

F-16s Collide, Pilot Dies

Capt. Nicholas Giglio, an F-16 pilot with the 77th Fighter Squadron at Shaw AFB, S.C., died Oct. 15 when his airplane collided with another F-16 from Shaw over the Atlantic Ocean about 40 miles east of Folly Beach, S.C., during a night training mission.

The second pilot, Capt. Lee Bryant, managed to land his aircraft at Charleston AFB, S.C. Despite an exhaustive 48-hour search by Air Force, Coast Guard, and Navy air and sea assets over some 8,000 square nautical miles of sea, Giglio's body was not recovered. However, debris was found, thought to be from his F-16.

Col. Joe Guastella, commander of Shaw's 20th Fighter Wing, said Oct. 17 the ongoing accident investigation had "revealed that the midair collision itself was traumatic." Indeed, the impact breached the canopy of Giglio's aircraft, leading investigators to believe that "the trauma [Giglio] sustained was fatal," Guastella said, adding that Giglio "never had the opportunity to eject."

Weather Sat Enters Orbit

An Air Force and industry team at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., on Oct. 18 successfully placed a Lockheed Martin-built Defense Meteorological Satellite Program spacecraft into orbit aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket.

Designated DMSP Flight 18, this satellite will provide data for weather prediction for US military forces and the civilian community. It is the third DMSP spacecraft in the Block 5D-3 configuration, which has features such as a larger sensor payload, compared to earlier generations.

F-18 was the first DMSP satellite launched since November 2006. Overall, it is the 37th DMSP spacecraft successfully put in space since 1965, according to Lockheed Martin. After F-18, the Air Force has two more DMSP spacecraft available for launch.

McCain Suggests Tanker Watchdog

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Oct. 21 he favors tasking an independent watchdog organization to oversee the Air Force's

new KC-X tanker competition to ensure that the process of choosing a winning aircraft is fair.

Speaking at a Reuters summit in Washington, D.C., McCain suggested the Government Accountability Office, as chief Congressional watchdog, would be a good fit to serve in this role and track the progress of the KC-X contest between Boeing and Northrop Grumman, Reuters news service reported Oct. 21.

"I would trust their judgment as to whether the whole process is biased toward one side or the other," said McCain. His comments came as political rumblings already started to emerge from supporters of both tanker camps on Capitol Hill over the fairness of the competition, as the Air Force conversed with industry on the draft KC-X solicitation.

C-17s Pull Disaster Duty

Air Force C-17s operating from Hawaii flew 17 sorties over an 11-day period starting on Sept. 30, delivering 632.5 short tons of relief supplies and a multiagency disaster-response team to American Samoa after the island was ravaged by a powerful earthquake on Sept. 29. The earthquake unleashed 15-foot ocean waves that destroyed entire villages.

Pacific Air Forces also dispatched its 68-member humanitarian assistance rapid response team and 200,000 pounds of medical supplies by C-17 to Padang, Indonesia, on Oct. 5. The team was sent to provide medical treatment to local residents after a devastating earthquake struck Indonesia's West Sumatra province Sept. 30.

After setting up a field hospital, the team treated more than 1,900 patients, alleviating the burden on local hospitals severely damaged in the earthquake.

ICBM Anniversary Commemorated

Air Force officials gathered Oct. 7 at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the nation's operational ICBM fleet. It was on Oct. 31, 1959 that three long-range, liquid-fueled Atlas D missiles armed with nuclear warheads went on full combat alert at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., usher-

USAF photo by SRA Susan Tracy



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ing in a new era of strategic nuclear deterrence for the nation.

F. E. Warren is home to 20th Air Force, which oversees the current Minuteman III ICBM fleet, and the 90th Missile Wing, which oversees 150 of USAF's 450 ICBMs.

The three days of events included Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley's keynote address on Oct. 8 and a memorial service for deceased mis- sileers on Oct. 9.

Congress Slows Fighter Retirement

The conference version of the Fiscal 2010 defense authorization bill, passed by the House on Oct. 8 and the Senate on Oct. 22, includes language prohibiting the Air Force from executing its legacy fighter retirement plan until at least 30 days after the service provides a "detailed" report to Congress.

The lawmakers want the Air Force to explain how it will address the force structure and capability gaps resulting

from the retirement of a combination of up to 254 F-15s, F-16s, and A-10s in this fiscal year. They also called for a description of the follow-on mission assignments for each affected base.

