Audit Report

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

QUICK-REACTION REPORT ON REPAINTING OF THE C-5 AIRCRAFT

Report No. 94-198 September 29, 1994

Department of Defense

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September 29, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
(FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND COMPTROLLER)

SUBJECT: Quick-Reaction Report on Repainting of the C-5 Aircraft
(Report No. 94-198)

We are providing this final quick-reaction report for your review and comments. It discusses repainting C-5 aircraft. This report resulted from our Audit of the DoD Aircraft Paint Application and Removal Capabilities (Project No. 4LB-0027). Quick action is needed to revise the C-5 repainting program before additional aircraft are prematurely repainted.

Comments to a draft of this report were requested from the Commander, Air Mobility Command on August 16, 1994. As of September 26, 1994, comments have not been received. DoD Directive 7650.3 requires that all recommendations be resolved promptly. Therefore, we request that the Commander, Air Mobility Command provide comments on the recommendations and monetary benefits by October 17, 1994.

Recommendations and potential monetary benefits are subject to resolution in accordance with DoD Directive 7650.3 in the event of nonconcurrence or failure to comment.

The courtesies extended to the audit staff are appreciated. If you have any questions on this audit, please contact Mr. Christian Hendricks, Audit Program Director, at (703) 604-9427 (DSN 664-9427) or Mr. James Kornides, Audit Project Manager, at (703) 604-9429 (DSN 664-9429). Copies of the final report will be distributed to the organizations in Appendix F. The audit team members are listed on the inside back cover.

Robert J. Lieberman
Assistant Inspector General
for Auditing

Enclosure

Office of the Inspector General, DoD

Report No. 94-198 **September 29, 1994**
(Project No. 4LB-0027.01)

QUICK-REACTION REPORT ON REPAINTING OF THE C-5 AIRCRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction. This report covers part of our Audit of the DoD Aircraft Paint Application and Removal Capabilities (Project No. 4LB-0027). Additional issues related to the painting and paint removal for DoD aircraft will be discussed in a separate report. In March 1991, the Air Force began a program to upgrade the appearance of its air transport aircraft. As part of that program, the Air Force began repainting all its C-5 aircraft. The estimated cost of repainting the C-5 fleet of 127 aircraft was approximately $152.1 million. Quick action is needed to revise the ongoing program before additional aircraft are prematurely repainted.

Objective. The objective of this part of our audit was to evaluate the economy and efficiency of repainting the C-5 aircraft.

Audit Results. The Air Force was repainting C-5 aircraft ahead of their repainting service intervals even though the aircraft did not need repainting. By repainting C-5 aircraft prematurely, the Air Force will incur unnecessary costs over the next 3 years (Part II).

Internal Controls. Because of the time-sensitivity of this report, internal controls will be discussed in a later report.

Potential Benefits of Audit. A monetary benefit of $59.3 million will be realized during the next 3 years by repainting only C-5 aircraft that qualify for repainting (Appendix D).

Summary of Recommendation. We recommend that the Air Force terminate the accelerated painting of C-5 aircraft and paint only those aircraft that qualify for repainting.

Management Comments. Comments to a draft of this report were requested from the Commander, Air Mobility Command but none were received. We request comments to the final report from the Air Force by October 17, 1994.

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This report was prepared by the Logistics Support Directorate, Office of the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing, Department of Defense.

Part I - Introduction

Background

The C-5 aircraft was designed to be used as a heavy lift air transport aircraft. There are two versions of the aircraft, the C-5A and the C-5B. Although the outer dimensions of both models are identical, the C-5B has advanced features, including modified landing gear, improved engines, and advanced instrumentation. At the time of audit, 77 C-5As and 50 C-5Bs were in the active Air Force inventory.

In March 1991, the then Military Airlift Command announced a time-phased program called the Proud MAC Image Program to upgrade the appearance of all its aircraft, including the C-5A and C-5B. The Proud MAC Image Program was changed to the Equipment Excellence Program in December 1991, to coincide with the reorganization of the Military Airlift Command into the Air Mobility Command.

To upgrade the appearance of the C-5 aircraft by the end of FY 1997, the Air Force planned to repaint each aircraft and change the color from gray and green to flat gray. The cost to repaint the entire C-5 fleet was estimated at $152.1 million.

Objective

The objective of this part of our audit was to evaluate the economy and efficiency of repainting the C-5 aircraft.

Scope and Methodology

Review of Records. We reviewed and evaluated Air Force documents and records that were prepared from November 1990 through June 1994 related to the repainting of C-5 aircraft. We also interviewed cognizant Government engineering, contracting, and program management personnel and representatives from industry. The audit did not rely on computer-processed data.

