

Donley Becomes USAF Secretary

Michael B. Donley formally became the 22nd Secretary of the Air Force Oct. 17 during a swearing-in ceremony at the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Va. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates administered the oath of office.

Donley had been serving as Acting Secretary since June when he replaced Michael W. Wynne in the Air Force's top civilian position. The Senate confirmed Donley for the post on Oct. 2. Several Senators, chief among them Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), had placed a hold on his confirmation primarily over dissatisfaction with the state of the Air Force's now-postponed KC-X tanker recapitalization program. They relented in late September.

KC-135 Contract Struck Down

A US federal claims court ruled Sept 30 that the Air Force must redo its solicitation to find a company to perform depot maintenance on its

Eisenhower-era KC-135s. Alabama Aircraft Industries, Inc., filed a federal lawsuit in June against the Air Force and Boeing after the Air Force decided to proceed with the \$1.2 billion contract that it originally awarded to Boeing in September 2007.

AAll protested the original award and won, receiving a favorable December 2007 decision from the Government Accountability Office. This caused the Air Force to re-examine the bids. But when the service decided to stay with its selection of Boeing, AAll filed a second protest with the GAO, which it subsequently lost, prompting the company to turn to federal court.

The court's ruling enjoined the Air Force from proceeding with the original award to Boeing and required the service to issue a new solicitation that addressed "explicitly the role of an ever-aging KC-135 fleet" on the programmed depot maintenance to be performed. The Air Force said it would

Air Force Proposes Major Fighter Cuts

In a dramatic change, the Air Force wants to shed a large portion of its legacy fighter fleet in 2010 to save upward of \$3.4 billion that it could then apply to areas such as bomber modernization, intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance expansion, and a greater focus on the nuclear mission.

Based on reports from InsideDefense.com that surfaced in October, citing internal Air Force budget planning documents for Fiscal 2010, the service is proposing retiring almost one-third of its F-15 air superiority fighters and about 15 percent of its F-16s in 2010, years earlier than previously planned.

Indeed, Air Force data, current as of Aug. 31, showed that the service had planned to retire only six F-15A/Bs and five F-16C/Ds in Fiscal 2010 when it presented Congress with its Fiscal 2009 five-year spending plan back in February. Now it aims to phase out 137 F-15s and 177 F-16s, as well as nine A-10s in 2010. The service said it is willing to accept the risk out to 2014 of a smaller, but more modern, fighter force—when coupled with a robust bomber fleet—until production of the new F-35A stealth fighter ramps up to 110 units per year and F-22s can be modified to a common configuration.

The Air Force fighter inventory, as of Aug. 31, included 420 F-15 A-to-D models—including 376 F-15C/Ds that average slightly more than 25 years in age—and 1,205 F-16C/Ds that are about 19 years old on average.

Air Force generals warned in April on Capitol Hill that the service faces a looming fighter gap beginning in 2017 and running through 2024 that could leave it 800 or more airframes short of its requirements for 2,250 fighters. The service views getting the F-35A annual build rates up to 110 as soon as possible as the means to mitigate this.

The next Administration will present the final version of the Pentagon's Fiscal 2010 budget request to Congress early next year.



USAF photo by SSgt. Aaron Allman

“take appropriate action consistent with the court’s decision.”

To Avoid Civilian Casualties

The Air Force said in October it was adjusting its procedures in the air war in Afghanistan to reinforce the methods it applies to avoid civilian casualties in close air support operations. The new procedures are “almost the same as we were doing before, but with a few exceptions,” said Brig. Gen. James

M. Holmes, commander of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Air Base, according to a FoxNews.com report Oct. 13.

Tightening the rules was meant to help smooth US-Afghan tensions over a much-publicized firefight between coalition forces and anti-government insurgents Aug. 22 in Azizabad in Afghanistan’s Herat Province. Originally, the US said the exchange, which included an AC-130 gunship attack,

killed many insurgents and six civilians. But a subsequent investigation carried out by US Central Command found that 22 enemy combatants died along with 33 civilians, including at least 12 children.