This mandate is similar to language included in the Senate's version of the Fiscal 2010 defense appropriations bill, passed in September, that was introduced as an amendment by National Guard Caucus Chairmen Sen. Christopher S. Bond (R-Mo.) and Sen.



Air Force SSgt. Justin Schramm of Eugene, Ore., keeps a close watch on the Afghan countryside below while on an HH-60 Pave Hawk mission. Schramm is an aerial gunner from Kadena AB, Japan, who is currently assigned to the 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. The Pave Hawk, equipped with two .50-caliber machine guns, is used for combat search and rescue. Schramm is trained to use his machine gun to protect service members while they are providing aid to injured persons on the ground.

Command Shake-ups at Nuclear Minot Wings

The commanders of the nuclear missile and bomb wings at Minot AFB, N.D., were both relieved of command in October, in the latest manifestation of the Air Force's no-excuses nuclear policies.

Maj. Gen. Roger W. Burg, commander of 20th Air Force, which oversees USAF's ICBM forces, on Oct. 14 removed Col. Christopher B. Ayres as commander of the 91st Missile Wing at Minot. Ayres had been in command since May 2008. Replacing Ayres was Col. Ferdinand B. Stoss III, who had been vice commander of the 90th MW at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

Ayres was relieved "due to loss of confidence in his ability to command," according to an Air Force Space Command release.

AFSPC said Ayres was not relieved for any alleged misconduct or wrongdoing, but a series of incidents—including a vehicle transporting non-nuclear Minuteman III ICBM components overturning on Aug. 31 near Minot—contributed to the loss of confidence.

"We must have complete confidence in our leadership as we continue the revitalization of the nuclear enterprise," said AFSPC Commander Gen. C. Robert Kehler. Air Force leaders have maintained that perfection is the standard by which all airmen will be judged in the nuclear field.

"This is a tough business we're in. There are many requirements," Stoss told reporters when asked about the removal of his predecessor, reported the *Minot Daily News* Oct. 16. The Minuteman ICBM "is a complex system, and it requires the utmost professionalism."

Two weeks later, on Oct. 30, Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Carpenter, commander of 8th Air Force, removed Col. Joel S. Westa as commander of the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot. Westa was replaced by Col. Douglas A. Cox, who had been serving as vice commander of the 36th Wing, Andersen AFB, Guam.

Westa himself had been brought in as a replacement commander at the 5th Bomb Wing. He assumed command in November 2007, when the previous commander was fired after nuclear cruise missiles were accidentally and unknowingly flown from Minot to Barksdale AFB, La.

Like Ayres, Westa was not relieved for any specific misconduct or wrongdoing. An "inability to foster a culture of excellence, a lack of focus on the strategic mission during his command, and substandard performance during several nuclear surety inspections" led to his removal, USAF officials said in a release. The newly activated 69th Bomb Squadron being deemed "not ready to perform its nuclear mission" contributed to the loss of confidence.

"While the shortcomings in recent inspections did not translate to an inability to accomplish the mission, they did show a departure from the standards of perfection that we demand in the nuclear enterprise," said Gen. William M. Fraser III, commander of Air Combat Command. "Our leaders must set and enforce the standards across all of our mission areas."

As for the Aug. 31 ICBM warhead accident, AFSPC investigators determined that a large insect was responsible for the chain of events that led to the transport vehicle overturning.

According to the findings of AFSPC's accident investigation board, the large insect flew through the driver's open window and landed on his back, distracting him. The driver failed to maintain control of the vehicle as he tried to remove the insect, which led to the vehicle overturning in a ditch.

Eighth Air Force, 20th Air Force, and both nuclear wings at Minot are all scheduled to become part of Global Strike Command.

Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) out of concern over how the fighter retirements would impact the air sovereignty alert mission.

C-17s Move All-Terrain MRAPs

The Air Force on Sept. 30 began transporting the US military's new all-terrain version of the mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle to Afghanistan from Charleston AFB, S.C. On that day, a C-17 flown in from McChord AFB, Wash., carried two of these vehicles, known as M-ATVs, to Southwest Asia.

Charleston is serving as the sole air distribution center for the overseas shipments of the M-ATVs, which are lighter than previous MRAP versions and are more suited to the rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

The Air Force expects to move between 300 and 500 M-ATVs by air each month through the end of the year to Afghanistan. The US military will also begin transporting M-ATVs to Southwest Asia by sea before the end of the year.

