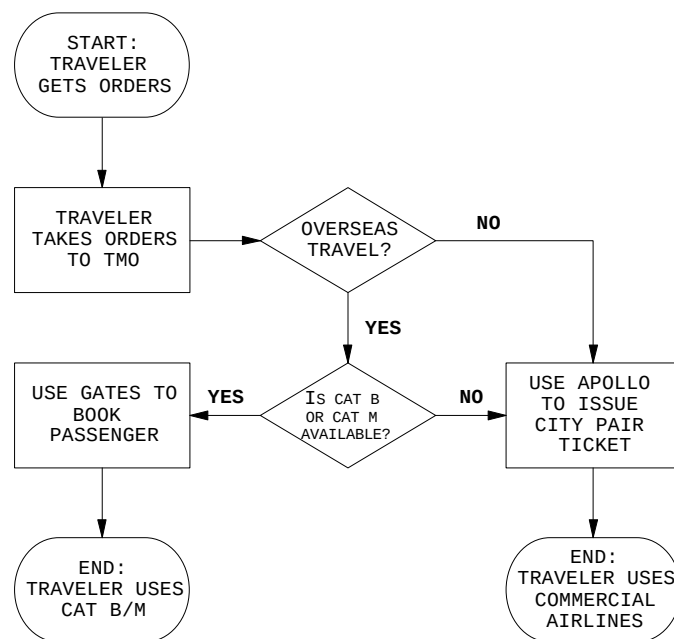


Figure 3 The TMO Process

Notes

¹ United States Transportation Command TC-J3-OJ, “Joint Operational Support Airlift Center (JOSAC) Customer Brief,” Briefing, Scott AFB, IL, 26 January 1998.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mary Hall, Traffic Management Specialist, HQ AETC, Randolph AFB, TX, interviewed by author, 19 October 1998.

⁷ United States Transportation Command TCJ3-OJ.

⁸ Major David Appel, JOSAC Small Branch Scheduling Team Leader, Scott AFB, IL, interviewed by author, 26 January 1998.

⁹ United States Transportation Command TCJ3-OJ.

¹⁰ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 24-101, *Passenger Movement*, 1 October 1995.

¹¹ Air Mobility Command Instruction (AMCI) 24-101, Vol. 14, *Military Airlift Passenger Movement*, 1 January 1996, 6.

¹² AFI 24-101.

¹³ Carolyn Woolf, Supervisor, Passenger Section, Maxwell AFB, AL, interviewed by author, 16 October 1998.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Gen Ronald Fogleman, Commander-in-Chief, US Transportation Command, Action Memorandum for Commander, Air Mobility Command and Commander, Military Traffic Management Command, subject: Responsibility for Procurement of Commercial Airline Tickets, 27 September 1993.

¹⁶ General Services Administration, “Homepage,” n.p.; on line, Internet, 27 January 1998, available from <http://www.gsa.gov>.

¹⁷ Robert Vidinha, Traffic Management Officer, McGuire AFB, NJ, Temporary Duty and Permanent Change of Station Travel, (draft) bullet paper, January 1998.

¹⁸ Brig Gen Craig P. Rasmussen, Commander, 305 Airlift Wing, McGuire AFB, NJ, (draft) Memorandum for all commanders, subject: Government Procured Transportation—Temporary Duty and Permanent Change of Station, 2 February 1998.

Chapter 3

The Global Transportation Network

None of the aforementioned transportation computer programs—JALIS, GDSS, GATES—communicate directly with one another. As a result, the United States Transportation Command has, since its inception, been working toward the goal of consolidating the myriad of military transportation computer programs and systems used in the field into one super-system for the entire Defense Transportation System. GTN is the end result of that effort, although it is still a work in progress, with new features and modules being added constantly. Even so, GTN is very capable today, and provides its legitimate users with a wealth of useful information right at their fingertips.

TRANSCOM defines GTN as “an automated information system that provides DOD an integrated view of transportation data and supports transportation command and control and business process functions. It provides In-transit Visibility of cargo and passengers moving through the Defense Transportation System (DTS).”¹ GTN accomplishes this by acting as a central database for all the data contained in the numerous “feeder systems” used throughout the DOD. GTN makes accessing this information system easy. All a user needs is a password and a computer with connectivity to the World Wide Web. The username and password are issued by

TRANSCOM in response to a request from a legitimate user, a process which generally takes two to three weeks. (A sample letter of request is provided in Appendix B.)

With a username and password in hand, a customer can get into GTN simply by typing the web site address, which is *https://www.gtn.transcom.mil*. According to the GTN User's Guide, this entry will bring up the GTN Home Page, from which the user can search for the data he is seeking. "From the GTN home page, [Figure 4 below], you can ask all of your questions about the movement of 'stuff' (CARGO, REQUISITIONS), people (PASSENGERS), forces (UNIT MOVES), and transportation assets (SCHEDULES, ASSETS) . . . GTN is set up so that you don't have to know all of the information about your movement. Query GTN with the information that you know."²

