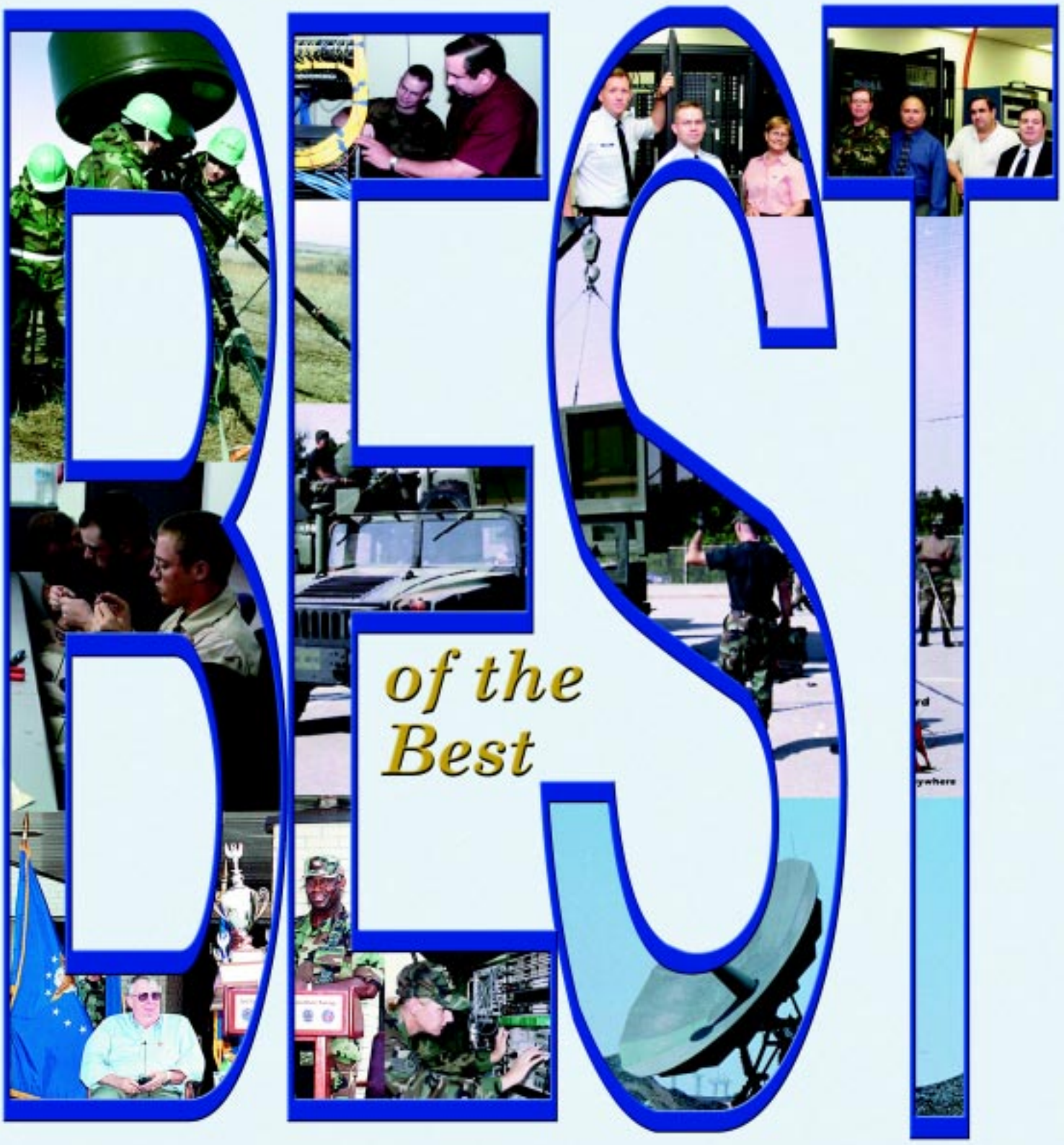
August 2001

intercom

Journal of the Air Force Communications and Information Community



intercom

Volume 42, No. 8

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This funded Air Force magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the ***intercom*** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the public affairs office of the Air Force Communications Agency.

All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise specified. Photo submissions are encouraged in the form of high-resolution digital images or 35mm prints.

News copy, photos, story ideas and comments may be e-mailed to intercom@scott.af.mil, or mailed to AFCA/XPPA, ***intercom***, 203 W. Losey St., Room 1200, Scott AFB, IL 62225-5222. Fax is DSN 576-6127 or (618) 256-6127. Editorial staff may be contacted at DSN 779-5690, or (618) 229-5690.

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About the cover

This month's cover features the 2000 Comm and Info Award winners.

Cover by Tech. Sgt. Mike Leonard

Air Force announces winners of Communications and Information Awards

WASHINGTON (AFPN) – The Air Force recently announced the winners of the 2000 Communications and Information Awards.

The awards are based on excellence in support of the Air Force mission, and recognize the best units and people in the Air Force communications and information field.

The recipients are:

Gen. Edwin W. Rawlings Award: Randolph Training Integrated Management System Network Team, 12th Communications Squadron, Randolph AFB, Texas. This award recognizes the innovative use of C4 systems technology that has most enhanced Air Force operations during the year.

Lt. Gen. Harold W. Grant Award: 609th Air Comm Squadron, Shaw AFB, S.C. This award is given to the best organization with 300 or fewer people.

Maj. Gen. Harold M. McClelland Award: 3rd Combat Comm Group, Tinker AFB, Okla. This award recognizes the best communications and information systems organization with more than 300 people.

Information Assurance Organization: Information Systems Flight, 27th Comm Squadron, Cannon AFB, N.M.

Information Assurance Professional: Staff Sgt. Jack J. Raitt, 48th Comm Squadron, RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom.

See **AWARDS** Page 6

Communications and Information Officers

Capt.
Steven G. B. Paxton
Air Force Communications Agency
Scott AFB, Ill.

Capt.
Samantha D. Ray
30th Comm Squadron
Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

Capt. Kristina L. Roth
1st Combat Comm Squadron
Ramstein AB, Germany

Capt. Jamie A. Maki
52nd Comm Squadron
Spangdahlem AB
Germany

Capt.
Robert E. Anderson
100th Comm Squadron
RAF Mildenhall
United Kingdom

Captain Anderson is also nominated for the Air Force Association's Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell Award

Information Management Enlisted Members

Senior Airman
Julie M. Hawkes
15th Comm Squadron
Hickam AFB, Hawaii

Tech. Sgt.
Terrance R. Meyers
HQ Air Combat Command
Langley AFB, Va.

Senior Master Sgt.
Donna R. Quijano-Butner
21st Comm Squadron
Peterson AFB, Colo.

Senior Airman
David P. Kennedy
609th Air Comm Squadron
Shaw AFB, S.C.

Tech. Sgt.
Andrew Clark
3rd Combat Comm Squadron
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Master Sgt.
Francis J. Ostrander
352nd Operations Support Squadron
RAF Mildenhall
United Kingdom

Communications-Computer Systems Enlisted Members

Visual Information Enlisted Members

Senior Airman
Suzanne M. Jenkins
30th Comm Squadron
Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

Tech. Sgt.
James G. Bryan
99th Comm Squadron
Nellis AFB, Nev.

Senior Master Sgt.
Michael D. Williams
355th Comm Squadron
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

Postal Service Enlisted Members

Senior Airman
Richard L. Mandregan
18th Comm Squadron
Kadena Air Base, Japan

Staff Sgt.
Garrett K. Kuwada
Det. 4, PACAF Air Postal Squadron
Sydney, Australia

Senior Master Sgt.
Michael Gasque
Det. 5, USAFE Air Postal Squadron
RAF Alconbury
United Kingdom

Senior Civilian Employees

Richard L. Terry
J6, U.S. Strategic Command
Offutt AFB, Neb.

Patricia E. Katzer
Air Force Communications Agency
Scott AFB, Ill.

Peggy Gifford
55th Computer Systems Squadron
Offutt AFB, Neb.

Junior Civilian Employees

Carl E. Holloway
375th Comm Squadron
Scott AFB, Ill.

Patricia Ann Creonte
Headquarters
Air Mobility Command
Scott AFB, Ill.

Rachel J. Hailstone
31st Logistics Support Squadron
Aviano Air Base, Italy

AWARDS

From Page 3

Installation Spectrum Manager: Tech. Sgt. Eduardo Dominguez, 7th Comm Squadron, Dyess AFB, Texas.

Electronic Spectrum Manager: Senior Master Sgt. Duane M. Williams, 605th Air Comm Flight, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

Additionally, the Air Force has submitted the name of Capt. Robert E. Anderson, 100th Comm Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom, for the Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell Award. The award is sponsored by the Air Force Association and is given to an individual for contributions that most enhance the Air Force's warfighting capability. The AFA will present the award during its annual convention.

Sergeant Raitt and the Information Systems Flight from Cannon will go on to compete at the national level for the Frank B. Rowlett Awards.

Information Assurance Professional

Staff Sgt. Jack J. Raitt
48th Comm Squadron
RAF Lakenheath
United Kingdom

Installation Spectrum Manager

Tech. Sgt. Eduardo Dominguez
7th Comm Squadron
Dyess AFB, Texas

Electronic Spectrum Manager

Senior Master Sgt. Duane M. Williams
605th Air Comm Flight
Yokota Air Base, Japan

Information Assurance Organization

Information Systems Flight, 27th Comm Squadron, Cannon AFB, N.M.

Maj. Gen. Harold M. McClelland Award

3rd Combat Communications Group
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Dr. James G. Roche, Secretary of the Air Force, presents the Maj. Gen. Harold M. McClelland Award to Col. Gregory L. Brundidge, 3rd Combat Communications Group commander.

Gen. Edwin W. Rawlings Award

Randolph Training Integrated Management System Network Team
12th Communications Squadron
Randolph AFB, Texas

Lt. Gen. Harold W. Grant Award

609th Air Communications Squadron
Shaw AFB, S.C.

Banner year earns recognition for 3rd Herd

By Staff Sgt. Ken Goss
3rd Combat Communications Group
Public Affairs
Tinker AFB, Okla.

The 3rd Combat Communications Group, better known to some as the 3rd Herd, had a banner year 2000 – busy and successful enough to earn it the Air Force's Maj. Gen. Harold M. McClelland Award for excellence in the communications and information systems discipline.

Among its activities, it took part in 15 worldwide deployments and provided expeditionary information dominance to three commanders-in-chief with combat communications and airfield operations. The Herd also rotated approximately 300 airmen through 14 theater air bases in four areas-of-responsibility throughout the year, living up to its motto, "Anytime – Anywhere."

Members of the 32nd Combat Communications Squadron practice self-help and buddy care during a Raging Bull exercise.

