

F.E. WARREN AIR FORCE BASE

PEACEKEEPER

OCT 2021

Mighty Ninety exercises RTF muscle

Story by A1C Darius Frazier

Airmen across F.E. Warren Air Force Base conducted a Response Task Force exercise Aug. 31, 2021, at several locations, including Pine Bluffs. The simulated incident was a payload transporter flipping over while carrying nuclear assets.

“RTF is in preparation to make sure that if something happens during weapons transport, we can ensure we maintain the mission,” said Tech. Sgt. Aaron Stubbs, the NCOIC of Emergency Management with the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron. “We’ll be able to minimize any damage done.”

An RTF scenario includes a multitude of incidents, and is not limited to a PT rollover.

“The Response Task Force Exercise, RTF, simulates a really bad day happening at the 90th Missile Wing and how we would handle the situation over a long term standpoint,” said Maj. Timothy Dominice, Wing Staff with the Wing Operations Center. “There’s going to be an initial 90th Missile Wing Response, and then there’s going to be a sustained message saying ‘hey we need more help’ in whatever situation we would be dealing with.”

Exercises like this allow Airmen to flex their readiness.

“It goes back to the priority of readiness,” said Stubbs. “Sometimes we think of readiness as deployment related; however, for our mission here, readiness means staying ready if that kind of incident happens.”

The RTF exercise involves many different agencies outside of the Air Force such as the Department of Energy and the Department of Justice.

“A lot of integrated planning is a huge benefit we get out of this as a Wing,” said Dominice. “Being able to mix sections up means you’re not just working in your stovepiped operations group.”

Exercises like RTF help ensure the readiness of Mighty Ninety Airmen as well as allowing those involved an opportunity to see how their piece works in the bigger picture.

While nuclear incidents are uncommon and unlikely, being prepared for the worst is crucially important in ensuring the proper custody and control of the country’s nuclear assets, according to Col. Catherine Barrington, 90th Missile Wing commander.

“This is a capability we cannot allow to erode,” said Barrington. “An exercise is the only time I want to accomplish these RTF actions, but we will always be ready for it.”



Top: An emergency management support team from the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron prepares to decontaminate an explosive ordnance disposal unit after investigating a payload transporter with a potential radiation leak during exercise Sentinel Rampart 21-05 south of Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, Aug. 31, 2021. Operation Sentinel Rampart 21-05 is an exercise overseen by Air Force Global Strike Command to test the Response Task Force capabilities of the 90th Missile Wing. The RTF exercise lasted two days and included personnel from a variety of units across the installation.

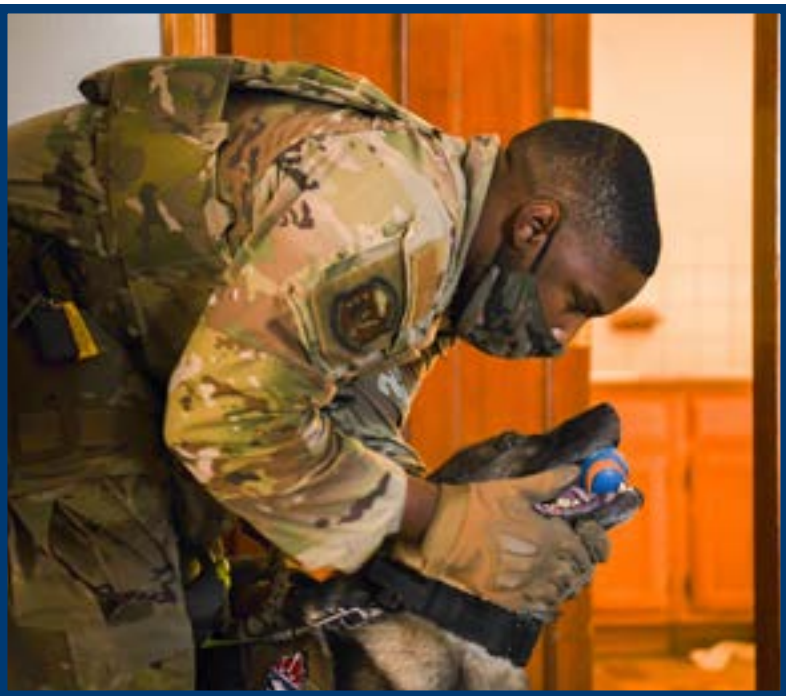
Above : Airman 1st Class Carl Baker, financial analyst assigned to the 90th comptroller squadron, plays the role of a casualty at exercise Sentinel Rampart 21-05 south of Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, Aug. 31, 2021. Operation Sentinel Rampart 21-05 is an exercise overseen by Air Force Global Strike Command to test the Response Task Force capabilities of the 90th Missile Wing. The RTF exercise lasted two days and included personnel from a variety of units across the installation.

