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## The Joint Enabling Capabilities Command: A Rarity within the Conventional Force

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Joint Communications Support Element members board C-17 Globemaster III carrying relief supplies to Haiti from MacDill AFB, Florida

# The Joint Enabling Capabilities Command

## A Rarity within the Conventional Force

By WALTER E. CARTER, JR.

Over the past decade, the Department of Defense (DOD) has watched the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC), which was initially conceived as the Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) prototype, mature into a fully functioning joint command validating its mission and capabilities through numerous successful deployments. Today's JECC is a collection

of high-demand joint capabilities ready to immediately support joint force commander requirements worldwide.

The JECC has supported every major military operation since 9/11—from contingency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in Haiti and Pakistan. Moreover, many may not realize that the JECC offers a military officer the opportunity to gain an

unprecedented level of joint experience in every area of operations across the globe.

These two statements not only make the JECC unique but also are the reason the

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**Rear Admiral Walter E. Carter, Jr., USN, was Commander of the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC) from July 2009 to August 2011. JECC is currently commanded by Rear Admiral Scott Stearney, USN.**

command has been so successful. There is no other DOD organization offering a joint force commander both the depth of joint knowledge and the remarkable level of joint expertise gained from experience in the full spectrum of military operations.

To fully understand the unique nature of the JECC and the critical capabilities the command can bring to the joint warfighter, it is necessary to take a brief look at its evolution and crisis participation since its inception.

### The Operational Challenge

Historically, creating a joint task force (JTF) has come with its share of forming and planning difficulties. Typically, a Service two- or three-star headquarters will be designated as the JTF for a crisis or contingency and will receive augmentation from the Services to fill the capability gaps within the JTF. Most situations require JTFs to be established rapidly, and the lag time in receiving augmentation, coupled with the inexperience of augmentees in joint operations, has proven an ineffective and unsuccessful model.

The search for a solution to this warfighter challenge began in 2000. Following a series of joint wargames and experiments at U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM)—Rapid Decisive Operations Wargame 2000, Millennium Challenge 2000, and Unified Vision 2001—the SJFHQ concept emerged as a possible remedy. The concept consisted of a core element of 58 personnel trained in joint warfighting disciplines and available on short notice to increase the operational effectiveness of a JTF headquarters.

Following Millennium Challenge 2002, in which the SJFHQ concept was tested and further refined, DOD tasked USJFCOM to

develop a prototype SJFHQ and build the necessary policies and procedures to assist the geographic combatant commands (GCCs) in implementing the concept. SJFHQs were established at every GCC, with the exception of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), from 2003 to 2005. The USJFCOM SJFHQ focused on the USCENTCOM area of operations in addition to augmenting the other SJFHQs during operational missions as their units were formed and trained.

Affairs Support Element (JPASE) and Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE). USJFCOM leadership decided to streamline the process and establish an organization to oversee all the capabilities that a joint force commander may require.

### Proof of Concept

One of the most significant catalysts for transitioning the SJFHQ into the JECC was the requirement to provide value to the joint

*Lessons learned from initial deployments demonstrated that the expertise provided by the SJFHQ was only a small portion of the capabilities required by a joint force commander when establishing a JTF*

Subsequently, the USJFCOM prototype evolved into an operationally capable headquarters deploying to a variety of missions, including assistance for JTF Katrina, 2006 Doha Asian Games, JTF Lebanon, Combined Disaster Assistance Center–Pakistan, Combined JTF–Horn of Africa, and Task Force Ramadi.

None of these operations, however, required the USJFCOM SJFHQ to deploy an entire core element. Instead, the SJFHQ deployed smaller, tailored groups ranging from just a few personnel to groups as large as 30. Lessons learned from these initial deployments demonstrated that the expertise provided by the SJFHQ was only a small portion of the capabilities required by a joint force commander when establishing a JTF. Other capabilities, such as public affairs and communications, were also requested regularly from organizations such as the Joint Public

warfighter. The JECC had seen the demand signal for capabilities such as public affairs and communications increase as joint force commanders became aware of the availability of those high-demand, critical resources.

