

Focus on the Warfighter

The Air Force is in the midst of a major reorganization of command responsibilities that should, by autumn, carve a series of new warfighting headquarters out of USAF's numbered air forces.

The new warfighting headquarters (WFHQs) will typically be led by three-star generals and will support a specific unified command. The goal is to create an off-the-shelf structure ready to go to war on a moment's notice.

One of the lessons from previous air wars was that USAF tended to supply command and control (C2) functions to commanders on an ad hoc basis. The C2 architectures "tended to be developed from scratch each time," said Brig. Gen. Eric J. Rosborg, who is leading the WFHQ effort for the Air Staff.

Standardization was needed, Rosborg told *Air Force Magazine*. Officials have hinted at these moves for months, and the implementation plan should be complete by Oct. 1, he said.

Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF Chief of Staff, wants wartime commanders focused on war planning, mission support, and beddown preparations, Rosborg explained. Jumper does not want them dealing with base golf courses, child care centers, and housing. Responsibility for administrative functions will therefore be shifted to the Air Force major command staffs.

By early May, the Air Force had announced only one WFHQ location. Pacific Air Forces' 13th Air Force moved from Guam to Hawaii, where it set up shop at Hickam Air Force Base and will evolve into Air Forces Pacific, or AFPAC.

The Combined Air Operations Center at Hickam will serve as the "execution arm" of the warfighting headquarters, said Rosborg. The WFHQ staff will be organized along the lines of the Joint Staff's command structure, to ease the integration of joint personnel if the headquarters needs to run an air war.

Notionally, the other WFHQs will be AFNEA (Northeast Asia) for US Forces Korea, AFEUR for US European Command, AFSOUTH for US Southern Command, AFTRANS for US Transportation Command, AFSTRAT for US Strategic Command, AFNORTH for US Northern Command, and AFSOF for US Special Operations Command.

The WFHQs will be standardized where possible but tailored for their individual missions. Some will center on Falconer Air Operations Centers, while AFTRANS, for example, will utilize the Tanker and Airlift Control Center.

Rosborg said the locations for the WFHQs have not been decided, and the names are subject to change. Air Force leaders are still planning the details. Still to be resolved is the future of the numbered air forces (NAFs). What becomes of 9th Air Force once AFCENT is up and running? What becomes of the NAFs that do not evolve into WFHQs? And for regions such as Europe—which has NAFs in England and Italy and a major command based in Germany—where will the warfighting headquarters be located?

Exactly what responsibilities belong within the WFHQ is also being finalized, as is the size of each headquarters. Rosborg said a series of announcements likely will be made up until Oct. 1, detailing which WFHQ will stand up at what location.

—*Adam J. Hebert*