Auditing Standards. This economy and efficiency audit was made from April through June 1994 in accordance with auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States as implemented by the Inspector General, DoD, and accordingly included such tests of internal controls as were considered necessary. Organizations visited or contacted during the audit are in Appendix E.

Internal Controls

Because of the time-sensitivity of this report, internal controls will be discussed in a later report.

Prior Audits and Other Reviews

On July 19, 1994, the General Accounting Office issued a letter, B-257911, to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives. The letter indicated that the General Accounting Office had identified more than $24 million in potential reductions in the Air Force's FY 1995 programmed depot maintenance request. The General Accounting Office indicated that it believed that the repaint requirements for the C-141 and C-5 aircraft were overstated by about $3.5 million and $20.8 million, respectively.

We did not identify any other prior audit coverage of this specific topic in the last 5 years.

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Part II - Finding and Recommendation

Accelerated Painting of C-5 Aircraft

The Air Force was repainting C-5 aircraft ahead of their repainting service intervals even though the aircraft did not need repainting. The condition existed because Air Force personnel did not follow policies governing the painting of aircraft for cosmetic purposes only, and disregarded technical evaluations that indicated that C-5 aircraft did not qualify for repainting. By repainting C-5 aircraft prematurely, the Air Force will incur unnecessary costs of approximately $59.3 million over the next 3 years.

Background

Air Force Regulation. Air Force Regulation 66-34, "Painting and Marking Aircraft, Missiles, Drones, and Aircraft Alternate Mission Equipment Exteriors," section A, paragraph 2C, states that painting or repainting aircraft solely for cosmetic purposes is not permitted. However, it is the responsibility of all Air Force units to prudently maintain good aircraft appearance as an inherent part of a well managed corrosion control program, to the extent that facilities and resources permit.

Air Force Technical Manual. Air Force Technical Manual T.O. 1-1-4, "Exterior Finishes, Insignia, and Markings Applicable to United States Air Force Aircraft," section 2-2, states that the requirement to paint aircraft must be tempered with good judgment and consideration of the availability of funds. It is not intended that crash programs be established for the prompt painting of aircraft. Aircraft will be painted in accordance with a service life plan unless there is an overriding operational requirement. Aircraft determined to have a sound paint system already applied will not be repainted solely to incorporate color, improve appearance, or perform material changes to the standard paint system and color scheme.

Repainting the C-5 Aircraft

Accelerated Paint Schedule. The Air Force was repainting C-5 aircraft prematurely. The Air Force developed an accelerated paint schedule that, by the end of FY 1994, resulted in repainting 28 C-5 aircraft an average of 3.6 years ahead of their original recommended paint service date. An additional

44 aircraft will be repainted an average of 5.2 years ahead of schedule over the next 3 years if the Air Force continues to repaint its C-5 aircraft ahead of their normal paint service interval. Appendix A lists the 44 aircraft that will be repainted ahead of schedule.

Optimum Paint Service Interval. The original service life plan for the C-5 aircraft indicated that the optimum service interval for repainting each aircraft was 10 years for the C-5As and 13 years for the C-5Bs. In March 1991, the Air Force decided that it would accelerate the schedule and paint the entire fleet of 127 C-5 aircraft. The Military Airlift Command wanted to repaint the aircraft to improve their appearance and restore the paint that had deteriorated during the Persian Gulf War.

In April 1991, the Air Force developed a time-phased plan to begin painting the aircraft as quickly as possible. The Air Force intended to repaint the entire C-5 fleet over a 3-year period through a combination of depot level maintenance and contractor support.

The repainting project was delayed in 1992 because of the limited availability of organic and contractor paint facilities. The Air Force subsequently revised the schedule and at the time of audit, the Air Force planned to repaint all C-5 aircraft by the end of FY 1997.

Contractor Support. The San Antonio Air Logistics Center's capacity for repainting C-5 aircraft annually was 24 aircraft. As such, the accelerated schedule for the repainting, combined with refurbishment of the paint facility at San Antonio in 1993, caused the Air Force to seek an alternative source for repainting the C-5 fleet.

On September 30, 1992, the Air Force entered into a contract with Chrysler Technologies Airborne Systems to repaint C-5 aircraft. The initial contract provided for the repainting of 15 aircraft. The contract contains options to paint additional aircraft at the option of the Government. The Air Force estimated that it will use the contractor to repaint 65 of the C-5 aircraft by the end of FY 1997.