Northrop Wins KC-10 Work

The Air Force on Oct. 1 awarded Northrop Grumman a \$3.8 billion contract to perform contractor logistics services for the KC-10 tanker fleet. Northrop Grumman usurped Boeing, which produced the KC-10s and has been performing the workload.

The contract covers depot-level maintenance and modifications, supply chain management, and other support tasks for USAF's 59 KC-10s and two Dutch KDC-10s over a nine-year period. Boeing's current contract expires in January.

"Our clear focus now is to conduct a flawless phase-in that will facilitate the superior program performance that both the US Air Force and Northrop Grumman demand," said James Cameron, president of Northrop Grumman's technical services sector.

Crash Causes Identified

The pilot's failure to recognize his altitude during a nighttime training mission while practicing low-altitude, high-angle strafing led to the crash of an F-16 fighter on June 22 at the Utah Test and Training Range, Air Combat Command announced Sept. 28.

The pilot, Capt. George B. Houghton, was killed upon impact, and his F-16, assigned to Hill AFB, Utah's 388th Fighter Wing, was destroyed, ACC said, citing the findings of its accident investigation board.

On Oct. 13, Air Force Materiel Command announced that "a failure in the rudder operating mechanism" was determined to be the cause of a T-38 aircraft crash near Edwards AFB, Calif., during a training flight on May 21. The mishap claimed the life of student pilot Maj. Mark Paul Graziano, and seriously injured his navigator, Maj. Lee Vincent Jones.

JASSMs Fly Right

The Air Force and Lockheed Martin said in October that the AGM-158 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile performed well in a series of 16 flight tests that concluded on Oct. 4 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., with the release of four JASSMs from a B-52 bomber.

The official results showed that JASSMs were "successful" in 15 of the 16 flights. One missile "failed to detonate," a spokesman said. All of these missiles came from Production Lot 7.

This test series, meant to assess JASSM's reliability, was considered a crucial indicator of whether the Air Force would buy more of the missiles, which despite their prowess, have been plagued by reliability issues. With the test

success, Lockheed Martin anticipated USAF awarding a production contract for Lot 8 missiles.

F-35 Units Take Shape

On Oct. 1, the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin AFB, Fla., formally embraced its new role as the lead joint training wing for the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter as it moved from Air Combat Command to Air Education and Training Command. The wing shed its F-15 force per BRAC 2005 and expects to see its first F-35s in late summer 2010.

In a related development, the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, headquartered at Kirtland AFB, N.M., on Oct. 2 stood up a detachment at Edwards AFB, Calif., to lead F-35 operational test and evaluation. It will be conducted with the Navy and Marine Corps as well as the British Royal Air Force and the Netherlands Air Force.

B-2 Radar Hits Full-rate Production

The Air Force on Oct. 16 authorized full-rate production of the new radar system for the B-2A stealth bomber. Northrop Grumman leads an industry team including radar maker Raytheon that is providing the upgraded radar,

Congress Poised To Fund More C-17s

In a 93-to-seven vote, the Senate on Oct. 6 passed its version of the Fiscal 2010 defense appropriations bill, a measure that includes \$2.5 billion to procure 10 C-17s that the Air Force did not request.

The bill appropriates to defense a total of \$636.3 billion, of which \$128.2 billion was earmarked for ongoing wars.

The C-17 measure was controversial. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, pushed for the aircraft, arguing that it would be unwise to shut down C-17 production before the Pentagon has made far-reaching decisions on its airlift fleet.

The Senate measure would push the Air Force's total C-17 buy to 223. Air Force officials have said they would welcome retiring one C-5A transport for every new C-17 that is acquired beyond 205.

On two occasions during floor debate, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) proposed to strip the C-17 funding and reapply it to boost the US military's readiness accounts. Both measures were resoundingly repudiated by robust bipartisan majorities.

The House included three C-17s in its version of the bill that was passed in July. President Obama signed the bill Oct. 28 with final numbers of C-17s still unresolved.

Rep. John P. Murtha (D-Pa.), head of the House Appropriation Committee's defense subcommittee, said Oct. 21 he thought conferees would ultimately agree to 10 C-17s, *CongressDaily* reported Oct. 22. However, he wanted C-17 maker Boeing to reduce the per-unit cost of the aircraft by about \$25 million, edging it closer to its \$200 million price tag in previous multiyear buys.

