

# Idaho Air Guard helps test stackable pallets

by Master Sgt. Thomas Gloeckle

GOWEN FIELD, Idaho — As part of an ongoing Air Expeditionary Force Battlelab initiative, a team tested a new bilevel aircraft loading system aboard an Idaho Air National Guard C-130 Hercules here in April.

People from the battlelab, a think tank for new and innovative ideas based at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, made the 50-mile trip here to test the system as part of an ongoing process to assess its fitness for use in field operations.

The system works by taking existing pallets and attaching a frame and vertical rails to make a second tier. The unit's base is designed to hold up to 6,000 pounds while the upper pallet can hold up to 3,000 pounds.

It's very simple, yet very innovative because it can dramatically increase the efficiency of airlift missions such as the air and space expeditionary force rotations into Southwest Asia, said Master Sgt. **Forrest Wood**, project officer from the battlelab.

"This system will allow the Air Force [to] fill its airlifters with more equipment, which will result in having to use fewer planes to haul the same amount of cargo," he said.



**The Air Expeditionary Force Battlelab's** bilevel aircraft loading system could make Air Force transport aircraft about 10 percent more efficient by reducing the number of planes needed for a typical air and space expeditionary force rotation, officials said. The new pallet system was tested aboard a C-130 Hercules from the Idaho Air National Guard's 189th Airlift Squadron at Gowen Field, Idaho. This marks the first test on the C-130E. A team has already successfully tested the system on the C-141 Starlifter and C-17 Globemaster III.

The team has completed an intense round of testing at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., and the system passed with flying colors. **Norman Maynard**, program manager for the design team from the Air Force Flight Test Center's instrumentation division at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., said if all con-

tinues to go well the system may be in the field in less than a year.

If approved for use in the field, the system will be relatively inexpensive — between \$8,000 and \$10,000 a piece.

— *2nd Lt. Anthony Vincelli*  
*124th Wing Public Affairs*

## Weapons testing enters new era

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.

— Engineers and technicians here ushered in a new weapons-testing era by dropping an inert, precision

courtesy photo



**A GBU-12 laser-guided bomb** is about to strike a barge during an offshore scoring demonstration test at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The range is the only Department of Defense test facility capable of testing such weapons.

laser-guided bomb from an F-15E Strike Eagle that struck an offshore floating target 21 miles away.

The test is the first in a program to build an offshore-scoring system on the Eglin Gulf Test Range, which allows weapons, like small-diameter

bombs and the joint air-to-surface standoff missiles, to be tested, said Col. **Robert Nolan**, 46th Test Wing commander.

The program will help wing officials test all weapon systems by 2010. The demonstration's planning began in September 2003, as wing leaders wanted war fighters to fully exercise modern weaponry under realistic conditions. Until the recent success, the ability to evaluate this type of weapon in open-air testing didn't exist in the United States.

This inability forced war fighters to go to combat without evaluating a weapon's full operational capability, the colonel said, putting war fighters and combat missions at risk. Weapon evaluation can now include scenarios beyond hundreds of miles.

— *Bill Wade*  
*46th Test Wing*