



'Sheriffs of cyberspace' Enlisted course next step in cyber transformation

by Susan Griggs
81st Training Wing Public Affairs

1/19/2011 - **KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, Miss.** -- Monday's launch of the enlisted portion of undergraduate cyber training closes the loop in the communication and information career force enhancement and transformation.

The 333rd Training Squadron is responsible for providing the initial skills for a brand new Air Force Specialty Code, 1B4X1, cyber defense operations. The new course ensures the Air Force will have junior noncommissioned officers to lead Airmen and assist senior NCOs in managing and protecting the complex domain of cyber.



Sergeant Judge, left, and Sergeant Matute do a final equipment check on the industrial control systems equipment to ensure results of their first ICS exercise were correct. (U.S. Air Force photo by Kemberly Groue)

"I've heard people say that cyberspace is like the 'wild west,'" said Master Sgt. Manuel Matute, cyberspace defense operations instructor supervisor. "Well, we're like the sheriffs of cyberspace.

"Cyberspace defense operations training at Keesler is the first step in achieving cyberspace domination," Sergeant Matute continued. "We're bringing the Air Force into the future -- this is where society and technology are heading, and we're at the forefront."

Much of the 1B4 training is identical to the 24-week 17D officer training course that Keesler initiated seven months ago. Officers and enlisted members must have the same knowledge level before they begin the second stage of training --- intermediate network warfare training.

"In the field, 1B4s sit side by side with their officer counterparts," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Judge, one of the cyberspace defense operations instructors. "With all of the recent hype about (the officer course), people forget there's an enlisted piece to it."

In addition to content from the 17D initial course, enlisted 1B4 training consist of content from communication and information officer network training, commercial Security + certification, undergraduate network warfare training, the network management infrastructure course and additional items identified by the 1B4X1 utilization and training workgroup.

Training will include information to design, secure, assess and defend a variety of networks: telephony, Internet protocol, satellite, land mobile radio, industrial control systems, integrated air defense and tactical data links.

The course is conducted at Stennis Hall, where the 11,000-square-foot facility has been expanded to 24,000 square feet to accommodate annual student throughput of roughly 70 students -- 50 active-duty crosstrainees and 20 Air National Guard members.

The 1B4 initial instructor cadre of seven enlisted instructors and one career development course writer has been in place since September preparing for the first class of 12 students that graduates May 23.

The classes last 85 academic days and are scheduled to begin every six weeks. The first four classes are used for validation.

The 1B4 training team is brimming with enthusiasm about its task.

"With a hand-picked instructor cadre from across the Air Force, you couldn't have a better crew," noted Maj. Rodney Owen, advanced systems and concepts flight commander.

"We have a great cross-section of various cyber specialties among the 1B4 instructor cadre," Master Sgt. Wayne Bullock, CDC writer, pointed out. "It's amazing what these guys are capable of."

"It may not be an Air Force job with a window view, but it's a computer geek's dream job," acknowledged Tech. Sgt. Jason Roberts, one of the instructors.

"I feel lucky to be involved in the 1B4 schoolhouse," said Tech. Sgt. Dennis Wilson, another instructor. "This is a major development in the way the Air Force looks at and addresses cyberspace. This is a long-overdue paradigm shift." Instructor Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Jones declared, "1B4X1 cyberspace defense operations is just the beginning of domain domination. Look out air and space -- here we come!"

"This course symbolizes the last pillar of initial skills training fortifying the Air Force's cyberspace operations foundation," explained Capt. Claudette Johnson, advanced cyber training director. "The Air Force has now instituted cyber operations training on all fronts: senior leadership, junior officers, enlisted and young Airmen.

"We've launched the next generation Airman equipped with the aptitude, attitude and skills to fly, fight and win in cyberspace," Captain Johnson added. "It's truly humbling to have been a part of such a historic feat for the Air Force, Department of Defense and this great nation we all serve."