Left: Staff Sgt. Timothy Meissgeier, a tactical response force Airman assigned to the 90th Missile Security Operations Squadron, provides overwatch for a disabled payload transporter as a part of exercise Sentinel Rampart 21-05 south of Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, Aug. 31, 2021. Operation Sentinel Rampart 21-05 is an exercise overseen by Air Force Global Strike Command to test the Response Task Force capabilities of the 90th Missile Wing. The RTF exercise lasted two days and included personnel from a variety of units across the installation.

(U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Anthony Munoz)

A group of four military personnel, three men and one woman, are standing in front of a large window. They are all wearing camouflage uniforms. The man on the far left is wearing a tan cap and has a name tag that reads "JAMES". The woman next to him is wearing a blue surgical mask and a black beret with a crest. The man next to her is wearing a black beret with a crest and has a name tag that reads "CHRISTOPHER". The woman on the far right is wearing a tan cap and has a name tag that reads "JESSICA". They are all smiling at the camera.

90 SFS conducts MWD certification



CES conducts readiness challenge

Left: A group of Airmen push a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) during the 90th Civil Engineering Squadron Readiness Challenge on F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, July 1, 2021. The purpose of the exercise was to train the readiness capabilities of the Airmen with the 90 CES.

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GLOBAL STRIKE CHALLENGE 2021



MUNS ramps up for Global Strike Challenge

The 90th Munitions Squadron practiced one of the Global Strike Challenge events August 19, 2021, at the Weapons Storage Area on F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The event, the vehicle handling rodeo, tested the crew's proficiency in the execution of a weapon transfer operation.

Munitions crews are required to accomplish three tasks to prove proficiency, including a reentry vehicle installation, the installation of an aft shroud and the reentry system/reentry vehicle handling rodeo.

To those who participate and those who cheer their Airmen on, the Global Strike Challenge is an important event to ensure lethality within Air Force Global Strike Command.

"Global Strike Challenge is important is because it breeds a healthy competitiveness throughout the northern tier missile wings," said Master Sgt. Anthony Mitchamore, Weapons Maintenance NCOIC. "Events like this promote readiness and most importantly lethality because it shows that although we are the tip of the spear, we can take time to have fun, build our morale and still get the mission done."

Since the first Global Strike Challenge in 2010, the exercise has pushed for enhanced readiness, teamwork, esprit de corps, mission pride and a competitive spirit.

"Being selected for the team is a huge honor and I am excited for the challenge after our outstanding performance in the NSI," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Pilla, Global Strike Challenge MUNS Team Chief. "My teammates are awesome and they'll make my job really easy during the challenge."

The competition for 90 MUNS will take place Aug. 30-31.

Those who work with the MUNS team are optimistic about their chances against Malmstrom and Minot Air Force Bases.

"Our 90 MUNS Global Strike Team we picked this year brings their own set strengths to the Challenge," said Mitchamore. "With some of the youngest and oldest 2W2's here, this team will be hard to beat."

The Global Strike Challenge pushes Airmen physically and mentally by testing military readiness and expertise. These Airmen from across the country are preparing for the competition highlighting the qualities that contribute to the Air Force's global strike mission.

The Global Strike Challenge is the world's premier bomber, ICBM, helicopter operations, and security forces competition featuring units from Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Reserve Command, and the Air National Guard.

OG participates in Defenders AFGSC Challenge train for GSC

The 90th Operations Group participated in Global Strike Challenge 2021 at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Sept. 14-15, 2021.

"It's important for the 321st Missile Squadron, because in our opinion, we have the best operators in the 90th Missile Wing and across 20th Air Force," said 2nd Lt. Gramm Roberts, deputy missile combat crew commander, 321 MS. "This is an opportunity for us to prove that we can do our job with precision lethality."

Operators within 90 OG face a variety of contingencies and job-related procedures over a two-hour period during Global Strike Challenge.

"We have to respond accordingly in accordance with all of our directives and tech data," said Roberts.