The JECC made these joint capabilities more visible and accessible to the joint force commander. Additionally, the JECC fostered unity of purpose and effort among the various organizations, which was advantageous for the joint force commander, who now only needed to make one call to request a tailored team of capabilities.

On October 1, 2008, the JECC officially stood up as a separate command. The SJFHQ became a Joint Deployable Team (JDT) consisting of experts in plans, operations, knowledge management, intelligence, and logistics. Additional capabilities came from the inclusion of JPASE, JCSE, and an Intelligence–Quick Reaction Team<sup>1</sup>—all designated as joint enabling capabilities.

As the JECC filled requests for assistance, two main themes emerged, setting the organization apart from other first responder units: the JECC’s “scalable” nature, and the “deployability” and “employability” of its personnel. The JECC made a significant effort to ensure that these attributes were the focus of the command. Organizational constructs were designed, red-amber-green readiness cycles were initiated, and codified processes were developed to track requirements and document each individual’s readiness to deploy.

A Ready JEC package (RJP) was developed, allowing teams to be modular, scalable, and tailored to the mission and the requestor’s



U.S. military troops meet with Civil Affairs multifunctional team leadership from UN on earthquake humanitarian relief operations in Cap-Haitien, Haiti

U.S. Air Force (Victoria Meyer)



**Joint Public Affairs Support Element arranges CNN interview on military assistance for transporting U.S. citizens from Lebanon during 2006 Israel-Hizballah conflict**

needs. The RJPs, which are still in use today, include elements from each of the JECs and are able to deploy within days of notification. The RJP undergoes a 45-day assumption process to prepare the unit and its personnel for deployment. It assumes an alert posture for a 3-month period. If a deployment is initiated within that timeline, a mission-tailored team is chosen from the RJP to deploy for the operation. The deployment of an RJP automatically initiates the formation of a new RJP, assuming sufficient resources remain.

Correspondingly, the process for obtaining JECs has been modified. A standing Global Response Force Execution Order was established, allowing a designated number of personnel from each of the JECs to deploy for a crisis or contingency operation with the USJFCOM commander's approval; formal approval from the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) was not needed, increasing the speed and efficiency of these capabilities to respond on short notice.

To ensure JEC members on the RJP were always ready to deploy, the command adopted stringent deployability and theater-entry requirements and instituted a comprehensive program to ensure that members

adhered to weapons qualifications, medical immunizations, and standard paperwork (that is, wills and power of attorney documents) and tracked the progress/completion of each.

The JEC also tracked employability requirements to document the readiness of a

person to execute the mission downrange. Two avenues were identified to assist in the employability of JEC members. The first was active participation in GCC-led exercises, which provided members a chance to use their skills in a simulated environment and to interact with likely mission partners. The second was completion of an in-house JEC course: the Joint Enabling Capabilities Planners Course, which provides baseline training in the joint operation planning process to ensure that a JEC member arriving at a JTF is ready to operate in an environment without any additional training or direction. The planning

course became a predeployment requirement for all new JEC members.

The JEC focus on scalable, deployable, and employable personnel revamped the day-to-day operations of the command and ensured that the joint force commander would receive a team tailored to the mission, flexible enough to adapt to any requirements, and ready to deploy as soon as requested.

### **Joint Enabling Capabilities**

The JDT, JPASE, and JCSE are currently organized as subordinate commands under the JEC, and each offers a unique capability to the joint force commander, which enhances the effectiveness, efficiency, and time required to stand up an operational headquarters.

**Joint Deployable Team.** The JDT, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, is a flexible employment package of experienced joint planners who possess expertise in the planning and execution of the full range of joint military operations. JDTs are teams of readily deployable and experienced joint planners with expertise in operations, plans, knowledge management, intelligence, and logistics.

The JDT is composed of trained and ready joint officers (O-4 through O-6), task-organized to each request in order to meet mission requirements. Each JDT member has a baseline understanding of JTF forming and the joint operation planning process and is a subject matter expert in his respective field of study. The JDT offers a world-class team of

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planners and operators who understand and integrate the whole-of-government approach through the building and sharing of information between interagency and multinational partners and GCC staffs.