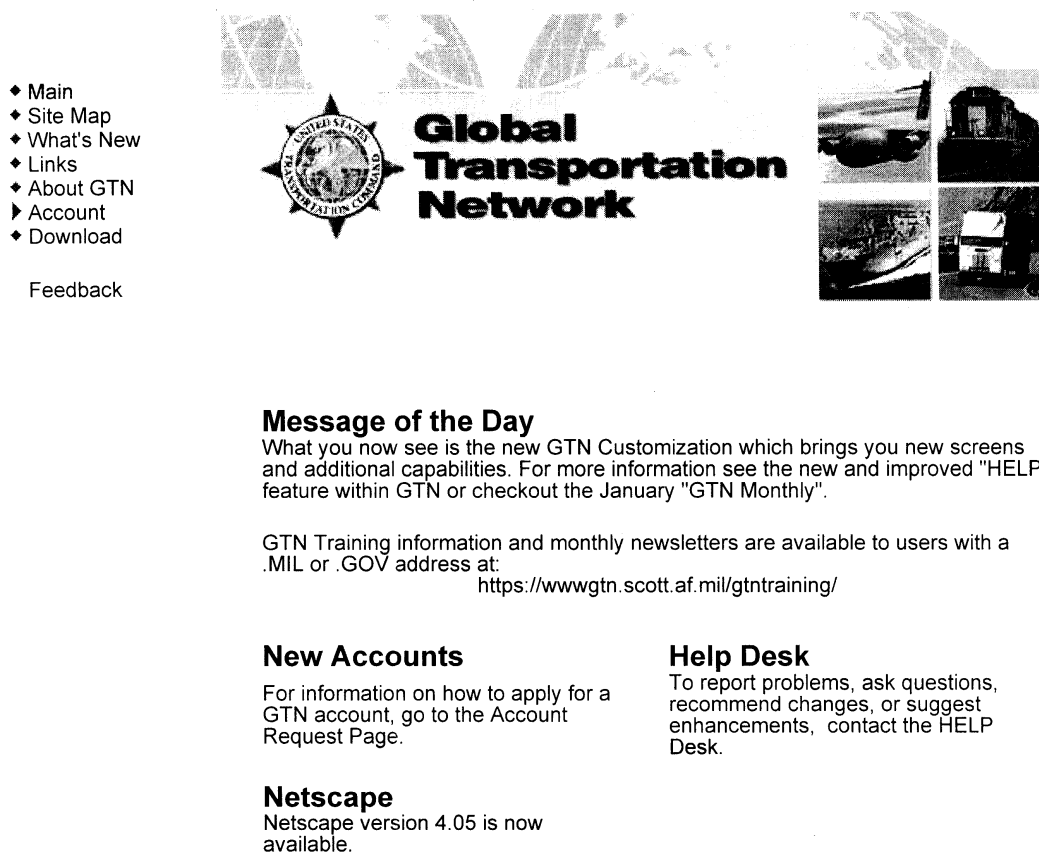


Figure 4. The GTN Homepage³

GTN is designed with “drill-down” capability, so that a user can access one screen of information, and conduct a more detailed inquiry about a data item on that screen. For instance, a customer conducting a cargo search can use the Transportation Control Number to locate the AMC mission the cargo is currently manifested on. The user can then drill down into the mission information to determine the whole itinerary for that mission and to discover when it is scheduled to arrive at its final destination. The drill-down feature is available throughout GTN and makes it very convenient for a user to have direct access to a great deal of useful data without the necessity of constantly repeating the search parameters.

The most useful search routines for passenger movement reengineering are found in the “Schedules” module. A user can select this page to search for scheduled air missions to, from, or between locations. This capability is the one that enables the reengineering concept to succeed. By using a customer’s TDY origin and destination data, TMO personnel can quickly generate a list of organic airlift missions that may meet the customer’s needs. Various data filtering capabilities can make the search results even more useful. (See Appendix B for detailed instructions on running a search on GTN.)

GTN is a powerful tool for conducting searches of this kind because it can display DTS data from all of its feeder systems. However, the system is not without its limitations. For instance, the Network is constrained to a read-only capability at this point; data in GTN cannot be entered or changed by the average user. While this is all the capability that most people need, there is significant value added by having an interactive capability for certain users or actions. Toward that end, funds were invested to create modules that would allow users to make passenger movement requests to

TRANSCOM directly through GTN, which would send the requests to the appropriate feeder system for action. This project was designed to address five movement request areas, including OSA. The funding was insufficient for all five areas, however, so this particular requirement was dropped in favor of higher priority projects, such as Special Assignment Airlift Mission requests.⁴ Since an upgrade allowing OSA requests would cost another \$500,000, TRANSCOM considers its development unlikely in the near future.⁵

Notes

¹ United States Transportation Command Handbook, *GTN User's Guide*, 10 Sept 1998, 4.

² Ibid, 5.

³ United States Transportation Command, "GTN Homepage," n.p.; on line, Internet, 9 March 1999, available from <https://www.gtn.transcom.mil>.

⁴ Gail Van Winkle, Interactive GTN Projects Lead, Scott AFB, IL, interviewed by author, 9 November 1998.

⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 4

Reengineering the Process

In spite of the many different travel options available to duty passengers, there remains a heavy dependence upon the commercial airlines to move people, especially within the CONUS. Misconceptions to the contrary notwithstanding, the government has no formal commitment to use commercial air transportation, only an agreement to utilize the City Pairs program when commercial air transportation is chosen. As a rule, however, transportation managers do not currently consider all travel options for their customers. This is a systemic failure: no structure exists to centrally manage passenger movement within the DTS. However, there is a precedent for such a model, and that is the Joint Mobility Control Group at TRANSCOM.

The JMCG was organized to act as a single point of entry for DTS cargo movements in order to reduce the inefficiency caused by parochialism and ignorance on the part of the shippers: “The JMCG will enable the DTS to transition from its modal orientation, represented by the TCCs, to an intermodal approach. From a customer perspective, this new way of doing business streamlines the mobility process while enabling USTRANSCOM to capitalize on the efficiencies inherent in consolidating functions and reducing redundancy.”¹ The JMCG is primarily devoted to cargo and unit moves, but the concept has applicability in the passenger arena too. It would be impractical to expect

every single passenger travel request to be routed through the JMCG at TRANSCOM, but the function could be handled at the base level where there is already a mandated central manager for duty passenger travel—the TMO. Unfortunately, the current TMO process makes no attempt to look for free lift from irregularly scheduled missions operated by AMC’s Tanker-Airlift Control Center or TRANSCOM’s JOSAC. For many years, this was a systemic failure because the TMO had no connectivity to the scheduling systems used by those two agencies. Worse yet, none of these systems communicate with one another. Fortunately, all of the military systems do have one thing in common—along with dozens of other similar systems, they now feed their data into GTN. The capabilities of GTN make it possible for the TMO to play a role similar to that of the JMCG, which enables the reengineering of the duty passenger travel process.

The process will still begin with a traveler receiving orders for official travel, and reporting to the TMO for action. The TMO will determine if the orders require overseas travel. If so, the TMO will access GATES and look for a scheduled Cat B or Cat M mission that will meet the traveler’s needs. If such a flight is available, the traveler will be booked on that flight through GATES and the process will end.

When the travel destination is not overseas or if Cat B/M will not meet the traveler’s needs, then the TMO will direct the traveler to the CTO, who will make a flight *reservation* on a City Pair carrier. (The traveler will not receive printed tickets at this time because there will be several chances to travel via military air later and there is an administrative cost associated with returning a printed ticket, but no cost to cancel a reservation in APOLLO.) Under the existing process, the TMO’s duties would be

complete and the traveler would be issued a commercial ticket. However, GTN allows a full spectrum search of organic air transportation options.

The next action for the TMO is to access the GTN “Schedules” module, and run a list of scheduled AMC missions that the traveler may be able to use on an opportune basis. Creating this list is an easy function in GTN, but the specific procedures will obviously vary depending upon the unique requirements of the traveler. The most logical approach would be to run a list of all departures from the closest military airfield and a list of all arrivals at any military airfields close to the destination during the travel window. The TMO may need to run these reports for only the originating and destination sites, or he may have to run several iterations when there are several bases in the local area either at origin or destination. (Of course, the same searches will need to run in reverse for the return travel.) In some cases, the entire search will come up empty; in other cases a search may seem impractical if the destination is not near a military installation. Nonetheless, it is worth the effort to run a search because AMC flies a lot of unexpected routes for special missions; these flights may well have seats available on a stand-by basis. This search procedure should be used for overseas and CONUS-only travel, but the traveler and his commander should be aware that there will be a cost charged for using AMC flights on an overseas route. Once he prints the results of the searches and gives them to the traveler, there is nothing more the TMO can do with this part of the process. The traveler himself may be able to use the information later.