Training inside of a missile procedures trainer for the challenge can generate a lot of stress, according to Roberts.

"The nuclear mission is a no-fail mission, so when we do our job, we have to do it with precision and we have to be right every time. The ultimate effect of us doing our job is lethality," said Roberts.

Global Strike Challenge ensures that units are maintaining mission readiness and are capable of performing under pressure.

"Our nuclear umbrella is international," said 1st Lt. Linda Rivera Matsuo, combat missile crew commander, 321 MS. "There are plenty of countries who are counting on us to be able to do that mission at a moment's notice."

Operators need to be well-versed with their job in order to succeed in both the challenge and operational settings.

"The deeper knowledge of the weapon system, how it integrates down the chain, the big picture all the way up into the White House, usually equips us with better knowledge to make decisions toward Global Strike Challenge," said Rivera Matsuo.

Global Strike Challenge is the world's premier Bomber, Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, Helicopter Operations and Security Forces competition featuring units from Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Reserve Command and the Air National Guard.

In preparation for the Global Strike Challenge, defenders across Global Strike Command are training for their competition period from Sept. 20 - 24. The Mighty Ninety's Defenders have trained in tactics and fitness, to ensure they're prepared physically and mentally for the Challenge.

The Global Strike Challenge pushes airmen by testing military readiness and expertise.

"It's amazing to see just how much we can accomplish when we work together," said Tech Sgt. Sage Fender, 90th Missile Security Operations Squadron, tactical response force. "It's a great opportunity to see how the Airmen are able to face challenges and work together as a team."

Since the first Global Strike Challenge in 2010, the exercise is designed to enhance readiness, teamwork, esprit de corps, mission pride and a competitive spirit, according to USAF Police Alumni Association.

The competition combines operations, maintenance and security forces participants from both the missile and bomber communities performing the Air Force's global strike mission. Global Strike Challenge is run every other year with operations and maintenance competitions taking place throughout the summer months. Teams compete at both their home bases and other competition sites from June to September. The Challenge is the world's premier bomber, Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, helicopter operations, and security forces competition featuring units from Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Reserve Command, and the Air National Guard.

Missileer reaches 500th alert

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Darius Frazier

Capt. Tom Popp, Crew Commander with the 319th Missile Squadron, recently achieved a rare milestone, reaching his 500th alert.

“Throughout my seven-year career, I’ve never met another missileer who reached 500 alerts,” said Popp. “I’ve heard from some missileers more versed in missile history than myself that it hasn’t been done since our mission fell under Strategic Air Command. Whether that’s the case or not, it’s still a milestone that I am immensely proud of.”

Going out on alert helps to ensure our Airmen are displaying their mission readiness in a vital mission.

“It is significant because it reinforces the time our Airmen spend in the field accomplishing this critical national mission and it illustrates that we never let it fail,” said Lt. Col. Robert Mack, commander of the 319th Missile Squadron.

Though it was something he looked forward to, Popp did have positive memories associated with his final alert.

“I did not believe it would be. Ask most missileers and they will tell you that they are looking forward to their last alert. I was no exception,” said Popp when asked if going out on his last alert felt bittersweet. “However, once I got into the capsule for the last time, I couldn’t help but reflect on all the positive things this job has given me and it certainly became bitter-sweet.”

His dedication to the job is indicative of the hard work that goes into performing as an Airman.

Glory Trip 239 takes off at Vandenberg

U.S. Air Force Captain Wesley Coonradt, 321st Missile Squadron, is scheduled to assist with a Glory Trip at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, from June 5 to Aug. 13, 2021.

His road to the glory trip is not dissimilar from many who join the military: for him it was a family affair. Coonradt’s decision to join the military was based on his father’s four years of service in the United States Marine Corps.

“My dad was a Marine, so part of our family’s values was an obligation to serve the country,” said Coonradt.

He decided to commission over enlisting after receiving an ROTC scholarship in order to pursue his family’s commitment to serve their country.

“I started school not knowing if I was going to be able to pay my way through it,” said Coonradt. “I decided that if I didn’t get picked up for an ROTC scholarship in my first year, I would put my degree on pause and enlist. I was fortunate enough to get a scholarship during that year.

Coonradt is currently working toward achieving a master’s degree in project management and uses his passion for learning to benefit his job as well

“I love to learn,” said Coonradt. “It motivates me to dig into the technical intricacies of the weapon system while I’m at work.”