Compliance with Policy

Improving the Appearance. The decision to accelerate the repainting of the C-5 fleet, to improve the appearance of the aircraft as part of the then Proud MAC Image Program, was not in conformance with Air Force policy. The aircraft were already painted camouflage (gray and green), and the Air Force believed that a neutral color (gray) would improve the image of the aircraft as it

performed its global missions. However, the decision to repaint the aircraft to improve their appearance contradicted the policy on painting aircraft contained in Air Force Regulation 66-34 and Air Force Technical Manual T.O. 1-1-4. The guidance forbids repainting an aircraft to improve its appearance.

According to Air Force personnel, the aircraft were painted camouflage during the cold war. Air Force records indicated that one of the primary reasons the Air Force adopted the camouflage paint scheme was to make the C-5 aircraft blend into the toned down parking ramps at European air bases. Additionally, the runways in the European Theater were expected to be painted with a camouflage paint scheme. However, the runways were never painted, and, when the threat in Europe dissipated, the camouflage paint scheme became obsolete.

Color and Detection. Air Force documents indicated that the color gray was selected for the C-5 aircraft based on information extracted from the "Air Force Camouflage Handbook," April 1986, and from the personal experience of trained corrosion control specialists. The Camouflage Handbook states that neutral colors (grays) provide a satisfactory match to sky backgrounds. However, the handbook also stated that the color of the aircraft really isn't important to visual detection. Additionally, in 1991, the Air Force Aeronautical Systems Division advised the Air Mobility Command that although gray paint blends with the sky and horizon better than the camouflage paint scheme, visually, a big airplane can be seen at a long distance. The Air Force Aeronautical Systems Division also indicated that no significant increase or decrease occurred in the infrared signatures of aircraft painted camouflage colors versus gray.

Semigloss Paint and Survivability. The Air Force plan for repainting the C-5, developed in March 1991, called for repainting each C-5 aircraft with a semigloss gray paint. The semigloss paint offered two advantages. It was considered easier to keep clean and it offered increased fade resistance. In May 1991, Air Force personnel questioned whether the survivability of the aircraft would decrease if a semigloss paint was used. After some deliberation, personnel from the Air Mobility Command concluded that the aircraft was so large that it was easily detectable regardless of the paint scheme. Nevertheless, the Air Force chose a flat gray paint instead of a semigloss gray paint because of the lower reflectiveness of the flat paint. As a result, the ease of cleaning and fade resistance, which in part justified the color change, will not be achieved.

Other Benefits. Although C-5 aircraft survivability was neither enhanced nor diminished by changing its color, Air Force personnel indicated that the switch to a single color scheme would be easier to maintain (touch up) than the camouflage colors previously used. The gray paint was also expected to keep the interior of the aircraft cooler. Additionally, Air Force personnel stated that

although no paint scheme would hide an airlifter in Europe or in the desert in Southwest Asia, the gray color was more appropriate for the C-5, which was expected to operate in a wide variety of scenarios.

Technical Evaluations

The accelerated painting of the C-5 aircraft disregarded technical evaluations that indicated that the C-5 aircraft did not qualify for repainting. The Air Mobility Command justified the accelerated repainting of the C-5 fleet based on the condition of the paint already on the aircraft. The documents indicated that hydraulic soaking, erosion, and sun fading were ongoing problems. Air Mobility Command personnel claimed that the paint was deteriorating faster than its projected service life. Personnel also claimed that the increased operating tempo during the Persian Gulf War had significantly accelerated deterioration of the paint on each aircraft, which they claimed were already in poor condition prior to the Persian Gulf War. Further, the aircraft were subjected to the adverse caustic effects of desert sand, with its high salt content, and the erosive effects of blowing sand, both while flying and when parked.

Although deteriorating conditions of the paint were cited as part of the justification for accelerating the repainting program and obtaining the funding for it, Air Mobility Command personnel had not performed any technical inspections to assess the condition of the paint on the C-5 aircraft. Additionally, no other evidence was provided to prove that the fleet had deteriorated as reported.

Inspections of C-5 Aircraft. The San Antonio Air Logistics Centers, which was tasked to repaint the C-5 aircraft, routinely inspects aircraft before repainting them, to determine whether repainting is justified. A scoring system developed by personnel at the San Antonio Air Logistics Command was used to assess the condition of the C-5 aircraft after the Persian Gulf War. Under the scoring system, the exterior surface of the aircraft skin was segmented into 58,963 scoring areas, each 10 inches square. If an aircraft had a score of more than 35,378 points (60 percent or more of segments required repainting), the aircraft qualified to be repainted.

Inspection Results. Inspection records at the San Antonio Air Logistics Center indicated that from April 1991 through October 1993, 29 of the C-5 aircraft were inspected and scored. The scores for the 29 aircraft ranged from 10,068 points to 26,970 points with the average aircraft score being 15,472 (26 percent) points (see Appendix B). Therefore, none of the inspected aircraft qualified for complete repainting.

