

LESSON 8

SERVICE WARFIGHTING: THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

“What Mitchell, Arnold, and other airpower heroes have been to us, we must be to a new generation of airmen who face dramatic changes in technology and in the sociopolitical environment. Not only must we know how to do aerospace power, we also must know how to think it.”

—General Ronald F. Fogleman
Air Force Chief of Staff (1994-1997)

Lesson Introduction

This course examines the forces, structure, and employment of the Air Force in peacetime as well as wartime operations. Tenets of Air Force doctrine will be examined as well how the Air Force has reorganized and embraced expeditionary warfare. The current Air Force strategy must be executed with fewer forces and from fewer forward deployed operating locations than was the norm during the Cold War. In order to respond to the current, uncertain operational environment and the many ongoing overseas contingencies, the Air Force has restructured and reorganized under the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) concept. Combat and mobility forces are organized into roughly equivalent force packages with set deployment windows. There are also two on-call Air Expeditionary Wings (AEWs) to handle crises. The AEF concept allows personnel to plan for deployments and brings some order to a world with increased operations tempo.

This lesson also includes aspects of how the Air Force fits into joint operations including the role of the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) and the Commander Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR).

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

Objective 1. Comprehend the tenets of Air Force doctrine and relate them to Joint doctrine. [JPME Area 1(a), 2(a)(d)]

Read:

- Joint Pub 3-33, *Joint Force Capabilities*, 13 October 1999, pp. II-10 to II-12 (read section #5 “US Air Force” only) (3 pages)

View:

- *Aerospace Power Course*, lesson on “Tenets of Aerospace Power” (20 minutes) and refer to AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997, pp. 21 to 35 (15 pages)

Like the Marine Corps, the Air Force has been adapting its doctrine to track with Joint doctrine. On the other hand, the Air Force influences Joint doctrine as demonstrated by its lead in the development of JFACC and Joint Targeting and Coordination Board (JTCCB) doctrine. In that role anything the Air Force writes is a draft until agreed upon by the Service chiefs and approved by the Chairman, JCS.

Additionally, the Air Force influences service doctrine on issues of airspace management. On some aerospace issues, the Air Force convenes doctrinal conferences to integrate developments and to discuss possible service conflicts with such integration. The Air Land Sea Application Center (ALSA) also provides a forum to influence all concerned about recent developments in joint warfighting concepts, issues and service interoperability. This organization has representatives from the Army – TRADOC, Navy – NWDC, Marines – MCCDC, and USAF – AFDC.

Requirement 2

Objective 2. Comprehend the capabilities and organization of the U.S. Air Force, its roles, missions, functions, and core competencies, and how they relate to other services. [JPME Area 1(a)(e), 2(d)]

Objective 3. Comprehend how Air Force and Joint systems are integrated at the operational level of war. [JPME Area 1(a)]

Read:

- AFDD 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, pp. 33 to 35 and 54 to 57 (7 pages)
- AIR FORCE Magazine, May 2002, “Major Commands,” pp. 72 to 93 (9 pages of reading) (Note: following pages deleted: 77, 81, 84, 85, 87, and 89)

View:

- *Aerospace Power Course* lesson on “Core Competencies” (20 minutes) and refer to AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997, pp. 21 to 35 (15 pages)
- *Aerospace Power Course* lesson on “Operational Aerospace Power” (35 minutes)

Requirement 3

Objective 4. Understand the concept surrounding the Air Force's expeditionary aerospace forces and how it supports future warfighting requirements. [JPME Area 1(a), 5(d)]

View:

- *Aerospace Power Course* lesson on "Expeditionary Aerospace Forces" (35 minutes) and refer to Air Force Instruction 10-400, 16 October 2002, "Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Concept," pp. 6 to 10 (5 pages).

The Air Force will form an Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force (ASETf) to support the Joint Force Commander (JFC). The ASETf is scalable in size and normally encompasses all USAF forces assigned or attached to the Joint operation. Within the ASETf will be Air Expeditionary Wings, Groups and Squadrons. The ASETf will be task organized to meet the needs of the JFC (think MAGTF). The COMAFFOR is the single commander of all USAF forces in the ASETf.