Coonradt enjoys going to parks and playing pretend with his spouse, Lauryn, and his child, Naaz, when he is not reading or working on his degree.

“They have been on a rocket ship kick since I’ve been trying to explain what I do at work,” said Coonradt. “We play a lot of board games, including some made for three year olds. We also like listening to music together and dancing.”

Coonradt has been pulling week-long alerts since Naaz was one year old, and has concerns that his child noticed his absence through development.

“The week-long deployments are difficult on my spouse, since they have to take care of our three year old for a full week straight,” said Coonradt.

He has attempted to stay involved with his child by reading stories over the phone at the missile launch control center, but he still finds the experience challenging.

“It’s really hard on me and a lot harder on my spouse,” said Coonradt.

Glory Trip, also known as the Air Force Global Strike Command Minuteman III Operational Test Launch, is an operational test launch that continues a long history of Western Range space range launches used to verify, validate and improve the capability of the nation’s intercontinental ballistic missile force.

“Captain Popp’s alert milestone highlights his sustained excellence, commitment, and professionalism over many years,” said Col. Deane Konowicz, 90th Missile Wing vice commander. “Less than one percent of missileers will ever reach 500 alerts, so it is clear that his dedicated service to our ICBM mission is a testament to our Air Force core values and indicative of all our Airmen who represent the 90th Missile Wing Wranglers.”

Standing alert is a tasking job that can have missileers traveling out to the field for weeks at a time.

“Being a missileer is a stressful job,” said Mack. “A lot of that stress is mental, especially when you realize we ask our missileers to be ready to turn keys on order and provide nuclear effects across the planet.”

Air Force Global Strike Command plays a pivotal role in the defense of the nation and the missileers are a key part in that.

“My advice to any missileer, especially new missileers, is to learn something new on every alert,” said Popp. “You can learn something new about the weapon system, your crew partner, your interests that lie outside of missiles - just learn something.”

Though he has stood more than 500 alerts, Popp is leaving the Air Force to pursue educational and professional goals outside the service.

“I’m separating from the Air Force in October to pursue my master’s degree in environmental engineering,” said Popp. “While I’m excited for my upcoming opportunities, I will miss this chapter of my life and Air Force career.”

Glory Trips can be an exciting opportunity for a Missileer to showcase their knowledge and ability in real time.

Each year, Air Force Global Strike Command randomly selects an operational missile from the field to test the safety and reliability of the nation’s ICBM weapon systems. The Air Force Global Strike Command Minuteman III Operational Test Launch exercise, known as a Glory Trip, is an operational test launch which continues a long history of launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and is used to verify, validate and improve the capability of the nation’s ICBM force.

Two Missileers from the Mighty Ninety were chosen to participate in Glory Trip 239 at Vandenberg from June 5 to Aug. 13, 2021, and one of those chosen is Lt. Keeshia McDonald.

McDonald echoes the sentiment of many who came before her in the honor for being chosen.

“It’s a dream TDY for a Missileer and a once in a lifetime opportunity where we’re able to be present for the missile build up, interact with maintenance personnel and see firsthand how much work gets put in at a Launch Facility,” said McDonald. “Obviously we’re all excited for the big fireworks show at the end, and to actually turn keys/switches and launch an ICBM. I’ll forever be grateful for this opportunity.”

Her road to GT-239 is one rooted in service, even if that service was once in a different uniform. However, like many who raise their right hand and join the military, she comes from a line of uniformed service.

“As I reached my early 20s, I felt a pull to become part of something that gives back and knew if I didn’t jump and give the military a shot, I’d regret it for the rest of my life,” said McDonald. “So, I enlisted in the Marine Corps for 5 years, I’ve been with the Air Force a little over 2 years now and plan to stay for as long as the military will have me.”

Though she might not have become a Missileer if not for blind chance and the needs of the service, she carries a deep sense of pride in carrying the title of 13N.

“I chose ‘needs of the Air Force’ and Missiles chose me, but whatever factors went into my 13N assignment, I’m grateful

for because it’s been a perfect match, said McDonald. “I am incredibly grateful and proud to be a Missileer. Every career field has its own heritage and tradition but there’s a certain uniqueness to this one that I feel connected to, where Missileers have been performing this duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of each and every year for over half a century and it’s humbling to think that I am now a small part of that legacy.”