Following the GTN search, the TMO’s next step will be to use the information on the traveler’s orders to complete an electronic version of the AF Form 3908; this will be forwarded to the JOSAC validator assigned to that base. The JOSAC validator will

ensure the request meets OSA requirements and, if so, will send the airlift request to JOSAC via JALIS. JOSAC will do its analysis and will determine if either direction of the travel request can be supported. Since that information will be forwarded to the traveler several days before the flight, he will have ample time to cancel his reservation when OSA support is confirmed. If JOSAC is used, then the process ends.

In the event that JOSAC cannot support the request, the traveler will still have enough time before his travel date to pick up his tickets. The traveler then has one more option to pursue before traveling commercial. If his GTN printout showed any missions that are going to his destination, he should check in with the terminal on the day of travel to determine whether or not there will be seats released for stand-by passengers. If so, he can travel on that mission and return his tickets for a refund later (the administrative costs are more than offset by the savings in the cost of transportation). If there are no seats available, then the traveler simply uses the City Pair ticket.

The reengineering concept illustrated below is really not a radical change in the way of doing business. It simply ties together three mutually exclusive air transportation methods at the TMO. Nonetheless, it will create a number of benefits for the DOD. The first benefit is that it creates a subtle change of mindset. For the past several years, travelers, their commanders, and even the transportation managers themselves, have not been encouraged to learn about or seek out non-commercial air transportation on most trips. One effect of this proposal is that it will highlight for everyone the reality that other transportation options do exist. Education is often the basis for step in self-improvement.

This process will further promote an emphasis on travel efficiency because it brings oversight of all travel options under the umbrella of the TMO. As TMOs take greater

responsibility for including all travel means in their customer relations, the idea that the TMO is the base transportation expert will be reinforced in the minds of the unit commanders. Over time, a mutually supporting relationship should develop between the TMO and the commanders; the TMO will learn more about how to meet the commanders' needs and the commanders will be more compliant with TMO guidance.

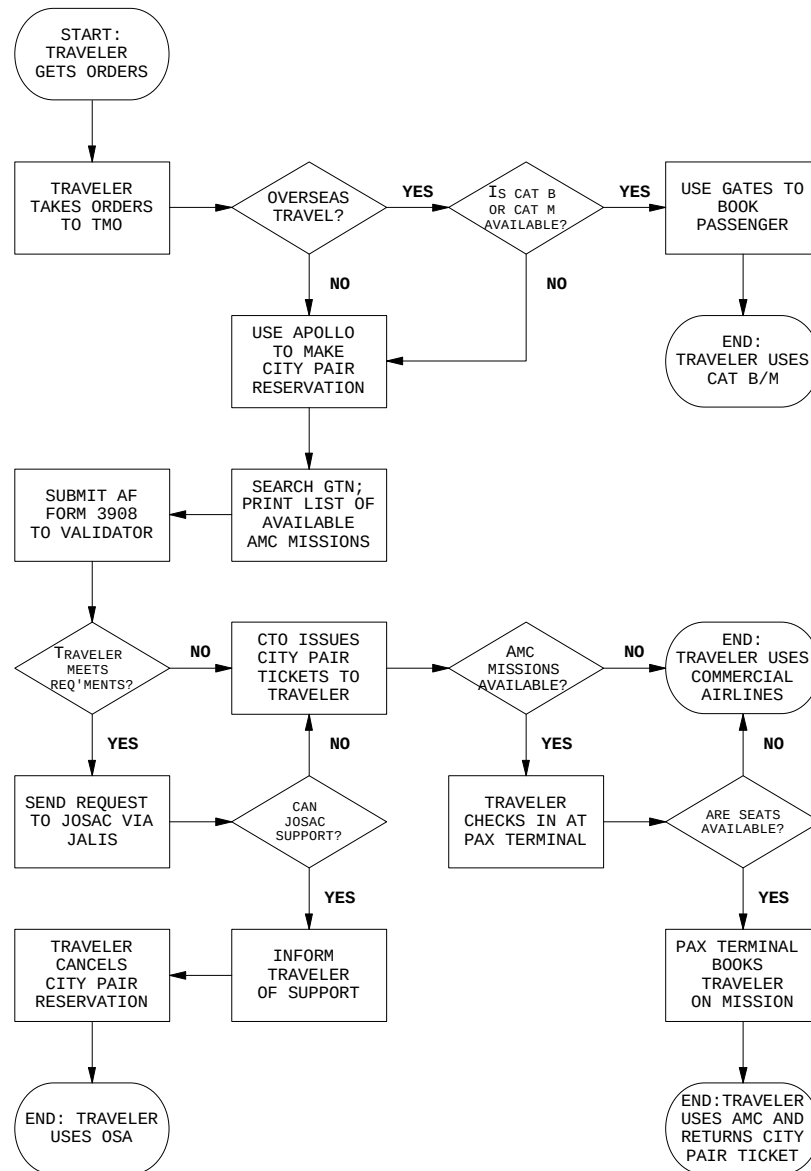


Figure 5 The Reengineered Process

Of course there will be no change in mindset without a catalyst, and that leads to the real crux of the matter for the need to reengineer. This proposal will directly aid the commander in squeezing more out of his unit budget, and that is often the best form of persuasion. Encouraging DOD travelers to overcome the notion that flying commercial is a “good deal” will be a major challenge; real financial figures are the best weapon for combating the resistance to change. It is impossible at this time to predict exactly how much money the proposal will save. It is frankly not likely to generate mind-numbing savings. Commercial air has become the norm precisely because it most often proves to be the most efficient option. However, “most often” is not “always,” and this concept will encourage the selection of the least costly option every time. If this program can encourage the use of military air even 5-10 percent of the time, it will be worth the effort. That level of success should be significant enough to encourage leadership to support a new way of thinking about air transportation on a daily basis.

The benefits of this proposal should not be oversold, however. This is a small process in the big scheme of things, and a failure to keep that perspective could result in excessive expectations; if the actual results do not measure up as anticipated, the concept may be discarded out of hand and labeled as a failure even if there are real savings generated. In fact, the proposal will generate a number of issues and obstacles to be addressed, and it will not produce benefits unless it is implemented effectively.

Notes

¹ United States Transportation Command Handbook 24-2, *Understanding the Defense Transportation System*, 1 April 1997, 16.

Chapter 5

Implementation

Change is rarely free. Implementing a new process such as that just described may mean incurring costs that are too heavy to bear for the payback. In this instance, however, that does not appear to be the case. The suggested changes are primarily philosophical in nature and can be made without the expenditure of additional resources.

Using GTN to gather data for a full spectrum air travel search means that every TMO will have to have GTN, and that the passenger service agents will need to be familiar with it. Due to the variety of GTN's applications for transportation managers, it is likely that most TMOs will eventually have to have the system just to conduct regular business effectively. However, even if a TMO does not have the system yet, getting it will not be a major endeavor. Since GTN is a web-based program, there is no GTN program software to purchase or load. Obviously, Web connectivity is a requirement, but the bulk of the Air Force is at the point where that is commonplace or can be obtained at the base level. "GTN . . . can easily be accessed through Netscape or Internet Explorer 4.0. DOD has purchased Netscape licenses, so if you don't have access to Netscape, you can download it onto your computer for official use."¹ The software requirements are therefore already a sunk cost that any official user can benefit from.

