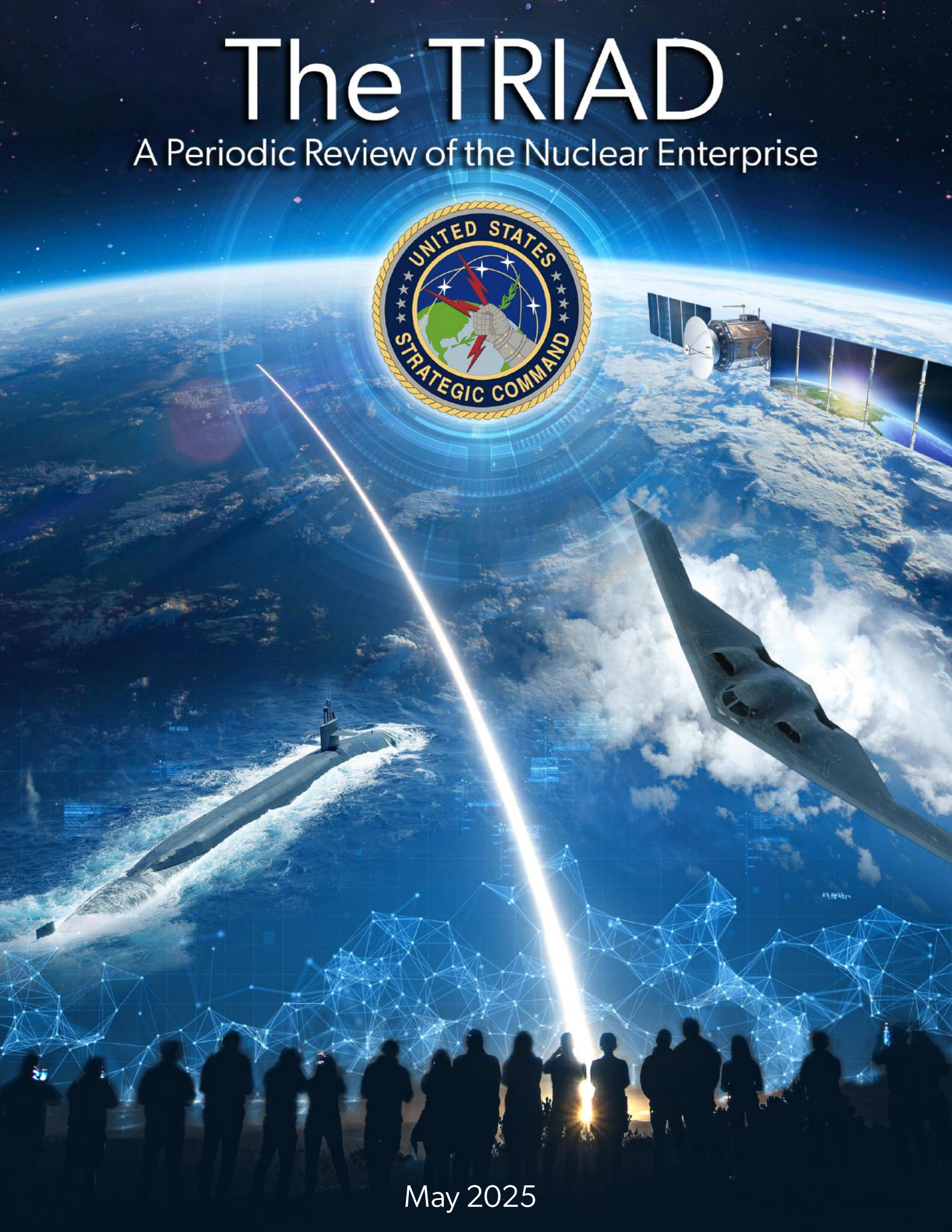


The TRIAD

A Periodic Review of the Nuclear Enterprise



May 2025

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Gen. Cotton testifies at the House Armed Services Committee Strategic Forces Subcommittee



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Alexander Kubitzka

"America's nuclear forces, the bedrock of our national security,

are and continue to be, safe, secure, effective, and credible. In today's deteriorating security environment, our mission has never been more critical. To effectively deter in this complex environment, we must maintain both our existing capabilities and accelerate the ongoing modernization of our nuclear deterrent to include all three legs of the triad and its critical Nuclear Command, Control and Communication Systems. Investing in modernization will ensure that U.S. strategic weapons continue to deter aggression, assure our Allies and partners, and allow us to achieve national objectives if deterrence fails."

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton, U.S. Air Force
Commander, USSTRATCOM



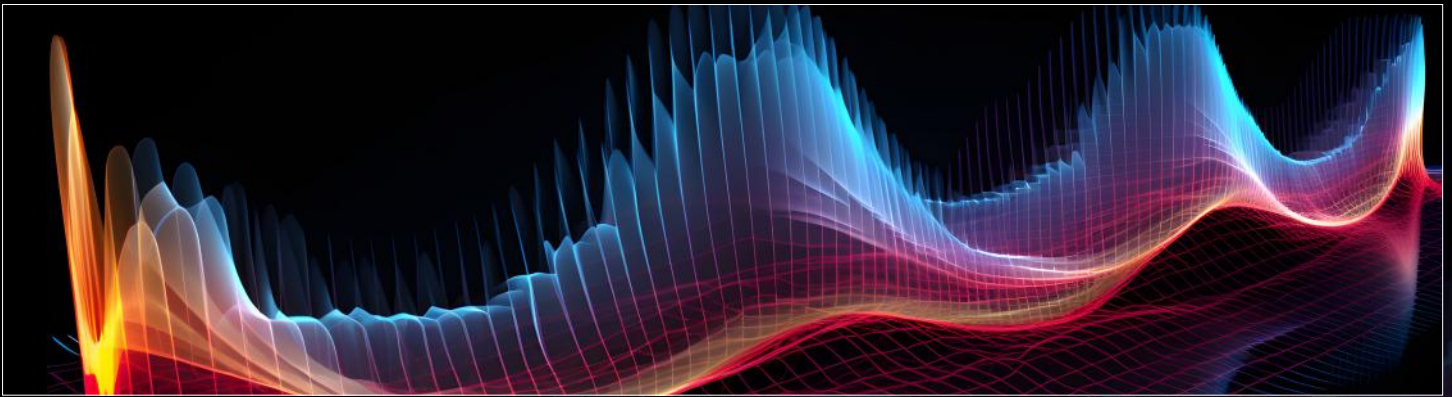
For the full posture statement, visit:

<https://www.stratcom.mil/2025-Posture-Statement/>

STRATCOM Synergy

USSTRATCOM JEC Director emphasizes importance of Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations

Story by U.S. Strategic Command Public Affairs



WASHINGTON -- U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. AnnMarie Anthony, director of United States Strategic Command's Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center, attended the Future Operating Environment workshop at National Defense University on Fort McNair, Washington D.C., Feb. 26.