As early as July 1991, the San Antonio Air Logistics Center informed the Air Force Materiel Command that the C-5 aircraft it had inspected did not qualify for repainting. However, Air Mobility Command personnel informed the San Antonio Air Logistics Center to continue repainting on the accelerated schedule.

Cost of Accelerated Repainting

The projected cost of repainting the remaining 92 C-5 aircraft on an accelerated basis over the next 3 years is $112.1 million. Painting the aircraft in accordance with the original service interval would reduce the requirement to 48 aircraft at a cost of $52.8 million. Accelerating the schedule for repainting each C-5 aircraft will cause the Air Force to incur unnecessary costs of $59.3 million over the next 3 years (see Appendix C).

Beginning in FY 1995, the Air Force will have the capability to repaint 24 C-5 aircraft annually at the San Antonio Air Logistics Center. That will provide sufficient capacity for the Air Force to repaint each C-5 aircraft in accordance with its original service interval (providing the aircraft require repainting at that time) and would eliminate the need for contractor support for the repainting.

Conclusions

Air Force inspections of the condition of the C-5 aircraft that have been repainted since 1991 indicated that none of the aircraft need repainting. We concluded that accelerating the C-5 repainting schedule to change the color and improve the appearance of aircraft is contrary to Air Force policy, is unneeded, and will cause unnecessary expenditures of resources.

Recommendation for Corrective Action

We recommend that the Commander, Air Mobility Command, terminate the accelerated painting plan for the C-5 aircraft and repaint only those aircraft that qualify for repainting.

Management Comments

We provided a draft of this report to the Commander, Air Mobility Command on August 16, 1994. As of September 26, 1994, we had not received formal comments. We request that the Commander, Air Mobility Command provide comments on this final report by October 17, 1994.

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Part III - Additional Information

Appendix A. Aircraft Accelerated for Repainting

	Aircraft Tail Number Model C-5A	Normal Paint Service Due Date	Accelerated Paint Due Date	Ahead Of Schedule Years	Months
1.	68-0216	Nov. 1998	Sept. 1994	4	2
2.	68-0227	Jan. 1998	Sept. 1997	0	4
3.	83-1285	Dec. 1998	Sept. 1997	1	3
4.	84-0050	Feb. 1999	Sept. 1997	1	5
5.	84-0061	May 1999	Sept. 1997	1	8
6.	85-0001	Aug. 1999	Sept. 1997	1	11
7.	85-0002	Sept. 1999	Sept. 1997	2	0
8.	85-0003	Oct. 1999	Sept. 1997	2	1
9.	85-0005	Jan. 2000	Sept. 1997	2	4
10.	86-0011	Aug. 2000	May 1994	6	3
11.	86-0012	Sept. 2000	Oct. 1994	5	11
12.	86-0013	Sept. 2000	Nov. 1994	5	10
13.	86-0014	Oct. 2000	Jan. 1995	5	10
14.	86-0015	Nov. 2000	Sept. 1994	6	2
15.	86-0016	Dec. 2000	Oct. 1994	6	2
16.	86-0017	Dec. 2000	Oct. 1995	5	2
17.	86-0018	Jan. 2001	Nov. 1995	5	2
18.	86-0019	Feb. 2001	Jan. 1995	6	1
19.	86-0020	Mar. 2001	Jan. 1995	6	2
20.	86-0021	May 2001	Jan. 1995	6	4
21.	86-0022	Apr. 2001	Feb. 1995	6	2
22.	86-0023	May 2001	Mar. 1995	6	2
23.	86-0024	June 2001	Mar. 1995	6	3
24.	86-0025	June 2001	Apr. 1995	6	2
25.	86-0026	June 2001	May 1995	6	1
26.	87-0027	July 2001	June 1995	6	1
27.	87-0028	July 2001	June 1995	6	1
28.	87-0029	July 2001	June 1995	6	1
29.	87-0030	Aug. 2001	July 1995	6	1
30.	87-0031	Aug. 2001	July 1995	6	1