Though she is driven and focused on her role and what that role means to national security, she ensures that her occupation isn’t her entire life.

“Missileers are required to be away from home to perform our alert duties and that means regularly leaving our families behind. While it’s not Afghanistan, it’s still separation and when you add additional duties on top of that, the work time adds up quickly,” said McDonald. “Luckily, my husband understands the mission and has always been very supportive and flexible of my career requirements, and when I am home, I’m allotted a certain number of recovery days to upkeep a healthy personal life – it’s not all work.”

The struggles of the job, though taxing, are lessened through love of family.

“My husband, Cody Rapol, and I are pretty active people, and we love to explore and try to get out and hike as often as we can,” said McDonald. “Family means the world to me and I’m lucky I get to share my day-to-day with someone incredible and I also have

family back home that I talk with regularly”

With her unique background, she offers a recommendation for those who may be struggling with their military service.

“If the excitement and novelty wears off and the military day-to-day becomes difficult or mundane to you, remember to take a step back and remind yourself why you decided to serve,” said McDonald. “This is not a normal job and we are not average people – we are a small percentage of the population who at some point dedicated ourselves to service, so reflect on your personal reasons, be proud, stay motivated, motivate those around you and always, always, always act with integrity.”

And to those who might question the value of what Missileers and the missile wings do every day, McDonald has strong opinions on the importance of Global Strike Command.

“The AFGSC mission is to provide strategic deterrence, global strike and combat support,” said McDonald. “I think that speaks for itself.”

90 MW updates out-processing system

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Anthony Muñoz

The 90th Force Support Squadron has implemented a new virtual out-processing system over the past year in an effort to make departing base easier and more efficient for Airmen leaving F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

“Out-processing Col. Bonetti was very, very simple,” said Staff Sgt. Samantha Marshik, NCOIC of out-bound assignments with the 90 FSS. “He got his text message at 7:30 Monday morning notifying him of his final out after his change of command ceremony. He was very appreciative and he liked it a lot.”

The new system allows for out-processing staff to distribute and receive documents virtually via the Air Force Connect app, text message and email. This eliminates the need for Airmen to travel repeatedly to the out-processing office in order to complete physical paperwork.

“We’ve gotten a lot of positive customer feedback because customers seem to like not having to come in and not having to carry everything around,” said Marshik. “Everything is a lot simpler for them. Especially for those that don’t have regular access to a computer desk, as long as we have their cell phone number and service provider, we can send them a message.”

The new virtualized program has also saved paper in addition to trips to the out-processing office by not requiring departing personnel to carry physical folders full of documents.

“We don’t have to waste paper because we don’t have to make packages and photocopies of everything,” said Marshik. “Everything just goes off to their gaining location through the Case Management System. All we do is send a text message to their phone with their CMS case number, so when they in-process to their gaining location, they just tell them ‘all of my documents are here.’”

The idea to virtualize the out-processing system originally came from efforts to limit close contact after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It really hit home with COVID,” according to Marshik. “We were trying to limit personal interaction and trying to keep things virtual to be safe. We found that with having virtual final outs, things just ran a lot smoother, quicker and more efficiently.”

The simplicity of the virtual out-processing system allows Airmen to focus on other aspects of their out-processing without too much interference.

“They would be scared that their housing appointments would be delayed because of their final out and they would reschedule,” said Airman 1st Class McKenzie Jones, outbound assignment technician, 90 FSS. “Now with my customers, they’re a lot more satisfied because when they’re at their housing appointment, I can just send them their message while they’re still trying to out-process with housing.”

The out-processing team initially tested the virtual system on a small scale in order to work through glitches before applying the system to all out-processing Airmen

“We started with FGOs and SNCOs and phased ourselves in as we worked out all of the little details, the good things, the bad things and the feedback,” said Senior Master Sgt. Leah Polhemus Barron, Military Personnel Flight chief with 90 FSS.

The out-processing team is continuously seeking ways to make the out-processing system more efficient after applying it to all Airmen out-processing off base.



A phone displays the Air Force Connect app at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, July 30, 2021. The Air Force Connect app can now be used to assist Airmen out-processing from F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

“It’s still being tailored, but the technicians have gotten it down to almost a science now,” said Barron.

Convincing base housing, medical, and other base entities that transitioning to a virtual out-processing system would be possible was the biggest difficulty faced by the out-processing team, according to Barron.