The COMAFFOR's role and responsibilities include the following:

- Set objectives
 - (1) Provide focus
 - (2) Provide essential unity of effort/command
 - a. Promulgate JFC "commander's intent"
 - b. Initiate subordinate commander's strategy-to-task analysis during planning
- Influence outcomes
 - (1) Assign missions
 - (2) Prioritize efforts
 - (3) Allocate and prioritize resources
 - (4) Assess risks
 - (5) Direct changes
 - (6) Stay attuned to subordinates and seniors
 - (7) Guide and motivate efforts toward endstate
 - (8) Maintain situational awareness in order to make informed decisions

Note: Under most circumstances the COMAFFOR is designated the JFACC, but normally this is due to the preponderance of forces assigned in the theater and the ability to exercise command and control/C4I. Normally U.S. Air Forces possess the robust command and control assets and staffs to support the significantly high sortie rates of a theater-wide air tasking order (ATO). In smaller scale contingencies where the sortie rates are lower, the JFACC (or CFACC) could be a Navy or Marine Corps commander.

Requirement 4

Objective 5. Comprehend how U.S. Central Command used U.S. Air Force forces during Operation Desert Storm. [JPME Area 1(a), 3(a)]

Read:

- *The Generals' War*, Chapters 10 and 12 (37 pages)

The Gulf War truly solidified the U.S. Air Force's place in Joint warfighting. Since the Gulf, U.S. forces have relied heavily on airpower as the prime method for battlespace shaping, and in places like Kosovo, airpower was used as decisive force. Controversy has always surrounded the issue of how much reliance should be placed on the use of airpower. Operation Desert Storm set the stage for that debate.

Chapter 10 describes the start of the air war campaign on January 16, 1991 and the days succeeding it. Friction manifested itself in the campaign through weather, the indecisiveness of Allies in participating, incomplete intelligence, mechanical failures, and the Iraqis' skill at deceiving the coalition where it hid its top assets (biological and chemical weapons facilities are two examples).

The targets chosen the first day were the ones that posed the greatest threat to U.S. forces, not those that would be the greatest long-term threat to U.S. Allies in the region. These targets were the system of air defense sites and their control centers, other command and control centers and nodes, communications to cities within Iraq and the outside world, the power grid, weapons of mass destruction, and aircraft and airfields.

Despite great effort, the attempt to decapitate the Saddam Hussein regime was unsuccessful. New weapons such as cruise missiles, sophisticated electronic warfare, the F-117s and high-performance jets exacted a toll. Electric power generation was cut, resulting in cities being placed in total darkness, complete air superiority was achieved (Iraq managed only 916 missions during the campaign versus the 69,000 by the Coalition), and the air defense system was shattered. However, differences in rules of engagement (ROE) between the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy led to disconnects over how to equip aircraft for identification friend or foe (IFF) and over criteria determining when targets could be engaged. Despite these difficulties, the U.S. Army could move men and equipment for its left hook unhindered. Few aircraft and pilots were lost during these efforts. In the end, the generals characterized the effort as a good start. But USAF Gen. Buster Glosson observed that the war was a long way from being over.

Lesson Summary

An understanding of the U.S. Air Force's capabilities and limitations is crucial to Joint/combined planning and will help future commanders and staff officers to appreciate the complementary power the Air Force offers within the Joint operational environment. Knowledge of Air Force-specific doctrine and its interrelationship with Joint doctrine

will be instrumental in successful operations planning. How aerospace forces fight, either through service or functional competency and Aerospace Expeditionary Forces, will be determined by the requirements levied by our nation and the future operating environment. Future Air Force concepts will continue to evolve in order to best project U.S. Air Forces and determine the ways and means U.S. Air Forces will contend with future global threats and the ever-changing national strategic interests.

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5							
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D				
X				X	X			X	X																	X