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## **ACC commander defends role of B-1**

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DYESS AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (ACCNS) -- The B-1 can carry more bombs, carry them faster, and just as far as any other bomber, so it's going to be a workhorse. So said Gen. Dick Hawley, Air Combat Command commander, during a visit here recently.

"I work with Atlantic Command and Central Command, our primary customers for all this deployed work we do, to make sure we think through the taskings (for deployments). We're trying very hard to persuade our joint (commanders in chief) that the Air Force can respond from home station in a timely way with lots of punch and satisfy their need for combat power. The B-1 plays a great role in that, of course, because of its great global capabilities."

With the Conventional Munitions Upgrade Program in full swing, the B-1's survivability and lethality make it the backbone of the bomber force, according to Hawley.

"For a long time a lot of fingers were pointed at the B-1," said Hawley. "'It's never been in combat, how come we have this expensive aircraft - nobody's using it.' Well, we've got the B-1 deployed today -- they've been deployed almost nonstop for the last year. They've been a part of (air expeditionary forces) deployed to the Middle East. We've got three of them deployed to the Middle East today," he said.

"Our commanders in chief understand the potential of the B-1. I went around this past year and visited all the geographical CINCs, the warfighting CINCs, and I gave them an extended briefing ... to encourage them to fully fold the bombers into their mission planning, they're operation planning, and they've all benefited from that. My feedback is they ... understand and appreciate the value of our bombers, especially the B-1."

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