



Customer
IDEX

Partner
Rev

Products and Services
Azure
Windows 10 IoT Core
Windows IoT

Industry
Automotive

Organization Size
Medium (50 - 999 employees)

Country
United States

F5 helps the United States Air Force build a cloud-based warning system on Azure

F5 Networks provides solutions that seamlessly scale, secure, and optimize applications in the cloud, delivering them to anyone, anywhere, at any time. F5's application delivery services for Microsoft Azure allow companies to access the people, skills, and tools needed to ensure the security, availability, and performance of their applications. F5 helps accelerate an organization's adoption of the cloud while minimizing risk and business impact.

The challenges of a legacy system

The Emergency Mass Notification System (EMNS) is the primary way that the United States Air Force (USAF) notifies personnel of threats, making it a critical component in the protection of US citizens. The USAF legacy EMNS was a hardware-based system running on local installations at individual military bases, which made operations and maintenance extremely costly and resource-intensive. In an era of uncertain departmental budgets, the USAF needed to move to a modern and cost-effective system. Microsoft Azure turned out to be a natural solution.

“The Air Force had the EMNS broken into these disparate systems that weren't completely integrated.”

—Eddie Augustine: USAF Federal Account Manager

F5

American Systems (AS), an IT solutions and services contractor, had won the contract to convert the EMNS to a cloud-based solution. But any new system was required to follow the strict Department of Defense Secure Cloud Computing Architecture (SCCA) guidelines. Achieving certification would take months, and AS estimated that a full-scale launch would take two years.

A certified solution

AS selected Microsoft Azure to run the new EMNS, highlighting flexibility, security features, and support as the deciding factors. An Azure team member familiar with SCCA directed AS to F5 to help streamline the accreditation and deployment of the new system.

“Azure can address 200 different locations throughout the Air Force from a centralized place, providing high availability without having to set up a new data center,” notes Eddie Augustine, USAF Federal Account Manager at F5.

F5 had previously worked with Microsoft to develop the Secure Azure Computing Architecture (SACA), an Azure-specific solution that meets SCCA requirements for both IL4 and IL5 workloads running in the cloud. SACA enables Department of Defense customers to move workloads into Azure while maintaining the strict compliance demands of the SCCA Functional Requirements Document. While developing SACA, F5 and Microsoft worked together to navigate the complex processes of achieving SCCA certification for several of its modules. Partnering with F5 meant that AS had access to certified solutions to accelerate the development and deployment of the new EMNS.

“Microsoft, American Systems, F5—everybody was laser-focused on ensuring a positive outcome for the Air Force,” adds Augustine.

A worldwide launch—in half the time

F5 and AS were able to develop and deploy the new EMNS solution to every USAF base around the world in one year—half of the original estimate. The SACA architecture ensures comprehensive protection against cyberthreats operating at every layer of the application stack, while the stability and scalability of Azure ensures that alerts are transmitted to all USAF personnel through email, push notifications, voice calls, and text on desktop and mobile devices the moment an event occurs—no matter where they are.

Shared success, continued collaboration

departments and agencies, including the creation of deployment templates covering different architectures. The company continues to work with Microsoft to develop and implement specialized solutions that help clients connect with and meet their customers' needs.