

Identity theft forces USCENTAF to become USAFCENT

2/29/2008 — **SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** (AFPN) — The threat of identity theft has proven costly to the former U.S. Central Command Air Forces. The command will be renamed U.S. Air Forces Central (USAFCENT) in a March 3 legal proceeding at Shaw Air Force Base.

For paperwork reasons, the official date of the change is March 1 and Lt. Gen. Gary L. North, the USAFCENT and 9th Air Force commander, will present a general power of attorney when he signs the documents.

The identity theft, which is currently under investigation, cost USAFCENT dearly. As a result of the theft, the command was forced to close the "PAS" accounts for the 609th Air Intelligence Group, 609th Air Intelligence Squadron, 609th Combat Operations Squadron, 609th Combat Plans Squadron, 609th Air Support Squadron, and the 609th Information Operations Flight.

Although the 609th Air Operations Group survived the identity theft, the unit will be downgraded to an Air Operations Center until it recovers.

General North insisted that all affected units were closed or had their names changed before the identity thieves could profit from their illegal activities. "If these people had been allowed to use our identity to gain access to our accounts," General North observed, "they could have drained our personnel dry."

This identity theft occurred just before the full implementation of the chief of staff of the Air Force's effort to create an Air Force component organization that is structured to survive and operate in the face of identity thieves and other wartime combatants. Internet warfighting organizations are being stood up around the globe to enhance the operational level support, planning, command, control, and execution of information operations capabilities across the full range of military operations.

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