There are also some hardware requirements to consider. “To effectively access GTN you need at least a 486 computer with 16 MB RAM.”² With the speed at which the Air Force has been upgrading office desktop computers, a 486 is easy to find if the TMO does not already have one. One communications officer commented that, “Based on what I’ve seen here . . . and in discussions with my counterparts at other bases, computers with a CPU speed of 486 or higher are readily available at every base.”³ Another communications officer stated that the “standard PC is a Pentium 233MHz with 64MB RAM. Most people who had 486’s have since turned them in to DRMO or are in the process of doing so. As such, there is now a glut of cheap 486 computers to be had.”⁴ It is therefore more than likely that an office will have a higher level computer than the minimum required and if not, there are plenty of 486s available for the asking. Finally, if an office is considering an upgrade as part of its normal operations, a relatively inexpensive option is a Pentium 166MHz with 32 MB RAM: “There should be minimal price difference between these and a 486, but much greater performance.”⁵ In short, the software is free for DOD agencies and the normal level of PC found throughout the Air Force today generally meets the hardware requirements.

Users will require some training to become proficient with GTN. But that will be no different from the learning process that takes place whenever the Air Force upgrades to a new suite of office software. TRANSCOM has an easy-to-follow user’s guide available, and the program has on-line help. Like any other new program, a little time spent “playing” with the system will soon uncover its primary capabilities. This reengineering proposal does not require in-depth fluency in all of GTN’s modules, merely a working knowledge of the key search parameters used in the Schedules module. More to the

point, the day is coming when most transportation technicians will have to be familiar with GTN anyway. This proposal merely gives them a leg up on learning one of the key modules.

With GTN in place and the office personnel familiar with its functions, the reengineering becomes simply a matter of changing the routine whenever a duty traveler arrives at the window. As often as not, the passenger service agent at the window will be a civilian, so the scope of new work required by a change in process must be conducted in order to ensure that the additional steps in the process are within the scope of the current job description. The “Position Classification Standards for Transportation Operations” issued by the US Office of Personnel Management offers some broad guidance about the normal range of duties performed by passenger service agents: “Passenger travel work involves duties such as:

Providing information on air, bus, and/or rail schedules and fares . . .

Planning itineraries and arranging for commercial, Government-owned or contracted travel . . .

Among other responsibilities, the following tasks are common to many transportation clerk and assistant functions: preparing and issuing paperwork to initiate, document, or complete transportation actions.”⁶

The reengineered process essentially calls for the passenger service agent to perform only two actions not previously done—to complete and forward the AF Form 3908, and to search GTN for a list of AMC missions to give the customer. Both of those administrative tasks are well within the guidelines cited in the Position Classification Standards. Closer to home, a typical civilian personnel position description written for a

base level passenger transportation assistant (GS-07) summarizes the duties as follows: “Coordinates with base agencies, HQ AMC, the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), and the commercial transport industry in securing varied travel arrangements for civilian/military personnel and military dependents traveling to destinations throughout the world which are not recurrent and at times diverse in nature. Arrangements are made using air, bus, rental car, or a combination of these common carriers. . . . Assists travelers in completing necessary forms and documents. . . . Initiates and answers correspondence relative to passenger travel. Compiles data for the on-time completion and preparation of recurring and one-time reports.”⁷ Completing a form and using a computer to search for AMC missions is again well within the letter and the spirit of this document.

Nonetheless, someone hostile to change might argue that the position description never intended to encompass the new requirements of the reengineered process, and that those requirements are not the job of the existing TMO Passenger Service Section. Fortunately, the same job description also contains an office mission statement: “The function of this section is to provide transportation services, and arrangements for the authorized movement of military personnel, military dependents, civilian personnel, and human remains. The purpose of this position is to oversee and provide the procurement of services of AMC aircraft and common commercial carriers for the authorized transportation of personnel to destination points throughout the world.”⁸ That statement is at once broad enough and specific enough to include every action proposed by the new process. Nonetheless, two small grammatical changes would close a potential loophole. The term “USTRANSCOM” should replace the clause “HQ AMC, the Military Traffic

Management Command (MTMC)” in the first statement and “DOD aircraft” should replace “AMC aircraft” in the second statement; in this way GTN and the JOSAC process are more directly referenced. A civilian personnel classifications specialist reviewed the proposed reengineering and the suggested edits to the job description. She explained that classification is based on the complexity of the tasks and that these additional tasks are well within the scope of the current job description⁹. Therefore, these changes “would not be grade-impacting.”¹⁰

The number of positions authorized for an organization is determined by the Air Force Manpower Standards. Traffic Management manpower authorizations are defined in AFMS 42C1. This document uses the following workload equations to set the passenger service standard manpower requirement at two people:

$$[975 \text{ (passengers/month)} \times .333 \text{ (hrs/passenger)}] / 160.73 \text{ hrs/month/worker available} = 2.02 \text{ workers}^{11}$$

According to the manpower specialist who assembled the standard, the basis of this equation is that the current process takes an average of 20 minutes per customer.¹² Assuming that the number of passengers and monthly worker hours available remains the same—and the reengineering proposal would not affect these factors—we find that that any process requiring more than 24 minutes/customer would require an additional worker in the passenger service section of the TMO. The proposed process would most likely be completed within that 24 minute time window. Once the GTN is turned on and the proper search page is accessed, entering the search data literally takes only a few seconds. The worker can then complete the AF Form 3908 while the computer runs the search. Completing this electronic form should be possible in less than three minutes, especially

once the worker becomes familiar with the data required in each block. E-mailing the AF Form 3908 and printing the GTN readout again require but a few seconds of effort on the part of the worker. All told, then, the new steps should not exceed an additional four minutes of work, so no manpower authorizations should be created, and no extra personnel costs will be created by implementing this process.

The new process should not be implemented overnight, nor should it be done everywhere at once. The process should first be tested at one or two pilot locations. In this way, the transportation unit commander can monitor the program to determine whether it provides actual benefits and to address unforeseen issues that may arise. An ideal pilot base would be a site that handles a lot of duty travel, that has or is near an AMC terminal, and has or is near an OSA unit. These conditions would make it more likely that the base's commanders will support the initiative because the opportunity for using OSA and AMC will be greater.

The TMO must insure his passenger service section has GTN access and that the passenger service personnel are familiar with the Schedules module and with the proper way to fill out an electronic AF Form 3908. The agents must also know the name and e-mail of the appropriate OSA validator, and the TMO should advise the validator that the number of requests from his base will be rising sharply.