When deployed, the JDTs form rapidly and provide the joint force commander with trained staff personnel from numerous disciplines who bridge the JTF manning challenge.

**Joint Public Affairs Support Element.** The JPASE, headquartered in Suffolk, Virginia, provides the joint force commander with a trained, equipped, scalable, and expeditionary joint public affairs capability.

JPASE is a close-knit cadre of civilian and military communication experts on call to respond to a wide range of contingencies anywhere in the world. As a first responder, JPASE is the only rapidly deployable joint public affairs unit in DOD providing the joint force commander with an exceptional capability to achieve his communications objectives. When not deployed, JPASE military personnel gain invaluable experience and insights through mission-rehearsal and GCC exercises around the world.

JPASE creates expeditionary teams to provide a ready, turn-key joint public affairs unit, and trains support teams. Additionally, JPASE supports public affairs training to joint staffs during major exercises, seminars, and schools.

The JPASE role as an operational capability is significant as joint force commanders understand the value of a trained team of professionals who can hit the ground running and require little time to acclimate to the operational environment, especially in an evolving technological world where news reporters often arrive before the military. JPASE's early entry capability enables the joint force commander to immediately gain and maintain the initiative in the information domain.

In their training mission, JPASE members participate extensively in the combatant command-led exercises and are fully involved throughout the entire joint exercise lifecycle to ensure public affairs requirements are planned and developed. JPASE provides training during these exercises to enable joint force commanders and their staffs to meet continuously evolving information environment challenges in their respective theaters of operations. In addition to providing training on how to develop a communications strategy, JPASE provides guidance on integrating strategic communications to build conduits between strategic and operational public affairs.

**Joint Communications Support Element.** The JCSE, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, rapidly delivers secure, reliable, and scalable command, control, communications, and computer (C<sup>4</sup>) capabilities to GCCs, U.S. Special Operations Command, and other agencies. JCSE provides essential C<sup>4</sup> support, ranging from small mobile teams to full-sized JTF headquarters deployments to immediately establish and then expand the communications capability of a JTF head-

quarters. JCSE can access the full range of DOD and commercial networks.

As one of the first capabilities needed on the ground during an emerging operation, JCSE has built a reputation as an essential, dependable capability. To keep up with an

four different GCCs (U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Africa Command). The DJC2 is a deployable communications package (including tents and generators) that can support a full JTF of up to 1,500 users

### *deployable Joint Command and Control systems have been used during both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises and real-world deployments*

ever-changing communications infrastructure, JCSE has invested in up-and-coming technologies that have enabled it to offer consistently lighter, faster, and more deployable communications packages. For instance, JCSE initiated the use of the Everything over Internet Protocol communications architecture, which allows its initial communications packages to be commercially air-transportable and easily accessible in the field. This technology allows JCSE's range of communications packages to be tailored to the mission. A basic package used to support only 4 users during the initial stages of an operation, for example, could be scaled to support up to 1,500 users without any interruption to service and only minor modifications and a few additional pieces of equipment.

JCSE is also tasked with the readiness and operation of the Deployable Joint Command and Control (DJC2) systems in

with unclassified/classified network access. JCSE maintains detachments of 16 to 24 members responsible for the operation and employment of these systems for each of these GCCs. In addition, JCSE maintains three surge teams of 12 members each, also trained on the DJC2 system, who can move into any of the detachments if extra support is needed. The DJC2s from each GCC have been used during both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises and real-world deployments.

The accessibility to a broad range of essential capabilities, coupled with the ability of the JECs to deploy within hours, has proven to be a model that successfully meets joint force commanders' requirements. In fact, as the JECC continued to refine procedures and develop operations documents after its initial establishment, the operational tempo began to pick up speed and further validated the JECC position as a critical DOD asset.

#### **JECC Joint Deployable Team plans for Pakistan disaster relief**



USTRANSCOM/JDT

## A Capability for Any Mission

From contingency missions to humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations, the JECC is prepared to deploy. The following are accounts of two of the most notable deployments—each a completely different mission set—to briefly illustrate the full range of military operations to which the JECC can respond.

