



Space gets greater role in Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment '99

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*by Capt. LeWonnice Belcher
Air Force Space Command Public Affairs*

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (AFPN) -- Looking at ways space systems can help in "Forging a Decisive Edge" in future conflicts is one of the prime objectives during the upcoming Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment 1999.

JEFX '99 is scheduled to take place Aug. 18 through Sept. 3, and is the second in a series of Air Force experiments that examines advanced technologies and new operational concepts to determine how the military will operate in the 21st century.

This year's event will feature an even larger role for space, according to Lt. Col. Matt Mills, Air Force Space Command's chief of exercise and employment branch.

During the course of JEFX '99, C2 technology integration and process development will be examined closely, and actual air and space systems will be augmented through modeling and simulation technologies -- some representing advanced future capabilities, Mills said.

One of the main objectives of the experiment will be to test "reach back" capabilities, the ability to support contingency operations anywhere in the world from the continental United States, from a command and control perspective.

This will be done by having a Coalition Forces Air Component Commander, or CFACC, and his staff assemble at a Coalition Air Operations Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. They will be charged with providing overall C2 for the "deployment" location of the simulated theater of conflict. The Air Force Operational Support Center will stand up at Langley Air Force Base, Va., in support of the CFACC. Additional primary sites will provide direct support to the CFACC using virtual C2 collaborative systems.

Feedback on the results of JEFX '99 will be provided by an assessment team and then published in a final report that will go to the chief of staff of the Air Force.

According to Maj. Russ Smith, the experiment project officer for JEFX '99, space systems capabilities are crucial to ensuring the success of AEFs as it relates to the overall expeditionary aerospace force.

"In fact, without space the EAF cannot occur," he said. "The simplest example is communications. Without satellite communications to enable the en route updates to the

CFACC and the en route reprogramming -- or actual programming -- of a weapons platform, the EAF just cannot occur. Period."

Additionally, the less obvious role of space is the intelligence preparation of the battlefield, or the IPB, according to Smith.

"Without the capabilities of overhead assets being brought to bear on any type of battlespace, there is no situational awareness," Smith said. "The people making the plans that the warfighter will implement have no information from which to build their plan without space. Those systems enable the CFACC and the senior planners and their senior decision-makers to have a more complete picture.

"We want that picture to be larger and more robust than what the enemy has so that we can make decisions faster," he said. "That's the whole point -- to get things going quicker than the enemy can. Space systems are absolutely vital to the life and health of an AEF."

Also, space systems will play a significant role in expanding and enhancing reach back capability, according to Col. Larry D. James, director of operations for 14th Air Force.

"We'll be looking at providing space data from the 14th Air Force Aerospace Operations Center as well as providing operational support that the theater requests."

James said other things that will be looked at during JEFX '99 include the integration and coordination of Air and Space Tasking Orders.

"We're working to ensure that the Space Tasking Order that we put out on a daily basis is properly formatted and able to be integrated into the Air Tasking Order so that someday we will be able to work from an integrated ATO."

The ultimate gain for the role of space in JEFX '99 may be the increased awareness among those in Air Force Space Command about their role in the aerospace force.

"The EFX environment is now allowing space command to educate space operators that what they do has impact and what they do actually supports a different wartime effort than what they are used to thinking about," according to Smith.

Conversely, JEFX is letting the "air breathers" know what capabilities space brings to the fight.

"Space command understands the power of space systems, but we've got to educate the rest of the world," Smith said. "What's in it for the rest of the Air Force is that they get to see a whole new tool box of what's out there. That's the beauty of JEFX. It's instituting a cultural shift."

JEFX '99 is the culmination of a year-long effort that includes three mini-experiments, or "spirals," and concludes with a two-week "execution period" that begins on Aug. 18. The

spiral system helps to field new and emerging technologies quickly using commercial and government "off-the-shelf" equipment. Spiral development brings the developers and operators side-by-side to review and improve the systems.

The first spiral tested command and control, or C2, systems software used in the experiment. The second integrated and tested C2 system and process initiatives at experiment sites. The third, which began July 14 and runs through the 21st, is a dry run for the JEFX execution phase that kicks off in August.

The experiment includes live and simulated flying operations and related military activities designed to add realism to stress-filled combat-like environments. All live-fly operations will occur at Nellis AFB, Nev.

The "crisis" scenario for this year's event involves a simulated attack by a border rogue nation against one of America's overseas allies. At the request of the embattled nation, the United States will send an aerospace expeditionary force to counter the attack.

The 366th Wing from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, forms the core of the Aerospace Expeditionary Force needed for the response. As part of the exercise, Mountain Home must prepare aircraft and personnel for deployment and coordinate with the 53rd Wing from Eglin AFB, Fla., the core wing for an already in-place AEF.

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