The transportation commander should be laying the groundwork for the test by getting the support of his group and wing commanders, and by selling the program to his fellow squadron commanders through stand-up meetings and informal discussions. In the end, this program will succeed or fail based on the degree of support the other squadron commanders offer it. If they give their people the impression that the savings are not

worth the effort, their people will continue to rely on commercial transportation and the government will continue to pay the airlines for travel the DOD could be providing for itself. The way to the squadron commanders is through their budgets. Most commanders suffer from a deplorable level of ignorance about the true costs of transportation; the transportation professionals must take the responsibility for providing that education. When unit commanders realize they will have more money available for operational needs if their people travel by other than commercial means, more of their people will be forced to use those other means.

The pilot program will of necessity require data to prove or disprove the viability of the concept. The best data is hard financial data. The transportation commander and the TMO will have to develop a system for tracking the ability to use organic air in lieu of commercial and the dollars saved by doing so. If the savings are appreciable—appreciable here is a relative term; a few thousand or even several hundred dollars should be considered appreciable for squadrons with regular travelers—then recurring reports during stand-up will help to garner continued support, especially from the senior leaders of the base. These reports may also be presented in such a way that the squadrons who are not willing to support the test will be readily apparent.

Even if the test generates clear data to support the idea on a widespread basis, there will still be considerable opposition to it from several quarters. Many servicemembers and their commanders are likely to dislike the concept because there is a feeling that flying commercial is a “good deal” for a traveler. It is unlikely that any amount of salesmanship will change that paradigm, largely because the actual cost to the traveler is usually invisible, and therefore not his concern. Even with all the controls in place to

force travelers to use Cat B instead of City Pairs, there is widespread abuse of the rules and that costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year. The change in mentality will have to come from the top down; once commanders change their paradigm, over time the travelers will adjust to the new reality. There may well be reasons why commanders choose to continue spending money on commercial tickets when alternate means of travel are available, and this proposal is not designed to take away their autonomy. It is designed to show that a new approach may provide them with benefits that make it worth supporting.

A more formidable opponent is likely to be the CTO. Each base has a separate contract with its ticketing agent, and the specific terms of each contract therefore vary from base to base. In general, however, the CTO earns revenue as a percentage of tickets sold on behalf of the civilian airlines. The bulk of that revenue comes from leisure travel sales, but any effort by the Air Force that reduces commercial duty travel will nonetheless results in lost profits for the CTO.¹³ Contractually, the Air Force has no obligation to procure any minimum amount of commercial travel, so there is no actual legal restraint against the new process. The reality, however, is that the CTOs will more than likely resist the effort because every dollar the Air Force saves by using organic air transportation translates to a reduction in the CTO's bottom line.¹⁴ In spite of the specific conditions of the contract, the CTO may be able to argue with some justification that the TMO is not acting in good faith, particularly since the CTO will be asked to make and later cancel reservations with commercial airlines solely because the Air Force found a cheaper alternative. If the test period indicates the new process is saving enough money to justify its full implementation, the Air Force does not have to have an adversarial

relationship with the CTO. The base contracts could be altered to allow the Air Force to make a direct payment to the CTO for any reservations that were canceled when organic air was used instead. Even if the payment were as much as 10- 20 percent of the City Pair rate, the traveler's unit would still realize a savings of 80-90 percent of the transportation costs. Obtaining military air transportation would become a win-win situation for both the CTO and the TMO.

Assuming the tests at the pilot bases are successful, it will then be the transportation commanders' job to pass the word to the rest of the Air Force. The best place to do this would be a short presentation at a transportation conference. The commanders from the other bases will be the ones that have to implement the concept at their bases, so a direct pitch to them will make the concept spread quicker with less confusion. The results of the tests should also be forwarded to HQ USAF/ILTT for their action as well. If the senior policy-makers agree this is a system whose time has come, they may choose to codify the process in the TMO regulations. This may prove difficult in the near future, however, since the entire transportation function is undergoing a broader reengineering effort right now, and the TMO processes are being especially targeted.¹⁵ There is a real possibility that the entire TMO function may be completely outsourced to a contractor.¹⁶ If that happens the Air Force will not have the autonomy to manage TMO processes that it has now. Likewise, depending upon how the contract is structured, the financial benefit of procuring organic air may vanish altogether. To the greatest degree possible, the Air Force's contracting agent should be cognizant of this danger and should write the contract in a manner which incentivizes the contractor to help the Air Force move its people as inexpensively as possible.

Broad systemic changes or the failure of the test program to produce significant enough savings may well preclude a service-wide change of policy. However, commanders who believe any savings at all are worth the effort could probably still use the core concept. GTN can be installed at a squadron just as easily as at the TMO, and most squadrons already have electronic forms available. A commander who sees merit in the new process can follow the same procedures with his support staff, assigning the orders-preparing function the responsibility to search for alternate transportation without involving the TMO (or the contractor) at all. Even if such transportation is only available once in ten tries, that is still one time more than it was without the process. In fact, the information revolution may continue to drive centralized processes down to the desktops of the individual units; this proposal could just as easily have been designed for the traveling unit to implement. However, that would be too low a level to begin the paradigm shift required to make this process work. At present, the TMO possesses the transportation expertise and the regulatory authority to manage travel, so that is the best place to begin to change the process.

Notes

¹ United States Transportation Command Handbook, *GTN User's Guide*, 10 Sept 1998, 4.

² Ibid, 2.

³ 1Lt Bill Bower, C4 Plans and Programs Flight Commander, Hurlburt AFB, FL, interviewed by author, 8 October 1998.

⁴ Capt Joseph Farron, Information Systems Flight Commander, Hurlburt AFB, FL, interviewed by author, 8 October 1998.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Handbook, *Position Classification Standards for Transportation Operations*, March 1993, 3-4.

⁷ Air Force Form 1378 (AF 1378), *Civilian Personnel Position Description for Transportation Assistant (Passenger) GS-2102-07*, 17 March 1995.

⁸ AF 1378.

Notes

⁹ Linda Conyers, Classification Specialist, Maxwell AFB, AL, interviewed by author, 14 December 1998.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Air Force Manpower Standard (AFMS) 42C1, *Manpower Standard for Traffic Management Flight*, 8 May 1998.

¹² Lawrence Rose, Manpower Specialist, Air Force Center for Quality and Management Innovation, interviewed by author, 16 December 1998.

¹³ 1Lt Tim Pertuis, (former) Traffic Management Officer, Edwards AFB, CA, interviewed by author, 10 December 1998.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Rose.

¹⁶ Pertuis.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The concept for reengineering the duty passenger air transportation procurement process is feasible, and it has several potential benefits for the DOD, including a higher level of transportation education for commanders, greater prestige for the TMO, and most importantly, reduced travel costs. The proposal should be tested soon to determine just how significant those benefits can be. This concept is really nothing radical; it is simply a combination of three disparate processes that are already in existence. However, the information revolution embodied within GTN makes it possible to consolidate those processes under a single process manager. Initially, that process manager should be the TMO, although the long-term execution of this concept could ultimately be pushed down to the unit level of the traveler. The TMO already manages the process for the most widely used method of travel and has the transportation expertise necessary to manage the changes smoothly. The TMO is therefore in the best position to allow a traveler to see all of his options.