Anthony participated in a fireside chat and hosted an international leadership panel of U.S. and allied flag officers during the event. The workshop focused on incorporating Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations into professional military education across the Joint Force and infusing a better understanding of critical warfighting capabilities into the curricula.

During the fireside chat with Dr. Ling Yung, acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for Force Education and Training, Anthony shared her insights on the importance of advancing the military's EMSO capabilities and improving military leaders' awareness of those capabilities.

"The electromagnetic spectrum is not simply a supporting element of military operations. It is the very arena where future conflicts will be won or lost," said Anthony. "The EMS is not a separate domain itself, but rather an inseparable component of air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace operations. We must continue to advance our capabilities and empower our forces to showcase lethality within the EMS environment to deter aggression and maintain our competitive edge."

Yung emphasized the significance of Anthony's contribution to the workshop. "Major General Anthony's expertise on this topic is why we were so excited to have her join us for this workshop. She has a passion for educating our force and strengthening our EMSO capabilities that is so motivating," said Yung. "Add to that her ability to take incredibly complex subject matter and make it easy to understand for all audiences, and you have a powerhouse in the EMSO space. She has a lot to say, and we should be listening."

USSTRATCOM, a global warfighting command, deters strategic attack through a safe, secure, effective, and credible global combat capability and, when directed, is ready to prevail in conflict.



U.S. Army photo by Specialist Joseph Martin

USS Tennessee wins Battle “E” award

Vice Adm. Rob Gaucher, commander of Submarine Force Atlantic (COMSUBLANT), announced the COMSUBLANT winners of the 2024 Battle Efficiency (“E”) Competition awards, Jan. 1.

The Battle “E” competition is conducted to strengthen and evaluate both command and overall force warfighting readiness and to recognize outstanding command performance. The criterion for the Battle “E” Award is the overall readiness of a crew to execute its combat mission.



**Ballistic Missile Submarine: USS Tennessee (GOLD and BLUE),
Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia**

U.S. Strategic Command announces 2024 Omaha Trophy winners

Story by U.S. Strategic Command Public Affairs

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. – Gen. Anthony Cotton, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, recently announced the winners of the 2024 Omaha Trophy, awarded by the Strategic Command Consultation Committee.

- **Intercontinental Ballistic Missile: 91st Missile Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota**
- **Ballistic Missile Submarine: USS Tennessee (GOLD and BLUE), Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia**
- **Strategic Bomber: 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri**
- **Global Operations: 171st Air Refueling Wing, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania**

Gen. Cotton lauded these units and their people's exceptional readiness, performance and commitment to national security.

"These dedicated warfighters remained squarely focused on this command's mission during our Year of Action," Cotton said. "Now, as we move through our Year of Acceleration, their extraordinary performance has set new, incredibly high standards of professionalism and combat-readiness."

The SCCC is a historic group of Omaha-based civic leaders focused on supporting USSTRATCOM's mission and people. Since 1971, they've bestowed the annual Omaha Trophy upon elite units across four categories in recognition of their exceptional contributions to strategic deterrence.

SCCC Chair Dana Bradford noted that the Omaha Trophy is the highest distinction awarded to a nuclear-enterprise unit by a civilian organization.

"We are deeply proud to recognize the hard work of these dedicated Americans and the selfless sacrifice of their loved ones at home," said Bradford. "It is our honor to continue the Omaha Trophy tradition by celebrating the very best of the best."

For more information, contact the USSTRATCOM Public Affairs Office at (402) 912-0020 or USSTRATCOMPA@mail.mil



**Intercontinental
Ballistic Missile**
91st Missile Wing



**Ballistic Missile
Submarine**
Sub Group 10



Strategic Bomber
509th Bomb Wing



Global Operations
171st Air Refueling Wing

COMPONENTS **in Action**

5th Munitions Squadron powers BTF 25-2 with precision and pride

Story and photo by Airman 1st Class Luis Gomez, 5th Bomb Wing Public Affairs,
Minot Air Force Base



RAF FAIRFORD, England -- The hum of machinery and the steady rhythm of hands at work fill the night air as the Airmen of the 5th Munitions Squadron execute their mission with precision and dedication.

Deployed from Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, they are a critical force behind Bomber Task Force 25-2, ensuring that B-52H Stratofortress bombers remain armed and ready at Royal Air Force Fairford, England.

Their mission is straightforward but essential, assembling and maintaining the munitions that enable global deterrence and combat capabilities. Through long hours and shifting conditions, they work tirelessly to support strategic operations across the region.

"Our job is to build, maintain, and prepare munitions for the BTF mission," said Tech. Sgt. Joshua Richardson, 5th MUNS training section chief. "The bombs we assemble here directly support the United States' ability to project power and assure our Allies."

Executing their role requires more than just technical skill. The Airmen of 5th MUNS rely on adaptability and teamwork to overcome obstacles and maintain efficiency under pressure.

"The builds themselves are simple enough, but sometimes you have to

think outside the box," Richardson said. "During Air Force Combat Operations Competition, we had to improvise solutions, like using a tie down strap in place of a missing spanner wrench. That mindset has carried over to this deployment, where adaptability is key."

The MUNS unit proved itself as a premier team within the Air Force when they competed fiercely against other Air Force Global Strike Command units during the AFCOCOMP. The team secured second place overall, narrowly missing first by one point. Their high energy, teamwork and technical proficiency were recognized by senior leaders, solidifying their reputation as one of the top munitions teams in the service.

"The success we had at AFCOCOMP has had a multitude of after effects," Richardson said. "Socially, we are well known throughout the career field. Internally, 5th MUNS now has a 10-person team of absolute professionals ready to be utilized at a moment's notice."

That sense of camaraderie and excellence carried over to their work at RAF Fairford, where they efficiently completed builds while maintaining a high level of morale.

"I think the team is doing great. We have completed a lot of our

builds quickly, even while pacing ourselves," said Tech. Sgt. Amanda Solis, 5th MUNS munitions operations section chief. "That is a testament to our team's capability and efficiency."

For Richardson, the impact of AFCOCOMP and the skills learned from it have been instrumental in making the 5th MUNS team an elite group of Airmen, ready to tackle any challenge thrown their way.

"The experience they gained training for and performing at AFCOCOMP will set them apart from their peers for years to come," Richardson said. "This energy trickles out onto all the jobs these members are involved in, showcasing their expertise in all ways. For example, an Airman 1st Class led and taught all the members of his shift how to properly align a strake and belly band on a GBU-54."