“I think retraining the customers, retraining our commanders, retraining our chiefs, retraining everybody on base that we’re going to change this was our biggest obstacle getting everybody on board and bought into a process that eliminated that face-to-face interaction and still kept the same level of customer service,” said Barron. “We can do this, and we’re not going to lose the amount of customer support that we provide. I would argue that we’ve increased our customer support.”

Jones agrees that junior-enlisted Airmen have a lot of potential to renovate technology-based systems and challenge current systems based on their proficiency with technology.

“I think you can have an idea at any rank,” said Jones. “A lot of good ideas would come from Airmen, especially those coming in fresh out of tech school.”

She also agrees that Airmen should not allow fear of rejection to stop them from voicing their opinions.

“I feel like ideas don’t deserve to be called stupid or irrelevant,” said Jones. “Push any idea up to your supervisor, because the more you express it or talk about it, the more ears you’ll turn.”



Road Warrior sharpens skills of missile wing defenders

Story by Maj. Victoria Hight

Security forces Airmen from the 90th Missile Wing here and 91 MW at Minot AFB, N.D., each participated in week-long iterations of exercise Road Warrior at Camp Guernsey from Aug. 9-20.

Road Warrior is an annual training event that tests the convoy tactics, techniques and procedures of missile wing defenders to ensure they remain ready to meet the challenges of protecting the nation’s ICBM force.

“I hope our Airmen walk away from this with a greater respect for the power of their entire team,” said Col. Catherine Barrington, 90th Missile Wing commander. “They have to shoot, move and communicate, and bring down the desired effect upon the adversary. Being a teammate is incredibly important and something that we all have to do; so if they understand that, we will be successful on the battlefield.

The controlled environment provided by the 90th Ground Combat Training Squadron at Camp Guernsey allowed security forces convoys to practice realistic transit scenarios, engagements with opposing forces and integration with aerial support provided by the 37th Helicopter Squadron stationed at F.E. Warren AFB. The teams were graded on their response to each scenario, providing them opportunity to hone their skills day-by-day.

”We want to test our capabilities against an opposing force and really see what we’re made of in these environments,” said Maj. Dexter Binion, 90th GCTS commander. “The battlespace here allows for that to happen, where we can test the capabilities of the weapons systems and our leaders’ critical thinking skills in a controlled environment founded on stress and see what they bring to the fight.”

The exercise hosted various Headquarters Air Force, U.S. Strategic Command, Numbered Air Force, and wing leadership throughout its duration, affording senior leaders first-hand perspective on how the Airmen performed and adapted to various challenges, as well as the opportunity to interact with the participants.

“Every time you go out on a convoy, you have to be prepared for what you faced today,” said Lt. Gen. Thomas Bussiere, USSTRATCOM deputy commander, as he addressed the defenders. “You are the line of defense between those who want to do harm and a nuclear weapon. They will watch you, and you want to convince them without any hesitation that today is not their day.”

After a week of hard work and training, Airmen return back to their home station units to carry the lessons learned to their teammates.

“Road Warrior is important because day in, day out, when we have missions, we are expected to perform,” said Airman 1st Class Jacob Gann, 90th Missile Security Operations Squadron contingency response force member. “We get put to the test here to see where we’re at and make sure we’re doing the job the right way.”

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, defenders from the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom AFB, Mont., were not able to attend.



Above: Defenders assigned to the 90th Security Forces Group defend against an oppositional force during operation Road Warrior, Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, Aug. 18, 2021. Operation Road Warrior is a 20th Air Force training exercise that assesses nuclear convoy operations which are regularly conducted by security forces, maintenance and helicopter groups. A convoy consists of a group of military vehicles secured by trained defenders which transports nuclear components.

Left: Defenders assigned to the 90th Security Forces Group defend against an oppositional force during operation Road Warrior, Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, Aug. 18, 2021. Operation Road Warrior is a 20th Air Force training exercise that assesses nuclear convoy operations which are regularly conducted by security forces, maintenance and helicopter groups. A convoy consists of a group of military vehicles secured by trained defenders which transports nuclear components.

Below: A mock convoy drives through Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, Aug. 18, 2021, as part of operation Road Warrior. Operation Road Warrior is a 20th Air Force training exercise that assesses nuclear convoy operations which are regularly conducted by security forces, maintenance and helicopter groups. A convoy consists of a group of military vehicles secured by trained defenders which transports nuclear components. (U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Charles Munoz)