Boeing Demonstrates Advanced Communications Capabilities At EFX '98

Boeing is playing a major role in the United States Air Force's Expeditionary Force Experiment -- EFX '98 -- by supplying several key pieces of an overall communications architecture that will be demonstrated on board several aircraft.

Aircraft participating include TS-3, an Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) test aircraft; a U.S. Air Force C-135 avionics testbed; a KC-135R transport; a B-1B bomber; and a Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircraft. EFX '98 is scheduled for Sept. 14-26.

The goal of EFX '98 is to demonstrate how emerging command and control capabilities can enhance U.S. forces' ability to decisively halt invading forces. Demonstrations involving about 30 aircraft in "live-fly" exercises at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., will focus on new technology to bolster mission effectiveness.

Boeing is providing the uplink communication services and satellite receive capability, via its phased array antenna, to allow large amounts of information to be delivered quickly to the aircraft. Phased array antennas have been installed on the TS-3, KC-135R, C-135 (Speckled Trout) and JSTARS aircraft.

For the TS-3, KC-135R and the C-135, Boeing also designed and installed a workstation/local area network environment to run theater battle management core-systems applications and other mission planning software.

In addition, Boeing installed and flight-tested a number of other enhancements on TS-3, including Multi-Source Integration, which merges all information about a specific target into a single computer track. This improves reliability and accuracy of the tracking process and target identification.

"We are excited about the installation of this technology on board an AWACS aircraft. These changes are the leading edge of improvements needed for AWACS to maintain its role in providing information superiority, and as the key component of the Air Force's new Air Expeditionary Force," said Jim Singer, Boeing U.S. AWACS program manager.

The Boeing system on board the C-135 will allow the Joint Force Air Component Commander and his team to remain apprised of battlefield activities while en route to a crisis area, allowing him to prepare a battle plan. Information will be updated in-flight to ensure the commander and his staff have the best information available.

The Expeditionary Force Operations Center on board the KC-135 will use the same feed, enabling it to retask aircraft that already have departed for the designated targets.

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