Day in and day out the Airmen of 5th MUNS continue to build, innovate, and adapt to meet the demands of their mission. Their expertise, dedication and relentless drive make them an invaluable part of BTF 25-2 and a key component in ensuring the success of global deterrence operations.

Missile security: A week in the life of the defenders

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Mattison Cole,
90th Missile Wing Public Affairs, F.E. Warren Air Force Base



F.E. WARREN AIR FORCE BASE, Wyo. – Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, defenders from the 90th, 790th, and 890th Missile Security Forces Squadrons trip out to the missile field to protect one of America's most valuable strategic assets - the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

Sprinkled throughout eastern Wyoming, northern Colorado, and western Nebraska are 15 Missile Alert Facilities housing defenders weekly to ensure that the 90th Missile Wing's ICBM fleet is secure. Each MAF is responsible for 10 neighboring launch facilities. Having defenders standing by closely allows for timely and effective protection and defense.

Bright and early in the morning, the 90th MSFS joined together for a guard mount formation and armed up for their trip out to the missile field. After loading up the trucks, the squadron members left F.E. Warren Air Force Base and arrived at their

assigned MAF and temporary homes for the week.

Equipped with a kitchen and a chef, a bathroom with shower facilities, bedrooms, and a lounge, these MAFs provide all the necessities for a comfortable stay.

To keep the MAFs running safely and effectively, there are designated facility managers who live in each MAF and whose responsibilities are to take care of the area, its systems, and the defenders who stay there.

"It's critical to the mission to have an FM on site because out here, we are not only the person who's in charge of the facility, but we are also the first responder," said Tech. Sgt. Ross Pritchard, 319th Missile Squadron Charlie-01 non-commissioned officer in charge. "Any emergency that happens, we're the first person to assess and handle the situation accordingly. Fires, tornadoes, a

medical emergency, flooding, fuel spills... all kinds of situations can happen out here."

After getting settled in, the teams of 90th MSFS defenders at each location are split in half to work 12-hour shifts.

Airman 1st Class Heaven Sanchez, 90th MSFS missile security operator, was on day shift at the Charlie-01 MAF. While missile defenders never know how many alarms they will have to respond to during their shift, they are always ready to go due to the steps they take to prepare.

"We first check the truck for gas, and then we load up with all of our equipment, and it's crucial we don't forget a thing," Sanchez said. "We have to make sure we have our gas mask, weapons, magazines, radios and more so we are properly prepared in all circumstances."

After ensuring all equipment is prepared for the teams to respond to alarms signaled from the nearby launch facilities, the defenders make the drive out to secure the perimeter and reset the alarm.

To know when these alarms are needed, a capsule team consisting of two officers perform around-the-clock alert in the launch control centers in each MAF. They relay messages to the designated field security controller of an alert and send out response teams to secure the site. Defenders on shift must stay vigilant to respond at the drop of a dime.

To maintain this vigilance, there are often security response exercises that take place in the missile field to practice readiness. These exercises range from possible duress at the gate, a medical emergency, or responding to alarms at the LFs.

The 90th MSFS defenders at the Delta-01 MAF participated in a security response exercise involving a duress scenario at the gate. During this scenario, day shift defenders challenge opposing forces. The defenders detained the opposing forces to remove the threat. 1st Lt. Nicole Calhoun, 90th MSFS flight commander, played an opposing force and evaluated the procedures.

"My role is to initiate exercises and to evaluate my defenders to ensure they know the proper procedures and to ensure the safety of the nation's assets, each other and themselves," said Calhoun. "We practice like we play. For example, in a sports setting, if you don't practice all the time, how do you expect to win a championship?"

According to Calhoun, staying prepared and ready ensures national security and allows for a watchful eye. The 90th MSFS demands excellence from these defenders, so if a real-world scenario emerges, they are more than prepared for it.

When there are no alarms to respond to or exercises to participate in, a lot of free time can become available at the MAFs. The defenders take advantage of this time by studying for upcoming tasks, going to the gym provided on-site and even coming together to play board games. Spending time together helps build camaraderie among the defenders.

"Doing mundane things such as weightlifting, chatting and sharing meals with the folks I'm posted with really helps build unforgettable

bonds," said Airman 1st Class Diego De Leon, 90th MSFS missile security operator. "Honestly, when being away from home for a little more than half the year in total, you start to rely on those around you to help pass the time and to keep the morale up."

De Leon also explained that through their honest conversations and perseverance in the field, the defenders create strong bonds that build their confidence when executing the mission.

Having collaborative strength and a strong bond amongst the defenders in the missile field allows for more effective safeguarding of the nation's most valuable asset. When these devoted defenders work together as one, they send a message to adversaries: "We stand ready to defend and secure a lethal combat-ready force for nuclear and conventional global strike...anytime and anywhere."



501st Combat Support Wing fuels BTF 25-2 success

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Kristen Heller, 5th Bomb Wing Public Affairs,
Minot Air Force Base

**"Just as our wing name
implies, we provide
combat support to the
Bomber Task Force
personnel"**

-- Col. D. Landon Phillips
501st CSW commander

RAF FAIRFORD, England -- For the 501st Combat Support Wing, supporting Bomber Task Force deployments is more than just providing a location for bomber operations -- the wing creates an integrated, mission-ready environment that allows deployed aircrews and aircraft to launch into action upon arrival.

The mission accomplishments during BTF 25-2 were not only made possible by the 69th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at RAF Fairford, but also the behind-the-scenes contributions of the 501st CSW Airmen who ensured every element of the mission -- from aircraft maintenance to airfield operations -- ran smoothly.

"Just as our wing name implies, we provide combat support to the Bomber Task Force personnel," said U.S. Air Force Col. D. Landon Phillips, 501st CSW commander. "We deliver munitions and ordnance, care and feeding, communication capabilities, logistical support, and anything the aircraft maintainers need to sustain air operations. Our goal is to foster seamless agile combat support."

Each BTF deployment requires months of preparation, tailoring support to the specific needs of the arriving unit. The 501st CSW's planning team worked closely with the 69th EBS well in advance of their deployment from Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, ensuring every operational requirement was met before the first aircraft arrived.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Cangealose, 69th EBS commander, said this proactive coordination set the stage for a smooth and effective deployment. The infrastructure and personnel at RAF Fairford provided a strong foundation, allowing his crews to remain focused on the mission.