Despite the tragic loss of innocent life, CENTCOM said coalition forces acted legitimately within the rules of engagement and law of war. And the enemy purposely chose fighting positions in proximity to civilians.



11.07.2008

Barely visible between huge turbofan engines, an unidentified USAF A-10 pilot heads out on a close air support mission over parched Afghanistan. The shark mouth paint means this A-10 comes from the 23rd Wing, Moody AFB, Ga.—heir of the famed Flying Tigers—but it is temporarily deployed to Bagram Airfield. It is heavily armed; note the nose-mounted GAU-8/A 30 mm cannon, capable of firing 65 rounds per second, and underwing munitions.

MH-53s Retired

Air Force Special Operations Command formally retired its remaining MH-53 Pave Low helicopters at the end of September, thereby ending the MH-53's roughly 40 years of service. The last six Pave Lows in use completed their final combat missions in Iraq on Sept. 27 and were then prepared for transport back to the United States.

On Oct. 17, AFSOC held a deactivation ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla., for the 20th Special Operations Squadron, the last unit flying the venerable helicopter. The first flight of the MH-53 occurred in March 1967, and the helicopters saw service in Vietnam. The Air Force lost six MH-53s after 9/11, supporting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, one of them—in April 2004 in Iraq—as a result of enemy fire. CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft are replacing the Pave Lows.

F-35 Beddown Progresses

Apparently the Air Force has placed Eielson AFB, Alaska, on its short list of beddown locations for the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter, along with Hill AFB, Utah, Moody AFB, Ga., Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and Shaw AFB, S.C. The Air Force had not announced this list publicly as of mid-October, but word of it surfaced in a report Oct. 14 in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*.

In January, the Air Force issued its future capabilities roadmap that listed these bases as part of the 41 potential



DOD photo by A1C Jason Epley

Light 'Em Up: A1C Martin Uresti, a security forces apprentice with the 532nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, fires a signal flare from an observation tower during proficiency training at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The 532nd is deployed from Lackland AFB, Tex.

homes of the F-35, expected to enter the Air Force's inventory in the early part of next decade. Once the short list is official, the process will proceed to complete environmental impact assessments of basing the F-35s at the preferred locations.

In a related development, Air Force on Oct. 17 issued the final environmental

impact statement addressing the BRAC 2005 actions that include the beddown of the F-35 joint training activity at Eglin AFB, Fla.

Defense Bill Becomes Law

President Bush on Oct. 14 signed into law S.3001, the defense authorization act for Fiscal 2009. The legislation includes \$542.5 billion for the Pentagon's baseline budget, as well as \$68 billion representing the first iteration of supplemental war spending for the fiscal year.

The act authorizes funds to cover an active duty end strength of 317,050 for the Air Force (USAF's end strength will rise to 330,000 in Fiscal 2010). It funds the production of seven Air Force F-35s and 20 F-22s. And it includes \$523 million to keep the F-22 production line active in case the next Administration wants to keep buying them beyond the current program of record.

Funds in the act also keep alive the GE-Rolls Royce F136 engine program for the F-35, enable the Air Force to maintain 76 B-52H bombers in a common configuration, and buy six C-17 transports, bringing the Air Force's C-17 total to 212.

On Sept. 30, Bush signed into law Fiscal 2009 defense appropriation legislation totaling \$488 billion as part of H.R. 2638, a larger consolidated spending act.

Predators at Cannon

The 3rd Special Operations Squadron, Air Force Special Operations Command's sole unmanned aerial

No Major Command for Cyber

The Air Force leadership announced in early October that it will not establish a major command to oversee the service's activities in the cyber realm. Rather, it will stand up a numbered air force—notionally designated 24th Air Force—under Air Force Space Command to handle cyber operations.

Determining the headquarters location for the cyber NAF will require further deliberation, service officials said.

The decision came out of the service's tri-annual Corona summit that was held Oct. 1-3 at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. (The leadership also decided at Corona to establish a nuclear-centric major command. See "Washington Watch: It's 'Global Strike Command,'" p. 8.)