The White House on Sept. 25 reiterated that it "strongly" objected to the C-17s. But those words fell short of actually threatening a Presidential veto of the spending bill.



USAF photo by TSgt. Eric Perosky

A Chile Host: Two F-15 Eagles of the 159th Fighter Wing maneuver during a mission over Chile in Exercise Salitre, a multinational exercise focused on interoperability. Participating air forces included the US, Brazil, Argentina, and France.

which features advanced electronically scanned array antennas, for USAF's 20 B-2s under a \$1.2 billion modernization initiative.

Already Northrop Grumman has supplied six production-representative radar sets for six of the B-2s. The Air Force in March took delivery of the first combat-ready B-2 fitted with the upgraded radar. Northrop Grumman is installing the remaining five sets.

The full-rate production sets will be fabricated as part of the \$468 million production contract signed in December 2008 for the remaining 14 radar sets, plus two spare sets. Northrop Grumman's team is already producing some of the production units as part of the contract's low-rate production phase. All B-2s are expected to be fitted with the upgraded radar around 2011.

First HC/MC-130J Assembled

The keel for the Air Force's first Special Mission Hercules aircraft was laid in ceremonies at Lockheed Martin's facilities in Marietta, Ga., on Oct. 5, marking the start of final assembly of this aircraft. This is a new model of the C-130J based on the Marines Corps' KC-130J tanker, but with added features for combat search and rescue and special operations forces.

The company will build both an HC-130J CSAR variant of this model for Air Combat Command and an MC-130J tanker version for Air Force Special Operations Command right on the standard C-130J production line.

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New Communications Satellite Supports the Fight

WGS-2, the Air Force's second Wideband Global SATCOM spacecraft, is now fully operational and supporting ground troops in Afghanistan and Iraq by relaying data and imagery across the battlespace at unprecedented high rates of speed, Boeing, the satellite's maker, announced in early October.

Launched in April and now residing in geosynchronous Earth orbit over the Indian Ocean, WGS-2 was cleared for use back in August by US Strategic Command, the company divulged in a release Oct. 6.

WGS-2 is supplanting the commercial communications satellites that have been used over that region in the past to support the US military. It is also designed, as all WGS spacecraft are, to replace the Air Force's legacy Defense Satellite Communications System spacecraft. Each WGS satellite has more than 12 times the throughput capacity of a single DSCS satellite, according to Boeing.

WGS-2 joins WGS-1, which sits over the Pacific Ocean and has been operational since April 2008, supporting US military operations in the entire Pacific region.

Boeing is under contract to build six WGS satellites for the Air Force, but the service has already indicated a desire for more.

WGS-3, the next satellite in the series, was shipped on Sept. 28 from Boeing's assembly facility in Los Angeles to Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., in preparation for its placement in orbit, which was scheduled in mid-November.

Bill Reiner, assistant director of satellite communications and cyber security for Boeing's government operations sector, told reporters Oct. 7 in Washington, D.C., that WGS-3 will reside in orbit over the eastern Atlantic Ocean. It will provide coverage of the US East Coast, Europe, Africa, and like WGS-2, the Middle East and Central Asia, thereby augmenting WGS-2 there.

WGS-3 will be the last spacecraft in the Block I configuration. The next three WGS spacecraft will be in the more robust Block II configuration.

The Air Force has said it wants 78 HC-130Js and 37 MC-130Js to replace earlier model HC-130s and MC-130s that are already 40 years old or more. The first two HC-130Js will be delivered in 2010—including the one for which the keel was laid. Ten MC-130Js will be built in 2011.

Engine Project Advances

The Air Force Research Laboratory announced Oct. 15 that it will continue to sponsor teams from General Electric and Rolls Royce through 2012 under Phase II of its Adaptive Versatile Engine Technology, or ADVENT, program.

Both teams began working in early 2008 under Phase I on maturing next generation variable-cycle turbine engines that combine fuel efficiency and high performance.

AFRL said it wanted Rolls Royce's LibertyWorks advanced concept shop in Indianapolis to complete its technology demonstrator engine development

Special Delivery: B-25 Mitchell bomber Special Delivery and a replica Japanese A6M2 Zero form up over downtown San Antonio on Nov. 5. The Disabled American Veterans organization arranged flights in historic and experimental aircraft for wounded servicemen being treated at the San Antonio Military Medical Center, Ft. Sam Houston, Tex.

