Red Flag Fact Sheet
Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada

- Operation Red Flag's mission is to maximize the combat readiness, capability and survivability of participating units by providing realistic training in a combined air, ground and electronic threat environment while providing for a free exchange of ideas among forces.

- Established in 1975, Red Flag is a two-week, realistic combat training exercise involving the elite aerial forces from all four branches of the U.S. military, plus their Guard/Reserve components. It is commonly described as being more challenging than actual combat.

- Since 1975, NATO and the air forces of 27 other countries have joined the U.S. in these intensive exercises, as well as individual members of other countries (such as India) who have participated as observers.

- Red Flag is conducted on the vast bombing and gunnery ranges at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, as one of a series of advanced training programs administered by the Air Warfare Center and Nellis through the 414th Combat Training Squadron.

- Red Flag exercises have provided training for over 400,000 military personnel, including more than 132,000 aircrew members flying over 350,000 sorties and logging over 600,000 hours flying time.

- Red Flag's "Blue" forces comprise most of the aircraft and personnel deployed for the exercise. Their mission is to attack Nellis range targets such as mock airfields, vehicle convoys, tanks, parked aircraft, bunkered defensive positions and missile sites. These targets are defended by a variety of simulated ground and air threats to give participant aircrews the most realistic combat training possible.

- Red Flag's aggressor "Red" forces are deployed to attack the "Blue" forces and protect the target area. "Red" force threats include electronically simulated surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery, communications jamming forces and an opposing enemy air force composed of 64th

Aggressor Squadron pilots. These pilots fly the F-16C and are specially trained to replicate the tactics and techniques of potential adversaries.

- The "White" forces utilize the Nellis Air Combat Training System (NACTS) to monitor this mock combat between "Red" and "Blue." NACTS, the world's most sophisticated tracking system for combat training exercises, allows commanders, safety observers, and exercise directors to monitor the mission and keep score of simulated 'kills' while viewing the simulated air battle as it occurs.

- A typical Red Flag exercise involves a variety of aircraft, including:
  - attack, fighter and bomber aircraft (F-117s, F-15Es, F-16s, F/A-18s, A-10s, B-1s, B-2s, B-52s)
  - reconnaissance aircraft (Predator, RC-135, U-2)
  - electronic warfare aircraft (EC-130s, EA-6Bs and F-16CJs)
  - air superiority aircraft (F-15s, F-16s, F/A-18s, etc.)
  - airlift support (C-17s, C-130s, C-5s)
  - search and rescue aircraft (HH-60s, HC-130s, CH-47s)
  - aerial refueling aircraft (KC-135s and KC-10s)
  - space assets

- The E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) and E-8C Joint Stars aircraft play a significant role in the training by using their unique capabilities to monitor and support many aspects of the "Blue" force effort.

- Upon completion of Red Flag, graduates have the equivalent of their first 10 combat missions accomplished.

- Red Flag has expanded to include all spectrums of warfare (command, control, intelligence, electronic warfare), and has added night missions to all exercises. As a result, the NACTS, the improved tactics, and increased aircraft/aircrew capabilities have combined to greatly improve the flying safety and combat readiness of the allied forces.