Combining cyber and space functions makes sense because it places two interdependent domains under one command, Air Force officials said. In the statement announcing the decision, Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley said the conduct of cyber operations is "a complex issue," as DOD and interagency partners have "substantial equity" in the realm. But the Air Force "will continue to do" its part to increase its cyber capabilities, he said.

Maj. Gen. William T. Lord, commander of Air Force Cyber Command (Provisional) at Barksdale AFB, La., said Oct. 1 that the work of his organization in Fiscal 2008 significantly advanced the understanding of how the Air Force will train, organize, equip, fight—and prevail—in cyberspace as it moves forward with these new plans.

"That's something we didn't have a year ago," Lord said. He continued: "We've figured all that out. We've outlined how to organize cyber forces, i.e., what capabilities fall into, or not into, a cyber organization." These efforts have "laid the foundation" for "a strong cyberspace capability," he said.



vehicle unit, formally transferred from Nellis AFB, Nev., to Cannon AFB, N.M., during a ceremony Oct. 8.

AFSOC activated the squadron in October 2005. It has been providing MQ-1 Predator capabilities to commanders in Southwest Asia since May 2007 from Nellis and Creech AFB, Nev., using UAVs and personnel brought over from Air Combat Command.

The unit has become one of the Air Force's most in-demand units for the War on Terror. Once it is at full strength at Cannon by around mid-2009, it will have more than 300 personnel.

NATO C-17 Plan Advances

NATO announced Oct. 1 that the alliance-led Strategic Airlift Capability program was moving into its execution phase with the completion of the 12-nation memorandum of understanding on Sept. 23 after two years of negotiations. Participating NATO members Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the United States, as well as NATO Partnership for Peace nations Finland and Sweden, will jointly operate three C-17 transports under a multinational heavy airlift wing at

At Gunpoint: Airmen from Det. 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, perform a weapons check before leaving Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad, Iraq.

Papa AB, Hungary. The US is providing one of the C-17s; the participants are acquiring the other two from Boeing via a US foreign military sale.

Arrival of the first C-17 at Papa is anticipated next spring with the remaining two coming next summer; initial operations of the wing is expected next summer. Denmark, Slovakia, and Latvia withdrew from the SAC program. The Czech Republic and Italy are still considered "prospective participants" and have until Dec. 23 to formally join.

Bronze Star Medals for Airmen

The Air Force awarded Bronze Star Medals to 10 airmen in September and October for their activities supporting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Two of them, TSgt. Christopher Grove and SSgt. David Solis, combat controllers with the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., received Bronze Star Medals for valor for directing close air support strikes while under fire.

The other recipients are: Maj. Joseph B. Wurmstein for electronic warfare work with the Army; 1st Lt. Eric Snelgrove for intelligence work with Army Special

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Air Force Takes Action To Stem A-10 Wing Cracks

The Air Force issued a time-compliance technical order on Oct. 3 that required the immediate removal from flight schedules of about one-third of the service's A-10 ground-attack aircraft, including those serving in Southwest Asia, for wing inspection and, if necessary, repair.

The service has 356 A-10s, including those in front-line units as well as those used for training and tests and in routine maintenance status. Affected by the TCTO were about 130 A-10s assigned to Air Combat Command, Air Force Materiel Command, Pacific Air Forces, the Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve Command that have comparatively thin-skinned wings that are more susceptible to structural fatigue than the thicker wings found on newer A-10s.

The Air Force said it made the decision following "an increase in fatigue-related wing cracks" discovered during recent depot work. Although the service already has a program in place with Boeing to replace wings on 242 A-10s, the service deemed that "taking immediate action is necessary for the safety of our aircrews and to bring our A-10 fleet back to health."

Aircraft currently deployed with units in Afghanistan and Iraq were given priority for the repairs.

Despite the inspection stand-down, the Air Force said it had enough A-10s available—albeit in fewer numbers—to go ahead with Hawgsmoke 2008, its biennial A-10 bombing and gunnery competition. AFRC's 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., hosted the event Oct. 15-18 at the Kansas Air National Guard's 34,000-acre Smoky Hill range near Salina.

Airmen from 14 active duty, ANG, and AFRC squadrons participated, sharing 30 A-10s provided by the Air Guard and Reserve units.