**ISAF Joint Command.** In July 2009, Lieutenant General David Rodriguez, USA, then deputy commander of U.S. Forces–Afghanistan, specifically requested JECC support to assist in establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command (IJC), the three-star North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquarters in Afghanistan, which he would eventually command. The JECC sent a tailored team of 24 JDT and 13 JCSE members with skills in operations, plans, knowledge management, and communications to Kabul to serve as a bridging mechanism during the critical initial formation period until permanent manning was received.

The JDT was fully integrated with the staff throughout the duration of the deployment. There was tremendous effort and emphasis on partnership, both with NATO partners and the Afghans. The JDT worked directly with Afghan partners on many projects, including the production of the IJC Campaign Operation Order.

The overall mission expectation was for the IJC to form, plan, and achieve initial operating capability to command and control the ISAF Regional Commands in full-spectrum counterinsurgency operations. Following initial operating capability, the IJC would expand across the future operations and plans horizons and execute a full IJC staff battle rhythm to achieve full operating capability. With the assistance of the JECC, the IJC reached initial operating capability on October 12, 2009, and reached full operating capability on November 12, 2009. The team redeployed shortly after reaching full operating capability. This deployment was a milestone for the JECC as the establishment of the IJC was exactly the kind of mission that the JECC was designed for: a short-duration bridging solution until the joint manning requirements were met.

**JTF Haiti.** Shortly after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in January 2010, U.S. Southern Command requested a variety of capabilities from the JECC in support of disaster relief efforts. Within days, JCSE, JPASE, and JDT rapidly



U.S. Army (Jose Velazquez)

**Joint Public Affairs Support Element Media team conducts CNN interview during Operation Unified Response in Haiti**

deployed and supported Operation *Unified Response* and the standup of JTF Haiti.

JCSE members were some of the first responders, deploying within hours of notification to establish and maintain communications connectivity at Port-au-Prince International Airport, U.S. Embassy Haiti, JTF Haiti headquarters, and various medical support facilities at designated locations around the country. In addition to small communications packages initially deployed in support of the operation, JCSE deployed the DJC2 package, which provided the primary means of communications for the entire JTF Haiti staff.

Five JPASE members responded the following day by providing JTF Haiti with experts who served as liaisons to coordinate among the Embassy, interagency organizations, and DOD assets. JPASE also employed the Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System to support senior-leader interviews and the transmission of electronic media to outlets around the world.

Immediately following JPASE, the JDT deployed 12 members to provide operations, logistics, and knowledge management capabilities while establishing JTF Haiti headquarters. JDT members provided operational planning expertise in the standup of JTF Haiti and were fully integrated in key positions. They supported several high-priority planning and execution efforts as numerous staffs (U.S. Agency for International

Development, U.S. Embassy, United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations) came together to support relief efforts.

The JECC team was a key component in the standup of JTF Haiti and provided critical functions lost as a result of the earthquake.

## JECC Success Around the Globe

In addition to these two operations, JECC expertise has been requested by all GCCs, and each command has gained valuable experience on every continent just within the past 2 years. The JECC has deployed in support of:

- U.S. Pacific Command in 2011 for Operation *Tomodachi/Pacific Passage*—the humanitarian assistance/voluntary authorized departure missions following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan
- U.S. Africa Command in 2011 for Operation *Odyssey Dawn*, the U.S. mission supporting the international response to the crisis in Libya
- U.S. Southern Command in 2011 for Operation *Continuing Promise*, a humanitarian assistance mission in Central and South America
- U.S. Northern Command in 2010 for Operation *Deepwater Horizon*, a disaster relief effort on the Gulf Coast
- U.S. European Command in 2010 for an operational-level headquarters planning mission

■ USCENTCOM in 2009 to assist in the establishment of JTF 435 and in 2010 for follow-on support to Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 and humanitarian assistance efforts following the massive flooding in Pakistan.

Additionally, JCSE has been continuously deployed in support of missions for USCENTCOM and U.S. Special Operations Command for Operation *Iraqi Freedom* since March 2003, Operation *Enduring Freedom* since March 2002, and Operation *New Dawn* since September 2010.

