



**They're saying that the force is going back to its roots as a deployable force to be reckoned with.**

# An



*A mini-Air Force unto itself, the 366th Wing from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, hustles off on another emergency deployment. With bombers, strike and air superiority fighters, tankers, defense-suppression aircraft, and support crews, the 366th is one of two crisis-response wings now always at the ready for pop-up contingencies requiring flexible air- and space power.*

*The Air Force has restructured its combat elements into 10 Aerospace Expeditionary Forces that will take turns dealing with the ongoing press of deployments worldwide. Though the new structure can't reduce the workload, it can at least make deployments more predictable, manageable, and less haphazard—restoring some of the quality of life for USAF personnel which the harried pace of operations has taken from them in the last decade. The 366th and the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., won't be part of the 10 AEFs but will trade off being ready to hop to a no-notice crisis. The AEFs are not designed for emergency response but rather for force management.*

# Expeditionary Force

Photography by USAF Combat Camera Photographers

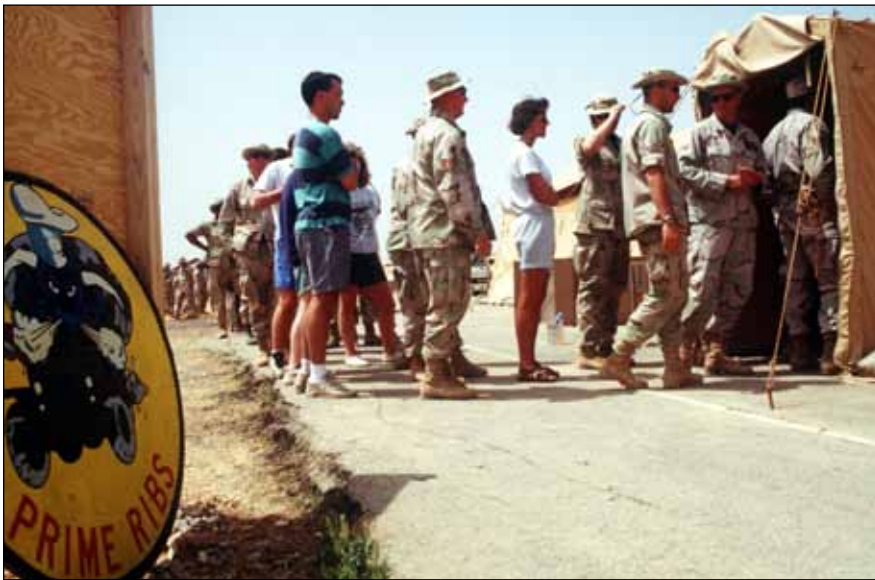


Since the 1991 Gulf War, a slew of contingencies requiring everything from humanitarian relief and rescue to all-out air campaigns has kept the Air Force in perpetual motion. Unfortunately, the old Cold War structure of a chiefly Stateside-garrisoned service made the quickening pace of operations a maddening merry-go-round of deployment after deployment. Normal training, military education, and the family life of service members suffered. The Aerospace Expeditionary Force structure will allow most USAF personnel enough time to get proficiency training, go to school, and have count-on-it time with the family.



USAF photo by SSgt. Paul R. Caron

USAF photo by SSgt. Paul R. Caron



Air Force people by now have grown accustomed to setting up air bases where none existed before. The AEF eliminates much of the ad hoc nature of deployments, keeping units together and giving them months of forewarning of where they'll go, what they'll need there, and what threats they'll face. Conditions likely will remain spartan; as Air Combat Command chief Gen. John P. Jumper has said, the Air Force is "getting back to its roots ... of living under the wing." The troops are getting very good at hitting the ground running: For Operation Allied Force, USAF set up some 21 expeditionary bases almost overnight.

Setting up a new operating site means bringing along only what is absolutely needed: tents to live in, a chow hall, communications, security, and, of course, airplanes and fuel. Above and left, troops work on a tent and line up for chow during a pioneering expeditionary deployment in 1996.

USAF photo by SSgt. Paul R. Caron



While some gear is pre-positioned, much has to be brought from home. At right, a C-17 loadmaster supervises loading an F-16 fuel pylon for the 169th FW, the Air National Guard's first wing dedicated to Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses, on its way to Turkey for AEF 4. The AEF stresses the Total Force: Guard and Reserve play an even bigger role in routine operations than before.