The passenger service agents at the TMO will have to complete two additional tasks per customer; they must conduct a search of AMC missions in GTN and submit an electronic AF Form 3908. The hardware and software required for these tasks are widely available at no cost. The growing importance of GTN as a transportation management

tool makes it likely that most TMOs will have this system on line soon anyway. There will likewise be no additional personnel costs incurred to implement the program. The two new tasks are well within the job descriptions in use today, so no grade changes will be required to those positions. Assuming the agents become proficient with GTN and the AF Form 3908, the average time per customer will not be extended beyond the limit required to maintain the same level of manpower. Beyond a little training time for the agents, the new process can be implemented at no cost.

That is not to say there will be no obstacles to implementation. Since the objective of the program is essentially to reduce the use of commercial airline tickets, the CTOs stand to lose revenue. These agents are unlikely to remain docile while they lose profits. This program may therefore require contract renegotiations to avoid troublesome legal embroilments. Furthermore, the traffic management function may be outsourced altogether, making a change like this impracticable. That is why it is important to test the program quickly at a stable location, carefully monitoring the actual savings produced during the test period. Only with hard cost data can the Air Force determine whether wider implementation is worthwhile. Ironically, the strongest opposition may come from the very people the reengineering is designed to help. Unless commanders and their troops escape from the paradigm that traveling commercial is a “good deal,” there will not be strong support for using alternate air transportation. It is therefore very important that the implementing TMO and transportation squadron commander lay the groundwork by educating commanders about the true costs to their budgets of forsaking organic air transportation.

The new process will produce some savings, but it will not be a panacea. Savings at the unit level will likely be measured in hundreds (or occasionally thousands) of dollars for an average sized unit because organic air transportation is normally not readily available at most bases. The point is that even small savings of 5-10 percent are worth the effort. This not only provides practical assistance to commanders in a time of declining budgets, but it is also supports the DOD's ethical duty to save the taxpayers' money whenever possible. Since reengineering the air transportation procurement process has the potential to save tax dollars, it deserves a chance to prove its worth and it demands support from everyone involved.

Appendix A

City Pairs Travel Rules and Considerations

Many government employees do not understand the City Pairs agreements with the airlines, so they attempt to circumvent the established procedures for booking commercial tickets. This is a mistake that can lead to long-term negative repercussions. Many travelers and their commanders are convinced that they can find a more cost-effective or convenient ticket on their own. While it is true that many City Pair rates do not beat super-saver rates, it is also true that City Pair rates remain fixed for the entire year. Hence, the government is not subject to volatile price changes throughout the budget year like many businesses or personal travelers are. Attempts to manage government tickets by searching for the best rate like leisure travelers do would only end up costing taxpayers a lot more in the long-run, especially since so much government travel is arranged at the last minute, well after the super saver rates no longer apply. More to the point, though, is that City Pairs tickets are completely unrestricted: the tickets can be changed right up to the last minute without penalty and are completely refundable even after the scheduled travel date. City Pairs are also negotiated only on a one-way basis: round trip fares are *always* equal to double the one way rate, ensuring that multi-leg travelers will not be gouged or forced to fly extraneous legs to capture round-trip rates.¹ City Pair tickets therefore provide a degree of flexibility that special fare tickets

do not. Nonetheless, some travelers continue to try to arrange their own transportation in violation of policy. A common mistake is to use the American Express Government Credit Card to purchase a reduced rate ticket from the contract ticket agency and then seek reimbursement on the travel voucher. Unfortunately, Finance cannot provide this reimbursement without a letter of City Pairs non-availability from the TMO; the TMO will not issue such a statement under normal conditions because the traveler purchased the tickets illegally. In cases such as this, the traveler has to pay for the ticket himself. Furthermore, if there was a penalty for a changed or canceled ticket, the traveler must pay that too.²

Lest commanders feel they have no control over the travel of their own personnel, DOD guidance does provide for exceptions to standard policy. Within the GSA contract is this excerpt:

(c) Exceptions to the mandatory use requirement. Mandatory users are not required to use contract fares when:

(1) Space or scheduled flights are not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel, or use of contract service would require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs which would increase the total cost of the trip.

(2) The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit policies of individual Federal departments and agencies or other mandatory users to schedule travel during normal working hours.

(3) A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government or other mandatory users, to include the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses. NOTE: THIS EXCEPTION DOES NOT APPLY IF THE CONTRACT CARRIER OFFERS A COMPARABLE FARE AND HAS SEATS AVAILABLE AT THAT FARE, OR IF THE LOWER FARE OFFERED BY A NONCONTRACT CARRIER IS RESTRICTED TO GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY TRAVELERS ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS AND MAY ONLY BE PURCHASED WITH A GTR, CONTRACTOR ISSUED CHARGE CARD, OR CENTRALLY BILLED ACCOUNT.³

Most TMOs will take advantage of these exceptions to policy if the unit commander sends a letter certifying that the itinerary for the City Pairs rate will not meet mission

requirements. Obviously, commanders who sacrifice their integrity to save a few dollars from their budget are ultimately putting the entire system at risk since the airlines will quickly refuse to offer special rates if they believe the government is defrauding them on a regular basis. Besides, a savvy TMO has several completely legal options available to get a commander a lower priced fare, e.g., the use of local segmented city pairs: “Carriers may quote a fare and participate in a particular market where it doesn’t have direct service, for example, American Airlines from San Angelo, Texas, to Washington National via Chicago. However, the total of the two segmented fares may be less than the direct through contract fare listed. TMOs must evaluate the alternatives and use the combination of fares which offers the greatest value to the government, using the original contract carrier.”⁴

Another area of on-going friction is the use of commercial tickets as a back-up for confirmed military air. DOD policy directs the TMO to attempt to use organic lift first whenever possible, usually in the form of Cat M or Cat B service. If travelers are scheduled to move on military air service, they must not attempt to book a commercial ticket as a hedge against the military air falling through. AFI 24-101 is crystal clear on this point: “Do not request commercial transportation as a backup for military air. Under DOD policy, the requester may be responsible for reimbursement of any unused commercial airlift services on their behalf.”⁵ This may seem like a foolish restriction to a commander since the City Pairs tickets are fully refundable. There is, however, an administrative cost associated with getting tickets refunded, as well as a lag of up to 60 days from the time the ticket is turned in until the funds are returned. During that period, the commander’s funds will be committed to a ticket that was never required, and will be

unavailable for other requirements.⁶ Commanders should not confuse the restriction against back-up tickets as a restriction against seeking opportune military air when City Pairs tickets have already been purchased. There are many perfectly legal air transportation opportunities available at little or no cost to the traveler, and these should always be pursued right up to the last minute. One option is to submit an airlift request to the unit's JOSAC validator. Since JOSAC can usually confirm or deny the request four to ten days before scheduled travel, the unit can return the ticket for a refund at that time. In this case, the administrative costs of refunding the ticket are more than offset by the use of the free travel. A commander who does not routinely submit an airlift request to JOSAC for duty travelers in his unit is passing up an excellent chance to save his unit money. Another option is to seek duty standby seats on a cargo channel mission. These seats are rarely confirmed until just before departure due to cargo load changes; however, when they do become available, they may offer more direct service at the same rate as the City Pairs ticket for overseas travel or for no cost at all within the CONUS.