USAF photo by Lance Cheung



Operation Enduring Freedom—Afghanistan

Casualties

By Nov. 16, a total of 913 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 911 troops and two Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 654 were killed in action with the enemy while 259 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 4,472 troops wounded in action during OEF. This number includes 1,841 who were wounded and returned to duty within 72 hours and 2,631 who were unable to return to duty quickly.

Airpower Helps Hold Back Taliban in Deadly Battle

US airpower played a key role in halting a devastating Taliban assault on a remote Afghan base Oct. 3 in Kamdesh, Afghanistan, that claimed the lives of eight US soldiers and three Afghan Army personnel, according to US military sources and wire reports.

At the time, it was the deadliest such attack on coalition troops in 2009.

Around dawn that day, a force of about 200 to 300 Taliban fighters attacked the outpost with a barrage of small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortar shells, peppering the outpost from three sides. According to US officials, the Taliban attacked an observation post on a ridge near the outpost and were able to breach the base perimeter.

US reinforcements were flown in nearby by helicopter, traveling the rest of the way on foot to the besieged base.

The main battle lasted nearly seven hours, with fierce firefights often at close quarters. A combination of small-arms fire and repeated close air support eventually drove back the attacking force.

Coalition air assets provided a rapid response to the attack, according to Air Forces Central. Two F-15Es already aloft when the attack came were quickly diverted to support the base, and four more F-15Es scrambled from Bagram Air Base to help, World Press Review reported Oct. 9., based on interviews with USAF officials at Bagram.

A B-1B bomber also performed at least one air strike, and Army attack helicopters carried out attacks.

Air Force pararescue units flew the wounded from the outpost.

NATO International Security Assistance Force officials estimated that around 100 militants died in the battle. US officials reported 24 US troops were wounded in the attack, along with 10 Afghan soldiers.

Operation Iraqi Freedom—Iraq

Casualties

By Nov. 16, a total of 4,364 Americans had died in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The total includes 4,351 troops and 13 Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 3,476 were killed in action with the enemy while 888 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 31,566 troops wounded in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This number includes 17,686 who were wounded and returned to duty within 72 hours and 13,880 who were unable to return to duty quickly.

Iraqi Air Force Begins Independent C-130 Operations

The Iraqi Air Force began fully independent C-130 operations on Sept. 29 at New Al Muthana AB, Iraq, marking the end of the US air advisory mission there.

USAF and IqAF officials held a ceremony that day, noting the latter's Squadron 23 assuming complete responsibility for its operations, maintenance, and training.

At the same time, USAF's 321st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron, which stood up in 2006 (as the 370th AEAS) to help the Iraqis, was deactivated.

"The Iraqi pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, and maintainers have clearly demonstrated that they are ready to perform their missions and, most importantly, to do it well," said Maj. Gen. Robert C. Kane, who headed the Coalition Air Force Transition Team at the time.

He also praised the USAF advisors for their work.

and testing during Phase II. It also called on GE Aviation in Evendale, Ohio, to continue with its technology demonstrator core development and testing, and to conduct risk-reduction activities for some components.

C-130 Laser Zaps Vehicle

Boeing announced Oct. 13 that its Advanced Tactical Laser aircraft, a modified C-130H that fires the laser out of a belly turret, achieved another milestone when its high-energy laser successfully engaged a moving ground vehicle for the first time during a Sept. 19 test at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

The laser was fired at the vehicle as the aircraft flew overhead; it put a hole in the vehicle's fender, said Boeing. This test built upon a previous engagement against a stationary vehicle back in August.

U-2s To Stay Over Korea

The US military will maintain U-2 surveillance aircraft on the Korean peninsula until there is no doubt that there are enough RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles in the Pacific region to take over the U-2's missions, Army Gen. Walter L. Sharp, commander of US Forces Korea, told defense reporters Sept. 29 in Washington, D.C.

"The Air Force has committed that to me," said Sharp. He added, "They are not going to pull off U-2s until the Global Hawks are not only in place, but there is some overlap so we can make sure the systems and all are working."

The Air Force currently operates some U-2s from Osan AB, South Korea. Sharp said the Global Hawk Block 30 variant, featuring a robust signals intelligence collection suite in addition to imagery sensors, is the version envisioned to support military operations on the peninsula. The first RQ-4 destined for Pacific basing is expected to arrive at Andersen AFB, Guam, in mid-2010.

