AIR FORCE TEST AND EVALUATION CENTER

MISSION

LINEAGE
Air Force Test and Evaluation Center constituted and activated as a separate operating agency of the United States Air Force, 1 Jan 1974
Redesignated Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, 4 Apr 1983
Status changed from a separate operating agency of the United States Air Force to a direct reporting unit of the United States Air Force, 5 Feb 1991

STATIONS
Kirtland AFB, NM. 1 Jan 1974

ASSIGNMENTS
United States Air Force, 1 Jan 1974

COMMANDERS
Maj Gen Wayne E. Whitlach, #1981
Maj Gen Howard W. Leaf

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards
1 Oct 1991-31 Oct 1993
1 Jan 2000-31 Dec 2001
1 Jan 2002-31 Dec 2003
1 Jan 2005-31 Dec 2006

EMBLEM
Light blue, issuing from base four contrails palewise argent terminating below four deltoids ascending, one in dexter flank, two in chief, and one in sinister flank, the dexter two or and azure, and the sinister two of the like and or; surmounting the vapor trails a pair of scales gules, all within a diminished bordure gold. Significance: The four deltoids (which appear to be a flight of delta wing aircraft trailing white contrails against a light blue sky) represent the four fundamental military objectives of the United States: (1) to deter aggression; (2) to resolve conflicts on favorable terms; (3) to achieve national objectives; and (4) to promote a secure international environment. The blue and gold deltoid color scheme subdivides these four fundamental objectives into eight of the Air Force's specific tasks and missions: (1) strategic aerospace warfare; (2) counter air; (3) air interdiction; (4) close air support; (5) aerospace defense; (6) reconnaissance; (7) electronic warfare; and (8) airlift. The ultramarine blue segments represent the sky (near earth) which is the primary environment for Air Force operations. The golden yellow segments represent the sun (directionally depicted rising from the East and setting in the West as indicated by right wing deltoids and left wing deltoids) and the excellence required of AFTEC personnel. The white contrails signify the test and evaluation process, which follows the concept formulation, validation, and full-scale development of systems and equipment. The red scales portray AFTEC's impartial and independent assessment of systems' performance weighed against the Air Force's tasks and missions. (Approved, 25 Sep 1974)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS
Air Force Test and Evaluation Center (AFTEC) is the Air Force's independent management agency for the operational test and evaluation of emerging weapon systems. "Basically, our charter is to test new systems in the operational environment they were designed for and to see how well they perform," says Maj. Gen. Howard W. Leaf, AFTEC Commander. "AFTEC also is charged with determining how well the system can be maintained and supported by Air Force personnel in the field once it becomes operational. Our final test results are reported directly to the Air Force Chief of Staff."

The results are reviewed and weighed by members of the Defense Systems Acquisition Review Council (DSARC) at various milestone points in the systems acquisition cycle. Results of AFTEC Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E), or preproduction testing, are used in the DSARC decision on whether to approve full-scale production. If a production go-ahead is given, AFTEC conducts the first phase of Follow-on Test and Evaluation (FOT&E) testing, the results of which are vital to any further production decisions or system modifications. Additional FOT&E s conducted by appropriate Air Force major commands.

To manage the forty-three major Air Force OT&E programs and monitor more than 230 others, AFTEC has 233 military and sixty-five civilians, the majority of whom are stationed at AFTEC Headquarters, Kirtland AFB, N. M. This staff of operational and technical people prepares

pretest documentation (including test plans), designs tests, and assists in analyzing data and preparing formal reports.

AFTEC testing is conducted at a series of test sites, such as Edwards AFB, Calif, More than 650 operational, logistical, maintenance, and training experts from using and supporting commands man AFTEC test teams that collect, analyze, and evaluate data, and have primary responsibility for preparing OT&E test reports. Final test reports, sent to the Air Force Chief of Staff, are the efforts of both the field test teams and the headquarters staff at Kirtland. A series of major milestones occurred among the AFTEC's OT&E programs during the past year. Among them were:

Successful completion of the F-16 multinational fighter IOT&E. This led to the DSARC decision to proceed with full-scale production of the aircraft. AFTEC Follow-on Test and Evaluation began after this decision.

