



ANNEX 3-17 AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS

TYPES OF AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS

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Air mobility allows forces to reach destinations quickly, thereby opening opportunities for seizing the initiative via speed and surprise, and by providing follow-on sustainment of critical materiel. The four types of air mobility operations are:

- ✦ **Airlift.** Airlift is “the movement of personnel and materiel via air mobility forces to support of strategic, operational, or tactical objectives.”¹ Airlift provides rapid, flexible, and secure transportation. Because airlift is a high demand asset, it should be used carefully when satisfying warfighter requirements.
- ✦ **Air Refueling (AR).** AR is defined as “the refueling of an aircraft in flight by another aircraft.”² AR extends presence, increases range, and serves as a force multiplier. AR significantly expands the options available to a commander by increasing the range, payload, persistence, and flexibility of receiver aircraft.
- ✦ **Air Mobility Support.** Air mobility support provides command and control (C2), aerial port, and maintenance for mobility air forces.³ Air mobility support is part of the global air mobility support system (GAMSS). The GAMSS consists of a limited number of permanent en route support locations plus deployable forces that deploy according to a global reach laydown strategy.
- ✦ **Aeromedical Evacuation (AE).** AE provides time-sensitive en route care of regulated casualties to and between medical treatment facilities using organic and/or contracted aircraft with medical aircrew trained explicitly for that mission. AE forces can operate as far forward as aircraft are able to conduct air operations, across the full range of military operations, and in all operating environments. Specialty medical teams may be assigned to work with the AE aircrew to support patients requiring more intensive en route care.

The Air Force description supplements the joint definition in JP 3-17: “AE is the movement of patients under medical supervision to and between medical treatment facilities by air transportation.”⁴ This clarifies that, to provide patient care in the aeromedical environment, Air Force AE crew members and specialty medical teams

¹ Joint Publication 3-17, [Air Mobility Operations](#)

² Ibid

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

receive advanced training and education on the stresses of flight, altitude physiology, and medical equipment designed for the en route care system.
