

AFSOC answers questions about new Cannon mission

by AFSOC Public Affairs

8/27/2007 - **CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M.** –

Q. What units will move, and when?

A. The first unit to move to Cannon Air Force Base will be the 73rd Special Operations Squadron, a unit of newly acquired MC-130W Combat Spears currently located at Hurlburt Field.

The four MC-130W currently assigned to the 73rd SOS will move to Cannon in December. Many people in the Clovis-Portales area may have already seen these Combat Spears flying in New Mexico since they have been TDY to the area regularly, and will continue to do so through November. This temporary status allows AFSOC the opportunity to train Cannon Airmen in specific maintenance requirements of an MC-130W. The first one may be on the Cannon ramp as early as September. Three more will rotate through the base until they are at Cannon permanently in December.

We expect to see the Airmen assigned to the MC-130W begin moving to the area in November. All currently assigned 73rd SOS personnel will arrive at Cannon no later than Feb. 1, 2008. We will add personnel as the fleet size grows to a total of 12 aircraft by late 2009. Approximately 538 personnel (150 ops and 388 maintenance) will eventually be relocated to Cannon as a result of the 73rd SOS and the MC-130W move.

The ability to move aircraft is limited to the rate of construction of hangars and other facilities required to maintain the aircraft. Two temporary hangars with site preparation are required until the fiscal year 2011 military construction projects are completed. Each temporary hangar will be approximately 22,400 square feet.

The next unit expected to move to Cannon will be the 3rd Special Operations Squadron, currently based at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, an MQ-1 Predator unit. This unit will most likely move to Cannon in June 2008. Other aircraft to follow will include AC-130 Gunships from the 16th Special Operations Squadron in 2010, and CV-22 Ospreys in 2011.

By the end of 2008, we expect to have 42 aircraft assigned to Cannon.

How quickly we move aircraft capability and complete required construction on new and existing base facilities will determine how fast we move Airmen and their families into the area.

Q: When will the transfer be complete?

A: It will take approximately six years to move the proposed fleet of special operations aircraft and personnel to Cannon. The funding and construction for facilities is spread over several years. Aircraft would be bed down in association with the completion of facilities at Cannon. One reason it takes so long for the final aircraft to arrive is because some of those aircraft, like the MC-130W and the CV-22, are still in production.

Q: What kind of changes can the people of Clovis expect to see at/around Cannon AFB?

A. The Security Forces posture at Cannon AFB will be transparent when it transfers to AFSOC. The base security forces will provide the same protection that exists at Cannon today. There will be some increased traffic through the Portales Gate due to more commercial delivery vehicles as a result of new units and construction efforts.

Q: What kind of changes can we expect to see Oct. 1?

A: Aside from patch changes, new unit names, and a new mission, changes should be transparent to most people, as well as the local community...we're still Airmen first.

Q: Will local businesses be able to bid on contracts to upgrade the facility, and what is to be expected in contracts for the base?

A: Command officials are anticipating the award of contracts in excess of \$40M at Cannon this fiscal year, up from approximately \$25 million last year. The additional contracts will provide needed construction and equipment in support of the beddown of AFSOC forces at Cannon and facilitate training on the Melrose Range.

Over the next few years, we expect construction projects to include eight new large-aircraft hangars, three squadron operations facilities and additional dormitory space, as well as modifications and renovations to existing facilities. Larger office buildings are required to support the larger number of personnel assigned to flying units, as well as the equipment they use.

One of the tools the contracting squadron uses is the Small Business Administration's 8A program to decide which contractors receive contracts. The only prerequisite to contract fulfillment is that contractors are certified by the SBA. Most other business opportunities are advertised online through Fed Biz Opps. Fed Biz Opps is the single government point of entry for Federal Government procurement opportunities over \$25,000, at <http://www.fbo.gov/>

Q: What sort of upgrades and modifications does the base require in order to meet AFSOC's standards?

A: The upgrades/modifications needed for AFSOC generally deal with converting Cannon from handling smaller F-16 aircraft to larger C-130 and CV-22 aircraft. C-130 squadron operations buildings and maintenance facilities are much larger than those of the F-16 units. Some existing buildings and facilities will need to be modified to handle the larger C-130 and CV-22. Additionally, the communication lines to accommodate the unmanned aircraft systems need to be upgraded.

Q: When will construction begin on the buildings that AFSOC requires?

A: Once construction contracts are awarded, the building of temporary hangars will begin. We are expecting the temporary hangars to be completed by June 2008. These temporary hangars would be used until 2011, when the new permanent hangars are programmed to be constructed.

Q: If local companies have a contract in place with Air Combat Command will they have to be renegotiated through AFSOC?

A: Some of the contracts that are in place through ACC will continue to be honored through AFSOC and some contracts will be renegotiated. The owning agencies should know if their contract need to be renegotiated.

Q: Will the same level of support for community activities such as Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels and things of that nature continue with AFSOC's arrival?

A: Despite the change in mission at Cannon, the Airmen will continue to support the local community. We may have smaller numbers of Airmen and family members over the next few years as the new aircraft and units move in, but won't affect the Air Force tradition of providing

support to our surrounding communities.

Q: Is Cannon AFB still planning to have privatized base housing?

A: There is no new information regarding the privatization of base housing at Cannon. We will provide updates as they become available.

Q: Who will be the commander of the special operations wing?

A: Col. Tim Leahy will be the commander of the special operations wing. Colonel Leahy was the vice wing commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field prior to arriving at Cannon. Col Val Bagnani will remain at Cannon as the vice wing commander.