USAF photo by SSgt. Gerard C. Gamble



USAF photo by SrA Greg L. Dawis

*Don't leave home without it: The F-16CJ, as the new SEAD specialist aircraft, is crucial to helping pave the way for any pickup air operation. The Air Force has, in fact, ordered 30 more F-16s so that each AEF has enough SEAD airplanes. These two CJs, from the 78th Fighter Squadron at Shaw AFB, S.C., are shown patrolling the no-fly zone in southern Iraq.*



USAF photo by SSgt Paul R. Caron

*The threat posed by an F-16CJ equipped with the HARM Targeting System and the High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile kept most anti-aircraft missile operators in Iraq and Yugoslavia either off the air or shooting blind. Above right, SSgt. William G. Staton loads an Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile radar-guided dogfight missile onto an F-16CJ from Mountain Home's 389th FS during an early expeditionary deployment to Southwest Asia.*



*The AEFs can bring with them a wide assortment of ordnance, stocks of which can be tailored for the area in which the AEF will operate. These F-15Es can carry the bruising 2000-pound GBU-15 glide bomb, as shown.*

## Buckets of Capability

### AEF 1

<b>Lead Wing</b>	<b>388th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah</b>
F-15C	19th FS, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
<b>F-16</b>	<b>115th FW Wisconsin ANG/183rd FW Illinois ANG</b>
F-16CG	421st FS, Hill AFB, Utah
F-16CJ	79th FS, Shaw AFB, S.C.
A-10	74th FS, Pope AFB, N.C.
	442nd FW, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
	926th FW, NAS JRB New Orleans, La.
B-52H	96th BS, Barksdale AFB, La.

#### Combat Support

116 Bases 12,718 People

#### Lead Mobility Wing 43rd Airlift Wing, Pope AFB, N.C.

KC-135	92nd ARS, Fairchild AFB, Wash.
C-130	39th AS, Dyess AFB, Texas
KC-10	305th AMW, McGuire AFB, N.J.
C-21	47th Airlift Flight, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

### AEF 2

#### Lead Wing 7th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas

F-15C	58th FS, Eglin AFB, Fla.
<b>F-16</b>	<b>120th FW, Montana ANG</b>
F-15E	494th FS, RAF Lakenheath, UK
F-16CJ	23rd FS, Spangdahlem AB, Germany
B-1	9th BS, Dyess AFB, Texas

#### Combat Support

109 Bases 10,466 People

#### Lead Mobility Wing 43rd Airlift Wing, Pope AFB, N.C.

KC-135	905th and 906th ARS, Grand Forks AFB, N.D.
C-130	39th AS, Dyess AFB, Texas
KC-10	305th AMW, McGuire AFB, N.J.
C-21	47th ALF, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

### Crisis Response AEW

<b>Lead Wing</b>	<b>4th Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.</b>
F-15E	335th and 336th FS, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.
F-16CG	34th FS, Hill AFB, Utah
F-117	9th FS, Holloman AFB, N.M.
B-2	325th BS, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
KC-135	19th ARG, Robins AFB, Ga.
C-130	40th AS, Dyess AFB, Texas

#### Combat Support

35 Bases 2,525 people

The AEFs are intended to be a rounded mix of capabilities: Air Force officials call them “buckets of capability.” They will not deploy as a group and have no overall commanders, but will provide necessary elements that can be dispatched as needed. The AEFs will rarely be identically equipped; the capabilities in them will vary depending on the region involved. For instance, F-16s with AMRAAMs may be deemed adequate for fighter cover in one region, while only F-15Cs will do elsewhere.

The AEF 1 and AEF 2 breakouts at left illustrate the capabilities an AEF might employ. Likewise, below left, the breakout for Seymour Johnson illustrates Aerospace Expeditionary Wing capabilities.

A lead wing is designated for each AEF to provide leadership if some of the package is deployed somewhere where there isn't a command structure already in place. Many AEFs will augment USAFE capabilities, for example, and will simply “plug and play,” while others will start from scratch on an empty strip somewhere and will need a provisional wing structure. Likewise, a lead mobility wing will be designated for each pair of AEFs, again, tailored with capabilities required at the intended deployment areas. In case there is inadequate infrastructure at the expeditionary site—air traffic controllers and equipment or weather experts, for example—the mobility wings will send their own crews to flesh out the site.

To help the AEFs get ready for their deployments, an AEF Center has been set up at Langley AFB, Va. Two teams—Blue and Silver, which will alternate coaching AEF pairs—will provide continuity, monitor readiness, suggest training germane to the deployment, coordinate it, and suggest improvements for the next time.

