Challenge

Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) is the home of Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex (WR-ALC), the 78th Air Base Wing, and more than 60 other units that make up a vital part of the Air Force war fighting team. It is the largest industrial enterprise in the southeast, employing a workforce of over 25,584 civilians, contractors, and military members.

The WR-ALC provides depot aircraft and parts maintenance, engineering support and software development to major weapon systems (F-15, C-5, C-130, C-17 and Special Operations Forces aircraft). The Complex achieves command objectives providing a capability/capacity to support peacetime maintenance requirements, wartime emergency demands, aircraft battle damage repair and a ready source of maintenance of critical items.

In 2009, several RAFB’s civilian employees became concerned about dust (resulting from sanding and grinding painted aircraft parts and components) and the potential that the dust contained significant levels of lead, hexavalent chromium six, and possibly cadmium. In 2010, a call was made to OSHA who came on site and conducted an extensive inspection of the industrial areas that were suspected of contamination. This inspection resulted in RAFB receiving thirty-nine (39) OSHA citations for dust contamination, lack of housekeeping procedures, PPE (personal protection equipment) violations, fall protection violations, record keeping violations and more. The inspection, findings and citations were a shock to RAFB, the Air Force and Congress.

MainStream Team and Approach

MainStream deployed a management consultant with deep ESOH and Enterprise Strategy Deployment experience to attack this problem and support WR-ALC in resolving their OSHA citations. MainStream took an enterprise approach in working with the Base Leadership to develop a recovery plan. The enterprise approach involved getting the leadership on board and focusing the recovery on being in alignment with the strategic plan for the Base. Moreover, it was recognized how important communications would be to the recovery plan, and strong two way stakeholder communications were put in place to support the recovery. Underlying all of this was a focused change management effort that would provide the capability for the Base to sustain a safe and healthy work environment over time.

WR-ALC Overview

The WR-ALC performs sustainment and depot maintenance on a number of US Air Force weapon systems including the:

- AC-130
- C-5 Galaxy
- C-17 Globemaster III
- C-130 Hercules
- E-8 Joint STARS
- EC-130
- F-15 Eagle
- HC-130
- HH-60 Pave Hawk
- MC-130
- MH-53 Pave Low
- RQ-4 Global Hawk
- U-2 Dragon Lady
- UH-1 Iroquois aircraft
**Workplace Safety and Occupational Health: US Air Force**

**Actions**

In 2011 RAFB formed a senior level, cross functional Team to investigate the OSHA citations, determine the root causes that led to the citations and develop recommendations for abating the citations. This multi-disciplinary team consisted of engineering, safety, occupational health, bioengineering, environmental, labor, maintenance, public relations, senior management professionals. Shortly after the “Team” was formed, Mainstream was contracted to provide the “Team” with a senior level management consultant who could help facilitate and guide the “Team” through discovery, analysis, assessment, solutions and recommendations. MainStream joined the ”Team” and provided external industry experience, perspective, ideas, and thinking that helped the “Team” see the root causes of Robin’s citations and helped the “Team” frame a safety strategy, solutions, recommendations to abate Robin’s citations, and a plan to sustain a safe and healthy industrial workplace.

In the fall of 2011, the “Team” presented (to Robin’s senior leadership) a Safety Strategy for RAFB that included a recommendation for a Safety Management System (SMS) to establish governance, standard policies, standard procedures, standard processes and controls for managing workplace safety and occupational health. The “Team” recommended that the Safety Management System be structured around the elements of ANSI Z10 and VPP. In late 2011, RAFB began implementing their Safety Management System (SMS). MainStream and business partner Georgia Tech Research Institute (under the direction of MainStream) were retained to assist with the implementation. Through 2012, MainStream has assisted RAFB with establishing a new structure for governing safety and health, defining and developing the elements and structure of their SMS, and identifying and prioritizing workplace hazards. Simultaneously Robins has been abating their thirty-nine (39) OSHA citations.

In implementing the Safety Management System, it has become evident that having the right organizational culture is critical to sustaining a safe and healthy workplace. To address this need MainStream has provided professional behavioral expertise to assess RAFB’s culture and understand the behavioral gaps that RAFB must overcome in order to establish and sustain a workplace culture that values safety and health. MainStream is now assisting RAFB’s leadership with establishing a base wide culture of “Safety” and behaviors that value a safe and healthy workplace.

**Results**

MainStream helped WR-ALC abate all 39 OSHA Citations and make workplace safety and occupational health an integral part of RAFB’s business strategy. All industrial groups have safety and health goals. A Safety Management System is being implemented across RAFB. Moreover, VPP is being revitalized [http://www.robins.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123328132](http://www.robins.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123328132). RAFB is no longer on the DoD’s safety watch list. RAFB is being transformed to a culture that values a safe and healthy workplace.

**WR-ALC Quick Facts**

- During World War II the WR-ALC took on a number of roles focusing on aircraft procurement and sustainment.

- Today, to accomplish its mission WR-ALC employs nearly 13,000 civilians.

- The 78th Air Base Wing provides support facilities and equipment for all Robins Air Force Base associate units. It is responsible for logistics, medical, civil engineering, security, and morale services for a base population of nearly 40,000 personnel.