There are also a number of situations where travelers are attempting to use City Pairs travel, but are legally prohibited from doing so: "DOD 4500.9R, Chapter 103, specifically states, 'AMC-procured channel airlift (international travel) or GSA airlift, contracted through the Contract City-Pairs Program shall be used to the maximum extent possible when available unless there is a negative, critical mission impact justifying non usage. GSA City-Pairs will only be used for official travel and refers to travelers destined to a TDY or PCS duty station or to a designated location from their permanent duty station and return. *The use of GSA City-Pairs for travel to and/or from leave locations is not authorized* [emphasis added]."⁷ There is a lot of confusion on this point

because travel from a leave point back to duty station use to be considered duty status and personnel on leave could take advantage of the lower City Pairs fares, especially if they were only traveling in a single direction. However, the airlines no longer permit this and the contracts have been amended. While there are no exceptions to this policy, there are some conditions under which travelers can partially offset their personal costs legally. When PCSing from overseas, a traveler may request circuitous travel to an en route leave stop, for example, Tokyo to Seattle, requesting en route leave in Guam. When authorized circuitous travel, the government can buy City Pairs tickets on the two legs (e.g., Yokota to Guam and Guam to Seattle); the traveler then pays the cost differential over and above the direct route (e.g., Tokyo to Seattle). Unfortunately, there is no equivalent to circuitous travel within the CONUS. A recent Air Staff message reiterated the policy. “The current policy provided by MTMC is quoted as follows: ‘Use of city pairs for leave travel: GSA city pairs are for official travel only, and not, repeat not, valid for travel to or from a leave point’ . . . The GSA City-Pair contract is implicit on this point. There are no domestic stop-overs allowed. The passenger always has the option of using the value of the official transportation (GSA contract fare) and applying that towards the desired routing.”⁸

As noted in the message, a traveler can legally exchange a City Pair ticket for a different routing to and from his leave destination if he pays the differential cost. Unfortunately, the airlines have renegotiated the contracts in such a way that the traveler remains at their mercy. For instance, travelers with round trip City Pair tickets may not exchange just one leg of those tickets; instead, they must turn in *both* legs of the City Pair and recreate the entire itinerary as if it were leisure travel. Of course, the cost of this new

itinerary is likely to be very high since the traveler has essentially been forced to buy several one-way tickets at the generally inflated leisure travel rate. Further, if the traveler makes arrangements which have restrictions and the duty travel is later canceled, the traveler will be expected to reimburse the government for the City Pair tickets, *but may get no relief from the airlines for the unused leisure tickets*. There is a legal way for the TMO to help the member in this scenario: the TMO can issue a traveler a City Pair ticket for just the outbound portion of the travel. The traveler can then go to the TMO at the TDY location to get a one-way return ticket, which can be cashed in for leisure tickets. Traditionally, Air Force policy has required the home base TMO to purchase both legs of a TDY if the duration of the trip is less than 30 days; however, that is regulatory guidance, and not a legal restriction, so the traffic management officer can deviate from the policy at his discretion. However, in light of all the recent changes in the City Pairs contract with the airlines, the TMO should no longer be put in the position of making that decision. The instructions should be codified to encourage an exception to the round trip purchase rule whenever it will benefit the member. For now, though, many travelers find it less expensive and less risky to simply retain the City Pair tickets and to acquire separate round trip tickets between the leave and the TDY locations on their own.⁹ In any event, when exchanges are made, they are managed directly with the contracted ticketing agent; unit budgets are unaffected by the transaction and the government absorbs no administrative fees because no funds are returned. Likewise, no portion of excess cost for exchanged tickets may be charged on a government-issued American Express card. So love it or hate it, commanders must understand the various aspects of the City Pairs program. This program is currently the main enticement for the major

airlines to participate in CRAF, so it is of critical interest to USTRANSCOM. Any deviations from the City Pairs contract will ultimately impact readiness; commanders therefore have a professional responsibility to adhere to the provisions of the GSA contract and to ensure their people understand all the repercussions—both legal and financial—of violating its terms.

Notes

¹ Robert Vidinha, Traffic Management Officer, McGuire AFB, NJ, interviewed by author, 2 February 1998.

² Ibid.

³ General Services Administration, “City Pairs Request for Proposal for Fiscal Year 1998,” 1997, n.p.; on line, Internet, 27 January 1998, available from <http://www.gsa.gov>.

⁴ Message, 282019Z JAN 97, HQ USAF/ILTT to Air Force Traffic Management Officers, 28 January 1997.

⁵ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 24-101, *Passenger Movement*, AMC Change 1, 24 February 1995, 3.

⁶ Vidinha.

⁷ Brig Gen Craig P. Rasmussen, Commander, 305 Airlift Wing, McGuire AFB, NJ, (draft) Memorandum for all commanders, subject: Government Procured Transportation—Temporary Duty and Permanent Change of Station, 2 February 1998.

⁸ HQ USAF/ILTT Message.

⁹ Vidinha.

Appendix B

Conducting a Search on GTN

233d TRANSPORTATION SQUADRON
222 WILSON AVENUE
LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE VA 12345-6789
(Unit Letterhead REQUIRED)

MEMORANDUM FOR USTRANSCOM/TCJ4-LPD 17 Jun 97

FROM: UNIT/OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Request for Access to the Global Transportation Network (GTN)

1. The following user requires access to GTN:

Name:	Doe, John A., JR
Rank:	MSgt (If civilian GS-#)
Service	USAF
MAJCOM:	ACC
Unit:	233 Transportation Sq.
Office Symbol:	LGXP
Street Address:	222 Wilson Ave
City/ST/Zip/APO/FPO:	Langley AFB, VA 12345-6789
E-Mail:	doejohn@233trans.langley.af.mil
Phone:	DSN: 234-5678 Comm: (555) 634-5678
FAX:	DSN: 234-5699 Comm: (555) 634-5699
Acct Type:	Unclassified GTN or Secret GTN
Clearance Type:	TS/SBI (Secret Account requests only)
Clearance Date:	01 Jan 95 (Secret accounts requests only)
Internet Browser:	Netscape 3.0, MS Internet Explorer 2.0, etc.

2. (Enter single paragraph justification for access.) MSgt Doe will be using GTN to monitor the flow of cargo through the aerial port at Langley AFB. He is properly cleared and has the need to know.

