

'No mission impact' says Air Force Y2K director

"I'm absolutely 100-percent certain there will be no mission impact," the director of the Air Force Year 2000 program said of the upcoming rollover.

Brig. Gen. Gary Ambrose took the opportunity during a recent visit to Ramstein AFB, Germany, to get the word out about the millennium bug, saying he has spent every waking moment of the last year making sure the Air Force can continue to fly and fight after Jan. 1.

On a scale of one to 100, "the Air Force is at 99.5" as far as being Y2K compliant, said Ambrose.

In fiscal 1999, the Air Force spent \$300 million of the \$1.1 billion Congress gave the DoD to solve Y2K issues. Everything from the weapons systems and Global Positioning System satel-

lites to personnel and pay systems is being assessed, fixed, tested and certified Y2K compliant.

The Air Force has tested 394 mission-critical systems, which Ambrose says, are all Y2K compliant. The Air Force is also tracking more than 2,200 other systems that are non-mission critical.

Going into the last three months of 1999, "we're looking hard at configuration management," Ambrose continued, "which means making sure you don't make changes to systems that you've (already) fixed and undo the fixes.

"The process includes making sure Y2K compliant software is actually what's loaded on the systems," he added. (AFP)

Kuwait OKs long-term U.S. presence, base upgrades

New changes should cut the number of members deploying in each rotation

The United States will maintain a long-term presence in this country and with the Kuwaiti government will upgrade U.S.-used facilities here, a senior defense official said Oct. 23.

Construction is set at roughly \$193 million over the next several years. It's uncertain how the United States and Kuwait will share funding, the official said.

Under the plan, which the Kuwaitis approved in August, Al Jaber Air Base, Ali al Salim Air Base and Camp Doha will receive major makeovers.

All will receive construction funds to improve U.S. service members' quality of life, including upgrades to living quarters and other facilities.

But the plan goes much further. Construction work will give Ali al Salim Air Base the ability to support more fixed-wing aircraft. "The construction would allow the Air Force to deploy more aircraft into the region quickly," the official said.

The Air Force also could pre-position aviation assets so crews could be airlifted into Kuwait in an emergency, draw equipment and begin operations immediately, he added.

Al Jaber Air Base would become an aerial port of debarkation and a military air logistics hub for Kuwait, the senior defense official said. Ramps and runways will be expanded to handle larger aircraft and more traffic.

At Camp Doha, improvements

will go mostly into command, control and communications. The base will become standing headquarters of a brigade-sized unit under Operation Desert Spring, which succeeded Exercise Intrinsic Action on Oct. 1. Under Intrinsic Action, Army battalions have been rotated into Camp Doha for training with the Kuwaitis while brigade command elements rotated into various locations in the country.

The official said battalions will still rotate through, but not the brigade headquarters. The advantages of having a permanent headquarters, he said, include stable staffing and operations. The change will cut slightly the number of soldiers who deploy in a rotation — a headquarters element normally isn't that big, he said.

But the permanent command would also bring other benefits. As an example, when Defense Secretary William Cohen was in Egypt at Exercise Bright Star, he and Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni were able to communicate with all areas of U.S. Central Command.

"The secretary had the ability to communicate with a headquarters element in Kuwait, a headquarters element next door in Saudi Arabia and the rear headquarters back in the United States," the official said. "It was a totally integrated command structure." This means information is available to all in the command chain.

"The Kuwaitis appreciate this because it demonstrates that we'll be here on a continuous basis," the official said. (AFP)

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-- Senior U.S. Defense official



N'ice landing

A C-17A Globemaster III from the 7th Airlift Squadron, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., sits on the sea-ice parking ramp at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, after touching down for the first time Oct. 15. A first for the C-17, this is part of validation tests for future Antarctic missions.

Courtesy photo

Ryan

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He said that based on the reaction he's seen to the pay, bonuses, and quality of life improvements, he expects to see the recruiting and retention curves turn around.

"Unfortunately," Ryan said, noting that the Air Force received only about half of a requested \$5 billion this year, "we still have unfunded requirements that contribute to our readiness shortfalls."

"We have to work on today's readiness;

but, also, we have to work on tomorrow's readiness," he said; "not fight the last war, but fight the next war."

Ryan pointed out that the force is deploying around the world with 20-year-old equipment. "Even if we execute every modernization program to date, much of the same equipment will be 30 years old in 2015," he said, indicating the time frame when much of the new equipment will be fielded.

"Readiness is a fragile issue," he said. "Once lost, it takes resources, time and constant attention to regain." (AFP)

Retraining

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if the TAFMSD of two or more individuals is identical.

"We have 54 members eligible for involuntary retraining," said Senior Airman April Fiske, base retraining monitor, "but that doesn't mean they'll all be selected."

Individuals selected for involuntary retraining must submit a minimum of three, and up to five, Air Force specialty code preferences for which they qualify by Jan. 10.

"Members who applied during Phase 1 or Phase 2 will have a really good chance of getting the AFSCs they selected," said Fiske. "Since Phase 3 people are the ones who did not put in packages for retraining, the MAJCOM (AMC) will select the retraining AFSC for the member."

Voluntary retraining applications for other personnel, including first-term airmen, may continue to be processed by the MPFs and updated by MAJCOMs provided they meet retraining requirements.

"People who are vulnerable and do not want to retrain may apply for a special-duty assignment outside of their control AFSC," said Tech. Sgt. Paul

Grady, noncommissioned officer in charge of Air Force Enlisted Retraining Programs at Randolph AFB, Texas. "There are also numerous recruiting vacancies."

All requests, including pending retraining actions, must be approved and finalized in the system by Jan. 14 to avoid involuntary AFSC selection by AFPC.

"AFPC will select AFSCs for individuals who have failed to submit completed retraining applications by the Jan. 14 suspense," he said.

"If members do not accept the mandatory retraining and don't have enough retainability they sign a declination statement and separate on their original DOS," said Fiske. "If the member has enough retainability, they must attend training."

Involuntary retraining is set up to benefit the Air Force said Fiske. "It's meant to balance out career fields and spreads manning evenly throughout AFSCs in the Air Force.

In the long run, it will help career fields that are having a hard time getting qualified applicants to be manned more effectively and providing more productive work centers.

Members who have further questions regarding the involuntary retraining program can call 963-4560. (AFP)