The top scoring team was the Idaho Air Guard's 190th Fighter Squadron.

Forces; 2nd Lt. Anthony Florentine for his signals intelligence actions with the Army while he was a staff sergeant; CMSgt. Paul Wheeler for his actions at Joint Base Balad, Iraq; MSgt. Darrin Goetchius for his work training Iraqi maintainers; TSgt. Michael McKenna and SSgt. Kevin Krooner, both tactical air control party airmen with the 8th Air Support Operations Squadron at Aviano AB, Italy; and SSgt. Joseph Hepler from Hurlburt's 23rd STS.

ANG F-16 Units Changing

The New York Air National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing started its 18-month transition, per BRAC 2005, from the F-16 fighter to the MQ-9 unmanned aerial vehicle on Oct. 14 with the permanent departure of the first two F-16s from the wing's home at Hancock Field, near Syracuse.

This represented the beginning of the end of the 174th's F-16 mission, which began in 1988. More F-16s will depart Hancock as the transition progresses, and wing members are supposed to begin training with MQ-9s in 2010.

Less than two weeks earlier, on Oct. 2, another Air Guard F-16 unit, the Michigan

USAF photo by TSgt. Erik Gudmundson



Heavy Duty: An MQ-9 Reaper is armed and ready for a mission at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Larger and more powerful than its forerunner, the MQ-1 Predator, the Reaper can carry up to 3,750 pounds of laser guided bombs and Hellfire missiles. August marked the first weapons engagement in Iraq since it began flying combat sorties there in July.

Operation Iraqi Freedom—Iraq

Casualties

By Nov. 6, a total of 4,193 Americans had died in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The total includes 4,182 troops and 11 Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 3,388 were killed in action with the enemy while 805 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 30,774 troops wounded in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This number includes 17,218 who were wounded and returned to duty within 72 hours and 13,556 who were unable to return to duty quickly.

Mosul Air Strike Against Al Qaeda-in-Iraq Members

A Mosul family reported to Iraqi authorities that a suspected al Qaeda-in-Iraq member had entered their home Oct. 7 wearing a suicide vest, causing them to flee. When police approached the residence, small-arms fire erupted from suspected AQI members who had entered the house.

Coalition troops arrived at the scene to reinforce the police. When they and police approached the house again, they began taking fire. The on-scene joint terminal attack controller requested air support after all local citizens were cleared from the surrounding area. A coalition aircraft dropped a bomb on the house, destroying it. One coalition soldier, one police officer, and one AQI member were killed in the exchange, according to Multinational Corps-Iraq.

Operation Enduring Freedom—Afghanistan

Casualties

By Nov. 6, a total of 622 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 621 troops and one Department of Defense civilian. Of these deaths, 407 were killed in action with the enemy while 215 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 2,581 troops wounded in action during OEF. This number includes 911 who were wounded and returned to duty within 72 hours and 1,670 who were unable to return to duty quickly.

Compass Call Unit Eclipses 10,000 Hours Over Afghanistan

The 41st Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron, an EC-130 Compass Call unit operating from Bagram AB, Afghanistan, surpassed 10,000 combat hours in Operation Enduring Freedom in late September, according to Air Forces Central. The milestone occurred during a night mission escorting a 41-vehicle International Security Assistance Force convoy.

The 41st EECS, deployed from Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., amassed the hours during more than four years of operations in the combat theater, beginning with its first OEF deployment in March 2004. The Compass Call is a specialized aircraft that disrupts enemy communications and limits the effectiveness of enemy forces trying to coordinate attacks.

The 10,000-hour milestone is significant, given the fact that the Compass Call is one of the Air Force's low-density, high-demand assets and there are only 14 of them dispersed in two operational units, members of the 41st EECS said.

Accordingly, many members of the 41st EECS have deployed overseas multiple times. Since the squadron sends only one or two EC-130s on each deployment, each aircraft has averaged about 2,000 to 3,000 flight hours annually to break the 10,000-hour mark, they said.