	Aircraft Tail Number Model C-5B	Normal Paint Service Due Date	Accelerated Paint Due Date	Ahead Of Schedule Years	Months
31.	87-0032	Sept. 2001	Aug. 1995	6	1
32.	87-0033	Sept. 2001	Aug. 1995	6	1
33.	87-0034	Oct. 2001	Sept. 1995	6	1
34.	87-0035	Oct. 2001	Oct. 1995	6	0
35.	87-0036	Nov. 2001	Nov. 1995	6	0
36.	87-0037	Nov. 2001	Jan. 1996	5	10
37.	87-0038	Nov. 2001	Feb. 1996	5	9
38.	87-0039	Dec. 2001	Mar. 1996	5	9
39.	87-0040	Dec. 2001	Feb. 1996	5	10
40.	87-0041	Jan. 2002	Apr. 1996	5	9
41.	87-0042	Apr. 2002	June 1996	5	10
42.	87-0043	Apr. 2002	June 1996	5	10
43.	87-0044	Apr. 2002	July 1996	5	9
44.	87-0045	Apr. 2002	July 1996	5	9
			Average	5	2 *

*Aircraft will be repainted an average of 5.2 years ahead of their paint service interval.

Appendix B. Scores Applied to C-5 Aircraft Evaluated Before Repainting

	Tail Number	Date of Inspection	Score [1]
1.	66-8305	Mar. 18, 1993	12,702
2.	68-0213	Mar. 18, 1993	24,334
3.	68-0222	Apr. 13, 1992	15,686
4.	68-0223	Mar. 18, 1993	15,692
5.	69-0001	Nov. 18, 1992	22,262
6.	69-0004	Sept. 24, 1993	14,212
7.	69-0005	Oct. 22, 1993	20,399
8.	69-0017	Nov. 23, 1992	26,970
9.	69-0027	June 28, 1991	14,662
10.	70-0447	Sept. 13, 1991	15,172
11.	70-0448	Apr. 22, 1991	10,068
12.	70-0451	Aug. 7, 1991	14,550
13.	70-0452	June 12, 1991	13,938
14.	70-0454	Nov. 24, 1992	23,062
15.	70-0455	June 10, 1992	14,873
16.	70-0456	Apr. 8, 1992	19,333
17.	70-0457	Aug. 29, 1991	15,084
18.	70-0458	Apr. 8, 1992	10,218
19.	70-0459	Aug. 4, 1992	14,138
20.	70-0460	Mar. 25, 1993	14,654
21.	70-0462	Aug. 5, 1992	10,778
22.	70-0463	June 11, 1992	12,546
23.	70-0464	Apr. 9, 1992	16,460
24.	70-0466	June 4, 1992	11,518
25.	70-0459	June 4, 1992	11,572
26.	83-1285	June 3, 1992	15,270
27.	84-0060	June 8, 1992	11,980
28.	84-0062	Aug. 5, 1992	13,463
29.	86-0023	May 10, 1991	13,118
		Average	15,472[2]

[1]A score of 58,963 points is possible. A score of 35,378 (or 60 percent of the aircraft exterior surface in need of repainting) is required to qualify for complete repainting.
[2]The average score for the 29 aircraft evaluated.

Appendix C. Cost of Painting Ahead of Schedule

Cycle	Number of Aircraft (FY 1995 - FY 1997)	Cost (million)
Accelerated[1]	92	$112.1
Normal[2]	48	52.8
Difference[3]	44	$ 59.3

[1]There are 127 C-5 aircraft. By the end of FY 1994, 35 C-5 aircraft will be repainted under the accelerated cycle. The remaining 92 aircraft will be repainted from FY 1995 through the end of FY 1997 at a cost of $112.1 million.
[2]Under the normal paint service program, 48 C-5 aircraft will be due for repainting from the beginning of FY 1995 through the end of FY 1997, at an estimated cost of $52.8 million.
[3]Accelerating the cycle versus repainting at the normal service interval will result in premature painting of 44 aircraft over the next 3 years at an estimated cost of $59.3 million.

Appendix D. Summary of Potential Benefits Resulting From Audit

Recommendation Reference	Description of Benefit	Type and Amount of Benefit
Recommendation	Economy and Efficiency. Reduces the cost of repainting the C-5 aircraft over the next 3 years.	Funds put to better use through reductions in the number of C-5 aircraft repainted over the next 3 years. The Defense Business Operations Fund Appropriation (97X4930) can be reduced by $59.3 million.

Appendix E. Organizations Visited or Contacted

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics, Washington, DC

Department of the Air Force

Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff (Logistics), Washington, DC
Headquarters, Air Force Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH
Headquarters, Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, IL
San Antonio Air Logistics Center, Kelly Air Force Base, TX

Contractors

Chrysler Technologies Airborne Systems, Waco, TX
Lockheed-Georgia Company, Marietta, GA

Appendix F. Report Distribution

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Audit Team Members

Shelton R. Young
Gordon P. Nielsen
Christian Hendricks
James L. Kornides
Gerald P. Montoya
Elizabeth A. Freitag

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