### Employing a Total Force Concept

One of the keys to JECC success is its incorporation of Reservists into each of its subordinate commands. The JECC relies heavily on the talent of its Reserve Component members for mission success. In fact, almost every deployment in JECC history has contained a blend of both Active-duty and Reserve forces.

JECC Reservists bring experiences from their civilian backgrounds, which are valuable during operational missions. The JECC is able to tap into the expertise of Reservists with specific industry skill sets, bringing a wide array of talent that might not be available if the command was limited to Active-duty military.

Servicemembers in the JECC represent all four Services, including Active and Reserve personnel, and are fully integrated, creating a total force unit that trains and deploys together. The total force concept also provides Reservists with an opportunity to expand their knowledge with participation in a joint unit. The JECC provides Service-specific capability training, which allows both Active and Reserve members to gain a better understanding of what each Service provides. This additional training enhances the proficiency of members when deployed and brings the joint force commander a highly skilled package of capabilities not found elsewhere in DOD.

Reservists assigned to the JDT assume an alert posture for a 90-day period to respond to short-notice deployments. Each Reservist assigned to the JDT assumes this alert posture once every 18 months, providing flexibility and predictability. In addition to the experience gained by deploying in support of GCC requirements, JDT members are afforded a broad range of training and education in joint and multinational matters. All JDT personnel, including Reservists,

receive extensive training in joint planning and are offered the opportunity to attend the joint professional military education II course in Norfolk, Virginia, NATO and allied nation planning courses, and other U.S. Government courses. In addition to the joint credit earned, following a 2- to 3-year

The unique opportunities and the deployment model for Reservists have proven an attractive program to a wide range of candidates, allowing the JECC to build a pool of highly skilled, highly motivated Reservists to choose from for deployment during both training and operational requirements.

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assignment with the JDT, an individual's Service can expect to receive back a competent, broadly experienced joint officer who can not only plan but also lead a team of planners in solving complex problems and developing executable plans and orders.

JCSE offers an opportunity for communications-based Reservists to develop a working knowledge of the most advanced communications technologies on the market and be a part of an organization dedicated to continually developing cutting-edge communications equipment packages for the joint warfighter. The JCSE mission supporting special operations forces and high-level operations with unique communications requirements attracts the most highly skilled network and system administrators, satellite and field radio operators, and data network specialists.

Reservists with JPASE are primarily tapped to participate in exercises but may be called on for real-world operations requiring crucial public affairs and strategic communications skill sets. As mentioned, JPASE expertise is usually required at the earliest stages of a crisis or contingency operation. The opportunity to participate at the onset of a major operation and influence the direction of the public affairs program allows JPASE Reservists to develop their proficiencies and bring their civilian knowledge into play at an influential stage.

Additionally, since the JECC mission spreads across all six GCCs, both Active and Reserve members from all the JECs have an opportunity to participate in exercises and real-world operations in multiple areas of operation. It is not uncommon for JECC members to have operated in three or four GCC areas during their JECC assignment.

### The Way Ahead

In the midst of the JECC's high operational tempo, the JECC officially transitioned to U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) on July 1, 2011, as a result of the Secretary of Defense's April 27, 2011, decision to disestablish USJFCOM. Additionally, as part of continued DOD efficiencies, the GCCs were directed to stand down their SJFHQs by October 1, 2011. The JECC was tasked to assume the mission for the former SJFHQs, giving the JECC responsibility for a global mission.

As the JECC settles into its new position under USTRANSCOM and assumes mission-tailored capabilities previously assigned to the GCC SJFHQs, the command's vision remains unchanged. The JECC will maintain a strong focus on preparing teams for deployments across the full spectrum of military operations. In addition, the JECC will continue to recruit highly skilled members of both the Active and Reserve Components to bring even more expertise and knowledge to the joint force commander.

As the requirements for global operations evolve, the JECC will continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its enabling capabilities for global response. The command will strive to continue developing and maintaining the highest quality JECC members and sustaining their deployability as they look forward to future joint force requirements. **JFQ**

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> The Intelligence-Quick Reaction Team has since been removed from the JECC as a result of the USJFCOM disestablishment.