ANG's 127th Wing at Selfridge ANG Base outside of Detroit, formally relinquished its air sovereignty alert mission to the Ohio ANG's 180th Fighter Wing based in Toledo. Selfridge's F-16s protected American skies since 9/11 as part of Operation Noble Eagle. The 127th Wing, which already converted from a C-130

transport mission to flying KC-135 tankers, is scheduled to stop flying F-16s by year's end and transition to A-10s.

UAV Pilot Recruiting Starts

The Air Force on Oct. 6 began its search for officer volunteers with no previous flying experience to enter

the service's new training program for operating MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles. The first 10 officers selected will start training in January, and a second batch of 10 will begin instruction in April.

If the first two training classes of 10 prove to be successful, then the Air Force will start accepting larger classes, service officials have said. The Air Force unveiled this new UAV training program in September. The service eyes it, along with the new practice of taking about 10 percent of its new undergraduate pilot training graduates and training them to operate the Predators and Reapers, as a means to beef up its current pool of about 450 UAV operators to 1,100 by Fiscal 2012.

Booster Reliability Eyed

The Air Force will fix problems with the Atlas V and Delta IV expendable launch vehicles before launching them again, Gary E. Payton, deputy undersecretary of the Air Force for space programs, told reporters Sept. 25 in Washington, D.C.

Payton said the Russian-designed RD-180 engine used on the Atlas V rocket experienced "an uncommanded actuator anomaly" in one instance, meaning that the actuator moved even though the rocket's guidance system did not tell it to. He said the Air Force thought the USAF-industry team had the fix in hand.

In the case of the Delta IV booster, the contractor performing vibration tests on component parts discovered that its test equipment had not been calibrated correctly for the past several years, meaning that some parts may not have been adequately tested, Payton said. They were to be retested.

F-35 Depot Work Decided

The Air Force and Navy in September came to terms on how they will divvy up depot work on about 80 percent of the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter and set the parameters on how they will decide on the remaining workload allocation.

F-35 airframe maintenance, scheduled to be up and running in 2012, will be located at the Fleet Readiness Center-East at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., and Ogden Air Logistics Center at Hill AFB, Utah, the Air Force said in a Sept. 29 news release. Engine maintenance, which will also stand up in 2012, will be at the Oklahoma City ALC at Tinker AFB, Okla., to be joined in 2014 by the Fleet Readiness Center-Southeast at NAS Jacksonville, Fla.

The F-35 engine lift system, which will be resident in Marine Corps F-35Bs, will be maintained beginning in 2014 at Cherry Point. A source-selection team, comprising representatives from all the services and the F-35 joint program

Senior Staff Changes

NOMINATIONS: To be Lieutenant General: Mark A. Welsh III. **To be ANG Major General:** William S. Busby III, Stanley E. Clarke III, Garry C. Dean, Steven R. Doohen, John B. Elington Jr., Maria A. Falca-Dodson, Donald E. Fick, Kathleen E. Fick, Tony A. Hart, James E. Hearon, Kelly K. McKeague, Linda K. McTague, Alan W. Palmer, Mark F. Sears, Charles E. Tucker Jr., Janette Young. **To be ANG Brigadier General:** John D. Bledsoe Jr., Theresa Z. Blumberg, Paul D. Brown Jr., Brewster S. Butters, Charles E. Foster Jr., Steven D. Friedrichs, Steven D. Gregg, John O. Griffin, Mark R. Kraus, Joseph L. Lengyel, Bradley A. Livingston, Catherine S. Lutz, Joseph K. Martin Jr., Michael A. Meyer, Stanley J. Oserman Jr., Stephan A. Pappas, Jay M. Pearsall, Bruce W. Prunk, James W. Schroeder, Charles L. Smith, James R. Summers, Bruce N. Thompson, Delilah R. Works.