"The 501st CSW and its personnel have been critical in ensuring the success of our mission here at RAF Fairford," Cangealose said. "From fire department operations to security forces and airfield management, their support allows us to effectively project airpower across the European theater." Among the many moving

parts that kept BTF 25-2 running, airfield management played a crucial role in maintaining a safe and efficient operational environment. Every takeoff and landing depended on a team that could anticipate challenges, adapt to shifting schedules, and coordinate with multiple agencies.

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Trujillo, 420th Air Base Squadron noncommissioned officer in charge of airfield management training, explained that while the work is complex, her team remained focused on mission execution despite fluctuating schedules and manning constraints.

"Airfield management is all about precision,

and despite the challenges, we ensured that every aircraft could take off and land safely," Trujillo said.

For Trujillo and her team, seeing the direct impact of their work on the broader mission reinforced the significance of their role. Ensuring a well-run airfield wasn't just about keeping operations moving -- it was about enabling strategic bomber crews to execute missions that strengthened NATO partnerships and reinforced deterrence efforts in the region.

"This mission showed me how interconnected we are with the bigger picture," Trujillo said. "Airfield management may not always be in the spotlight, but without us, bomber operations wouldn't be possible."

Beyond sustaining daily operations, the 501st CSW played a key role in ensuring interoperability with NATO Allies. RAF Fairford's strategic location and specialized infrastructure provided an ideal staging ground for multinational exercises, facilitating seamless integration with partner nations. Phillips emphasized that the wing's ongoing collaboration with NATO strengthens both U.S. and Allied airpower capabilities.

"RAF Fairford is specifically designed to handle bomber operations, and our unique location and capabilities are a great asset to the alliance," Phillips said. "Having a constant boots-on-the-ground presence and maintaining relationships with the host nation and the 603rd Air Operations Center ensures that NATO and higher headquarters objectives are met."

As BTF 25-2 progressed, combined training missions with more than 13 partner nations highlighted the strength of interoperability. The ability to rapidly integrate with NATO Allies and regional partners demonstrated not only the flexibility of U.S. strategic airpower but also the shared commitment to collective security in the region.

Phillips sees the 501st CSW's role expanding in future BTF deployments as NATO's priorities evolve and security dynamics shift. The wing's ability to provide agile combat support will only grow in importance as global operations become increasingly complex.

"The support we provide BTF missions will only expand as we continue to hone our craft and strive to be the premier enabler and combat operations gateway into the European theater," Phillips said.

From the precision of airfield management to the meticulous planning and logistical coordination that kept the mission on track, the 501st CSW's efforts were instrumental in enabling BTF 25-2. While the B-52s carried out their missions across Europe, it was the dedication and expertise of the Airmen on the ground that ensured every launch, recovery, and operation was executed without hesitation. Their work didn't just support the mission -- it made it possible.

Sub Group 9 Weapons School Collaboration

Joint. Integrated Deterrence. One Team, One Fight. These phrases speak to the force multiplier that is cooperation across the Department of Defense.

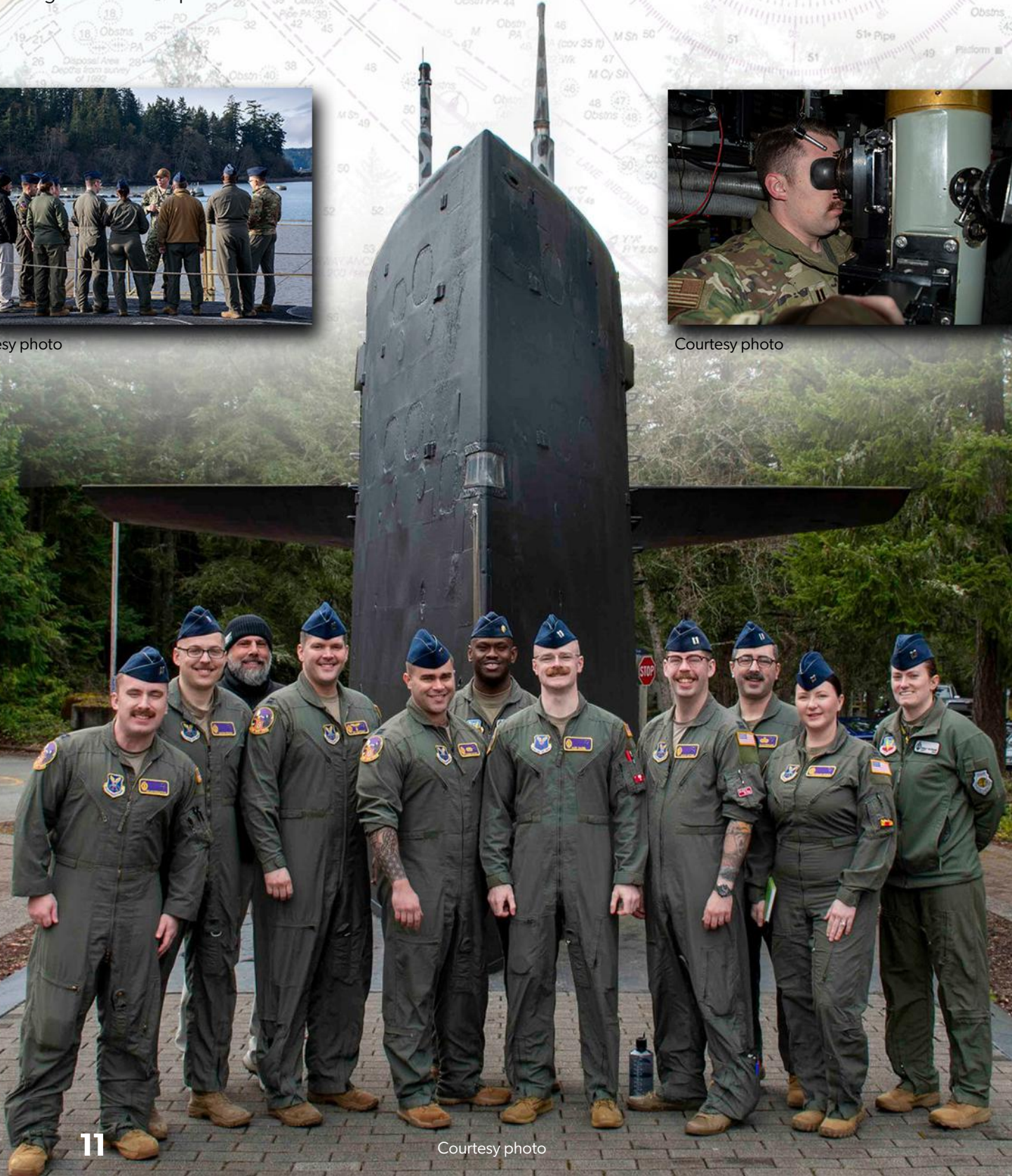
Sub Group 9 hosted students and instructors assigned to the U.S. Air Force's Weapons School, which trains tactical experts to control and exploit air, space, and cyber on behalf of the joint force. During their visit, students had the opportunity to learn about the most-survivable leg of the nuclear triad, enhancing their knowledge base of the nation's strategic deterrent capabilities.



Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo



USS Maine (SSBN 741) transits the Puget Sound

U.S. Coast Guard vessels and Military Sealift Command submarine support vessel USNS Eagleview (T-AGSE 3) escort the Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Maine (SSBN 741) as it transits the Puget Sound near Washington state during routine operations, March 18. Commander, Submarine Group (SUBGRU) 9, exercises administrative control authority for assigned submarine commands and units in the Pacific Northwest providing oversight for shipboard training, personnel, supply, and material readiness of SSBNs and their crews. SUBGRU-9 is also responsible for nuclear submarines undergoing conversion or overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton.



USS Nevada crews return home

There's no place like home!

Sailors assigned to the Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Nevada (SSBN 733) returned to their homeport at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Wash., recently with family and friends anxiously awaiting their arrival pier side.

Bravo-Zulu and welcome home shipmates!



U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer reinforces partnership and integration at Aero India 2025

Story by 2nd Lt. Alejandra Angarita
28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth Air Force Base

BENGALURU, India -- Airmen and a B-1B Lancer assigned to the 34th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, returned to Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, to support Aero India 2025, a five-day air and trade show.

Aero India's biennial airshow was held at Yelahanka Air Force Station, which hosted over 50,000 attendees. The air show also served as an exposition of emerging technologies, hosting nearly 800 exhibitors and more than 900 national and international manufacturers showcasing cutting-edge technological advances serving aerospace.

While deployed at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, to lead Bomber Task Force 25-1, the 34th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron forward-deployed to Bengaluru to conduct four flyovers Feb. 11 and Feb. 13 over Yelahanka Air Force Station. The flyovers helped demonstrate U.S. airpower projection and readiness in the Indo-Pacific region.

"In 2023, the 34th EBS Thunderbirds participated in Aero India. Having the opportunity to do it again this year is a true honor for not only the Thunderbirds, but for Team Ellsworth," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Wasil, 34th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron commander. "The participation is a testament of our commitment to strengthen partnerships with India. We look forward to future opportunities to grow our relationship with the Indian Air Force and to furthering our involvement in the Indo-Pacific region."

India is a Major Defense Partner leader and drives regional growth and development across the Indo-Pacific. With worldwide support, the air show showcased a variety of dynamic aircraft assets from the U.S. Air Force, Allies and partners, collectively serving aerial demonstrations and static displays to its attendees.

The U.S. partnership with India in participating in the air shows over the past decade continues to allow both countries, and their Allies and partners to strengthen military-to-military relationships in training, capabilities, and maintenance goals. This event underscores the importance of the U.S.-India partnership and commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Tarelle Walker

Airmen from Whiteman Air Force Base sharpen warfighting skills at Red Flag Nellis

Story and photos by Senior Airman Bryson Sherard,
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs, Whiteman Air Force Base



WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo.—Airmen from the 509th and 131st Bomb Wings recently participated in Red Flag 25-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

Red Flag is an annual exercise that gives warfighters an opportunity to train their capabilities in the most realistic environment possible. US Air Force troops also integrate with Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force units during the exercise, strengthening their ability to cooperate with key Allies and enhancing the global deterrence mission.

"Red Flag for us is an opportunity to take the skill sets that we hone back at home station and the things we train on every day and bring those competencies to the Joint Force in a dynamic environment," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Manglitz, 393rd



is 25-1



Expeditionary Bomb Squadron and 13th Bomber Squadron commander.

The B-2's capabilities make it a unique asset, and exercises like Red Flag provide air crews with simulated real-world conditions to enhance their operational effectiveness.

"The B-2 is a striker platform that brings a unique capability to penetrate deep into enemy air defenses," Manglitz said. "Operating in contested environments and holding high-value targets at risk in a way that other platforms simply cannot."

During Reg Flag, the B-2 operates out of an airfield away from its home station, giving aircrews and maintainers the opportunity to practice operations using only a minimal footprint.

"Exercises like Red Flag and Bamboo Eagle give our maintenance team the chance to operate outside of our comfort zone," said Capt. Gabrielle Franze, maintenance officer in charge 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron. "With fewer resources and less manpower. It challenges us to think critically, plan creatively, and become more independent, forcing our leaders and maintainers to adapt and execute under pressure."

This mindset fosters both individual growth and team cohesion, allowing Airmen to perform with confidence in any future challenge, especially under high stress environments.

"The high ops tempo here at Red Flag forces us to work harder with fewer resources, making every minute and every team member count," Franze said. "The relentless pace and limited resources challenge

teams to become more resourceful and efficient."

Exercises like Red Flag send a message to Allies and adversaries alike that the Air Force and its Allies are ready and capable to bring the fight anywhere in the world at a moment's notice, Manglitz said.

"As our Airmen return from these exercises, they do so with enhanced skills, strengthened alliances, and a renewed understanding of their role in the greater strategic picture all while being prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow, today," he said.

Guardians of the North

Ellsworth AFB mobilizes entire B-1 Fleet

Story by Senior Airman Dylan Maher,
28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs, Ellsworth Air Force Base



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alec Carlberg

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. — Raider maintainers from the 34th and 37th Bomber Generation Squadrons recently mobilized Ellsworth's entire fleet of B-1B Lancers. While most will temporarily relocate to Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, some made their way to Andersen AFB, Guam, for a Bomber Task Force deployment.

The temporary relocation is necessary to complete a runway construction project tied to the future bed down of the B-21 Raider. As the last B-1 departed Jan. 25, it marked the first time in 30 years the Ellsworth flightline was empty of Lancers.

Generating aircraft sorties, especially B-1B Lancer sorties, requires an exceptional team of aircraft maintainers.

"The mighty B-1 has been around for over 40 years, and the foundational mission remains the same: win today, dominate tomorrow," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Andrew Feigen, 37th Bomber Generation Squadron commander. "From production to the technicians to the lowest level, elevating the lethality of the B-1

maintainer in partnership with Grand Forks will cause pause in our enemies."

Before the wheels of a B-1 lift off the ground, maintainers are tasked to ensure aircraft are serviceable, safe and combat ready. They conduct detailed inspections, apply necessary repairs, and log every maintenance action for accountability.

"It's a very high paced mission from where I stand. You're always going from one job to the next. The game plan is always changing, quite literally by the minute on the flight line," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lane Benefield, 37th Bomber Generation Squadron B-1 crew chief. "This gave [our team] the opportunity to step up into different roles, showing great flexibility from enduring the cold and being away from family and loved ones."