"Members of the 3rd Herd answered many short-notice taskings from Central Command and Air Combat Command, proving we're their 'go-to' combat comm group," said Col. Rick Dinkins, 3rd CCG commander. "When we got the call to deploy after a C-130 crash destroyed the airfield instrumentation landing system at Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, we were on the road in less than 72 hours. We showed our mobility and flexibility when 12 Herders were in the air with a Precision Approach Radar system to get the airfield back in the game."

Staff Sgt. Helen Adams, 34th Combat Communications Squadron, checks readings from the Tactical Deployable Communications system.

Flexibility is a key element of 3rd Herd success, as exemplified by members who returned to Kuwait because of unforeseen delays in ILS repair. The unit needed only five days to get the system operating at full capacity.

Group members were mobile throughout the year, providing more effective command and control in Kosovo by commercializing communications and completing the move of the multinational brigade headquarters, responsible for enhancing the stabilization of the province. With the planned move of more than 300 Air Force combatants from Eskan AB to Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia, the 3rd laid ground work for Desert Shift and the new Coalition Air Operations Center. This facility provides command and control of all U.S., Saudi, French and British aircraft in the region, and gives senior commanders an integrated common operational airspace picture. They installed the first-ever defense telephone network at Seeb AB, Oman, saving $480,000 and earning the gratitude of the U.S. ambassador.

At home the Herd created ACC's only dedicated Network Control Center-Deployed training center, spun up a Network Training Council to build a roadmap for NCC-D trained and certified technicians, and crafted master task lists and training guides for 120 technicians. Third Herders also built two Network Integration Center laboratories for "hands-on" on-the-job training seminars, and a standard training process for NCC crew positions. This resulted

in a repeatable certification process providing competent network technicians and better warfighter support.

"The professional results in our daily efforts help us achieve so much. We won the Air Combat Command Gould Award [which leads to being nominated for the McClelland Trophy] in 1999 and 2000, so we know we're the best at what we do. Now, the rest of the Air Force knows it too," Colonel Dinkins said. The 3rd won the award in the large unit category, for those with more than 300 people.

"Everyone who was part of the 3rd Herd during the year 2000 has the right to stand even taller, knowing their efforts contributed to winning this award," said Colonel Dinkins.

The Air Force announcement said the 3rd Herd's efforts to provide vital communications and information services to Air Force missions at home and around the world led to its selection.

The group also received an Air Force individual award. Tech. Sgt. Andrew Clark, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Tactical Data Networks, from the 32nd Combat Communications Squadron, won the communications-computer systems award for enlisted members.

Sergeant Clark was recognized as the 3rd Herd's number one operations NCO. He deployed on two Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotations, and provided communications for six sites in four countries for Operation Southern Watch. While in-country, he led seven technicians to maintain a number of communications circuits vital to the flying mission. And when the ACC commander called for the best technician to get the Joint Expeditionary Forces Exercise 2000 on-line, the 32nd CCS commander had an easy choice. Sergeant Clark was on the plane within four hours, and two hours after hitting the ground had troubleshot and repaired 12 downed Defense Switched Network telephone circuits that had baffled on-site technicians for days.

In JTF-SWA, Sergeant Clark was also responsible for reprogramming the Integrated Digital Network Exchange system to keep the air tasking order on time, with no impact on the flying mission. He led the tiger team that ran new fiber optic cable within the JTF-SWA Headquarters building, boosting the warfighter LAN connection to 10 times its original capability, and eliminating constant congestion problems.

"His efforts and expertise were key to professionalizing the deployed network section here at home," according to Colonel Dinkins. Sergeant Clark masterminded the "blueprint" lesson plan for network training seminars. He built the first proof-of-concept seminar on LAN and cabling basics, which was the key first step in launching the 3rd CCG deployed network on-the-job training program, and cut technician certification time by 50 percent. He developed a group operating instruction for conducting "check rides" for network technicians in five crew positions. Colonel Dinkins said, "His efforts alone put us way out in front when it comes to performing the mission and training others to be able to do the same."

Members of the 33rd Combat Communications Squadron practice setting up a MSN-7 control tower and start off by lifting it from a transport humvee.

JIVE gives commander 'big picture' at one terminal in joint air operations center

By Capt. Kristina O'Brien
Command and Control Battlelab
Hurlburt Field, Fla.

During a military operation – whether in South Korea, Saudi Arabia or any other part of the world – the Joint Forces Air Component Commander must be able to see the "big picture" at a moment's notice in order to make quick and effective decisions. Typically, even if the Joint Air Operations Center has the information he needs, it's not all in one place, so he has to go to various workstations to get it.

Recognizing how important readily accessible, real-time information is to the JFACC, the Command and Control Battlelab recently demonstrated a new technology that gives the commander all applicable information in one smart package.

During Blue Flag 01-2 at Barksdale AFB, La., the C2B debuted the JAOC Information Viewing Environment initiative. JIVE accessed, collated, and visualized air operations and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance status through a common presentation portal, and it received extremely positive warfighter feedback throughout the exercise.

What exactly does JIVE mean for the warfighter? JIVE takes real-time data from various sources and overlays it to provide a complete picture of the area of operation, leading to more effective planning, execution and monitoring.

"The purpose of JIVE is to combine data from different sources in the air operations center," said Maj. Ghyslaine Lockhart, JIVE program manager. "Now, instead of going to separate computer terminals, all information is in one environment."

During Blue Flag, information was relayed on a 5-foot by 10-foot "data wall," enabling the JFACC to simultaneously see a variety of information. The wall displayed a simulated live unmanned aerial vehicle feed; real-time reconnaissance data, which was overlaid with friendly aircraft locations and ground targets; the current air tasking order; and other valuable data. Other information sources, such as CNN and intelligence targeting tools, can be added as required.

Overall, the C2B wanted to exhibit JIVE's capabilities during Blue Flag, while receiving feedback on additional potential uses. As the exercise progressed, new ideas continued to evolve. For example, the battlelab team discovered JIVE could assist in Joint Search and Rescue Center operations. After a simulated aircraft shootdown, JIVE displayed real-time video of the crash site, overlaid the location of rescue, air refueling, and close air support assets, and identified hazards such as anti-aircraft artillery. This type of real-time, visual snapshot was never before available, and it will certainly be applied as a use for JIVE in the future.

Blue Flag 01-2 was an outstanding opportunity for the C2B to demonstrate JIVE, and Maj. Kent Burkhart, C2B deputy chief of Initiative Management, was extremely pleased with the battlelab's participation.

"We received great support from 8th Air Force, and a positive reaction from the warfighter," Major Burkhart said. "The C2B demonstrated capabilities which need to be incorporated into the AOC of the future."

C2B's mission is to rapidly identify and prove the worth of innovative ideas for command and control which improve the ability of the Air Force to execute its core competencies to support joint warfighting. Consequently, demonstrating capabilities to improve the AOC is exactly what the C2B strives to accomplish.

If you have an innovative idea to improve C2 for the warfighter, contact C2B by e-mail at ideas@c2b.hurlburt.af.mil or through their Web page at http://www.c2b.hurlburt.af.mil.

STEP sites receive enhanced satellite bandwidth

ARLINGTON, Va. – Department of Defense Standardized Tactical Entry Points in Germany and Virginia received a shot in the arm when several military organizations teamed to enhance the sites' satellite bandwidth capability. The U.S. European Command, U.S. Transportation Command, Defense Information Systems Agency, Army's Team Fort Monmouth and three U.S. Air Forces in Europe elements came together to plan, program and install new commercial C/Ku-band capabilities at the Ramstein AB, Germany, STEP facility, and commercial Ku-band capabilities at the Northwest Virginia STEP facility. The additions will allow deployed forces to use commercial satellites to augment existing DOD satellites.

Called the Enhanced STEP Program, these upgrades extend classified and unclassified voice and data networks to deployed tactical forces from nearly 90 percent of the Earth's land mass. The program augments heavily saturated DOD X-band satellites and gateway systems, and affords flexibility to support additional terrestrial connectivity as requirements evolve.

Enhanced STEP capabilities minimize technical challenges and long provisioning times required to establish connection with terrestrial voice and data services. Equipment has undergone interoperability certification and will expand coverage for deployments in Europe, Southwest Asia and the Western Pacific. The effort also provides support options for several new families of deployable tri-band satellite terminals being fielded throughout DOD. An interim solution, expanded capabilities at the Ramstein facility will be integrated into the proposed DOD Teleport Program as funding becomes available. This initial effort served as a corporate lead-in for the much larger and long-term DOD Teleport Program which will add badly needed C/Ku/EHF/UHF band capabilities to six select STEP sites around the globe.

USTRANSCOM sponsored this effort and received program funding through the Joint Chiefs of Staff CINC Initiative Fund Program. HQ DISA provided design, technical engineering, and program management support. Team Fort Monmouth handled all commercial contracting and much of the installation and testing. HQ USAFE funded and managed portions of the installation and picked up some future operations costs. The 86th Civil Engineering Group and USAFE Construction and Training Squadron performed comprehensive civil works to prepare the area and install power. The 86th Communications Group at Ramstein played an integral role as local project coordinator and will operate and maintain the facility. The entire effort was completed in less than 12 months.

"Projects of this size demand a lot of effort, coordination and management to keep things on track and headed in the right direction," said Brig. Gen. Gilbert Hawk, director of C4 systems for USTRANSCOM, during a recent ribbon-cutting ceremony marking an initial operating capability at Ramstein. "From day one, the entire Enhanced STEP team has provided fantastic support to get this job done."

Group conducts technology conference

GUNTER ANNEX, Ala. (AFPN) — "One Air Force — One Network" is the theme for the 15th annual Air Force Information Technology Conference set for Aug. 26 to 30 in Montgomery, Ala.

The AFITC is conducted annually by Standard Systems Group headquarters and the city of Montgomery.

This no-cost conference is specifically geared toward computer users, developers and managers from across Air Force and Department of Defense organizations that identify and define requirements which drive information technology capabilities of tomorrow.

Attendees will see the Air Force's direction for information technology, discover the latest technologies and learn of future industry offerings and advances.

Among industry leaders confirmed to attend are Rick Belluza, president and chief operating officer of Microsoft Corporation; Sean Hickey, vice president and chief information officer of Hewlett-Packard; and Scott McNealy, chairman and chief executive officer of Sun Microsystems.

Government and industry leaders will present more than 160 in-depth technical seminars and workshops, and a vendor exhibition hall consisting of more than 200 participants will showcase the latest technologies.

More than 3,700 attendees are expected this year.

Registration can be done on line, and organizers said registration is easy to accomplish.

"The process is quick and painless," said Capt. Aly Vrosh, AFITC chairman. "Attendees can register and receive a confirmation notice in a matter of seconds."

To register on line visit: http://web1.ssg.gunter.af.mil/AFITC.