CHANGES: Maj. Gen. C. D. Alston, from Dir., Nuclear Ops., Plans & Rqmts., DCS, Ops., Plans & Rqmts., USAF, Pentagon, to Asst. C/S, Strat. Deterrence & Nuclear Integration, USAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. Larry K. Grundhauser, from Vice Dir., Intel., Jt. Staff, Pentagon, to Dir., Intel., ACC, Langley AFB, Va. ... Brig. Gen. Robert C. Kane, from Vice Cmdr., 18th AF, AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Commanding General, Coalition AF Transition Team, Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq ... Brig. Gen. James O. Poss, from Dir., Intel., ACC, Langley AFB, Va., to Vice Dir., Intel., Jt. Staff, Pentagon ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Mark A. Welsh III, from Assoc. Dir. for Mil. Spt., CIA, Washington, D.C., to Assoc. Dir. of CIA for Mil. Spt., Washington, D.C. ... Brig. Gen. Margaret H. Woodward, from Cmdr., 89th Airlift Wg., AMC, Andrews AFB, Md., to Vice Cmdr., 18th AF, AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ■

office, will decide on the work for the remaining 20 percent of the aircraft, which includes software and some avionics systems.

MIA Pilots' Remains Found

The remains of Col. David H. Zook Jr. and Capt. Lorenza Conner, Air Force pilots missing since they died in separate crashes in Vietnam in October 1967, have been identified.

Zook, from West Liberty, Ohio, was carrying out a psychological warfare mission in a U-10B aircraft on Oct. 4, 1967 over

Song Be Province, South Vietnam, when the U-10B collided in midair with a C-7A, crashed, and exploded. Excavations of the suspected crash site in 1992, 1993, and in March 2008 recovered remains that forensic analysis proved to be his, DOD said Sept. 30.

Conner's F-4D fighter was shot down by anti-aircraft fire on Oct. 27, 1967 over Tuyen Quang Province, North Vietnam. While his copilot ejected safely and was captured, Conner was unable to eject before the airplane crashed. Surveys of the crash site between 1992 and 2003,

and then in 2007, led to recovery of aircraft wreckage and human remains that were identified as Conner's, DOD said in an Oct. 8 statement.

DOD Plans Aircraft Sales

The Defense Department informed Congress on Oct. 2 of its intent to convert three Air Force KC-135R tankers into RC-135 Rivet Joint signals intelligence platforms for Britain under a proposed foreign military sale. If all options are exercised, the deal could be worth as much as \$1.1 billion, including associated equipment and services.

Three days earlier, the Pentagon told Congress of its intent to sell Israel at least 25 F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters and perhaps as many as 75 of them under a proposed FMS worth up to \$15.2 billion if all options are exercised. Israel would be the first F-35 non-partner nation to buy the aircraft.

The Mideast nation initially would receive 25 F-35A conventional takeoff and landing aircraft and associated equipment and services, with first delivery potentially in 2014. It would have the option of acquiring an additional 50 F-35s at a later date, either in the CTOL configuration or F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing model.

AFSOC Training Center Opens

Air Force Special Operations Command formally stood up the Air Force Special Operations Training Center Oct. 6 at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The center consolidates all of the command's training units under one roof.

It will be responsible for all mission qualification training of operators of AFSOC's gunships, special-mission transports, unmanned aerial vehicles, and nonstandard aviation, Col. Paul Harmon, the center's commander said in an interview Oct. 10. The AFSOTC will also be in charge of training the command's combat aviation advisors and special tactics airmen, he said.

AFSOC expects to have the center fully operational in Fiscal 2012.

Chinese Visit Hickam

A 12-member delegation from the Chinese People's Liberation Army visited Hickam AFB, Hawaii, and other nearby military installations Oct. 1-2 for a professional exchange with senior enlisted airmen, marines, sailors, and soldiers. Maj. Gen. Zhong Zhiming, chief of military affairs for the PLA Headquarters General Staff, led the Chinese group, whose visit was part of the US military's efforts to promote understanding and a constructive bilateral relationship.

The Chinese visit came after a US military delegation went to China in June.



USAF photo by SrA. Julianne Showalter

Climbing the Ladder: Pararescuemen from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron climb a ladder into a US Army MH-60 Black Hawk after completing a training mission at Gator Lake, Fla., near Hurlburt Field.



And it concluded just one day before the Bush Administration informed Congress of its intent to sell Taiwan a \$6.5 billion package of defensive arms.

