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## **Mountain Home people deploy to EFX '98**

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MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho (ACCNS) - Nearly 600 366th Wing people and more than 30 aircraft from here are participating in Expeditionary Force Experiment 1998 at Duke Field, Fla.

Expeditionary force experiments are events designed to test new initiatives to complement the development of the recently-announced Expeditionary Aerospace Force - the restructuring of the Air Force into units that will provide the core for 10 air expeditionary forces. Under the new concept, each AEF will be "on call" during a 90-day rotation to respond to any potential world crisis.

EFX's are different from the traditional exercise, said Air Force officials. Exercises train military members on proven and established procedures, while experiments test new, unproven initiatives, doctrine and equipment which may become a reality in the future.

The scenario for this year's experiment is a rogue nation attacking one of America's trusted allies. At the request of the ally, the United States responds with an AEF. As America's only standing AEF, the 366th Wing will provide the bulk of the response force.

"We're the proven model for the AEF," said Brig. Gen. Mark Schmidt, 366th Wing commander. "Our expeditionary experience makes us uniquely qualified to show the world how light, lean and lethal expeditionary airpower can be."

EFX '98 focuses on command and control and will be a combination of flying operations, simulations and computer modeling - testing nearly 40 initiatives and involving Air Force and other service units from around the country.

The 366th Wing is involved in many of the Air Force initiatives, to include the Expeditionary Operations Center, the Beyond Line of Sight, and the Integrated Planning and Execution Capability initiatives.

The EOC En Route, said Air Combat Command officials, will allow friendly forces to plan and execute missions while on the way to a hostile area.

A specially-equipped 22nd Air Refueling Squadron KC-135R Stratotanker from here has been modified to carry a portable Expeditionary Operations Center. It will provide intelligence and weather analysis, mission planning, air defense integration, aircraft status monitoring, command post and other operations functions. The aircraft has been outfitted with a phased array communication antenna so crewmembers can rapidly receive large amounts of data at global distances.

The EOC En Route initiative is a combined effort by 366th Operations Support Squadron and Air Expeditionary Force Battlelab people.

Two 34th Bomb Squadron B-1B Lancers from here have been modified to carry state-of-the-art technology including Joint Tactical Information Distribution System, Combat Track II, Multisource Tactical System and Airborne Warning and Control software.

This Beyond-Line-of-Site Datalink capability will provide aircrews with improved command and control via secure worldwide communications, color moving maps and in-flight electronic mail.

One of the modified aircraft successfully completed five test flights in preparation for the experiment, according to Boeing officials who are working with the Air Force on the BLOS initiative. The tests confirmed that the B-1B's advanced data link can provide the bomber with an unprecedented situational awareness through all parts of its mission profiles.

Wing and battlelab people involved in the IPEC initiative will use laptop computers and a suite of government and commercial software to determine what resources are available at forward locations and transmit that information to a central database.

This capability will also allow them to integrate air tasking orders to build deployment packages; shortfalls with munitions, fuel, lodging and feeding. It will also allow them to use geographical information and overhead photography to build a tent city on computers, design aircraft parking areas, force protection plans and more before the first AEF aircraft has even departed.

EFX '98 will cost approximately \$40 million, but according to experiment officials, up to 40 percent of that investment will continue to be used by the Air Force. For instance, the 34th Bomb Squadron will continue to test the BLOS system throughout 1999.