

Survey Spotlight

New C-40A Maintenance Stand Gets an Overhaul

By ATCS(AW) Wallace Williams

The Naval Reserve has a new jet in their inventory. The Boeing-built C-40A Clipper is the replacement for the aging C-9 Skytrains. The C-40A is a member of Boeing's next-generation 737 family and is the first logistics aircraft to join the fleet in 17 years. The first four aircraft were delivered to Logistics Support Squadron Fifty Nine (VR-59) at the Naval Air Station (Joint Reserve Base) Fort Worth, Texas. The fifth and sixth aircraft were delivered in August 2002 to VR-58 at

Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla. The required tools and IMRL equipment to support them were shipped with the aircraft. Among other things, a brand new commercially procured maintenance stand was delivered to both squadrons. But, this item has caused a few problems.

This stand is huge and was designed to allow access to any part of the C-40's fuselage and vertical stabilizer that tower 41 feet 2 inches above the ground. However, the manufacturer delivered the stand without a preventive-maintenance cycle or pre-operational-inspection criteria. Squadron maintainers realized this error and tried to contact the manufacturer; however, after delivering the two stands, the manufacturer went out of business. The squadron was forced to develop local pre-op procedures. During this process, they found much of the connecting hardware was assembled improperly.

The squadron called PWC, and, with their assistance, the squadron inspected the entire maintenance stand. The team then generated a list of discrepancies, documenting many loose nuts and bolts and numerous missing washers. PWC ordered and installed the required hardware. The whole process took several months to complete, and they shared the findings with VR-58.

The maintenance stand at that squadron was in the same substandard condition. The cooperation between VR-59 and PWC resulted in a useable asset being placed into service. Their lessons learned were shared to allow similar problems to be identified and resolved at current and future C-40 squadrons. A big Bravo Zulu to the Sailors of VR-59. During surveys, we often find and report the bad things we see. It was great, this time, to share a positive story.

 Senior Chief Williams is a maintenance analyst at the Naval Safety Center.



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