The Chinese government wasted no time in responding, announcing Oct. 6 that it was canceling a senior general's visit to Washington, D.C., later this year, halting port calls by US naval vessels for the time being, and not participating in upcoming talks on disaster relief and nonproliferation.

Blackswift Canceled

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency said in October it was canceling plans to pursue the Blackswift reusable hypersonic flying test bed after Congress slashed the program's \$120 million funding profile in Fiscal 2009 down to \$10 million. DARPA had planned to fly the Mach 6-capable Blackswift, which was to be powered by a combined-cycle propulsion system featuring a turbojet and supersonic combustion ramjet, in 2012.

While Blackswift hopes were dashed, DARPA announced Sept. 30 that it would spend \$18.3 million to fund a third flight test of the full-scale hypersonic strike missile demonstrator that Boeing and Aerojet have designed under the HyFly program with the Navy. This flight is scheduled for the summer of 2010. It comes after two partially successful flight demonstrations in September 2007 and January 2008.

Joint CSAR Training Begins

Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk and Army AH-64 Apache helicopter forces deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan, flew their first joint combat search and rescue training mission Sept. 25.

"We are practicing recovering isolated personnel while the Apache suppresses any threat in and around the isolated personnel," said Air Force Lt. Col. John Trumpfeller, 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander.

The HH-60s have their own firepower, two 50-caliber machine guns, but Trumpfeller said the Apache's weapons provide an extra measure of coverage. Pave Hawks and Apaches have already flown joint aeromedical evacuation missions in the combat theater.

SBIRS May Still Face Bumps

The Air Force may be facing additional delays and costs in getting the first Space Based Infrared System early warning satellite, GEO-1, into orbit in December 2009 as planned, the Government Accountability Office warned in a Sept. 30 report. Indeed the confidence level that some contractors will produce the necessary software in time to meet that launch goal is in some cases only five percent, and the program's schedule allows little margin for error, the agency noted.

Further, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has introduced more risk

Heavy Lifting: A C-17 Globemaster III readies for takeoff Nov. 3 at Ramstein AB, Germany. USAF members at the base handle more than 85 aircraft operations daily. USAF modernized a 50-year-old runway at the base, to go along with the brand-new runway built a few years ago. Now the mobility hub can handle the heaviest cargo aircraft in USAF's inventory.

by granting waivers to streamline the software development processes to meet the schedule, thereby allowing the program "to deviate from disciplined processes," GAO said.

In 2007, the SBIRS program had a "major setback" when flight software for GEO-1 failed testing due to design issues, GAO noted. In April of this year, OSD approved the fix, estimating at that time that the program would be delayed by 15 months and incur costs of \$414 million to resolve the issue. "But these estimates appear optimistic," GAO wrote.

World War II Airman Identified

DOD announced Oct. 21 that it has identified the remains of 2nd Lt. Ray D. Packard, declared missing following the crash of his P-38 on Aug. 25, 1944 during an engagement with German enemy fighters over Beauvais, France. Packard, of Atwood, Calif., was one of 22 P-38 pilots en route from St. Lam-

AFRICOM Looks To Expand Airlift Infrastructure

The Department of Defense has no plans to establish any permanent US presence on the continent of Africa at this time, outside of the forces currently stationed at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, Army Gen. William E. Ward, commander of US Africa Command, told defense reporters Oct. 8 in Washington, D.C.

However, Ward said, an effort is under way to negotiate "cooperative security locations" across the continent that would serve as small logistical hubs for US airlift assets of the just-activated 17th Air Force, the air component of the new command.

It would "not be a permanent infrastructure," he said. Instead CSLs would be places where AFRICOM has standing agreements with host nations to get fuel and logistics support for aircraft as they conduct activities across the continent. Some locations already exist that would meet the command's standards, such as Entebbe, Uganda, Ward noted.

These locations would have a limited storage capacity, fuels infrastructure, maintenance capabilities, and some warehousing available. "We would look to enhance those where it might be suitable" if the host nations agree to it, Ward said.

AFRICOM's permanent air infrastructure will remain at Ramstein AB, Germany, but CSLs will be crucial due to the immense distance between Europe and the interior of Africa, he said. Exercising and training events would require these locations, and, due to the size of the continent, increasing the number of these sites would aid in performing missions such as humanitarian relief, Ward said.