For more information, e-mail Vrosh at alycia.vrosh@gunter.af.mil, or call her at DSN 596-2082; or e-mail 1st Lt. Charisse Jefferson at charisse.jefferson@gunter.af.mil, or call her at DSN 596-6556.

TACC comm control enters new millennium

By Master Sgt. Eric Laurhammer
Headquarters Air Mobility Command
Air Force Combat Camera Operations Manager
Scott AFB, Ill.

Col. E. Gene Redmon, Tanker Airlift Control Center vice commander, and Col. Douglas B. Peterson, deputy director of Communications and Information, cut the ribbon to the Communications Control Center in the TACC as Airman 1st Class Marissa R. Papion and Senior Airman Philip J. Earls, TACC Comm Flight, hold the ribbon.

"And with that we have officially come out of the cave man days!" Those were the words spoken by Col. E. Gene "Geno" Redmon, Vice Commander, Tanker Airlift Control Center, as he cut the ribbon to the "new" and improved TACC Communications Control Center, formerly referred to as the "Comm Cave." TACC Comm Control was officially renamed in June with Colonel Redmon officiating the ceremony, but the changes went well beyond a simple name change.

The new Comm Control launched TACC customer support into the 21st century with a proactive posture built around the latest in network monitoring and knowledge-based tool technology. The Comm Controllers now have the ability to identify and act upon communications problems affecting TACC operations, sometimes before the user even notices the problem. With a knowledge-based reference tool designed to capture TACC unique requirements and lessons learned, they can quickly take the appropriate actions to minimize operational impacts to the TACC mission.

The TACC relies heavily on robust and available worldwide communications 24/7 to support more than 300 AMC missions a day around the globe. The Comm Control role of supporting AMC's Global Reach through dependable communications has not changed over the years, but the technology used by the TACC has changed dramatically, forcing the Comm Control to evolve quickly also. The high reliance on technology to perform command and control functions means that any interruption in service can have grave consequences.

Tech. Sgt. Elliott Ray, TACC Comm Control supervisor, superbly demonstrated the newest tools for Colonel Redmon and others, explaining how the tools are key to quickly identifying, reporting and resolving communications problems. The tools will not only reduce problem resolution times, but they will also serve as the foundation for a valuable training tool for the complex set of networks and C2 systems that serve the TACC.

The ceremony was a trip down memory lane for Master Sgt. Chuck Carlson, an individual mobilization augmentee assigned to TACC Comm Control. Sergeant Carlson was here in 1993 shortly after the "Comm Cave" stood up. "I came from Germany where we had one computer for reporting and maintenance," said Sergeant Carlson. "I got here and saw network PCs for the first time. Sometimes we'd be out on the floor for a whole shift. We'd take a notepad and go from one problem to another." The Comm Controllers still launch out to the TACC customer to assist them first hand, and although they still carry a pencil and notepad, they are now armed with much more knowledge and more sophisticated problem solving tools.

According to Tech. Sgt. Cary Purcell, TACC Comm Control supervisor, it was the same for him and his coworkers until the recently installed software applications reduced response time and reduced the time needed to report and resolve problems. "We could be out there (on the floor) from time to time," Sergeant Purcell said. "We were the middlemen and would have to make lots of calls. Now if you have a computer problem I can open a ticket in Remedy (trouble ticket software) and track it from here in the Comm Control."

Lt. Col. Marvell Roberson, the Tanker Airlift Control flight commander, is quick to point out that the equipment and applications are only as good as the people who operate and maintain them. "We have just

See **TACC** next page

Scope Champion: Shaping the next generation of comm and info civilian leaders

By Jim Neighbors
Technical Director
Air Force Communications Agency
Scott AFB, Ill.

A significant challenge facing the Air Force's communications and information career field is to develop its next generation of civilian leaders. According to a recently completed Department of Defense morale and quality of life study, 50 percent of DOD employees will be eligible to retire within five years. This presents a difficult scenario for senior leadership, especially since the communications and information functional area has received the mandate to leverage information technology to lead the Air Force through a sweeping transformation of command and control, and business processes.

With this in mind, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for Communications and Information is developing a program to mature mid-level civilian managers to take the reins of future senior leadership. Named Scope Champion, the program aims to build future civilian leadership by providing the following foundation:

- Advanced professional degrees
- Professional military education
- A broad base of experience at different levels and geographic locations
- An enhanced opportunity for senior level positions

Scope Champion will provide current and future Air Force civilians more career development opportunities by managing a percentage of senior leadership positions as a corporate functional area resource. Along with position management will come SES-level mentoring, rotation opportunities, intermediate and senior service school billets, and other career enhancing and broadening experiences. Many communications and information civilians know about or have participated in the highly successful Palace Acquire or career broadening opportunities that are already a part of our civilian career management program. Scope Champion will extend positive position management and career advancement opportunities to individuals entering senior levels of civilian leadership. The program will also offer relocation bonuses to participants.

"Our goal is to improve our service and our people through Scope Champion," said Brig. Gen. Walter I. Jones, assistant deputy chief of staff for Communications and Information. "We want to prepare our people to assume senior leadership roles, see many aspects of our Air Force, and find challenging and rewarding careers. No matter where you are right now, you're there because of choices you've made. Accept where you are, but don't be satisfied with it. There's much higher ground for you and me."

Since Scope Champion is still in the conceptual phase, senior leadership encourages comments and suggestions regarding your interest in the program, and what types of incentives you would like to see included. Please visit the Web site at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/ cicp/scopechamp.htm and enter your thoughts about Scope Champion. They are extremely important to us!

The military constantly refers to the civilian force as the "continuity" which keeps the body of knowledge intact as warfighters PCS in and out of jobs. Senior leadership agrees, and with the potential for 50 percent of civilians to leave government service in the next five years, we must aggressively pursue training and shaping our next generation of leaders.

Scope Champion will be a major player in getting the job done.

TACC

From previous page

a few airmen and NCOs in the spotlight during each shift," said Colonel Roberson. "It's amazing what we receive from our enlisted corps today. To maximize their effectiveness in maintaining our computer comm systems," he added, "it's my job to give them the right tools. I feel we've done that with the recent introduction of technology."

In regard to the personnel mix described by Colonel Roberson, things certainly have changed from the early days of the TACC. "We used to have 12 per shift, including one officer," Sergeant Carlson explained. "Today I noticed that a small group of highly skilled airmen and NCOs are running the whole show."

While ribbon cutting ceremonies are normally orchestrated to usher in a new building or facility, this one recognized the evolution from the comm cave of old to the new powerful force of TACC's Comm Control. It will be Comm Control leadership's job to continue pushing these customer-oriented initiatives to stay one step ahead of new technologies and processes.

The TACC should someday take their C2 systems and networks for granted, like the good old telephone that is always there and working when needed.

Opportunities for improving your strategic information management

By Beatrice Ramirez
CICP
Randolph AFB, Texas

As our dependence on information technology increases, so does the importance of managing that information. We (communications and information professionals) have successfully demonstrated and defended our networks as the critical systems that they have always been. However, we continue to struggle with ways to manage the multitude of information that traverses those systems. It is imperative that we begin treating the organizational information that resides in our systems and on our computers as an increasingly critical resource.

Managing information as a strategic resource throughout its life-cycle is challenging. It requires us to have a blend of technological and business acumen. As communications and information professionals, we all need to broaden our knowledge, skills and abilities in the information resource management field. Individuals who have technical expertise need to broaden their skills by developing a business viewpoint, while anyone involved in the business and strategic side of our career field needs to develop technological management skills.

The Communications Information Career Program recognizes that it is difficult for C&I professionals to keep up with the rate of change in the telecommunications, computer systems, information management and multimedia fields. To obtain the goal of total force strategic thinking, the CICP has received senior C&I leadership support to offer these training and educational opportunities:

* Undergraduate tuition assistance
* Graduate tuition assistance
* Continuing Education
* On-Site Courses
* Distance Learning

The pursuit and attainment of specific training and education credentials has been encouraged and recognized for many years by the CICP and senior C&I leadership.

Training and education not only enhance your ability to accomplish the Air Force mission, but they also improve your competitiveness for promotions and reassignments. The completion of academic degrees, certifications, Professional Military Education, and mobility will be essential if you want to be competitive for promotions to the GS-13 and above levels.

Additional opportunities to acquire experience can be derived by volunteering for organizational projects and CICP-sponsored career broadening opportunities. Career broadening allows the employee to obtain additional skills, and requires an Air Force wide mobility agreement.

Information about CICP sponsored training, tuition assistance, and competitive job placement opportunities, is available on our Web site at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/cicp or by calling us at DSN 665-3691. Our team of C&I professionals is available to provide career counseling to help you to effectively manage your career.

You hold the key to your future. Call us today!

Registrants should subscribe to list server

By Ruby Anderson
CICP Position Management Specialist
Air Force Personnel Center
Randolph AFB, Texas

The Communications and Information Career Program is striving to keep Air Force civilian employees informed of career program opportunities and current events. In this age of information technology, the best way to do this is through the CICP List Server.

List servers send information directly to the inbox of all subscribers as a new e-mail message. The CICP List Server provides information about the career program, training, tuition assistance, career broadening and the PALACE Acquire Intern Program for employees working in the communications, computers, information management and visual information areas.

The civilian career programs will be changing to the modern personnel system, and when the system goes on-line, we'll begin advertising all position vacancies at that time. The only way personnel will be able to be considered for those jobs will be through self-nomination.

How do you find out about position vacancies? You can visit the USAJOBS Web site at http://www.usajobs.opm.gov, our Web site at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil, or subscribe to the CICP List Server. All CICP vacancy announcements will be sent by the list server directly to your desktop. In addition to vacancy announcements, you'll receive messages concerning training opportunities and other information beneficial to your career.

We **strongly** recommend all registrants subscribe to the CICP List

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Joint Staff opens state-of-the-art visual recording facility

By Tech. Sgt. Mona Ferrell
Public Affairs
Air Force Pentagon
Communications Agency
Washington

Lt. Gen. John L. Woodward Jr., Headquarters Air Force deputy chief of staff for Communications and Information, cuts the ribbon at the official reopening of the National Military Command Center's visual recording studio. Dave Bauch, Air Force Pentagon Communications Agency C2 radio and television systems branch chief, right, and U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Gregory S. Newbold, Joint Staff director for operations, background, watch.

Thanks to personnel in Air Force Pentagon Communications Agency's Command and Control Radio and Television Branch, members of the Joint Staff now have a state-of-the-art visual recording facility at their fingertips with the completion of phase four of the National Military Command Center's VRF digital-upgrade renovation.

The VRF, which is a secure television studio, is used to process classified video information for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Military Command Center. With the exception of on-air transmission, the studio has the capabilities of a network television station, said Dave Bauch, AFPCA C2 Radio and Television Systems Branch chief. The fourth and most labor-intensive stage of the five-phase upgrade is a large-scale renovation of the studio's control room.