Wyatt Wants More "Associates"

Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III said Oct. 6 he wants to see the creation of more associate pairings of his units with their active duty and Air Force Reserve Command counterparts that go beyond the changes already being instituted under BRAC 2005.

"We need to continue doing that," he told an audience at the Minuteman Institute for National Defense Studies in Washington, D.C., when discussing the role of associations in the Air Force's Total Force integration.

Since new weapons systems are capable of around-the-clock operations, as opposed to more limited cycles, manpower becomes the limiting factor, and the Air Guard's involvement could

Senior Staff Changes

NOMINATIONS: To be General: Mark A. Welsh III. **To be Lieutenant General:** Kurt A. Cichowski.

CHANGES: Brig. Gen. Darryl W. **Burke**, from Vice Cmdr., 12th AF (AFSOUTH), ACC, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., to Cmdr., 82nd Tng. Wg., AETC, Sheppard AFB, Tex. ... Maj. Gen. Garry C. **Dean**, from Dep. IG of the AF, OSAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., 1st AF, ACC, Tyndall AFB, Fla. ... Brig. Gen. Mark W. **Graper**, from Cmdr., 354th FW, PACAF, Eielson AFB, Alaska, to Vice Cmdr., 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force, ACC, Shaw AFB, S.C. ... Brig. Gen. Otis G. **Mannon**, from Cmdr., 82nd Tng. Wg., AETC, Sheppard AFB, Tex., to Vice Cmdr., AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla. ... Maj. Gen. Harold L. **Mitchell**, from Mobilization Asst. to the Cmdr., TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill., to Dep. IG of the AF, OSAF, Pentagon ... Maj. Gen. Henry C. **Morrow**, from Cmdr., 1st AF, ACC, Tyndall AFB, Fla., to US Defense Representative, US Liaison Office, CENTCOM, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates ... Brig. Gen. Marvin T. **Smoot Jr.**, from Dir., Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to Commandant, Jt. Forces Staff College, NDU, Norfolk, Va. ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Jerry P. **Martinez**, from IG, AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Dep. Cmdr., Political-Mil. Affairs, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, CENTCOM, Kabul, Afghanistan.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGES: Eugene **Collins**, to Dep. Dir. of Log., ACC, Langley AFB, Va. ... Richard P. **Deavel**, to Dep. Asst. SECAF for Reserve Affairs, Office of the Asst. SECAF (Manpower & Reserve Affairs), Pentagon ... Richard W. **McKinney**, to Spec. Asst. to the Administrative Asst. to the SECAF, USAF, Washington, D.C. ... John W. **Steenbock**, to Dir., Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... Patricia J. **Zarodkiewicz**, to Principal Dep. Asst. SECAF for Financial Mgmt. & Comptroller, OSAF, Pentagon. ■

be pivotal in exploiting these systems to their full potential, said Wyatt.

Nuclear Components Demilitarized

The Air Force announced Sept. 30 that it is demilitarizing more than 100,000 nuclear weapons-related parts and components no longer needed from its legacy ICBM, aircraft, and space test programs.

Under this initiative, excess assets from more than 6,000 distinct stock numbers are being removed from the active inventory. Already, as of July 31,

45,000 assets had been disposed of in 2009. The goal is to eliminate another 52,000 by Sept. 30, 2010.

Arizona Trolls for F-35s

Arizona government officials, including Gov. Jan Brewer (R), and state business leaders on Oct. 14 launched a "Luke Forward" campaign to secure the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter for Luke Air Force Base when the Air Force begins phasing out the F-16s currently based there.

At a press conference, Brewer called Luke, currently USAF's largest F-16 training base, "the ideal location" for an F-35 schoolhouse. Supporters cite, for example, Luke's robust and modern infrastructure and its proximity to the Barry Goldwater training range.

However there are some dissenting voices. The *Phoenix Business Journal* reported Oct. 16 that the El Mirage community close to Luke is considering legal action to keep the F-35 away. Like the city of Valparaiso, Fla., near Eglin Air Force Base, which is slated to be the initial F-35 training site, there is concern in El Mirage over the F-35's comparatively higher noise levels.