B-1 Maintainers work around the clock in all types of weather and conditions. Grand Forks is known for challenging winters, but the Raider maintainers' work ethic remains, and the team ensures there are always combat-ready B-1s available. The Airmen of Grand Forks are also



steadfast in their commitment to ensuring the B-1 mission continues.

"It's been a long effort in coordination with our partners here at Grand Forks and our supporting agencies back home," said Lt. Col. Daniel Mount, 28th Maintenance Squadron commander. "This is a once in a career moment for the B-1 community to relocate an [entire base's fleet]. It's not every day that runway repair is done at wholesale. There's a pride that follows in knowing all of our teams are succeeding in their mission and continue to present a credible threat to our adversaries through power projection."

Whether from North Dakota, South Dakota or from a forward operating base, Raider maintainers have the capability and capacity to enable long range strike, anytime, anywhere.

B-52s conduct first live weapons drop in Sweden since nation joined NATO



Story by U.S. Air Forces in Europe – Air Forces Africa



On March 11, two U.S. Air Force B-52H Stratofortresses participating in Bomber Task Force mission VIKING NEBULA conducted the first live weapons drop in Sweden since the nation joined NATO.

During the mission, the aircraft were escorted by two Swedish JAS 39 Gripen

to the Vidsel Test Range, where they released GBU-38 joint direct attack munitions. Ground support was provided by U.S. and Swedish Joint Terminal Attack Controllers. The mission reinforced coordination between air and ground units, refining precision strike capabilities in a new, complex training environment.

The mission also included a low-formation flyover of the Swedish Parliament to celebrate the one-year anniversary of Sweden's accession to NATO.



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Christopher Hibben

The B-52s and aircrew deployed with the 69th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at RAF Fairford, England, where they executed operations alongside NATO Allies and partners across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, bolstering collective lethality and improving integration.

VIKING NEBULA marked the eleventh operation completed during this BTF iteration.

For more information, please contact the USAFE-AFACRICA Public Affairs office at usafepao.pao@us.af.mil.

Minuteman III test launch showcases readiness of U.S. nuclear force's safe, effective deterrent

Story by Air Force Global Strike Command Public Affairs

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. -- A joint team of Air Force Global Strike Command Airmen launched an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with a single telemetered joint test assembly re-entry vehicle Feb. 19 at 1 a.m. Pacific Time from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California.

The Western Range at Vandenberg Space Force Base serves as the primary testing ground for the Air Force Global Strike Command's ICBM deterrent architecture. This test launch is part of routine and periodic activities designed to demonstrate that the United States' nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure, reliable, and effective in deterring 21st-century threats and reassuring our allies. With over 300 similar tests conducted in the past, this particular test is part of the Nation's ongoing commitment to maintaining a credible deterrent and is not a response to current world events.

"Today's Minuteman III test launch is just one of the ways the Department of the Air Force demonstrates the readiness, precision, and professionalism of U.S. nuclear forces," said Acting Secretary of the Air Force Gary Ashworth. "It also provides confidence in the lethality and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear deterrence mission."

AFGSC Commander Gen. Thomas Bussiere added, "The nuclear triad is the cornerstone of the national security of our country and Allies around the globe."

"This test launch is demonstrative of our nation's ICBM readiness and reliability," he said. "Because of the skill sets and expertise of our

maintenance personnel and our missile crews, our freedoms and the homeland remain secure."

Vandenberg's 377th Test and Evaluation Group, located at Vandenberg SFB, oversaw the test launch. It is the nation's only dedicated ICBM test organization professionally executing tests that accurately measure the current and future capability of the ICBM force.

"During this test, we collected and analyzed performance and other key data points to evaluate current missile system competencies," said Col. Dustin Harmon, 377th TEG commander. "This allows our team to analyze and report accuracy and reliability for the current system while validating projected missile system improvements. The data we collect and analyze is crucial for maintaining Minuteman III while we pave the way for Sentinel."

The ICBM's reentry vehicle traveled approximately 4,200 miles to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command's Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site located within Republic of the Marshall Islands at the Kwajalein Atoll. Reagan Test Site sensors, including high-fidelity metric and signature radars, as well as optical sensors and telemetry, support the research, development, test and evaluation of America's defense and space programs. For these tests, RTS team members collect radar, optical and telemetry data in the terminal phase of flight to evaluate system performance.

"The Reagan Test Site serves as the supporting range for all Glory Trip missions," said U.S. Army Lt.

Col. Casey Rumfelt, RTS range director. "It's a vital national asset used to support operational and developmental tests of our nation's offensive and defensive systems. RTS provides a unique suite of instrumentation and an ideal geographic location to meet many of the U.S. testing needs that cannot be accomplished anywhere else in the world."

The test launch is a culmination of months of preparation that involve multiple government partners.

Airmen from all three missile wings were selected for the task force to support the test launch, while maintainers from the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren Force Base, Wyoming, supported maintenance requirements. The missile bases within Air Force Global Strike Command have crew members standing alert 24 hours a day, year-round, overseeing the nation's ICBM alert forces.

The ICBM community, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and U.S. Strategic Command, uses data collected from test launches for continuing force development evaluation. The ICBM test launch program demonstrates the operational capability of the Minuteman III and ensures the United States' ability to maintain a strong, credible nuclear deterrent as a key element of U.S. national security and the security of U.S. allies and partners.

The Air Force is committed to ensuring Minuteman III remains a viable deterrent.



The test launch is a culmination of months of preparation that involve multiple government partners.

Minuteman III Characteristics

- Initial Deployment: June 1970
- Length: 59.9 feet
- Diameter: 5.5 feet
- Weight: ~79,000 lbs
- Range: ~6,000 miles
- Ceiling: ~700 miles
- Max Speed: ~15,000 mph (Mach 23)



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Richmond

U.S. Space Force photo by Airman 1st Class Olga Houtsma

FRONTLINE Focus

National Airborne Operations Center

The E-4B Nightwatch: Ensuring National Command and Control Continuity

The E-4B “Nightwatch” serves as the National Airborne Operations Center, a critical component of the National Military Command System. Its mission is to guarantee the continuity of U.S. leadership’s command and control capabilities under any circumstances. The NAOC provides a survivable and mobile platform for the President, Secretary of Defense, and Joint Chiefs of Staff to direct U.S. forces, execute emergency war orders, and coordinate with civil authorities, even during a national emergency or if ground-based command centers are destroyed. This capability covers the full spectrum of threats, ensuring national leadership maintains control in all scenarios.