Air National Guard Unit

Air Force Reserve Command Unit

# The Schedule

Recovery  
Normal Training and Exercises

Prep and spin up to deployment

AEF 1/2					
Oct.	Dec.	Jan.	AEF 3/4		
			AEF 5/6		
				AEF 7/8	
					AEF 9/10
					Oct. Dec.
<b>Expeditionary Base Leadership</b> 10 Combat Leads					
388th FW / 7th BW		3rd Wing / 48th FW		355th Wing / 20th FW	
				2nd BW / 28th BW	
				27th FW / 1st FW	
<b>5 Mobility Leads</b>					
43rd AW		60th AMW		22nd ARW	
				319th ARW	
				92nd ARW	

## 2 Crisis Response AEWs

4th FW	366th Wing	4th FW	366th Wing	4th FW
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## Low Density/High Demand Units

Two AEFs are on call at any one time. Each will spend 90 days dealing with deployments, followed by a rest period (up to two weeks), then a training/education period (about 10 months), and finally a spin-up block (about two months prior to eligibility) in which they prepare for their next deployment. A 15-month cycle was created so that people wouldn't be away from home base at the same time each year. About 20 percent of the force will be on the hook for deployments at any given time.



USAF photo by TSgt. Lance Cheung

USAF photo by SrA. Greg L. Davis



USAF photo by SrA. Richard Kaminski

The only people not rescued from back-breaking deployment schedules are the Low Density/High Demand units, such as those operating U-2s, Airborne Warning and Control Systems, and other platforms that regional commanders in chief can never get enough of. Above right, Maj. Scott Winstead does the prebreathing necessary for a U-2 mission. SSgt Vic Obillo (in headphones) and SrA. Larry Bosher help get him ready.



Combat search and rescue forces fall into the LD/HD category. There are never enough HH/MH-60G Pave Hawks to go around, and the pace of their deployments affects the pararescue troops who work with them as well as the pilots and ground crews. Maintenance and aircrew members preflight these choppers (far left), which were deployed to Kuwait. At left, an HH-60 gets a lift from a widemouthed C-5.



Not all AEF deployments will be targeted toward combat operations. Here, relief supplies are loaded on a KC-10 bound for Guatemala in the aftermath of flooding last year. Suffering itself may be the "target" that AEFs will attack.



USAF photo by SrA. Frank Rizzo

Force protection remains a major concern when operating from an austere site, and AEFs will have a hefty contingent of security forces to keep them safe. Above right, SrA. Dan Boudria sets up concertina wire around USAF operating areas in Doha, Qatar, for Operation Southern Watch.

Troops will not always deploy to austere patches of flat ground. Sometimes the operating location will be a well-prepared and provisioned, full-up air base. At right, in an early AEF, an F-16C from Mountain Home is prepared for a quick turnaround at an air base in Jordan. Nearly 10 years of routine deployments to the Middle East have established some very well-equipped forward operating locations.



USAF photo by SSgt. Paul R. Caron



Stealth will be a feature of most combat-oriented deployments. F-117s, such as this one sent to support Southern Watch, will be assigned to AEFs as needed. Intense effort is being devoted to improving the maintainability of stealth materials so that they can be more easily kept combat ready in forward operating locations. Troops have learned from long desert experience to keep the water handy, as the "camelbacks" on these flight-line troops deployed to Kuwait demonstrate.





*The show's over: Like stage hands striking the set, USAF troops break down a hospital tent to pack up and go home from a 100-day desert deployment in 1998. Under the new EAF concept, they would now have a two-week rest, followed by about 10 months of solid home-based time. There would be time to make up training, go to Red Flag, attend schools, qualify for upgrades, and then start preparing for the next AEF.*

*Home again: At its heart, the AEF structure is meant to give back to USAF families the time they had been missing for family vacations, holiday celebrations, music recitals, little league games. It should also improve morale by restoring time needed to develop proficiency at their jobs and once again feel an enthusiasm about deploying.*



USAF photo by SSgt. Jim Verchio

*Above right, just back from Operation Allied Force, A1C Jerrod Heinlein, a crew chief from the 92nd Aircraft Generation Squadron at Fairchild AFB, Wash., sizes up how his son has grown. His wife Jamie looks on.*



*Left, 1st Lt. Jim Herrington, back to RAF Mildenhall, UK, from Allied Force, gets a welcome home from his wife, 1st Lt. Jen Herrington. ■*

USAF photo by SSgt. Paul Holcomb