European testing of the F-15, AWACS, and the infrared imaging radar (MR) tracker, in a series of realistic demonstrations.

Establishment of three significant AFTEC field units: Det. 1, Kapaun, Germany (near Ramstein), to coordinate all aspects of European operational testing with allied defense agencies; Det. 2, Eglin AFB, Fla., liaison with the Tactical Air Warfare Center (TAWC), the Armament Development and Test Center (ADTC), and other defense organizations impacting on operational test and evaluation; and the MX Test Team at Norton AFB, Calif., for advanced planning of operational test and evaluation of this major Air Force weapon system.

Approval of the initial test concept for the Base Level Data Automation Systems (Phase IV).

Completion of the F-4G "Wild Weasel" program IOT&E.

Initiation of EF-111A Tactical Jamming System IOT&E at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

First phase of the Advanced Aerial Refueling Boom (AARB) IOT&E flight testing.

Completed IOT&E on the YC-14 and YC-15 Advanced Medium Short Takeoff transport aircraft.

Completion of preproduction prototype testing on the "stretch" YC-141B cargo aircraft.

AFTEC will continue active testing during the coming year on the principal Air Force weapon systems, with major milestones coming in such programs as the F-16, F-4G "Wild Weasel" FOT&E, Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM), AIM-9L missile, E-3A, E-4B Advanced Airborne Command Post, F-5E simulator for the Royal Saudi Air Force, EF-111A,IIR tracker, and the laser Maverick missile.

Air Force Test and Evaluation Center (AFTEC), headquartered at Kirtland AFB, N. M., was

established on January 1,1974, in response to DoD and congressional desires that each of the military services have an operational test and evaluation (OT&E) organization separate and distinct from the developing and operating commands. AFTEC is the USAF independent agency that furnishes OT&E information to the Air Force Chief of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and Congress. For all programs designated by Hq. USAF, through its own independent channels, AFTEC plans, directs, controls, evaluates, and reports on OT&E and recommends OT&E policy to Hq. USAF.

The 450-person Center consists of the headquarters, four permanently established detachments, and field test teams at designated test sites. The headquarters staff primarily designs tests, prepares pretest documentation (including test plans), monitors the activities of the field test teams, assists in data analysis and evaluation, and people from AFTEC, from the various operating commands involved in the specific weapon system undergoing test (e.g., Military Airlift Command, Strategic Air Command, or Tactical Air Command), and from such supporting commands as Air Force Logistics Command and Air Training Command. An average of 600 to 800 people from these commands are normally assigned to AFTEC test teams at any specific time.

To support personnel at selected test sites, permanent detachments have been established at Kapaun AS, Germany; Eglin AFB, Fla.; and Nellis AFB, Nev. Additionally, twenty-one AFTEC operating locations (OLs) have been established at individual testing sites. For example, an OL at Edwards AFB, Calif., serves the AFTEC test team for the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM); an OL at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, serves the AFTEC test team for the ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM); and an OL at Columbia Falls, Me., serves the AFTEC test team for the over-the-horizon back-scatter (OTH-B) radar system. Such operating locations are established only for the duration of AFTEC's active operational testing of the system concerned. Two AFTEC liaison offices, at Hq. USAF and at the US Army's Operational Test and Evaluation Agency at Falls Church, Va., complete the unit's organizational structure.

An AFTEC initial operational test and evaluation (IOT&E), conducted under conditions that are as realistic as possible, addresses critical operational questions and issues of a system. Such testing is carried out to estimate a system's operational effectiveness and suitability while concurrently identifying deficiencies or needed modifications. Early test results, normally from tests of prototype and preproduction models, are considered in Air Force and DoD decisions during the early stages of the acquisition process.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 27 Feb 2023
Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.