



Search

- HOME
- TODAY IN DOD
- ABOUT DOD
- TOP ISSUES
- NEWS
- PHOTOS/VIDEOS
- DOD SITES
- CONTACT US
- RESOURCES

News

- > News Articles
- > News/Casualty Releases
- > Press Advisories
- > News Transcripts
- > Publications
- > Speeches
- > Contracts
- > Testimony
- > Messages
- > Special Reports

Secretary of Defense

- > Biography
- > Speeches
- > Messages
- > Testimony
- > Travels
- > News Photos

Deputy Secretary of Defense

- > Biography
- > Speeches
- > Travels
- > News Photos

Photos/Videos

- > Lead Photos
- > News Photos
- > Photo Essays
- > Week in Photos
- > Videos
- > DoD Video News
- > Imagery Archive

Other

- > Briefing Slides
- > Pentagon Press Badges
- > Press/Media Queries
- > Military Commissions
- > Detainees
- > Other News Sources

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Eberhart Tabbed to Head U.S. Northern Command

By Gerry J. Gilmore  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, May 8, 2002 – The commander of the U.S. military's space and continental air defense assets has been chosen to lead the nation's premier military homeland defense organization.

Air Force Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart has been nominated by President Bush to command the soon-to-be established U.S. Northern Command, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said today in a Pentagon news briefing. The nomination requires U.S. Senate confirmation, DoD officials noted.

Northern Command will take the homeland security missions being performed by various combatant commanders and put them under a single command, Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted April 18 at a Pentagon press briefing.

If approved, the new organization is slated for activation Oct. 1 at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colo., as part of changes to DoD's Unified Command Plan announced April 17.

Eberhart currently wears three hats as the commander in chief of both U.S. Space Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command and as Defense Department manager for Space Transportation Systems Contingency Support, all at Peterson. He has served as head of Space Command since Feb. 22, 2000.

A command pilot, Eberhart flew 300 combat missions in Vietnam. Other assignments during his career include tours as Air Force vice chief of staff; commander, Air Force Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va.; and commander of the 5th Air Force, Yokota Air Base, Japan. He is a 1968 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs.

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 0
 0
 0
 0
 0
 0

Home  
 Today in DOD  
 About DOD  
 Top Issues  
 News  
 Photos/Videos  
 DoD Sites  
 Contact Us  
 Resources

Inspector General  
 Privacy & Security  
 Link Disclaimer  
 Recovery Act  
 FOIA  
 USA.gov  
 No FEAR Act  
 Plain Writing Act of 2010  
 Accessibility/Section 508

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 Web Policy

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