

Airlift Over, MATS Resumes World-Wide Schedules

Now that Operation Vittles has come to a successful end, the Military Air Transport Service is restoring its world-wide schedules.

First portion of the far-flung MATS network to return to pre-blockade schedules was medical air evacuation within the U. S. The level of foreign and domestic service maintained before MATS planes and men were concentrated in the Berlin airlift is expected to be restored in all respects by the end of 1949.

August 1 marked the beginning of the end for the Vittles airlift. "Phasing out" continued until 31 October. Civilian contractors gave each airlift plane a 1,000-hour overhaul as the C-54 four-motored transports returned to the states. None of the MATS C-54s was restored to duty without such a reconditioning.

Squadron VR-6 which formerly operated in the Pacific will be assigned duty at Westover Air Force Base, Chicopee Falls, Mass. Squadron VR-8 will return to the Pacific division and be based at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Both of these Navy squadrons established

fine performance records while working with the combined airlift task force in Germany.

Squadron VR-3 will operate over continental division routes in the U. S. This squadron was assigned to transatlantic support runs during nine months of Operation Vittles.

The replacement training unit at Great Falls, Mont., is being converted into a transport training unit. Its emphasis will be on training crews for new Boeing C-97A heavy transports assigned to MATS. Pilots, engineers, mechanics, traffic personnel and others will be trained at that transport training unit.

Many C-54s belonging to the Air Force will be released by the phasing out. Some of these will be put on the Great Falls, Mont.-to-Alaska run and some will be assigned to the Caribbean area. Certain squadrons will go to the Pacific division. There they will relieve a number of Navy JRM flying boats and planes of the Marine Corps and the Far East Air Force.

Lessons learned during Operation Vittles are being used to refine further the organization of MATS.