3. POC is Tsgt Ross DSN 576-0102. (Specify point of contact for senior officers/officials)

JANE W. SMITH
Colonel, USAF
Commander, 233 Trans. Squadron

Figure 6 Sample Letter Requesting GTN Access¹

1. Get a GTN username and password. These are issued by TRANSCOM in response to a request from a legitimate user. To apply for a password, a prospective user simply sends a letter (see sample shown above) explaining his need for access to DTS information. The letter must be endorsed by the applicant's supervisor; phone and fax

contact information must be provided for further information when required. It generally takes two to three weeks for the request to be processed, following which a TRANSCOM-assigned username and password is mailed to the applicant.

2. Access GTN via the following World Wide Web address:
<https://www.gtn.transcom.mil>

3. Select the “Queries” button at the top of the home page and enter username and password when prompted to do so. Select “Schedules” in the right margin when the Queries page comes up.

4. Enter the data for the search.

a. Block #1 is Mode; users would select the “Air” bullet.

b. Block #2 asks what to look for; users can select “Mission Number” to see all missions, or can specify a particular type of mission from the pull down menu, such as “Category B.”

c. Block #3 offers several qualifiers a user can designate; generally, “NONE” is best.

d. Block #4 asks for Status, and it is important for the user to select the right option here. When searching for a scheduled flight into or out of a location, users would designate either “Scheduled to Arrive At” or “Scheduled to Depart From.” Someone interested in current data might choose one of the “Actually . . .” options.

e. Block #5 lets the user tell GTN the Location. This block is set up for the novice operator and allows him to enter the key locations in a variety of ways; a lookup database is also available to help with unfamiliar codes or locations. Before entering the locations in the boxes on the right, the user must decide whether or not to

check the “Channel” box because this decision changes the way GTN conducts its search. If a user simply wants data about missions *at* one or two locations, then Channel should not be checked. GTN will now display all missions at the sites listed that fit the criteria from Block #4. When a user wants to look for missions *between* specific locations, however, Channel must be checked. GTN will now display missions between the two sites listed. (GTN will read the first site listed as the departure base, for instance, if “Scheduled to Depart From” is selected for Block #4; likewise, it will read the first site as the arrival base when an arrival option is designated in Block #4.)

f. Block #6 is the Time period for the search, and it is self-explanatory. Choose the “Fixed” button, and note that all times are ZULU.

g. Block #7 is Output. This option allows the user to tell GTN how to sort the final data. The “List” button is the best option here.

h. Click the “Submit” button to enable the search. You can also Save search parameters for recurring searches.

i. NOTE: On line help is available in GTN for users who have problems filling in the search parameters correctly.

5. *An example.* Suppose a traveler stationed in England needs to travel to New York City between the 20th and 25th of March 1999. The traveler hopes to fly into McGuire AFB, where he will procure ground transportation to New York. The GTN user would access the Schedules module and enter the following data:

- a. Block #1: Air
- b. Block #2: Mission Number
- c. Block #3: NONE

- d. Block #4: Scheduled to Depart From
- e. Block #5: (Using ICAO Airports); Channel Box Checked; Enter EGUN (Mildenhall) in top box and KWRI (McGuire) in the bottom box.
- f. Block #6: Dates are 20-25 March 1999 (Beware of time zone changes due to the use of ZULU time)
- g. Block #7: List

Submit.

GTN Home ? Query + Help

Schedules

- ◆ Quick Query
- ◆ Cargo
- ◆ Schedules
- ◆ Passengers
- ◆ Requisitions
- ◆ Assets
- ◆ Unit Move
- ◆ Reference Tables
- ◆ Query Manager
- ◆ Address Book
- ◆ Sent Results Log
- Feedback

MODE ☒ Air ☐ Ocean

LOOK FOR =

QUALIFY BY =

STATUS

LOCATION ☒ Channel

=

=

☒ Fixed ☐ Relative

TIME From: Z

To: Z

OUTPUT ☒ List ☐ Summarize By Location ☐ Summarize All Locations

Figure 7 A GTN Schedules Page Query²

Using the specified inputs, GTN will produce a list of missions that fits the criteria.

The resulting data is displayed below:

Schedules Query Results



Row #	Mission #	JCS	Status	Loc	Est	Date	Act	Date	Fly Tm	State	Prev	Next	ACType	ACTail	Cgo in	Cgo
1	BBALDR200080	3A3	Depart	EGUN	1535	9080						KWRI	DC8			
2	QDN62Q328078	3B1	Depart	EGUN	1000	9081						KWRI	KC10A			
3	QDN62Q329080	3B1	Depart	EGUN	1000	9083						KWRI	KC10A			
4	AEN0709TD078	3A2	Depart	EGUN	1315	9083						LPLA	C141B			
5	BBA0DR100083	3A3	Depart	EGUN	1620	9083						ETAR	DC8			
6	AEN0709AR082	3A2	Depart	EGUN	1500	9084						KWRI	C141B			

Figure 8 Results of the Schedules Query³

The list that GTN produces shows all missions departing from Mildenhall during the designated time that will eventually arrive in McGuire. (For those missions that do not list KWRI as the next station, the user may drill down through the mission number to see the entire itinerary, and the ultimate arrival time at McGuire.) The same traveler might choose to modify the search in case there is an unexpected mission to an airfield he had not considered. In that case he would uncheck the Channels box in and would delete KWRI. GTN will now show him all of the missions departing Mildenhall from 20-25 March, irrespective of destination. While this will obviously result in a much longer list, removing the filter may allow the traveler to locate a mission to an airfield closer to home.

Notes

¹ United States Transportation Command GTN Website, "Accounts," n.p.; on line, Internet, 15 December 1998, available from <https://www.gtn.transcom.mil>.

² United States Transportation Command, "GTN Homepage," n.p.; on line, Internet, 9 March 1999, available from <https://www.gtn.transcom.mil>.

³ Ibid.

Glossary

AMC	Air Mobility Command
Cat B	Category B: Scheduled Contracted Airlift
Cat M	Category M: Scheduled Military Passenger Airlift
CONUS	Continental United States
CRAF	Civil Reserve Airlift Fleet
CTO	Contracted Ticketing Office
DOD	Department of Defense
DRMO	Defense Reutilization Management Office
DTS	Defense Transportation System
DV	Distinguished Visitor/Very Important Person
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GATES	Global Air Transportation Execution System
GDSS	Global Decision Support System
GSA	General Services Administration
GTN	Global Transportation Network
JALIS	Joint Air Logistics Information System
JMCG	Joint Movement Control Group
JOSAC	Joint Operational Support Airlift Center
MAJCOM	Major Command
MILAIR	Military Air Transportation
MTMC	Military Traffic Management Command
OCONUS	Out of Continental United States
OSA	Operational Support Airlift
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PRC	Passenger Reservation Center
RAM	Random Access Memory

TCC	Transportation Component Commands
TDY	Temporary Duty
TMO	Traffic Management Office/Officer
TRANSCOM	United States Transportation Command

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