"The first three phases of the VRF renovation were designed to move the studio from the analog to the digital world as quickly as possible without interrupting facility operations. In the first three phases, we replaced the production switcher, added more special effects and acquired new studio cameras," he said. "In addition, we installed a digital audio mixer, dismantled the old linear editing system and built a new digital editing suite. But phase four has been the most ambitious part of the entire project."

Since the fourth phase began in October, the three-camera studio, which is used to produce a biweekly Joint Broadcast Service news program for transmission to the European Command, has been operating at limited capacity, Bauch said.

"The entire control room was dismantled, walls were removed, the raised floor was replaced, and a completely new equipment configuration was installed," he said. "It's kind of analogous to performing a heart transplant. Every system in the VRF has a mainframe or is connected in some way to the control room."

While a renovation of this magnitude is a job within itself, AFPCA took the upgrade efforts one step further. To save the Air Force money, members of the agency's radio and television systems branch eliminated the need for outside contract support by doing everything themselves, said Bauch, who manages the branch. By doing the job in-house, AFPCA personnel spent more than 3,500 man-hours on the fourth phase and saved the Air Force an estimated $300,000.

"Planning for this phase began over a year ago," Bauch said. "Under the direction of the lead engineer, Franklin Black, we did all of the design work, developed all the documentation, procured the equipment and installed everything ourselves. We're kind of a one-stop shop."

Of course, the hard work and dedication put forth by this one-stop shop doesn't go unnoticed, said Capt. Raymond Powell, AFPCA C2 systems maintenance chief. "Our audiovisual shop is simply amazing – they've nursed this project along from start to finish. They were the engineers, the project managers and the installers

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eCOMM delivers comm requests at light speed

By H. S. Harrison
eCOMM Customer Service Center
86th Communications Group
Ramstein AB, Germany

The 86th Communications Group found a way to enhance service to its customers within a relatively widespread area of Germany by developing *eCOMM*, a system that enables electronic submission of communications requests.

The group recognized the need for improvement based on several situational factors. Customers were primarily situated in a 30 km section of Rheinland-Pfalz, with some even further away in remote locations. Due to limited building space, communications work centers were also scattered throughout the area. Getting a communications request to the right office required an organization to either transport a hard copy of Air Force Form 3215, communications-computer systems requirements document, from one end of the Kaiserslautern Military Community to the other, or wait for the base information transfer system to deliver it. But before you even got the request out of the door, you had to coordinate it with your telecommunications coordination officer or organization computer manager, which took more time waiting or playing telephone tag to assure it didn't get sidetracked.

The 86th CG commander felt there had to be a better way to take care of customers, including not only the 86th Airlift Wing, but also Headquarters USAFE, Headquarters Air North and various other NATO, Air Force, Army and DOD organizations in the KMC. The idea was to create a "storefront" for customers, one place they could go to get any communications support they needed. The solution – *eCOMM* – put communications request capability on every customer's desktop.

A Web-based, interactive process manager, *eCOMM* now provides maximum customer convenience while optimizing coordination between all work centers involved in meeting customer communications needs. It gives anyone involved with a requirement instant 24/7 desktop access to up-to-date information on the central database. The system uses e-mails to keep everyone informed and provides a hyperlink to the requirement in each message, speeding and simplifying the recipient's access to the requirement. The customer inputs the request, then *eCOMM* notifies unit approving officials. When an approver validates the request with a mouse click, *eCOMM* notifies the work center and the requestor. Every time the work center updates the request record, *eCOMM* notifies both requestor and approver.

"Our research showed some bases were trying to create similar systems, but only on their base Intranet," said Senior Master Sgt. Tim Gress, lead researcher for the *eCOMM* Development Team. "This wouldn't work in the KMC because our customer base is so spread out, and in many cases, outside the firewall. They wouldn't be able to access our Intranet, so we decided to put *eCOMM* on the Web where every MILNET user could reach it."

Researching Air Force Instructions, charting processes and searching the Web for ideas and tools, the team built *eCOMM* from the ground up. It exhaustively interviewed work centers and customers, then analyzed processes as well as customer needs and desires. Scott Harrison, 86th CG telecommunications manager, served as the team's systems analyst. With a background in management consulting, quality and process re-engineering, his experience helped assure compliance with AFIs and minimize changes to work center processes. The goal was to reduce work, not make more, while improving customer service.

"With customers and work centers scattered all over the KMC, we had to build a focal point for all requirements information, for the customers and for the shops," said Harrison. "Analyzing the process enabled us to conceive an architecture that gives everyone access to the same information – *eCOMM* is never out of date. If something changes, that change is instantly accessible. All data is centrally stored to ensure everyone gets the same, up-to-date information."

"We knew the Air Force Portal was coming," said Master Sgt. David Bacungan, who wrote the code for *eCOMM*, "and we wanted our system to be a part of that. It's already on the 86th CG home page. USAFE's Web Technology Branch was very helpful right from the start," he related. "They gave me access to their test server, loaded our software and gave continual support and advice as we operated and de-bugged eCOMM."

Does it work? Ask the Ohio Air National Guard – they input test requests. Or check with the Ramstein STEM-B at Tinker AFB; she gets her requests for Ram-

stein tech solutions on her computer in Oklahoma and inputs her replies to *eCOMM*, where they're instantly available for project managers. She said it cuts their response time tremendously, with no more mail delays between Germany and Oklahoma.

Placing *eCOMM* on the Web has demonstrated the global reach of the system. In response to queries, the team encouraged people to register and look at the site. A recent scan of the users registry revealed addresses from Osan and Kadena, as well as numerous bases in CONUS and all over Europe.

The prototype system has been in operation for over six months at Ramstein and has processed more than 2,500 requirements input by the 1,600-plus registered users in the KMC. Input and submission of a requirement and all subsequent steps in the process are documented and managed in *eCOMM*. This assures e-mails are sent to appropriate addressees (unit approvers, work centers, and others), and that anyone needing access to the record can call it up on their browser. Each record is configured to be accessible only to individuals concerned with that requirement, and *eCOMM* knows who they are. Users can access the record at their convenience and review progress of the technical solution.

There's also a provision for communication between work centers and customers through *eCOMM*. If the work center needs to ask a question, *eCOMM* makes it happen – e-mails the customer telling them to look at their requirement and answer the question using the "customer coordination" block.

"I love the *eCOMM* system," said Dennis Chambers, HQ USAFE/FM. "It saves me a lot of time over the old sneaker-net way of doing business. It's a great improvement to the CSRD process."

As *eCOMM* matures, applications for its information will multiply. And it's available anywhere there's MILNET access.

"It's feasible to build report shells enabling the commander to conduct briefings using *eCOMM*," said Sergeant Gress. "Anywhere there's a computer he can log in to the system and show his report, or project it on a screen, whether in the wing conference room or on TDY in CONUS. It means instant access to current information – no more slides to update."

"Someday soon," said 86th CG commander Col. Michael McDonald, "*eCOMM* will make it possible for an airman with orders to 86th AW to request a mailbox at Ramstein before he leaves his current base, or for a Reserve unit to request communications support for their upcoming annual tour before they fly to Ramstein."

"*eCOMM* will be usable anywhere the requirement process follows the AFI," said Harrison. "The base-unique factors are in the data base, not the Web page code. This system could become the Air Force standard for the comm requirements process."

And for customers, there's no more asking, "Who's our TCO?" because *eCOMM* already knows their name, phone number and e-mail address. There's no more driving around hunting for a building and a parking space, no more waiting and wondering what's happened to that piece of paper – there is no paper! With *eCOMM*, KMC customers can check on the status of their requirement any time, at every stage of the process, on their browser.

Airman 1st Class Demetria Cooper is the first point of contact for anyone calling with questions or needing help. "I talk to many customers who love the system," said Airman Cooper. "They say it's much easier submitting a request via *eCOMM* versus typing up an AF 3215, which is a very long process."

She's also the primary OCM for her flight, and can take action on a computer request within minutes of entry into *eCOMM*. Systems acquisition gets the new requirement when she clicks the "approved" button – CSRDs at light speed.

The folks at Ramstein are *eCOMM* believers. Their Web-based system does in minutes what once took hours or days, as well as gasoline, shoe leather and innumerable telephone calls, to accomplish. Now there's no need for them to call or chase paperwork, but if they really want paper, they can click "print" on their browser and there it is. While it's still in the growth stage, *eCOMM* is projected to be ready to distribute to other USAFE bases within a year of completion of its certificate to operate. In the meantime, if you want to see it live, just point your browser to https://ecomm.usafe.af.mil.

Taming the beast: development of the C4ISP/CON process

By Sherry Knaub
Warfighter Capabilities Directorate
Air Force Communications Agency
Scott AFB, Ill.

It was late one Friday afternoon when the panicked phone call came into the newly assigned action officer working the Joint Computer-Aided Acquisition and Logistics System.

"SPACECOM won't let us run JCALS through the firewall at Schriever. We need you at the JCALS Program Management Office at Fort Monmouth, N.J., on Tuesday to convince the Army they need additional security before they can field JCALS on Air Force bases," said the Air Force JCALS fielding and deployment office at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Only a few weeks earlier, the mission of the newly reorganized Air Force Communications Agency had expanded to include working network issues.

AFCA's then Systems (now Warfighter Capabilities) Directorate had recieved direction from its commander, then Col. Gilbert Hawk, to "Go out and discover what kinds of help developing systems need with comm and info support." But who could have predicted that, in the stack of systems documents I, the newly assigned action officer, had been handed the week before, a simmering cauldron of crisis was about to boil over.

Flanked by Capt. Jeff Cordell, from AFCA's Scope Network team, and Capt. Brian Carr, from AFCA's Network Security office, I entered the standing-room-only crowd of 70-plus frustrated and confused contractors, and Air Force and Army personnel, awaiting our instantaneous JCALS solution. Within minutes, the problems of the JCALS fielding team at Schriever AFB poured out. The PMO understood system security to mean "passwords." Stunned by the audience's lack of understanding of network security, we triaged the bewildered group. We immediately began educating the JCALS masses on network security and Barrier Reef 101.

That was nearly four years, and many AFCA concerted efforts, ago. We've worked with the Army-led JCALS PMO to tackle one stumbling block after another, so that JCALS can be implemented securely at Air Force bases. JCALS was one of the first programs that clearly drove the WF directorate to evolve the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence Support Plan and Certificate of Networthiness process, so that Air Force comm and info issues, especially security, are addressed. Developing system PMOs had many misunderstandings regarding communications and computer requirements and support. The base and major command directors of communications and information were screaming for help, and they were backed up by Lt. Gen. William J. Donahue, then Air Force Director of Communications and Information, in his push to, "Stop all the drive-by fieldings!" We had to do something. The answer was C4ISP/CON.