A Mobile Command Center: Features and Capabilities

The E-4B, a militarized Boeing 747-200, is equipped with advanced systems to fulfill its mission. Its robust communications suite, utilizing advanced satellite technology, provides worldwide connectivity for senior leaders. Hardened against electromagnetic pulses and equipped with nuclear and thermal shielding, the aircraft offers a secure environment. Inside, dedicated areas include a command work area, conference room, briefing room, operations center, communications hub, and rest area, accommodating a joint-service operations team, Air Force flight crew, maintenance, security, communications personnel, and other essential staff. In-flight refueling capability ensures global reach and extended operational endurance.



Always on Alert: Maintaining Constant Readiness

Maintaining constant readiness is paramount, and at least one E-4B is on alert 24/7/365. A dedicated ground and flight crew stands ready to launch within minutes, continuously monitoring global events and maintaining communication with national command authorities. The aircraft's location at a strategically chosen base is often shifted to enhance security and responsiveness. This unwavering vigilance ensures the NAOC can rapidly respond to any crisis, providing uninterrupted command and control.

Operational Structure and Management

Air Force Global Strike Command, through the Eighth Air Force, manages the E-4B fleet, providing aircrew, maintenance, security, and communications support. Operational direction comes from the Joint Chiefs of Staff through U.S. Strategic Command, which also provides personnel for the NAOC battle staff. The 95th Wing at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, encompassing the former 595th Command and Control Group, is responsible for the aircraft and personnel. This integrated structure ensures seamless operation and responsiveness for this critical national security asset.



Eighth Air Force activates 95th Wing

Story by Master Sgt. Rachel Waller, Eighth Air Force and Joint-Global Strike Operations Center Public Affairs, Barksdale Air Force Base



Photo by Charles Haymond

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. -- Maj. Gen. Jason Armagost, commander Eighth Air Force and the Joint-Global Strike Operations Center, commemorated the recent activation of the 95th Wing during a ceremony at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, March 28.

The 95th Wing will focus on providing combatant commanders with assured command and control over assigned forces through global command, control, and communication capabilities. Additionally, the wing will organize, train, and equip the total force to execute strategic requirements as set forth by commanders.

"Since its realignment in October 2016, the 595th C2G has grown exponentially, but the level of professionalism demonstrated by these Airmen has never faltered," said Armagost. "These professionals serve in a dynamic environment to maintain 'the watch' and fulfill a host of no-fail missions which are foundational to nuclear deterrence and national security."

The 95th Wing activation ceremony was accompanied by the inactivation of the 595th Command and Control Group and a change of command for the National Airborne Operations Center.

The wing, which falls under Eighth Air Force and Air Force Global Strike Command, incorporates existing disaggregate units from the 595th C2G at Offutt AFB; the 253rd C2G, of the Wyoming Air National Guard; and the 610th Command and Control Squadron, Air Force Reserve Command, at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, to form an integrated wing to provide a unity of command and effort.

The 95th Wing traces its lineage to the 95th Bombardment Group, which was established in 1942 at Barksdale Field and flew the B-17 Flying Fortress. In 1945, it was deactivated until 1952, when Strategic Air

Command re-activated as the 95th Bomb Wing, flying the B-35 Peacemaker and the B-52 Stratofortress. In the following years, it was inactivated and reactivated two more times with the most recent designation as the 95th Air Base Wing assigned to the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, California.

"Today, we return the 95th Wing back to its bomber heritage," said Armagost. During the ceremony, the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation made a special presentation to the newly activated 95th Wing.

"The 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation congratulates the 95th Wing on this special day and are fully confident that you will build on the legacy of the 95th Bomb Group while you are performing critical missions in defense of our nation," said retired Col. John Mollison, 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation membership chair.

"We are looking forward to both carrying on the heritage of a storied World War II unit, while moving forward with the complex missions providing national-level command and control to the most senior officials leading the United States," said Col. David Leaumont, 95th Wing commander and former 595th C2G commander.

The 95th Wing was provisionally activated Oct. 1, 2024, with the intent of building processes and developing the organization. The wing officially activated Feb. 28, 2025, via Program Action Directive 24-03 signed by then-Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall.

The new wing is expected to reach its full operational capability in 2027.

"We stand ready for this new chapter," said Armagost. "The mission has not changed. We will continue to assure our Allies and deter potential adversaries. We will embrace the invaluable lessons that experience will undoubtedly provide as we shape the future of the 95th Wing going forward."

Depth to Deterrence: One sailor's unconventional course

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Taylor Drzazgowski
U.S. Strategic Command
Public Affairs



Courtesy photo by New York Times

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. -- A misstep could have derailed U.S. Navy Senior Chief Matthew Johnson's 22-year career, but instead, it became a catalyst for accountability, growth and drive. Although Johnson's time in uniform has been a positive journey, it has not been without its challenges and setbacks -- including a poor decision that curtailed his promotion to higher enlisted ranks.

"I decided right then and there 'that's not who I am,'" Johnson shared, reflecting on the non-judicial punishment that cost him his rank. He continued, "I liked my job and the Navy, I still do, and I didn't see the point in doubling down with a bad attitude because of one mistake. How would that help anyone?"

Johnson's path in the Navy hasn't been a straight line. However, instead of becoming disillusioned, he chose to learn from the experience and press on. He attributes his career recovery and success to staying focused on his technical skills while mentoring and investing in the people around him.

"I refused to let one moment define my career and just kept on moving forward, kept on taking care of people," Johnson emphasized. "I actually got re-promoted to Senior Chief just last year. It's pretty rare to go from being a senior non-commissioned officer who lost rank like that and still managed to recover."

This drive is a common trend in Johnson's career. An interest in

nuclear power as a teenager coupled with a Navy recruiting visit to his Texas high school led him to enlist with hopes of being a nuclear engineer. When he discovered that he wasn't eligible for the job, Johnson did what he continues to do even now -- he pressed on. Over two decades later, Johnson now serves as an information systems technician within the Special Access Programs division at U.S. Strategic Command.

"I manage classified special access program networks, focusing on the protection of [communication security] material," Johnson explained. "This involves overseeing a section of people responsible for network maintenance. I'm also managing all administrative duties for Operations Team 3 onboard the National Airborne Operations Center, which involves travel and logistical arrangements whenever the jet relocates."

Johnson's commitment to service extends beyond his technical skillset. He has served as the senior enlisted leader for USSTRATCOM's Navy element, demonstrating his leadership capabilities and dedication to his fellow sailors whom he hopes can learn from his mistakes.

