

392d Combat Training Squadron Meets CSO's Intent with Expanded Exercise Program

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, UNITED STATES, March 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The article below was prepared by Captain Ellie E. Vlahos, USSF, Intelligence Flight Commander, 392d Combat Training Squadron and Captain Karl M. Pruhsmeier, USSF, SPACE FLAG Officer in Charge, 392d Combat Training Squadron. [The Space Force Association](#) is assisting in the dissemination of this information as part of its mission to promote and support the United States Space Force.

In his first letter to the men and women of the United States Space Force after being sworn in as the Chief of Space Operations, General Chance Saltzman told the force that he is “laser focused on enhancing combat readiness”. Acknowledging the focus on readiness is not new, Saltzman opined that progress toward improved readiness will not be without bold and innovative efforts. In Space Training and Readiness Command, the 392d Combat Training Squadron under Delta 1 heard the CSO’s call and has built an impressive portfolio of exercises that drive combat readiness assessments for the service. As the only squadron in the Space Force that builds and leads large force exercises, the 392d plays a critical role in helping to keep space warfighters



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combat ready.

This era of evolved readiness training was not built without considering the challenges Guardians face, specifically from the actions posed by Russia and China. In October 2021, China's Shijian-21, "space tug" grabbed and then moved a defunct BeiDou navigation satellite into a high altitude "graveyard orbit". In November 2021, Russia successfully destroyed one of their own non-operational satellites during a test of their anti-satellite system. During their war with Ukraine, Russia disrupted satellite

communications via cyber-attacks, jammed GPS signals in the region, and have stated publicly that U.S. commercial companies could be the next as military targets. Considering threats such as these, an evolved approach to readiness training was needed to ensure Space Forces are combat ready should they find themselves in the line of fire from Russia, China, or any other threat to peace and security in space.

The 392d Combat Training Squadron evolved its menu of readiness training events in the form of both large and small force exercises to help keep Guardians ready to win. Building on the long-standing SPACE FLAG exercise program, the 392d built the SKIES exercise series, POLARIS HAMMER and a whole host of small force exercises to provide tailored combat training to different warfighting echelons of the Space Force. Each exercise is unique and presents authentic representation of adversary forces. This gives the training audience diverse opportunities to rehearse combat tactics like never before, all in the safety of a complex combat training environment.

Since 2017, SPACE FLAG improved readiness by exercising all space mission areas at the tactical level, focusing training outcomes on improving mission planning and execution. Since the establishment of SPACE FLAG, the exercise has progressed with the threat, and continues to make programmatic adjustments to keep SPACE FLAG the premier exercise for space warfighting forces. Each exercise is much better than the last, and now that it is the only space exercise in the Department of Defense accredited as a joint national training capability, the exercise will evolve at a much faster pace, keeping tactical Guardians combat ready at speeds faster than the adversary.

The SKIES exercise program was constructed to bridge the gap between operational and tactical planning and execution for a given space mission area. BLACK SKIES led the series as the first real-time, live-fire, electronic warfare exercise at the service-level. The SKIES exercise series



allows Guardians to focus with realistic fidelity on the intricacies of employed weapon systems while optimizing coordination with command and control elements. The 392d will standup RED SKIES, an orbital warfare focused training, later this year, and BLUE SKIES, a cyber warfare training exercise, will likely have its first iteration in 2024.

POLARIS HAMMER puts emphases on the intricacies between command and control units, serving as the operational parallel to SPACE FLAG's tactical training event at a level rarely experienced during nominal operations. The 392d completed the first iteration of POLARIS HAMMER in early February, allowing the newly established U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific to work out command relationships and authorities with the Coalition Space Operations Center and the Australian Space Operations Center. The integrated nature of POLARIS HAMMER exposes space C2 agencies to coordinated mission planning at a level rarely experienced during nominal operations.

The 392d also established a series of exercises that are tailored to agile training programs of combat training squadrons in Space Operations Command. These small force exercises provide further opportunity for Guardians in a single mission area to refine weapon system tactics. The 392d hosts small force exercises in their distributed Space Battle Laboratories that house multiple modeling and simulation suites, driving the number of exercises from two events per year in 2021, to over 90 per year in 2023. These exercises consist of ready spacecrew program advanced training missions agile enough to train day-to-day problem sets that prepare space crews for threats they will face before they actually face them on their next mission.

The 392d Combat Training Squadron is leading the way in providing the service with a simulated battleground to train and prepare Space Forces to win. Within only two years of its establishment, the squadron has stood up two brand-new service-level exercises since the start of SPACE FLAG in 2017, has increased the number of small force exercises, and is prepared to deliver two brand-new large force exercise programs in RED and BLUE SKIES. Thanks to the bold and innovative efforts of the Guardians of the 392d Combat Training Squadron, space warfighters have never had such a diverse set of combat training events that were purpose built to improve their readiness.

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