Great as the C4ISP/CON process is at addressing system comm and info issues, it's still a work in progress and has shortfalls, including the fact it doesn't mesh well with the evolutionary acquisition process called "spiral development." JCALS, a bona fide spiral development program, was having difficulty meeting MAJCOM interpretations of C4ISP/CON requirements.

JCALS difficulty began when upgrading or fielding software at Air Force sites. The MAJCOM and base System Security Authorization Agreement is the key security component of the C4ISP/CON. SSAA reviewers are uncertain when new or full reaccreditation of SSAAs is needed. MAJCOMs are delaying or halting JCALS fieldings until new SSAAs are produced. JCALS averages an update or reaccreditation release every quarter, most of which do not involve any security impact. To their credit, the JCALS PMO provides a security analysis with each new release. However, Air Force sites were leery this would suffice in lieu of a new SSAA.

Representatives of AFCA's WF and Global Connectivity Directorates met with the JCALS PMO, Air Force Deployment and Security PMO, the Integrated Digital Environment Office and the AF/ILMM functional representative and determined it's unnecessary to produce a new SSAA for each (spiral) update. The group established a new process. Now the JCALS PMO will send all software packages, maintenance drop releases and documentation updates for appropriate Air Force security review and recommendation, before releasing them to the field.

Details of the new process include:

- A PM JCALS signed cover letter listing security implications will precede any software or maintenance drop instructions.

- AFCA recommended PM JCALS include the word "update" or "revalidation" on each 90-day reaccreditation.

- IDE will receive the letter and instructions, and re-evaluate from an Air Force perspective.

- IDE will attach an Air Force cover letter to clarify security impacts, and send the letters and drop instructions to MAJCOM directors of communications and information, network control centers, network operation and security centers, and Air Force network operations centers, two to three weeks prior to drop.

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DISA commander sends last AF-RPC offline

By Master Sgt. William A. Barton
Last Chief
USAFE Regional Processing Center
Ramstein AB, Germany

With the console command "$!" Lt. Gen. Harry D. Raduege Jr., director Defense Information Systems Agency, sent the last Air Force-operated Regional Processing Center UNISYS mainframe offline recently. Until its closure the U.S. Air Forces in Europe RPC, on Ramstein AB, provided Standard Base-Level Computer support to USAFE's operational (aircraft maintenance, logistics, and finance) community. USAFE outsourced the RPC's operational mission to UNISYS Federal Systems in 1995. The USAFE RPC's long and distinguished history includes contingency processing support provided to the Royal Netherlands Air Force at the height of Operation Allied Force, the air war over Serbia. When the RNLAF mainframe suffered a catastrophic hardware failure, USAFE RPC personnel transferred the entire RNLAF aircraft maintenance database to the RPC's UNISYS mainframe. Within 24 hours RNLAF F-16s were back flying sorties over Serbia.

Photo by Master Sgt. John Parry

Col. John Maluda, USAFE/SC, left, and Lt. Gen. Harry D. Raduege Jr., director DISA, center, enter the command to shut down the last Air Force-operated Regional Processing Center while Silas Smith, UNISYS site manager, and Master Sgt. William Barton, RPC Chief look on.

The closure ceremony marked the completion of DISA's efforts to consolidate all Air Force-SBLC into their Defense Enterprise Computer Center structure. This effort traces its roots to the Office of Management and Budget Bulletin 96-02 "Consolidation of Agency Data Centers." Under the auspices of OMB bulletin 96-02, all CONUS and PACAF-based SBLC previously migrated to DISA. The USAFE RPC remained open during this period as USAFE evaluated the cost and operational benefits and risks of migration. "This is a little sad," said USAFE Deputy SC, Col. Rick Jensen. "As a guy who started my Air Force life in a Data Processing Installation running the B3500, this is the closest thing we had left. It's time to go."

That all changed this past November, when DISA and USAFE representatives again looked at the business case for migrating or not migrating the USAFE RPC workload to a DISA DECC. These discussions centered on a total cost of ownership perspective. DISA based their proposal on migrating the USAFE RPC's SBLC workload onto an already existing UNISYS SBLC environment within their DECC at Oklahoma City – a technical change from previous proposals that significantly reduced DISA's up front costs. In addition, DISA's rate-based charges are now significantly lower than previous proposals. These changes from the DISA side, when factored in with the Air Force-level costs of ownership funded through Standard Systems Group, now made DISA a financially viable option for USAFE SBLC requirements. Finally, systems currently running on the SBLC platform are scheduled for migration to Air Force and DOD level "open systems" beginning in FY '03, further increasing the USAFE cost of ownership in relation to SBLC processing accomplished versus dollars spent. The aggregate result of all these factors led Col. John W. Maluda, USAFE/SC, to conclude, "Now is the right time to migrate our remaining SBLC requirements to DISA, and their rate-based (you pay for what you use) system."

From that decision point reached in January, migration kicked into high gear. USAFE's UNISYS Federal contractors, working in concert with DISA DECC employees, tag-teamed the myriad challenges to prepare USAFE's more than 10,000 SBLC users for migration. Their Herculean effort cumulated in the simple command "$!" entered at the console that sent the last Air Force-operated UNISYS SBLC mainframe computer off line and into the history books.

O/PTN takes a big step forward in USAFE

By Master Sgt. Douglas Kaufman
786th Communications Squadron
Ramstein AB, Germany

The 786th Communications Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany took a big step forward earlier this year with the first full certifications in accordance with new operationalizing and professionalizing the network standards.

Master Sgt. Clarence Markley, Tech. Sgt. Michael Robinson, Staff Sgt. Christie Snow, Staff Sgt. William Davis, Senior Airman Rochelle James, Airman 1st Class Amanda Bashore, Airman 1st Class Michelle Case, Airman 1st Class Brandon Newton, and Airman Joseph Siquig successfully completed the O/PTN gauntlet to achieve certification status. These newly certified professionals were the first in USAFE and among the first in the Air Force.

Becoming a crew position certified network professional is by no means an easy task. Based on the assigned crew position, each person must complete 44 to 79 computer-based training modules. The time to take the CBTs can add up to more than 350 hours but completing the CBTs is only one step to become a certified network professional. It also takes real hands-on knowledge and experience. Part of the certification process involves over-the-shoulder evaluation of job performance skills for core and critical tasks identified in the Air Force 3CXXX Job Qualification Standard.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Robinson, 86th AW workgroup manager instructor, assists a student in Phase 1 of the WM certification program.

"Getting everyone on an equal level of competency and increasing the skills of all network professionals is our number one objective," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Spruill, NTC instructor.

People becoming certified are given a battery of practical hands-on tasks to perform ranging from simple to complex. These performance tasks are essential in assuring personnel have practical skills necessary to perform demanding tasks in our work centers. The necessary tools, software requirements and workstation peripherals are provided and the evaluated person must complete all given tasks in a specified time, with a rigid pass or fail standard. Anyone failing to complete a given task is sent back to the work center for additional training.

The CBTs and task evaluations are still not all that's required before being titled a network professional. Each person also takes two sets of written exams. One test covers 11 core CBTs required for all crew positions. The second exam targets the crew position specific CBTs. The supervisor conducts a complete OJT records review before the unit training manager can recommend an individual for certification.

"We must take every opportunity to ensure all network professionals, including 3A0X1s, receive the necessary training to do the job our senior leaders expect of them," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Robinson, NTC instructor.

Care must be given to not only the certification process but also to how the people are trained. In-depth training programs must be developed to ensure all areas and aspects of crew positions are covered. Units must be thorough and comprehensive in their development of training plans and training timelines. The use of standardized training programs throughout a base or unit now becomes even more critical with O/PTN. A new initiative in USAFE is to develop a standardized format for training guides, lesson plans, procedural checklists, and performance evaluations for each crew position. The 786th CS has taken the lead on five of the 11 crew positions. The desired products are targeted for Web-based access to provide the tools to all who use the local networks throughout Europe.

Even after certification, the work is not done. All certified network professionals must maintain their proficiency levels and be recertified annually by com-

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Staff Sgt. Bill Quinn programs the switch with the laptop interface, while Staff Sgt. Paul Pohnert tests circuit paths between the modules. Both are from the 1st CCSQ, Ramstein AB, Germany.

1st CCSQ moves toward new vision

By Master Sgt. Jim McCorkle
1st Combat
Communications Squadron
Ramstein AB, Germany

"Rapid" and "scalable" are key elements of the vision of the 1st Combat Communications Squadron. The unit has obtained new technology to reach this vision, but mission demands require it to retain some of its legacy communications systems, such as the Theater Air Control Communications Module. TACCM consists of a digital telephone switchboard, cable infrastructure and telephone instruments that provide phone service to more than 240 customers in a bare-base environment.

In January, Staff Sgt. William Quinn discovered a way to upgrade TACCM and significantly reduce its size. He put together a plan to relocate system components into six transit cases. Lt. Col. James Appleyard, squadron commander, said, "This upgrade will save money, reduce logistical requirements, and enhance operational capabilities. It will be good for the unit, the Air Force, and the mission. Let's do it!" That green light was all technicians needed.

In the past, all emphasis was on mobility. Electronics for TACCM were placed in a rugged shelter mounted on a highly mobile multi-wheeled vehicle, so it could be relocated as combat situations warranted. Unfortunately, the desire for mobility brought with it excessive demands for airlift. TACCM was also an all-or-nothing package. By placing the system in transit cases, airlift requirements will be cut from 11 pallet positions to three. Additionally, engineers will be able to scale the system to mission needs. The upgraded system has the versatility to provide a dozen telephone lines for peace negotiations, 100 telephones for humanitarian operations, or nearly 300 telephones for a deployed air operations center.

Project technician, Staff Sgt. Paul Pohnert, also noted, "Versatility won't be the only benefit of TACCM. It's vital to our ability to integrate communications with Army and Marine units. The upgraded TACCM will ensure our readiness for joint service operations."

Innovations such as the TACCM upgrade will add many years to the shelf life of tactical communications systems. It's the kind of initiative one could expect of the 1st Combat Communications Squadron.

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pleting the entire process again. If someone fails to meet the requirements, they are decertified and retrained. The decertification status will remain in effect until all requirements are met.

The 786th CS Network Training Center takes the responsibility of preparing future network professionals very seriously. As the lead team on O/PTN for Ramstein, the NTC initiated the certification and evaluation program without a hitch. The customer population the NTC handles is close to 600 network professionals throughout the Kaiserslautern Military Community, including Ramstein, Kapaun and Sembach Air Bases. The courses and programs offered are being upgraded to meet the challenge of timely and current material. The goal of keeping current in desired subject matters such as SOJT and Microsoft Windows 2000 are not easy but are being met with unique opportunities. The NTC personnel work closely with local vendors, customers and higher headquarters to ensure the most up-to-date training possible is available to every network professional.

