

Explanation of JSTARS (Re: Spring Thunder article)

From: campbell@ufomind.com (Glenn Campbell, Las Vegas)
Date: Fri, 14 Mar 1997 13:38:02 -0800
Subject: Explanation of JSTARS (Re: Spring Thunder article)

[Re: previous "Spring Thunder" message found at
<http://www.ufomind.com/area51/list/1997/mar/a14-001.shtml>]

From: [Withheld by request]
Date: Fri, 14 Mar 1997 14:04:00
Subject: JSTARS

You asked for a translation, so...

Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System is also called JSTARS; it's a really whiz-bang down-looking radar intended to follow ground traffic like cars, trucks and tanks. It creates a giant map with something on the order of a 100+ mile radius of every large metal moving object on the ground--it was developed in Phoenix and Motorola was the lead contractor. JSTARS can also watch aircraft, too, at least the close-to-ground helicopter/bomber stuff. It just has to be below the JSTARS plane, which can (and in this case is) be a E-8C aircraft.

JSTARS has two elements--the air element that's the radar, and a "terminal" element that can be on the ground, air, or sea. Small terminals fit in humvees. They basically display the real-time radar data with a map to show where everything is.

The U.S. Army's Advanced Warfighting Experiment is a test for new technology using what they're calling sensor fusion. The military is trying to combine the sensors from different weapons systems and between service branches to create a real-time 3D database of forces and targets. The idea is that with sensor fusion, it will be impossible for the enemy to hide, and that multiple weapons systems can target the enemy; the closest system with the best chance of destroying the target gets assigned the task. So it's possible (though not likely) that an enemy tank a 1/2 mile away from our army ground forces would be taken out with naval artillery or an air force missile once it's designated as a target by someone. Anyway, JSTARS provides *lots* of battle management data.

The go-to-war plan is what a unit does to get into battle. It's sort of a checklist for packing up and moving out. "Standing up" means going into service, and "standing down" means leaving service, so the 93rd ACW went into service on 1/29/1996. After a war, lots of units stand down; sometimes units stand down for maintenance (unavailable to fight a war) and sometimes they're just plain gotten rid of (the build-down of the forces going on right now, for example.)

Just FYI, Operation Alliance is a organization of joint-task-force-six (JTF-6) of the sixth army that handles things out west (AZ, NV, CA, NM TX). OA provides military support to civilian law enforcement, including JSTARS. I wouldn't be surprised at all if you've had JSTARS operational near Area 51 to provide surveillance of nearby traffic during tests. I know that JSTARS is used to provide air support to customs in my area, giving "targets" to customs or JTF aircraft: threatening inbound enemy traffic in the form of El Caminos carrying illegal immigrants as payloads. Once the aircraft ID them, they send the state police or border patrol in to detain them and send them back to Mexico. Plug in JTF-6 or Operation Alliance into Alta Vista and be amazed at what tax dollars (and ignoring the Constitution and posse comitatus) can do!

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