



Highlights of [GAO-13-366](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Electronic command and control systems, which rely on technologies such as radar, satellite, and electronic surveillance, play a critical role in modern-day defense strategy. ESC at Hanscom Air Force Base supported the Air Force's ability to develop and acquire these capabilities. It was inactivated in July 2012 as part of an effort to respond to an initiative by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to reduce civilian positions to fiscal year 2010 levels. The reorganization consolidated ESC into AFLCMC at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which manages weapon systems from inception to retirement. Congress directed GAO to assess the effect of the reorganization on Hanscom's mission. This report examines (1) how the reorganization affected reporting chains of command, workforce composition, and the acquisition mission at Hanscom Air Force Base, (2) opportunities and concerns resulting from the reorganization at Hanscom, and (3) what is known about the effects of the reorganization and what metrics have been developed to assess how the new organization is meeting customers' needs. GAO evaluated relevant documentation; reviewed data on eliminated positions; and interviewed Air Force officials, selected contractors based on size and proximity to Hanscom Air Force Base, and Hanscom's primary customers. Results from these interviews cannot be generalized but offer stakeholders' perspectives on the reorganization.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this report. DOD provided technical comments, which GAO incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-13-366](#). For more information, contact Rebecca Gambler at (202) 512-6912 or gamblierr@gao.gov.

April 2013

AIR FORCE ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS CENTER

Reorganization Resulted in Workforce Reassignments at Hanscom Air Force Base, but Other Possible Effects Are Not Yet Known

What GAO Found

The reorganization of the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) affected reporting chains of command and workforce composition for some offices at Hanscom Air Force Base, but did not change how former components of the Electronic Systems Center (ESC) at Hanscom carry out their acquisition mission. Personnel in functional offices who provide technical services previously reported to the locally-based ESC leadership; they now report directly to senior functional managers at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, who oversee functional offices across all locations of the new Air Force Life Cycle Management Center (AFLCMC) established by the reorganization. In addition, the reorganization eliminated 131 functional office positions (about 10 percent of Hanscom's civilian positions), which AFMC determined were not directly involved with development, delivery, or sustainment of weapon systems. GAO's analysis of Hanscom's data showed that the eliminated positions included 13 which were unfilled; of personnel in the remaining 118 positions, 15 accepted voluntary-separation agreements, 102 were reassigned at Hanscom Air Force Base, and 1 was removed. The reorganization did not change the mission of directorates that deliver electronic capabilities to customers.

Various opportunities and concerns at Hanscom Air Force Base resulted from the reorganization. According to officials at Hanscom and Wright-Patterson Air Force Bases, customers, and contractors, the opportunities include increased focus on life-cycle management of electronic systems, increased collaboration within the command, and greater standardization of processes. Hanscom Air Force Base officials and contractors identified some concerns related to increased workload for functional office personnel due to position eliminations, process delays, the lack of full understanding of Hanscom's programs by AFLCMC officials, and whether Hanscom Air Force Base will continue as the center of electronic systems for the Air Force. However, AFMC and AFLCMC senior officials generally did not see these concerns as significant problems. For example, they stated that AFLCMC's senior functional managers do not require in-depth technical knowledge of Hanscom's programs because the functions, such as financial management, apply across programs. AFLCMC's steps to facilitate the reorganization include establishing a governance structure and communicating with stakeholders.

The effects of the reorganization on Hanscom's core mission of delivering electronic systems to customers are not yet fully known, but AFLCMC has developed metrics to measure how well it is meeting customer needs. Officials stated the changes went into effect only recently and multiple factors unrelated to the reorganization, such as budget changes, may affect the mission. However, AFLCMC developed organizational objectives and associated metrics in areas such as delivering cost-effective acquisition solutions and providing affordable and effective product support. The metrics, while not designed to measure the effects of the reorganization, are intended to measure how AFLCMC is meeting customers' needs. The data for the metrics will be collected by individual offices and aggregated monthly at the AFLCMC level, according to its senior officials.