These essential steps may be burdensome but are absolutely critical in the certification process. The process of "licensing" network professionals cannot be looked at lightly, or any differently than we would a munitions technician handling explosive material. DOD has now mandated O/PTN for the fact information systems and networks are equal to a weapons system and must be handled as such. The Air Force cannot afford to manage network professionals in any other way.

Flight bridges the communications and intelligence gap

By Capt. Lara Falardeau
Intelligence Systems Support Flight
USAFE Computer Systems Squadron
Ramstein AB, Germany

The U.S. Air Forces in Europe Intelligence Systems Support Center is USAFE's Comm and Info Large Workcenter of the Year for 2000.

Most people have heard the saying, "Customers aren't an interruption of our work – they're the reason we're here." Nowhere in the Air Force does this saying ring more true than with the men and women in the Intelligence Systems Support Flight of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Computer Systems Squadron. Located at Ramstein AB, the 85-member flight works to bridge the gap between the intelligence and communications worlds by providing dedicated round-the-clock support to intelligence warfighters here and throughout the USAFE area of operations.

Covering three classifications of systems – Unclassified, Secret and Top Secret/SCI – the flight is responsible for cradle-to-grave management of more than 2,500 hardware components supporting some 1,000 systems, including more than 700 at Ramstein. The flight also provides intelligence customers throughout the command with on-site and remote administration for assigned systems and circuits.

Through two help desks, users can report many problems by phone or electronically. Depending on the nature and urgency of the problem, jobs either receive immediate technician attention or are placed in a short queue.

The flight supports analysts at 15 NATO air bases in Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. Locally, the flight also works diligently to support two annual large-scale intelligence exercises: Union Flash and Trailblazer. Not to be overlooked, four people continuously rotate through the U.S. Theater Intelligence Support Team, Vicenza, Italy, and a fair share of Air Expeditionary Force deployments.

The flight is able to accomplish this broad and ever-changing mission with a strong teamwork mentality and the synergy of its three branches. The Technical Solution and Implementation Branch usually sets the wheels in motion for a new or changed intelligence systems requirement. Working hand-in-hand with intelligence counterparts, the branch takes on a liaison function to ensure development of a technical solution, systems acquisition, implementation, testing and fielding. After determining a technical solution, the branch coordinates implementation and fielding with the appropriate workcenter – either the Unit Automation Center for unclassified and collateral systems, or the Intelligence Systems Support Center for TS/SCI systems.

As an example of teamwork that really "works," intelligence analysts are assigned to each flight workcenter, and HQ USAFE/IN's Systems Integration Management Office is collocated with the Technical Solution and Implementation Branch. Teaming with intelligence counterparts, the flight works hard to place the latest technology at intelligence warfighters' fingertips, in an effort to make the flow of information smooth and accessible. As a testament to the flight's success and ability to "put the customer first," the Intelligence Systems Support Center was named HQ USAFE/SC Large Workcenter of the Year three years in a row. Not to be out-done, the Unit Automation Center claimed the title of HQ USAFE/SC Medium Workcenter of the Year for two consecutive years. This

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Members of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Unit Automation Center pose for a photo with their Intelligence counterparts. The UAC is the USAFE/SC Communications and Information Medium Workcenter of the Year for 2000.

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recognition has spurred the men and women of the Intelligence Systems Support Flight to work even harder, which continues to strengthen the bridge between the communications and intelligence worlds. At this pace, you can expect to see these workcenters in the running next year.

(Lt. Matthew S. Furman, Tech. Sgt. Trent Woodruff and Staff Sgt. Roy L. Harris contributed to this article.)

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- This should reassure Air Force bases that a new SSAA need not be completed for each reaccreditation.

- Significant security impacts found in maintenance drop or software releases will be reverified by AFCA/GCI and require a SSAA.

In this JCALS constant spiral of software updates and releases, we hope by assigning one Air Force point of contact (IDE, for JCALS) to preview documentation and PMO self-analysis of the security impact of each change and make recommendations, this should help major commands and bases decide whether a release is OK and ready to field on Air Force networks and servers, avoiding costly fielding delays, and saving millions of dollars.

Hopefully a similar solution can be implemented and overlaid between the SSAA/C4ISP/CON process and the spiral development process for all legacy system upgrades and fieldings.

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– it's just incredible. Using their expertise, they've saved the Joint Staff hundreds of thousands of dollars by not contracting out."

While saving money is a plus, the positive impact of the project is the primary force leading the group on, Bauch said. "Over the past 10 years, the big push in the television industry is conversion from analog to digital video," he said. "Digital has a much higher quality signal and a crystal clear picture. There's no degradation during the editing and tape duplication process, as in an analog system. The bottom line is the facility's products will have much better quality.

"The renovation was sorely needed," Bauch added. "The studio hadn't been fully renovated for over 24 years. It was time to do a complete redesign, so all of the equipment could be relocated and rewired. Now the studio can function as a completely integrated system, rather than a collection of miscellaneous television equipment."

"NMCC customers will benefit from the renovation in a lot of ways," said Bob Hughes, Defense Intelligence Service Agency VRF manager, whose agency employs the TV studio operators. "Operations will be totally digital, from the camera lens all the way back. It will be the only fully digital television facility in the Pentagon."

The renovation has already had a huge impact on the Joint Staff operations, Captain Powell said. "The already operational edit suite puts customers in the director's chair, enabling them to craft professional quality productions and meet their precise requirements," he said. "While the studio was primarily built for Joint Staff customers, its quality has attracted customers from around the region – even Senator John Glenn came in to produce a presentation."

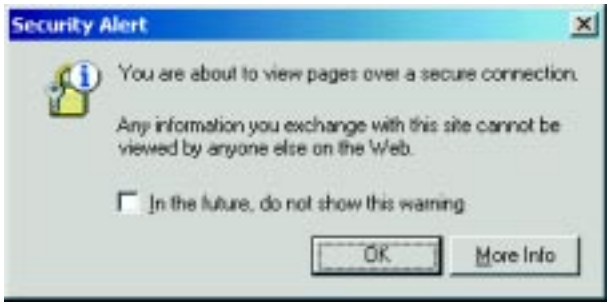
"We're very proud of the people in AFPCA," Hughes added. "This is a remarkably ambitious product. They've worked very hard and accomplished something to be proud of."

The fifth and final phase of the upgrade, a graphics room renovation, is slated for completion in December.

Secure Socket Layer helps prevent theft, unauthorized use of Internet information

By Tech. Sgt. Maureen Moore
Information Assurance Manager
113th Communications Flight
Air National Guard, Andrews AFB, Md.

When you go to certain Web sites (e.g., https) you may get a notice that looks something like this:



This box is telling you a secure socket for connection will occur. Once you click OK, you'll see a closed-lock icon on the bottom of the site you're connecting to. This lets you know Secure Socket Layer is in place. If the lock is open, you're not secure.

In order to do business on the Internet and prevent others from viewing, altering, taking the information, or pretending to be someone or something else, a secure method was developed. This article explains the system.

Some key words and ideas are associated with secure computing on the Internet, such as:

Encryption is the conversion of data, called plain text, into a form called cipher text, that can't be easily understood by unauthorized people. Plain text is whatever it is that you don't want others to easily read or see, including your data in its original form, such as a file, picture, letter or e-mail message.

Decryption is the process of converting encrypted data back into its original form, so it can be understood.

Encryption and decryption keys are required to convert one type of text to another. The key is an algorithm that does or undoes the encryption work. The algorithm is a math function used as a procedure or formula for solving a problem.

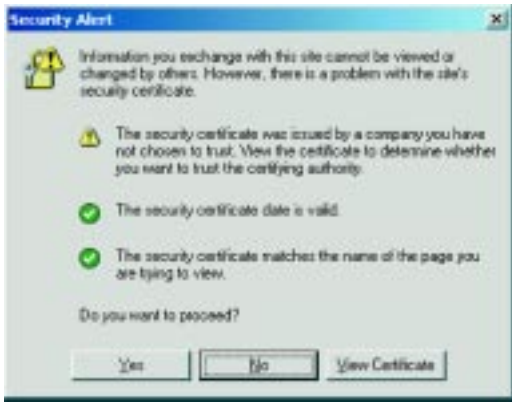
Secure Socket Layer is a commonly used protocol for managing message transmission security on the Internet. Protocols are sets of rules used by end points in a telecommunications connection to communicate. End points are PCs or servers, for example.

Digital Certificates are electronic "credit cards" that establish your credentials for doing business on the Web. They contain your name, a serial number, expiration date, a copy of the certificate holder's public key (used for encrypting messages and digital signatures), and the digital signature of the certificate-issuing authority, so that a recipient can verify the certificate's authenticity.

Digital Signature is an electronic signature used to authenticate identity of message senders and document signers. It also ensures original content of a message or document is unchanged.

When you make a secure connection, a few things happen between your computer and the Web site.

The site you're trying to access passes you a digital certificate with a public key and digital signature. The certificate is issued by a certificate authority, a third party who verifies information's validity and source. This confirms your connection to the intended site. Your browser has a predefined list of accepted CAs. If the site's certificate CA matches those in the list of your computer's browser, it's accepted as long as it's current. If it doesn't accept it for any reason, you'll see a message like this:



After being given this warning, if you accept the certificate then you may be operating at a risk. You're no longer assured your transaction is secure. That's why it's important to view the certificate and verify its pertinent information. In the General tab, you'll see

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NGB offers answers for some frequently asked DMS questions

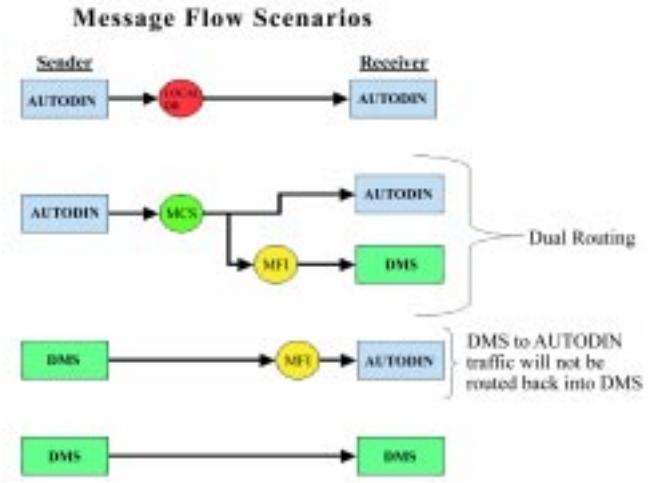
By Master Sgt. Tom Melody
Air National Guard, National Guard Bureau Arlington, Va.

