



# The Air Force and Year 2000

Capt. Chris Stephens

*Air Force Year 2000 Program Management Office*

*The Air Force's Year 2000 Program Management Office is providing the necessary guidance to ensure all systems and infrastructure components that impact the Air Force mission be tested and made year 2000 compliant by the end of 1998.*

If you are not familiar with the year 2000 (Y2K) problem, it is, in effect, the inability of many microprocessor-controlled systems to properly handle the transition from 1999 to 2000 ("99" to "00" in two-digit representation). The secretary of the Air Force and the chief of staff said in a June 24, 1997 letter that "the Air Force is arguably the most technologically dependent component of the United States armed forces" (*CROSSTALK*, December 1997). As such, this seemingly minor problem represents a potential threat to our ability to sustain our air and space mission. At this point in time, no one can determine absolutely the impact of this event on our mission capabilities. For the U.S. Air Force, unknown impact equals unacceptable risk.

Attacking the Y2K problem is a top priority for every Air Force organization. It must be understood that the problem is not limited to automated information systems (AIS) and weapons systems, but includes *everything* with a microprocessor in it: medical equipment, elevators, building entry-control systems, street lights, fire-suppression systems, and even fax machines (to mention but a fraction of the list). Individual failure of these items may be only a minor problem; widespread failure or degradation across the Air Force is something else entirely.

Tackling this problem is to be done using *existing* resources. That means resources—both dollars and people—must be reassigned to address year 2000. This is a monumental task given that the current cost estimate for the Air Force is more than \$400 million. As we turn our attention to the cost of fixing our infrastructure, the cost will continue to climb. This realignment of resources

requires the active participation of every leader in the Air Force if corrections are to be completed and in place by late 1998.

The Air Force established an Air Force Y2K Program Management Office at the Air Force Communications Agency (AFCA) at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. in February 1995. The goal of this program is to ensure that no mission-critical systems are adversely impacted by the year 2000. An infrastructure of dedicated professionals has been set up across the Air Force to tackle this problem. People at all levels are involved: major command (MAJCOM), field operating agencies (FOAs), direct reporting units, functionals, and base level. The program office has published several guidance packages to cover the different items that may be impacted and the roles and responsibilities of everyone. Everybody must be familiar with these documents and stay informed on the issues. If you do not know who your MAJCOM or unit point of contact is, give us a call. Everyone in the Air Force must understand this problem and be actively involved in minimizing its impact.

## Philosophy

The enduring management philosophy for the year 2000 by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence has been centralized management with decentralized execution. The basis of this concept is that commanders command, system developers produce new capabilities, and lifecycle managers test, field, and maintain systems and software on a daily basis. Using this rationale, resident skills can be com-

binated with processes to establish management structures, assign responsibilities, analyze Y2K defects, develop renovation strategies, replace or retire systems or components where necessary, and test and field compliant systems. The centralized management side of the equation is Air Force-level day-to-day management, policy, and direction necessary to ensure that Y2K changes are effectively and efficiently executed. The bottom line is that all systems and infrastructure components that impact the Air Force mission must be tested and made compliant in time.

## Program Initiatives

The Air Force has developed processes and capabilities to efficiently manage the execution of the Y2K program. AFCA has issued direction in the form of three Air Force Y2K guidance packages:

- The Air Force Year 2000 Guidance Package is the Air Force plan for addressing AIS and weapons systems. This package details the five-phase process the Air Force uses to assess, analyze, and implement Y2K solutions.
- The Air Force Year 2000 Infrastructure MAJCOM/Commanders Guidance Package details a management approach to solve Y2K infrastructure problems.
- The Air Force Functional Year 2000 Guidance Package defines the Air Force functional communities role in resolving Y2K impacts.

AFCA has developed the Air Force Year 2000 Web site that is the official repository for all Air Force Y2K information at <http://year2000.af.mil>. This site contains links to other Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and U.S.

government agency Y2K pages, e.g., the General Services Administration repository for commercial-off-the-shelf compliance information. AFCA has established the Air Force Year 2000 help desk, which is accessible via the Web site, by E-mail at [afca-afy2k@scott.af.mil](mailto:afca-afy2k@scott.af.mil), or by telephone at DSN 576-5761.

AFCA developed the Air Force Automated Systems Inventory (AFASI) to inventory all Air Force AIS and weapons systems and to track their progress toward Y2K compliance. AFASI is the database used to track progress and update the Defense Integration Support Tools. Over 400 accounts have been established, and all MAJCOMs and FOAs are updating or validating Y2K information for systems for which they are responsible. The AFASI is used to prepare the status of the Air Force Y2K

effort reports for Air Force Combat Intelligence Operations Center, Information Technology, who in turn prepares reports for OSD.

AFCA has developed a formal system testing and certification process and provides hands-on training to Air Force system certifiers who provide them with the necessary skills to test and certify weapons and AIS as Y2K compliant. The purpose of certification is to ensure that a system meets a minimum set of criteria to reasonably make sure it is not impacted by the year 2000; the implementation of this program ensures that certification is applied consistently and accurately across the entire Air Force.

AFCA conducts periodic Air Force Y2K working groups that draw together command Y2K representatives to discuss issues and resolve problems. The sixth

working group meeting was held Aug. 5-6, 1997. It was the first session with colonel representation from the commands. This session truly raised the awareness levels in the commands.

### How to Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to know more about the Air Force's Y2K program, contact the Air Force Year 2000 Program Management Office (AFCA/ITY) at 618-256-5697 DSN 576-5697 or visit our Web page at <http://year2000.af.mil> (government access only). There you will find the Air Force Y2K guidance packages, information on our testing and certification program, and reference to many other Web sites throughout the Air Force, Department of Defense, government, and industry. ♦

## 552nd CSG Receives CMM Level 3 Rating

Cheryl Stefenel and Gordon Fitzgerald  
*552nd Computer Systems Group*

After 18 months of hard work and dedication, the 552nd Computer Systems Group (CSG)—communications and computer support for the 552nd Air Control Wing—recently achieved Level 3 according to the Software Engineering Institute Capability Maturity Model (CMM) criteria.

In 1993, the 552nd CSG was assessed at Level 1, the starting point for all organizations. According to the group commander, Col. Frank Richardson, when the group was assessed at Level 1, many people thought the CSG would never achieve a Level 2, much less a Level 3.

Lt. Col. Vincent Azzarelli, former 552nd Computer Systems squadron commander who led the CMM Level 3 efforts agreed. "After the satisfactory rating the group received in the 1996 Quality Air Force Assessment, there wasn't a lot of confidence—the thinking within the group was that this would be too much of an uphill battle to accomplish in a year," he said.

However, once the group got motivated, they not only reached Level 2—their original goal—the Air Force

Communications Agency assessed them at Level 3, which surprised the group.

"I am extremely proud of what the 552nd Computer Systems Squadron did to lead the CSG and the wing to a Level 3 rating. To move from Level 1 to Level 3 was just an awesome feat," Richardson said. "In addition, the support provided by the Air Combat Command Computer Systems Squadron and the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center was invaluable."

After achieving the Level 3 rating, the CSG will improve its Level 3 processes, stabilize these processes, and get its Level 4 rating. The group hopes to have a Level 4 rating within the next two years.

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