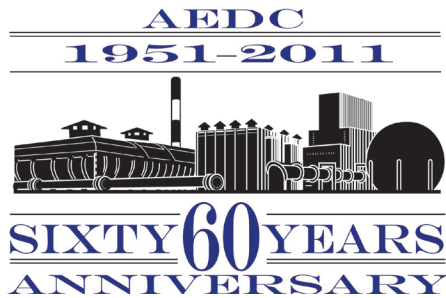


AEDC's Bob Rogers looking forward, not back



By Shawn Jacobs
Aerospace Testing Alliance

With Arnold Engineering Development Center (AEDC) celebrating its 60th anniversary June 25, at least one man can recall most of those years as an employee.

Records show Tullahoma, Tenn., native Bob Rogers, 76, is the longest consecutively employed worker, with more than 54 years of service. Having hired in Nov. 8, 1956, Rogers was honored five years ago as the first person to hit 50 years of continuous service at AEDC.

Rogers also holds another distinction: he has worked in the same building, the von Kármán Gas Dynamics Facility Compressor Building for all of those years.

"[I started out] upstairs in the old portion of the building," Rogers said. "The high pressure addition (HPA) portion was added in 1970. I moved to this corner of the office at that time and have been here ever since."

Currently as a member of the Aerospace Testing Alliance (ATA) Materials Control Team, he is the inventory manager of 16 active bench stock areas. Rogers also works with system engineers and maintenance managers to help establish spare parts for their assets. A large percentage of his time is spent with data collection and analysis involving materials and services.

With all those years on the job,



Bob Rogers, inventory manager for ATA's Materials Control Team, examines inventory in one of the bench stock areas for which he is responsible March 24. With more than 54 years of service, records show Rogers is AEDC's longest consecutively employed worker. (Photo by Rick Goodfriend)

Rogers enjoys what he does.

"Not only is the job interesting, it's challenging – new things happening every day – welcome to the world of material management," he said. "And the people I work with are so great – not only the members of the Material Control Team, but folks like the people here in the office and shop. You couldn't ask for a better crew to work with."

"I've had some wonderful supervisors over the years. My current supervisor, David Uselton, and I had worked together on various projects for many years prior to him accepting the position of Materials Control manager. Dave has assembled a good working team and the Materials Control members are all constantly striving to make improvements to provide better support to our customers."

Even though he has been in-

involved in some form of material management his entire career, Rogers' job has changed incrementally over the years. He has added more responsibilities and dropped a few, but the biggest change has involved technology.

"Just from my little corner of the world we see things like how we started out banging on typewriters and came up through the computer age from dumb terminals into the much more sophisticated machines that we have now," Rogers said. "Our first 'computer' in this office was the size of a desk, and when you typed on this monster you could hear it all over the office. It actually recorded onto a tape spool on the side of the machine instead of a hard drive. Our first real copy machine was a Thermofax hand-me-down from the commander's office – actually nothing more than a light



Bob Rogers, 13th from left, is among those honored for five years of service with ARO in December 1961. (File Photo)

bulb in a box using thermal paper – but that was pretty hot stuff for its time.”

But Rogers likes the technology and said it has made his job easier.

“Oh, yes, definitely,” he said. “And it’s interesting. I like to stay abreast of things,” pointing to his new, personal Apple iPad lying on his desk.

Rogers works from 6 a.m.-2:30 p.m., but he arrives even earlier.

“Normally I get here about 5:30, about the time they open up Gate 2 every morning and get to talk with the guard for a few minutes when I come in,” he said. “Those guards are some of the most unappreciated people in the world, I think, because they do a fantastic job. Not only are

they concerned with the security of the base, they always take time to smile and greet you as you enter the gate. That gives you a great start to your day.”

Even when he’s not working, Rogers keeps busy. He enjoys jogging, playing piano and organ, reading and doing his genealogy research.

“My church family plays a large part in my life,” Rogers said. “I joined First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tullahoma in 1950, have been a member of the chancel choir for 61 years, been playing the piano for worship service for the past 17-to-18 years, work with the food pantry and currently am the chair for the Memori-

als Committee.”

People often ask Rogers about the prospect of his retirement, but that is a subject not even on his radar.

“What’s retirement?” he asked. “No, I don’t really have any plans for it now. The Lord’s been good to me and given me good health all my life, so with good health, I don’t really have any plans for retirement as long as I can continue to provide assistance to our customers.”

Rogers says he is very optimistic about the future of the base.

“I’m looking forward to even greater things happening for ATA and AEDC.”