The Defense Message System, successor to the Department of Defense's legacy Automatic Digital Network system, is on line in organizations around the world. While AUTODIN is still in use, and until DMS is fully implemented, an interface between the systems is required. Although guidance is available, the situation can still be confusing. Following are some of the most frequently asked questions.

Q. My Plain Language Address is set up for dual routing. Why do some of my messages come only to the AUTODIN terminal and not to my DMS mailbox?

A. Two common causes are related to how the message originated. If the originator uses an AUTODIN terminal, the terminal must be pointed to the Message Conversion System in order for dual routing to occur. If the originator's terminal is using a local routing database instead of the Central Directory Component database the MCS uses, the message won't be dual routed. Instructions for pointing the AUTODIN terminal to the MCS are in the "AUTODIN to DMS Transition Guide," which can be downloaded from the DMS-AF Web page https://www.afca.scott.af.mil/dms/index.cfm.

The second reason a message may come in on AUTODIN and not DMS is when the message originates in DMS and is being sent only to AUTODIN. The design of the interface doesn't provide routing of a message from DMS to AUTODIN and then back into DMS. In this situation, the sender needs to address the message to both the receiver's AUTODIN PLA and DMS Distinguished Name addresses.



Q. My PLA is in an Address Indicator Group, so why don't I receive DMS Mail List traffic?

A. The DMS-AF Program Management Office uses a software program to automatically populate Mail Lists based on information contained in the Central Directory Component database. In order for a DMS DN address to be added to a Mail List, a PLA-to-DN association must be accomplished at Fort Detrick, Md. Ask your DMS System Administrator to make a PLA-to-DN association request to your MAJCOM PLA manager. Instructions and format are in the "DMS-AF Guide for Updating PLAs and AIGs," downloadable from the DMS-AF Web page https://www.afca.scott.af.mil/dms/index.cfm.

Q. How can I find out which AIGs a PLA belongs to?

A. Your DMS System Administrator can get this information from the DISA DII Asset Distribution System Web site https://whefl001.ncr.disa.mil/DMS/. If your PLA is missing from an AIG it should be in, ask the AIG owner to add it. Here's how:

1. From the Web site's main page, click the PLA Search link to open the search window.

2. Enter the PLA to search for or get information for all PLAs at a location. Enter the location information and select the "Check if field must end with given string" box.

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Operational security essential to mission success, personal safety

By Capt. Jefferey T. Hennes
Communications and Information Directorate
Air Force Reserve Command
Robins AFB, Ga.

We all have a role to play in Operations Security. Protecting information related to our military operations and personal lives is paramount to ensuring mission effectiveness and safety for military members and their families.

OPSEC is defined in Joint Pub. 3-54 as "the process of denying adversaries **information** about friendly capabilities and intentions by identifying, **controlling**, and **protecting** indicators associated with planning and conducting military operations and other activities." I've added the bold for emphasis on words that should peak the interest of any good communications and information troop.

A primary mission we all share is delivering **information** to the right people at the right time, while giving the receiver confidence the message is from the indicated sender and hasn't been altered or intercepted. We also provide communications infrastructure and the core communications services that **control** passing of information across the globe. Since I'm currently in the Information Assurance business, the final word of interest to the comm and info community is **protecting.** Looking at the definition from this perspective emphasizes the community's significant role in the OPSEC world.

What's the importance of OPSEC and the comm and info role in today's military environment? Information is gaining ever-increasing importance in today's military operations, as evidenced by addition of "Information Superiority" to core competencies listed in Air Force Doctrine Document, September 1997. This is represented visually in the illustration accompanying this article – Figure 2.3 from AFDD 1. This importance is also depicted in the August 2000 "Operations Security for Program Manager's" guide, which states, "America, as one of the most information-dependent military forces on Earth, must protect our information's availability and dependability to accomplish our mission and protect our forces."

Figure 2.3 from AFDD 1

Perhaps one of the most important and less appreciated roles we perform in the OPSEC arena is as keepers of Communications Security material. We safeguard the keys to our cryptographic systems day-in and day-out, ensuring countless missions continue without a hitch. Dedicated COMSEC managers help to assure safety and security of our classified information and people performing missions.

One of the steps in the OPSEC process found in the manager's guide is to assess information risk. Potential is great for the comm and info community to perform an increasing role in this area. Assessing risk entails comparing cost of implementing an OPSEC measure to expected value of mission effectiveness. We can function as technology experts to find the best tools to help reduce cost of implementing countermeasures. Advancing technology is providing means to counter information vulnerabilities at an ever-increasing rate. We need to stay on top of technology to ensure we use the most effective and efficient means to insert new capabilities into the process.

There are more roles we can and will support within the OPSEC process. The intention of this article is to underscore the comm and info community's roles in OPSEC, encourage appreciation of the growing importance of these roles within overall military strategy, and emphasize specific roles to help direct and inspire the community's thinking. I challenge comm and info professionals to think about the part they play in their current position to assure OPSEC. Get directly involved with OPSEC, and always practice good OPSEC discipline in every mission you support.

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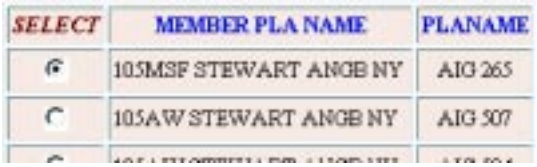
3. Click the radio button next to MEMBER PLA NAME under the Member PLA Table section.

4. Select the number of entries you want to return and click the "Search Database" button.

5. A list of AIGs for a particular PLA or location will be displayed.



SELECT	MEMBER PLA NAME	PLANAME
	105MSF STEWART ANGB NY	AIG 265
	105AW STEWART ANGB NY	AIG 507

Q. I'm trying to send a message to an organization that doesn't have DMS. Why can't I find its PLA in the Directory Information Tree under Genser PLAs?

A. When sending a message from DMS to an AUTODIN PLA, you must select the PLA from the AUTODIN PLAs branch of the DIT, not the Genser PLAs branch. A good example of sending a message from DMS to AUTODIN is on the DMS-AF Organizational Messaging video, which can be downloaded from https://dmsafnt1.ssg.gunter.af.mil/.

Q. When I try to send DMS messages, why do I keep getting nondelivery notices?

A. Several things can cause NDNs. When analyzing the problem, start with Lockheed Martin's "NDN Trouble Shooting Guide," available for download from the DMS-AF Web site https://www.afca.scott.af.mil/dms/index.cfm. Depending on the type of NDN, you may have to open a trouble ticket with the DMS help desk. If so, follow your local guidelines.

The problems outlined above are commonly encountered by DMS System Administrators. Use program guidelines to find resolutions. The following simple checklist will get you started.

* Can my DMS account send and receive signed and encrypted e-mail?
* Has my PLA-to-DN association been established?
* Is my PLA set up for dual routing?
* Is my PLA in the AIGs it needs to be in?
* Has my DMS DN been added to all the Mail Lists I need to be in?

SSL

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who it was issued by and to, and the dates it's valid. If you recognize and are confident of the authority, you can accept the certificate knowing you're operating securely with the Web site.

The public key given to you by the certificate allows your browser to decrypt and encrypt information passed between you and the SSL site. Anyone setting up an SSL with this site receives the same public key. The site also maintains a highly secure private key known only to the site manager. One key can not work without the other. This is what makes it secure. The algorithm used can be known as well. These keys are essential to security of the SSL. The public key system is called asymmetric because the keys are different. When two trusted sites use the same key for privacy and secrecy, the system is called symmetric.

After SSL is established, all your transactions are encrypted, so even if nefarious persons capture your information, they'll find it impossible to decrypt and read without the correct key set. By the time they were able to break the code, the information might no longer be of any value. Some types of encryption are easier than others to break. Usually you're requested to use 128-bit encryption.

It's important to remember that although SSL is fairly secure, there are always risks. Even if your secure socket transaction has low vulnerability to being hacked, the site server that stores your information may not. Most hackers don't attempt to crack the SSL, since accessing the data server is much easier.

An understanding of the Secure Socket Layer function – and adherence to its guiding principles – will assist you in helping to safeguard vital defense information.

CICP

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Server from their computer at work or home. You don't have to be a registrant to subscribe. Our list server is available to military personnel, as well as civilians. Currently, more than 1,500 Air Force personnel have subscribed. Our goal is to have 100 percent of CICP registrants subscribed by the end of the summer. To register, go to our Web site at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/cicp/list_server.htm.

Make sure you don't miss a vacancy that you're interested in. Sign up for the CICP List Server today.

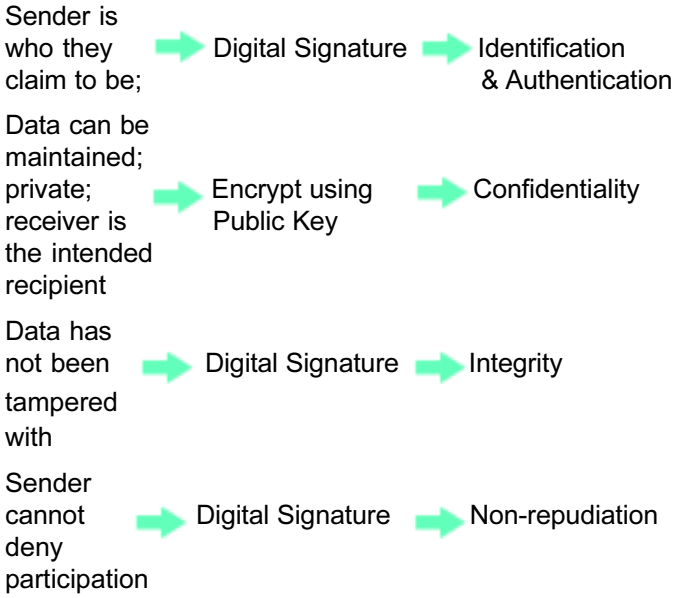
For more information or if you have problems with subscribing, contact our position management specialists, Ruby Anderson, Mike Zimmerman, Susan Krudwig or Al Tudyk, at DSN 665-3691.

How PKI contributes to Information Assurance

By Cheryl R. Smith
Air National Guard, National Guard Bureau
Arlington, Va.

PKI has more to offer than just another acronym. While most may know PKI stands for Public Key Infrastructure, the bigger question is, "What is it and what does it have to offer me?"

PKI consists of systems, software, tokens, public and private keys, and processes which provide the using community with identification and authentication, confidentiality, integrity and non-repudiation. These attributes are illustrated below.



