



# COMPASS CALL

## Crew details mission, OIF success stories

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**WASHINGTON** — At the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, dozens of Iraqi soldiers waited patiently near the al Faw Peninsula for instructions being transmitted from higher headquarters to blow up key oil fields there.

The message never came.

In its place, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force's EC-130H "Compass Call" aircraft and a handful of crewmembers, was static. Followed by more static. And then, static.

The story is one of many success stories compiled by the Airmen of Air Combat Command's Compass Call mission, flown on C-130 Hercules aircraft modified and configured to perform tactical information warfare. Compass Call crewmembers were at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on March 31 to detail those successes, along with a host of unit capabilities, to Air Force and media representatives. Those capabilities include jamming and degrading communications essential to the command and control of weapons systems and other enemy resources, according to U.S. Air Force

fact sheets.

The aircraft and the people who fly, maintain and work on it, have reputations as being the military's premier communications jammers, said 1st Lt. James Kovarovic, EC-130H electronic warfare officer and mission crew commander from the 41st Electronic Combat Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

"When they look at communications-jamming roles," said the Dodge City, Kan., native, "they look at Compass Call first. We offer one of the few aircraft that can provide line-of-sight, airborne capability."

The mission crew commander is one of 13 people aboard a typical Compass Call mission, the lieutenant said. Those include four who are responsible for aircraft flight, and another nine who operate and maintain the primary mission equipment -- a dazzling array of electronic gear -- at the rear of the plane. Among the nine specialists are cryptologic linguists and an airborne maintenance technician. Staff Sgt. Keith Capra, an EC-130H crew chief from Philadelphia, said the aircraft itself is great to work on, and that its capabilities rival those of any

aircraft in the Air Force arsenal. But, he added, what makes the mission so special is the synergy between those people assigned to it.

"Teamwork is what makes our mission work so well," he said. "Operations and maintenance (Airmen) really know how to work together to get things done. Having such a small number of planes, we all learn early on to work together."

Capt. Brian Lamirande, an EC-130H co-pilot, said being on the team is a great job all around.

"I love the plane," said the captain, who flew more than 300 hours during OIF. "But the best part of the entire thing was being over with the people who work on this plane, being part of the mission, doing what we are trained to do."

### FAST FACTS ✪ EC-130H

**Primary Mission:** *Electronic warfare, suppression of enemy air defenses and offensive counter information*

**Speed:** *366 mph at 20,000 feet*

**Unit Cost:** *\$30.1 million*

**Date deployed:** *June 1974*

**Mission flight crew:** *13 — two pilots, navigator, flight engineer, electronic warfare officer, mission crew supervisor, four linguists, high band operator, acquisition officer and an airborne maintenance technician*