"During his time as Navy Element's collateral duty senior enlisted leader, Senior Chief Johnson provided true 'deck-plate' leadership daily to our sailors, both enlisted and officers, without losing sight of the Navy's critical role in the strategic deterrence mission," said U.S. Navy Master Chief Yeoman (Surface Warfare/Information

Warfare) Philip H. Demson, the Navy Element senior enlisted advisor and command directorate senior enlisted leader for USSTRATCOM.

Johnson acknowledges that on top of the job and the people, it's the unique opportunities that have kept him in the Navy this long. With no plans to hang up his uniform any time soon, he has built a unique resume not typically expected of a Sailor over the years.

"My career so far has allowed me to experience almost every aspect of the Navy's missions and it's been amazing to participate in all of them," he reflected. "I've been stationed everywhere from Guam and Hawaii to almost every quadrant of the United States, and now here in Nebraska, smack in the middle. I've served on deep-submergence units where I stood on the ocean floor 2,000 feet underwater, on surface ships, submarines, and now I'm flying on aircraft -- first on the E-6B TACAMO and now the NAOE."

"Every day is a new adventure," he declared. "That's what keeps me going."

As he prepares for his next assignment aboard a ballistic missile submarine, Johnson carries with him the lessons he's learned, and a strategic-level understanding honed here at USSTRATCOM. His story serves as a reminder that setbacks, while difficult, can ultimately become tools for personal and professional growth.

VOICES OF Deterrence

The Lost Art of Deterrence: Raising the strategic deterrence IQ for a new era

Commentary by Dr. Jennifer Bradley, U.S. Strategic Command
Deterrence Analysis and Outreach branch chief

The policy of
DETERRENCE
has stood the
**test
of
time**

It should no longer be a shock that the security environment confronting the United States is increasingly dangerous and requires urgent action. Multiple policy documents, commission reports, and senior leader testimonies before Congress have made this threat clear.

Nevertheless, while it should no longer be a shock, it is still an uncomfortable position for the nation to be in. At the end of the Cold War, it appeared that great power competition was a feature of the past.

The lack of a peer competitor coupled with the unrivaled superiority of U.S. military capabilities meant the United States enjoyed escalation dominance in any domain over any adversary it faced.

That is no longer the case, as our adversaries have increasingly closed the gap in military capability while pursuing strategies that actively conflict with the interests of the United States, creating a more complicated multi-actor strategic deterrence challenge that we must now confront.

In his first message to the force, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth established three pillars to achieve peace through strength, one of which is reestablishing deterrence. Deterrence of strategic attack against the United States, Allies and partners remains a cornerstone of Defense Department priorities, as it has been for decades.

The reemergence of great power competition with peer adversaries means that the United States must again enhance and rely on strategic deterrence to prevent great power conflict. However, a consequence of the superiority of the post-Cold War years is that thinking about deterrence has atrophied.

International relations scholar Therese Delpech noted, "Foreign policy, notably Western foreign policy, continues to be made under the shadow of a nuclear strategy that is almost forgotten or that is becoming empty."

Despite advances both in the theory of deterrence and its application as the strategic environment continues to evolve, Western deterrence

literacy remains shallow, with much of U.S. public debate falling back on Cold War tenets of deterrence, which are now several decades out of date. Former commanders of U.S. Strategic Command have drawn attention to this lack of literacy.

In 2017, Gen. Kevin P. Chilton stated, "Unfortunately, since the end of the Cold War...there has been a dearth of attention paid to the rationale for the nuclear deterrent. 'The underlying principles and rationale for the deterrent have not gone away, but we have stopped educating, thinking, and debating, with informed underpinnings, the necessity and role of the U.S. nuclear deterrent in today's world.'"

While Adm. Charles Richard pointed out that "Even our operational deterrence expertise is just not what it was at the end of the Cold War. So, we have to reinvigorate this intellectual effort."

During the Cold War, strategic deterrence was synonymous with nuclear deterrence.

Now, modern conventional weapons are capable of producing strategic-level effects previously only achievable with nuclear weapons. Our understanding of strategic deterrence must expand to address both nuclear and non-nuclear strategic attacks. The consequences of both the atrophy of deterrence thinking and expansion of strategic consequence requires an increase in the intellectual capital to raise the strategic deterrence IQ of national security professionals.

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton, current commander of USSTRATCOM, has made raising the strategic deterrence IQ of the Joint Force a necessity to increase individual readiness, a key pillar in his vision and intent. Cotton continues to urge, "You can't just be good. You have to be awesome at your job. We don't have time to fall behind."

While attention to strategic deterrence may have atrophied in general, USSTRATCOM has remained vigilant and focused on continuing to advance critical thinking on new deterrence concepts to address the changing strategic environment. Kayse

Jansen, senior technical advisor in the Plans and Policy Directorate at USSTRATCOM recently wrote on the need to not only modernize the nuclear triad, but also the intellectual capital operationalizing deterrence theory.

She stated, "A new security environment demands assessing our strategic deterrence approaches to identify the truths that are enduring, the assumptions that no longer hold, and the frameworks that require an overhaul."

The people of USSTRATCOM remain committed to advancing strategic deterrence concepts to address emerging security challenges.

As Cotton stated in his recent testimony to lawmakers, "People are the cornerstone – they make deterrence credible."

The DOD's renewed emphasis on reestablishing deterrence presents an opportunity for the Joint Force to invest in raising its strategic deterrence IQ. Deterrence should not be a lost art, but a sharpened weapon in our quiver to address emerging and dangerous changes in the security environment.

Ronald Reagan, during an address to the nation discussing nuclear deterrence, asserted, "Now, while the policy of deterrence has stood the test of time, the things we must do in order to maintain deterrence have changed." Today, the policy of strategic deterrence is still steadfast, but we must devote resources to increase our intellectual capital in strategic deterrence concepts to meet the demands of a more complicated security environment.

¹ Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, "Secretary Hegseth's Message to the Force," Department of Defense, 25 January 2025.

² Therese Delpech, *Nuclear Deterrence In the 21st Century* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2012) p. 11.

³ Gen. Kevin Chilton, "On US Nuclear Deterrence," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, Winter 2017, p. 2.

⁴ Tara Copp, "US Military 'Furiously' Rewriting Nuclear Deterrence to Address Russia and China, STRATCOM Chief Says," *Defense One*, 11 August 2022.

⁵ Donnell Schroeter, "U.S. STRATCOM Commander Addresses Challenges and Mission Readiness with Team Kirtland," *Air Force Global Strike Command*, 15 August 2024.

⁶ Kayse Jansen, "New Strategic Deterrence Frameworks for Modern Day Challenges," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 15 February 2024.

⁷ President Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Strategic Arms Reductions and Nuclear Deterrence," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, 22 November 1982.

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Peace is Our Profession...