Currently, four certificates are issued through PKI to ensure our electronic transactions are secure through the use of 128-bit encryption and digital signing:

Certificate Type	Purpose
Server	* Authenticates server identity to end user * Provides for secure, encrypted communications
Identity	* Every individual within DOD is required to have one * Authenticates end user to server or application * Supports digitally signing documents or electronic forms
Signature	* Supports digitally signing e-mail message traffic * Ensures the originator a message is valid within the PKI system
Encryption	* Supports encryption or decryption of message traffic

PKI has something to offer each of us, as we continue to satisfy our information security needs and responsibilities. Additional information is available on the Air Force PKI SPO Web site at https://afpki.lackland.af.mil.

TMAP helps assure proper use of telecommunications

By Master Sgt. Sonya Obrynba
and **Master Sgt. Trina Hines**
179th Communications Flight
Air National Guard
Mansfield, Ohio

You've seen it numerous times. In fact, it's become so routine you're probably unaware why it's there and what it really means. We're referring to the fact you're subject to monitoring whenever you use any telecommunications device. Remember that notice and consent banner that appears when you first turn on your computer in the morning? How about that red sticker, DD Form 2056, on your telephone advising that use constitutes consent to monitoring?

The Air Force uses unsecured telecommunications systems such as telephones, cellular phones, radios, facsimile machines and computer networks to conduct day-to-day official business. Adversaries can easily monitor these unsecured systems and intercept information on military capabilities, intentions and activities.

The Telecommunications Monitoring and Assessment Program is a key part of Air Force operational security efforts. In accordance with AFI 33-219, it permits monitoring of unsecured telecommunications systems to determine vulnerability to hostile signal intelligence exploitation. However, because TMAP involves surveillance of base communications systems, AFI 33-219 contains clear, concise mandatory noti-

See **TMAP** next page

Understanding secure telephone use important for secure communications

By Paula May
Air Force Reserve Command
Robins AFB, Ga.

When you hear the term STU-III, do you automatically think of secure communications? The career field and environment you work in will most likely determine your familiarity with secure telephone unit III. However, all Department of Defense personnel should have a basic understanding of it, and when and how it should be used, both in-garrison and deployed.

The STU-III is a reliable means of communication, capable of both voice and data transmission. It should always be used when discussing classified, or sensitive-unclassified information.

The terminal without a crypto-ignition key may only be used as a regular telephone for making unclassified calls. The key allows the STU-III to be used for secure communications.

Here are general steps for using the STU-III in the secure mode:

1. Locate the CIK.
2. Clear the area of personnel who don't have a clearance and a need to know.
3. Insert the key into the STU-III and turn one-quarter turn clockwise.
4. Dial the STU-III number you want to call.
5. After the connection is established, verify the site called in the display window.
6. Press the Secure button to begin discussing classified information.

(Note: Other models may have a different button for secure mode.)

7. After termination of the classified discussion, press the Clear button to return to unsecure mode.
8. After completing the call, remove the key and return it to its storage location.

As always, when dealing with classified information, some precautions can prevent a communications security incident. Whether in-garrison or deployed, watch for unauthorized persons attempting to make secure calls on STU-III terminals. To minimize this potential, remove the key from the terminal when it's not being used or when it's left unattended. For deployed situations, it's required to have a "Deployed" CIK. Otherwise, when a call is made, the identification is misleading, because the display indicates the caller's home station, when in reality that person may be at a deployed location. Another measure worth mentioning, especially when deploying, is to make sure CIKs haven't expired. If this occurs, the STU-III is nothing more than a paperweight when it comes to secure communications. Additionally, STU-IIIs and CIKs must be transported or shipped separately when shipping or deploying to another location.

The STU-III is being replaced gradually by Secure Terminal Equipment, which isn't yet readily available or widely used. That status is changing this summer, as bases convert to STEs. However, progress is expected to be slow, due to the equipment's relatively high cost. But whether you use STE or STU-III, the important thing to remember is the mission constancy of COMSEC:

The protection resulting from all measures designed to deny unauthorized persons information of value which might be derived from the possession and study of telecommunications, or to mislead unauthorized persons in their interpretation of the results of such possession and study.

Being aware of how the overall mission relates to the use of STU-IIIs and STEs is vital to the protection of classified information.

These are some primary issues involved with using STU-IIIs. Hopefully you now have better awareness and understanding of the mindset required for dealing with secure communications. Preplanning and observance of basic security rules will continue to enhance the STU-III's reputation as the ultimate backup system for voice and data transmission and, in turn, ensure the overall reliability of our communications infrastructure.

TMAP

From previous page

fication procedures that must be in place to support this function. To ensure compliance, the instruction requires an extensive review of base or organizational user notification processes every two years.

Your base legal folks are responsible for initial reviews and ensuring compliance with AFI 33-219 requirements, and it's imperative you understand game rules. The purpose of legal reviews is to certify users of telecommunications devices have been provided sufficient notice of consent to monitoring. In other words, documentation included in base certification packages should clearly confirm base notification efforts meet instruction requirements, and base telecommunications users are placed on notice their calls, e-mails and faxes are subject to monitoring.

AFPCA members volunteer time, efforts So Others May Eat

Tech. Sgt. Mona Ferrell
Air Force Pentagon Communications Agency
Public Affairs
Washington

Some people volunteer simply for the smiles they put on the faces of those they serve. For others it's the gratification of giving something back to their community. Regardless of their reasons, there's no doubt that volunteerism can make a difference; members of the Air Force Pentagon Communications Agency are finding this out first hand.

Every fourth Monday of each month, personnel within AFPCA volunteer their time at a D.C.-based homeless shelter. While their job as a volunteer in the So Others May Eat mission program is to serve food, their outreach accomplishes much more, said Tech. Sgt. Linnel Hickman, AFPCA Executive Travel deputy superintendent for Office of Secretary of Defense, and agency coordinator for the monthly event.

"It's a fantastic feeling knowing you've done something to help other people less fortunate in our community. Even though it's not a total fix for the homeless and the problems they have, even a fraction of help is better than no help at all."

Tech. Sgt. Linnel Hickman
SOME volunteer

"Volunteering with SOME, or with any program like this, gives you a real sense of satisfaction," said Sergeant Hickman, who's been working with the program for two years now. "It's a fantastic feeling knowing you've done something to help other people less fortunate in our community. Even though it's not a total fix for the homeless and the problems they have, even a fraction of help is better than no help at all.

"It's also a very humbling experience," Sergeant Hickman continued. "A lot of people don't give much thought to the necessities of life – food, clothing, shelter and healthcare – because they seem so simple. Yet around the United States and throughout the world, there are literally millions of homeless people who don't know where their next meal is coming from or where they're going to sleep at night. SOME helps to provide these necessities for people who are at a time in their life where they can't provide for themselves."

Founded in 1970 by a group of ministers, SOME began as a "soup kitchen," serving homeless people in the D.C. area, said David Bright, SOME volunteer coordinator. However, with the help of volunteers, the mission quickly grew. Now, in addition to providing 1,200 meals a day, SOME also offers clothing, shelters, showers and medical and dental care at 20 mission sites located throughout the National Capital Region.

"... Throughout the course of a year, more than 10,000 people volunteer their time, and we need each and every one of them."

David Bright
SOME volunteer coordinator

However, it's the help of volunteers that keeps the mission going, Bright said. "Our volunteers play a huge part in everything we do here," he said. "Each meal requires at least 15 people to make it work, and we only have four employees (at the "O" Street mission). Throughout the course of a year, more than 10,000 people volunteer their time, and we need each and every one of them."

But, it's not just the work the volunteers undertake that impacts the people they serve; it's their attitude. "Something as simple as sitting down and having a conversation with these people can brighten their day," said Bright, who's been the primary focal point for SOME volunteers for the past 12 years. "It's extremely gratifying to know that just by talking to someone you can put a smile on their face."

Even more gratifying for many of the AFPCA volunteers is seeing success stories and solidifying friendships, Sergeant Hickman said. "Although we don't wear uniforms when we volunteer, the majority of the people we serve know we're in the military. Our military background helps to catapult conversations. And, since we see a lot of the same people every month, we start building friendships.

"It's great to see and hear about success stories that come out of the mission too," Sergeant Hickman added. "I've befriended some guys who were on drugs or down-and-out in some way; to see how SOME has helped them out is remarkable."

It's these success stories that bring the AFPCA volunteers back every month. "To know that just by opening our hearts we're making a difference – there's no other feeling like it," Sergeant Hickman said. "If we can feed just one person and put a smile on their face; it's all worth it."

Christmas in April*OKC 2001 'a dream come true' for elderly

By Cheryl Stefenel
552nd Computer Systems Squadron
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Making dreams come true – that's one of the things the "Rebuilding Together with Christmas in April*OKC" project does.

For the sixth year, members of the 552nd Computer Systems Group and the 507th Combat Logistics Support Squadron joined together to work on the home of Dorothy Dryden, an elderly widow, to make her home safe, secure and weatherproof.

"I am very grateful my house was chosen," Dryden said. "It's 30 years old. Things get worn out just like me. The work that was done is beyond my expectations – totally a dream come true."

Master Sgt. John Dunham fills in the pool as part of work the 552nd CSS, Tinker AFB, Okla., did for Christmas in April.

The first of the three weekends working on her house was spent breaking up a concrete swimming pool and filling the hole. The pool had not been used for many years and there was the possibility that someone could fall in from the narrow walkway.

"The pool was put in 20 years ago," said Dryden. "After my husband's death in 1991, I couldn't afford to run it. I had to pump out stagnant water every time it rained because of the mosquitoes."

Now Dryden says she's going to plant tomatoes, peppers and flowers in its place. The second weekend involved maintenance jobs: scraping paint off eaves, repairing the roof, putting up a new fence and doing other general repair.

During the final weekend, finishing touches included giving the house a thorough cleaning, installing carpet, painting the exterior, working in the yard, and completing other miscellaneous jobs.

Dryden was very thankful her house was chosen this year as one of the Christmas in April*OKC projects.

The primary goal of CIA is to make homes of the elderly safe, secure and weatherproof, so that they may live independently and with dignity, according to Nicole Hunzicker, executive director. Their scope has expanded to improving community centers that serve Oklahoma City residents.

Photos by Cheryl Stefenel

Master Sgt. Derek Van Duyne uses the Ditch Witch to put fill dirt into the pool.

CIA is more than just repairing homes, Hunzicker said. "Volunteers and homeowners alike receive a renewed sense of community spirit. If we do our job, both the homeowner and the volunteers will receive the warm feeling that is shared in an old-fashioned community barnraising."

The words "Rebuilding Together" were added to the Christmas in April*OKC name to better describe their mission, Hunzicker noted.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the program. Since its inception, 412 homes and 20 community service facilities have been repaired by more than 26,000 volunteers.

Air Force Outstanding Airman

Photo by Senior Airman Delia A. Castillo

Tech. Sgt. John A. Maldonado II, chief of ground radio maintenance, 603rd Air Control Squadron, Aviano AB, Italy, last month was named one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of 2001. Watch for a feature article on him in a future issue of *intercom*.