

USAF DOCTRINE UPDATE
on
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Air mobility has been an integral part of the Air Force since its inception. In fact, President Truman was aboard an **air mobility** asset, a C-54 named “Sacred Cow,” when he signed the National Security Act of 1947 that created the Air Force. In 1948, the *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum*, commonly known as the Key West Agreement, listed “**provide air transport for the Armed Forces**” as one of the 12 primary functions of the new Service. Today, DODD 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*, directs the Air Force to:

“Provide rapid global mobility... to include airlift forces for airborne operations, air logistical support, tanker forces for in-flight refueling, and assets for aeromedical evacuation.”

To update the guidance for air mobility operations, the Air Force recently revised AFDD 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*. The February 2013 revision reorganized the publication to enhance the flow of the material and added doctrinal lessons from recent operations. New material of general interest includes:

The Airman’s Perspective on Air Mobility Operations (page 8)

- Air mobility enables joint force commanders to simultaneously exploit mass, maneuver, and surprise (flexibility), thereby influencing effects at the strategic, operational, or tactical levels of war (versatility).
- The preferred command relationship for intertheater Mobility Air Forces (MAF) is for the functional command to support the geographic combatant command. Command and control of air mobility aircraft performing multiple-role missions on the same sortie should be vested in one authority, normally the COMAFFOR.
- Effective integration of intertheater and intratheater air mobility operations is critical to efficient and timely air mobility support to the warfighter.
- Because air mobility supports multiple competing common users, the necessity to prioritize and apportion limited resources favors centralized control of intertheater air mobility operations.
- Successful employment of the airlift and air refueling (AR) force is contingent upon establishing and maintaining an air mobility support force enabled by the core capabilities provided by combat support.
- For MAF performing primarily intertheater operations, the normal command relationship between functional and geographic organizations is support.
- Airland delivery, as opposed to airdrop, is the preferred method of delivery when conditions permit, because it is the more efficient, safer, and less expensive way.
- The prepositioning of Global Air Mobility Support System forces should be accomplished ahead of combat force deployment (whether Air Force or sister Service).

- AR significantly expands the force options available to a commander by increasing the range, payload, persistence, and flexibility of other aircraft.
- The success of worldwide air mobility operations depends on the combined efforts of Regular forces, ANG forces, AFRC forces, Air Force civilians, and civilian air transportation partners.

Air Mobility Command Relationships (page 10-11)

- AMC is the Air Component to USTRANSCOM making the AMC/CC the COMAFFOR to CDRUSTRANSCOM.
- CDRUSTRANSCOM normally delegates OPCON to AMC/CC, who normally further delegates OPCON to the commander, 18th Air Force (18 AF) for day-to-day execution.
- 18 AF, Air Forces Transportation (AFTRANS), is USTRANSCOM’s designated component numbered Air Force (C-NAF). AFTRANS controls air mobility operations through the 618 AOC (TACC).

Integration of Functional and Geographic Mobility Structures (page 16-17)

- Frequently, specific forces may be established in direct support to a GCC or an organization subordinate to the GCC. When established in direct support, the AMC-controlled forces are authorized to respond directly to the supported commander’s operational mission requirements. Instead of receiving requirements validated by their owning command, these forces receive requirements validated by the supported command’s Deployment and Distribution Operations Center (DDOC).
- To better meet the Army’s air transport needs, there is the evolving practice called direct support-apportioned (DS-A). Here the Air Force retains OPCON of airlift forces, and apportions a certain amount of the common-user airlift pool to support Army requirements. This improves responsiveness to the supported Army unit while preserving efficient use of the airlift fleet.

Director of Mobility Forces (page 15)

- The DIRMOBFOR is a senior mobility officer, normally attached to the COMAFFOR’s special staff, who focuses on operational-level issues and, with appropriate liaison authority, coordinates with other agencies on behalf of the COMAFFOR. The COMAFFOR grants the DIRMOBFOR coordinating authority for all air mobility issues and with agencies affecting air mobility operations. (see figure 2.2)

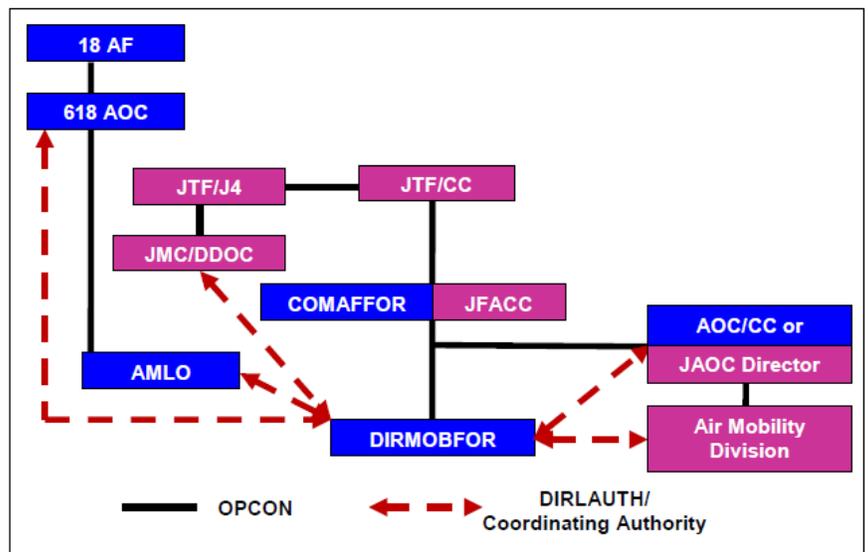


Figure 2.2. DIRMOBFOR Coordination

