AIR FORCE AIR MOBILITY BATTLELAB

LINEAGE
Activated, 4 Jan 2001
Inactivated, 24 Sep 2008

STATIONS
Fort Dix, NJ

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS
In 2002, a seventh battlelab, the Air Mobility Battlelab was activated to specifically focus on the Air Mobility mission to contribute to the mission of the Air Force. Each battlelab has a specific focus area staffed by dedicated military and civilian subject matter experts.

One example of Air Mobility Battlelab success in its partnerships is the recently completed joint project with the Air Expeditionary Force Battlelab. The Mobility Aircrew Information Library, or MAIL project, showed how digitized flight publications, flight planning information, Falcon View maps and live threat feeds could be provided to the aircrew using a tablet-sized knee board computer and a miniaturized radio receiver. This project showed how to inexpensively reduce paperwork for the aircrew while providing easy access to information crucial to worldwide air mobility and fighter missions. Currently, in partnership with Air Force Research Laboratory at Rome, NY, and AMC, the Air Mobility Battlelab is maturing a capability to provide AMC flight dispatchers with rapid access to the many sources of information that may affect flight planning and execution, such as giving instant updates for Notices to Airmen, weather and diplomatic clearances.

Iridium satellite phones in flight: One of Air Mobility Battlelab's biggest successes tackled global communications. When U. S. Air Forces in Europe requested an inexpensive way to equip its aircraft with alternate voice communications, an AMB project officer designed a way to use iridium satellite phones in flight. The idea was demonstrated in the field in partnership with the AMC test community ... and has been implemented on several aircraft.

Chelton antenna mount: Another Air Mobility Battlelab communications project prototyped a new mounting system for a Chelton antenna on the C-17 for special operations use. Air Mobility Battlelab's design was adapted by the C-17 contractor and is now in use.

9/26/2008 At 2 p.m. on 24 Sep 2008, the Air Mobility Battlelab was no longer a unit in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, or the Air Force. In front of the center's commander, MG Kip Self, and the battlelab's last commander, LTC Jeffrey Lathrop, the unit's flag was rolled up and ceremoniously put away during a deactivation ceremony here in Grace Peterson Hall. The Air Mobility Battlelab was created provisionally in the then-Air Mobility Warfare Center on May 4, 1998. Its mission was to "make innovation in air mobility practical by exploring high payoff operational, logistical, and informational concepts, technologies, and tactics to advance the Air Force core competency of rapid global mobility." It wasn't until Jan. 4, 2001, that the battlelab was officially sanctioned by the Air Force. All that said, in more than 10 years, the battlelab has left a mark of excellence for the Air Force to remember, Colonel Lathrop said. "During its existence, the Air Mobility Battlelab completed 78 concept demonstrations," Colonel Lathrop said. "Of those, 28 concepts were fielded or incorporated into on-going acquisition or research and development efforts, and 18 others are still at Air Mobility Command headquarters awaiting funding or a fielding decision." Colonel Lathrop added that much of Air Mobility Battlelab's work has contributed to safer and better items for aeromedical evacuation, such as a man-portable litter rack that enables crews to quickly configure virtually any Air Force aircraft for AE missions, and a portable fuel cell capable of travelling with the patient to provide uninterrupted electrical power from field hospital to stateside medical center. Other notable initiatives include an automated in-flight balancing system for C-130 aircraft propellers that reduces aircraft noise and vibration while eliminating the need for mechanics to manually balance the propellers on the ground; and a battery-powered LED-based floodlight that's one-fiftieth the size of the Air Force's current light carts and provides infra-red light for covert operations as well as visible light. Or, how about the KC-10 bunk quick release and cargo net initiatives that promise to save time and man-hours for tanker aircrews? And recently, there is the KC-135 cooling sock initiative that

offers a safer way to cool the flight decks of the planes. "I think completing 78 initiatives is very impressive considering the battlelab was only at full strength for around five years," Colonel Lathrop said. "And the fact such a high percentage of the concepts we demonstrated lived on after we transitioned them indicates we did a good job selecting ideas that met critical needs." Battlelab members are looking to move forward from this point, but they say the innovative work has made a difference. "We were able to demonstrate technologies at low cost, giving AMC options to streamline operations and bring efficiency to the warfighter in a timely manner," said Senior Master Sgt. Dominic Perino, Air Mobility Battlelab superintendent who now moves on to Dover after three years with the Air Mobility Battlelab. "Individual units will now have to tackle innovation with their own manpower and money. With tight budgets, it is understandable why the battlelabs were closed, but in the future, similar organizations will be developed to tackle 'innovation to warfighting.'" Master Sgt. Michael Harris, the Air Mobility Battlelab's loadmaster concepts manager for the past three and a half years, added that he believes the people who worked in the Battlelab represented all of the Airmen "who are working hard to fulfill the AMC and Air Force mission." We attempted to expedite the fielding of mature and emerging technologies to those Airmen so they could accomplish the missions faster, safer, cheaper, and, in some cases, more accurately," Sergeant Harris said.

Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 23 Nov 2010
Updated:

Sources