

# Corps builds training complex Air Force C-5 flyers

**Story and photos by Edward Rivera  
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Last June, the 433rd Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, broke ground on highly-anticipated facilities allowing the C-5 Galaxy, cargo aircraft Formal Training Unit, to move from Altus Air Force Base, Okla. to Lackland AFB, Texas, to make room for the C-17, Globemaster III, cargo aircraft FTU move to Altus.

Currently, the Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is administering the \$17 million project. The 37th Training Wing and the 433rd AW are providing base and user oversight for the project, which is one of the largest ongoing contracts the Corps has with AFRC.

The project, which consists of a three story, 69,000 square-foot Ground Training School and a 25,000 square-foot Flight Training School must be finished by its completion date in September. From the start of the project, all involved have been on a tight schedule.

“The first obstacle, if you can call it that, is the very ambitious construction schedule,” said Col. John C. Fobian, commander, 433rd AW. “This project has a 15-month construction period. Normally, a project of this scope and complexity would require between 18 and 21 months for construction.”

Fobian added the Air Force goal of bringing the C-17 FTU on-line as soon as possible at Altus required relocation of the C-5 FTU at a faster timeline. “There is virtually no ‘float’ or time that can be lost which will not impact the project's completion,” he said.

The new C-5 FTU will train pilots, flight engineers and loadmasters in C-5 aircraft operations. Academics and flight simulator training are just some of the items that will be taught in the new buildings.

So far, the project is close to its projected timeline, but with large, complex structures and the high-tech equipment involved, there can be numerous causes for delays which require taking time to find solutions to overcome them.

According to Jason S. Price the project engineer with C-5 Training Schoolhouse Complex Project Delivery Team at the Lackland Resident Office, teamwork and communication between all the parties has helped solve many issues that have arisen. Contributing to the successful

communication are Lackland Resident Office members, Larry Reser, Quality Assurance Representative, who closely works with the construction aspects of the project and Resident Engineer John Curtis, who has managed the administrative aspects of the project.

“Excellent communication helped overcome an early design problem encountered by the field office and the contractor,” said Price. “They discovered the power support needed to service the simulators was insufficient.”

In order to resolve the power issue, the project delivery team and Fort Worth District Project Managers Kendall Waldie and Bobbi Farrell provided immediate support by engaging the electrical engineer of record.

“The engineer attended a field meeting at the Resident Office to address the power support issues,” said Price. “The contract drawings were reviewed and a design fix was provided.”

The building that will house the simulators will closely resemble the facility at Altus except that it will be a bit smaller. According to David Bruton, C-5 Aircrew Training Device Equipment Specialist, Detachment 2, Scott, AFB, Ill., the new facility will house three simulators worth about \$80 million. “At this time we have a \$14 million simulator from McCord Air Force Base, Wash. in storage waiting to be installed when the Lackland facility is ready,” said Bruton.

For pilots and aircrew members, training in a flight simulator allows them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, so when on an actual mission they are prepared for anything. Being prepared for anything is also on the mind of the project team members where delays may come from an unpredictable source, the weather.

“While there are many obstacles which could impact the project's completion date, at this point weather has the most potential to delay the work,” said Fobian. “We've been very fortunate as far as weather is concerned. Up to the present time, there has been no time lost to weather delays.”

According to Fobian, the building's shell -- walls, windows, exterior doors and roof -- should be completed in May which would take weather delays out of the equation. “But until then, there's always a chance weather can hamper progress,” said Fobian.

Due to the expedited nature of the project, an enormous amount of preplanning and scheduling had to take place in order to aggressively tackle the challenging timeline. Once the

building is weather tight, the interior construction will be fast-tracked, following a preplanned conceptual schedule.

According to Price, they scheduled as much required contract trade work, such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural support that can be accomplished simultaneously without causing any interference with each other. Fobian added jobs can also be staggered to start construction. As soon as a prerequisite trade has completed a particular task or floor, then the next trade follows immediately behind them.

"I'm confident the facilities will be ready as soon as possible and that the 433 AW will meet the ambitious C-5 FTU transition schedule to relocate all active duty, Guard and Reserve C-5 aircrew training to Lackland," said Fobian.

Building quality working relationships and maintaining communication has so far been the key to keeping close to the tight schedule. According to Fobian, the relationship between the Corps of Engineers, the 433 AW, and 37 TRW has been a model of cooperation.

"The Corps was proactive in scheduling the project's pre-construction meeting as well as a 'partnering' meeting between the Corps, both wings, and the contractor to set the tone of cooperation to achieve our common goal," said Fobian. "Since construction started, each of the entities involved with the C-5 FTU has been responsive when it comes to working issues, and on a project of this scope, there have been a number of issues. Many other Air Force functions, too many to list, have also been instrumental in the design and construction of the FTU. However, at all times, the focus of all parties has been the completion of the projects and bringing the FTU on-line and on schedule."

*Note: Edward Rivera is also a Technical Sergeant in the Air Force Reserve and is assigned to the 433rd Training Squadron as a Military Training Instructor.*



**Col. John R. Minahan (left), commander, Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers goes over the C-5 Schoolhouse Complex project update, while Jason S. Price (right), the project engineer at the Lackland Resident Office briefs Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko, commander, Southwestern Division, USACE, along with Project Managers Kendall Waldie, Fort Worth District (second from left) and George Cardenas, Lackland Resident Office (second from right).**



**Jason S. Price the project engineer with the Lackland Resident Office, Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, gives Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko, commander, Southwestern Division, USACE a project update on the C-5 Schoolhouse Complex, as Denny Dodge, San Antonio Area Engineer observes the construction process.**



There are many obstacles which could impact the project's completion date, weather delays being the most unpredictable. The building's shell -- walls, windows, exterior doors and roof-- should be completed in May which would take weather delays out of the equation.