AFRICOM, currently headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, reached full operational status as a global unified combatant command on Oct. 1. The command is geared toward a systematic, interagency approach to promote stability, security, and democracy on the entire continent, except for Egypt, which remains under US Central Command's purview.

Camp Lemonier is home to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, formerly a CENTCOM-run effort that now falls under AFRICOM's responsibility along with African-related initiatives formerly executed by US European Command and US Pacific Command.

bert, France, to strike German-held airfields near Laon-Chambry, France, when they were attacked by more than 80 German fighters, resulting in the loss of 11 P-38s.

It was not until 2006 that US investigators tracked down human and other remains that led to excavations in 2006 and 2007 and the recovery of Packard's ID tag and other items.

Medal for Bataan Survivor

Retired CMSgt. Robert Brown, the youngest surviving member of World War II's Bataan Death March, received the Bronze Star Medal during a ceremony Sept. 30 at Beale AFB, Calif., 66 years overdue. Due to illness, he was unable to attend the ceremony, but his wife, Rosemary, accepted the honor on his behalf.

Brown was among the Luzon Forces that surrendered to the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula, Philippines, on April 9, 1942, and then were forced to march more than 60 miles without sufficient food and water through the jungle to a POW camp. He served as a medical technician, helping other prisoners of war during his more than three years of imprisonment by the Japanese, which included time in Korea and Manchuria.

B-1B Cleared for Synthetic Fuel

The B-1B bomber on Sept. 15 became the third Air Force aircraft certified for "unlimited use" of the synthetic fuel blend that the service wants its entire inventory cleared to use by early next decade. The B-1B joined the B-52H and C-17.

Jeff Braun, director of USAF's alternative fuel certification office, said Sept. 29 that the Air Force has also certified all of its ground support fueling equipment for unrestricted use with the synthetic mix. The fuel blend is a 50-50 mix of traditional JP-8 jet fuel and synthetic paraffinic kerosene. SPK is derived today from natural gas but can also be made from coal of which the US has an abundant supply, making it highly promising as one means to reduce US dependence on foreign sources of energy. ■

News Notes

■ The Senate confirmed Lt. Gen. William M. Fraser III on Oct. 2 to be the Air Force's 34th vice chief of staff. Fraser received his fourth star Oct. 8 and assumed his new post that day.

■ Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley was confirmed by the Senate Oct. 2 for appointment to the rank of general and to head the National Guard Bureau as its 26th chief and first four-star leader. He has led the Air Guard since May 2006.

■ Werner J. A. Dahm, a University of Michigan professor of aerospace engineering, became the chief scientist of the Air Force on Oct. 1, replacing Mark J. Lewis who had served in that role since 2004.

■ Capt. Chad Bubanas, an AC-130H gunship commander assigned to the

18th Flight Test Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., on Oct. 6 received USAF's annual Cheney Award for his role in directing his gunship crew during a close air support mission in Afghanistan in May 2007 that saved ground troops' lives. The Cheney Award honors valor in an aircraft in service of a humanitarian interest.

■ The 109th Airlift Wing from Schenectady County Arpt., N.Y., sole operator of ski-equipped LC-130 transports in the US military, in September won the National Guard Association of the United States' Spaatz Trophy for being the overall outstanding Air National Guard flying unit in 2007.

■ The Air Force adopted special duty assignment pay in October for most airmen serving in the explosive ordnance

disposal career field to sustain this specialized force in the face of a 30 percent decline in retention since 2002 due to the career field's high operations tempo and the inherent dangers of the work.

■ The National Park Service on Oct. 10 opened the National Tuskegee Airmen Historic Site at Alabama's Moton Field, which, along with Tuskegee Army Air Field, trained black airmen during World War II. A portion of Interstate 85 was also designated that day as Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Highway.

■ The near-simultaneous failure of two hydraulic systems on a B-1B bomber after landing April 4 at an air base in Southwest Asia ultimately led to the aircraft's destruction and damage to two nearby C-130Js, Air Combat Command announced Oct. 1. ■