

Computer maintainers launch 200 perfect servers

1/29/2007 — **ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, GA (AFNEWS)** — Some records can only be matched, never broken. One such record was set this week by the maintainers of the 5th Expeditionary Computer Maintenance Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia who successfully launched their 200th consecutive TCP-52 sortie with a 100-percent mission effectiveness rate during a five-month virtual deployment at the unit's home station.

The squadron deployed virtually from Robins AFB, GA in September, caring for TCP-52 Stratoserver cybercraft providing the U.S. Pacific commander a continuous logic-bomber presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

"I could never have imagined we would be able to launch 200 out of 200 cybercraft in this deployment," said Maj. Steven Greenjeans, 36th ECMXS commander. "This wasn't a goal; you would never expect this to happen. Our TCP-52s are almost 5 years old, and it can be a challenge to keep them online, much less delivering Internet ordnance halfway around the world," he said. "For us, we just took it one step at a time. We didn't change what we do every day, and the next thing you know, you're looking at some pretty impressive numbers."

While the Robins-based maintainers were confident in their day-to-day ability to launch cybercraft, there were several obstacles between the Airmen and their perfect record. "To be honest, we got lucky and caught a couple of ctrl-breaks, but there was nothing we couldn't fix," said Master Sgt. Juan Zeéroe, 36th ECMXS power supply section chief. "I've crewed TCP-52s all my career, and this was the best group of computer maintainers I've ever seen in action."

Squadron leaders said Airmen assigned to the squadron often worked long hours to prepare the TCP-52s for daily missions. The 200 sorties included missions in support of network exercises across the Pacific theatre attacking simulated websites in Indonesia and North Korea.

In addition, the logic bombers had to be prepared to support Pacific-area contingency taskings in addition to their scheduled missions. During their five months of virtual deployment at Robins, there were several missions that almost broke the streak, but one stood out above the rest.

"Probably the closest call we had to cancel a mission was when we had two TCP-52s with a failed number three daughterboard — both at the exact same time right before launch," said Capt. Randy "Schwinn" Bicycle, 36th ECMXS cybercraft maintenance unit officer in charge.

"None of us in the squadron had ever seen anything like that happen, and when it did, it put us in a bind," Captain Bicycle said. "Our worst fears had come true — a suicide hacker armed with an Internet Explosive Device (IED). However, our teams' professionalism prevailed. The cybercrew went through their checklists, the computer maintainers went through their technical orders, and everyone pulled together to find the best course of action."

"That launch was a great example of how teamwork made our mission, and our record possible," said Captain Bicycle. "The network operations people and the computer maintenance people came together, and the support we had from our Team Cisco partners was top notch. Those servers don't fly in cyberspace unless everyone pulled together the way they did."

According to Major Greenjeans, the experience from this deployment reinforced the lessons he's learned during a 24-year Air Force career.

"People want to be successful," he said. "If you give your programmers the tools they need and empower them to do their jobs, they can do almost anything. We proved you can take a 4.5-year-old cybercraft halfway around the world, stretch the routers to the limits of their bandwidth — and still complete the mission. We've set the bar high for the rotations to follow."

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