Cyber Wing Activated

Air Force officials activated the service's first combat communications wing, the 689th CCW, during a ceremony Oct. 5 at Robins AFB, Ga. The unit falls under 24th Air Force, USAF's new cyber operations organization that stood up in August at Lackland AFB, Tex.

The 689th CCW will provide expeditionary and specialized communications, air traffic control, and landing systems to support US and coalition operations in austere, forward locations. Nationwide, it will have some 6,000 airmen, along with civilian and contractor support.

The wing is one of three under 24th Air Force, along with the 67th Network Warfare Wing and 688th Information Operations Wing. The latter two are headquartered at Lackland.

Reaper Unit Stands Up

The Air Force's first MQ-9 Reaper maintenance field training detachment was dedicated during a ceremony Oct. 2 at Hancock Field in Syracuse, N.Y., home of the New York National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing.

The wing, which relinquished its F-16s in June 2008 per BRAC 2005 for the Reaper mission, will now operate the only schoolhouse in the Air Force dedicated to training MQ-9 maintenance personnel. Conversion of the wing's former aerospace ground equipment facility to the schoolhouse began in September 2008 and was completed in May 2009.

Reserve Seeks Active Ties

Air Mobility Command and Air Force Reserve Command announced Oct. 6 that they are working to establish three new active associate flying squadrons that will partner with Reserve units at Keesler AFB, Miss., March ARB, Calif., and Peterson AFB, Colo., by 2012 to operate C-130 transports or KC-135 tankers.

Already the 52nd Airlift Squadron, a C-130 flying unit, stood up Oct. 3 at

USAF photo by SSgt. Brian Ferguson



Lights Out: Airmen from the 51st Security Forces Squadron hold off "enemies" during a night training exercise at Osan AB, South Korea. The base operational readiness exercise simulated a car bombing of a building, infiltration by opposing ground forces, and evacuation techniques.

Peterson to cooperate with AFRC's 302nd Airlift Wing there to fly and maintain the wing's 12 C-130H aircraft. At March, the projected date for activating the 912th Air Refueling Squadron is Oct. 1, 2010. This unit will support AFRC's 452nd Air Mobility Wing, which flies 12 KC-135s.

No date has been set for activation at Keesler of the 345th AS, which will partner with AFRC's 403rd Wing in operating and maintaining its eight C-130Js.

Vietnam War Unit Honored

Members of Det. 1 of the 314th Troop Carrier Wing received the Presidential Unit Citation for their service during the Vietnam War during an Oct. 9 ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz presented them with the high honor, which recognizes extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy.

These former special operations airmen flew MC-130E Combat Talons in support of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group from 1966 to 1968 on missions such as transport, air rescue, and leaflet drops over enemy territory.

Although the MACVSOG and its supporting units received the citation in April 2001, Det. 1 was not included as a supporting unit on the citation, prompting former Capt. Richard Sell, formerly of Det. 1, to wage a six-year campaign to serve the unit's recognition. It came in June.

Career Path Solidified for UAV Pilots

The Air Force leadership approved the creation of an 18X Air Force Specialty Code for officers who operate remotely piloted aircraft, during an intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance summit at the Pentagon.

This new, yet-to-be-named career field will be considered "rated," carry a six-year active duty service commitment, and will qualify for aircrew incentive pay, the Air Force said in a release Oct. 2.

The leadership said it wanted more time to come up with a name for this career field that better articulates what the new mission area entails. The "unmanned" aircraft label appeared to be losing appeal since, as Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz said, these platforms are "anything but that." UAV operators are ever vigilant at the controls, even though physically separated from the aircraft.

Future 18X pilots will earn an occupational badge, a new set of wings designed by SSgt. Austin May, a public affairs specialist with the 100th Air Refueling Wing at RAF Mildenhall, Britain.

For enlisted airmen, the USAF leadership decided at the summit that the previously created 1UOX sensor operator career field will be a subcategory under career enlisted aviators.

It also gave the nod for a new set of sensor operator wings that is similar in appearance to standard enlisted aviator wings but with a different shield.

Also, the leadership decided, for now, to stick with the service's current intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance structure—built around the Air Force ISR Agency, which reports directly to the Air Staff—instead of pursuing a separate ISR major command or ISR numbered air force.

EOD Airman Receives Bronze Star

TSgt. Michael Williams, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with the 437th Civil Engineer Squadron at Charleston AFB, S.C., on Oct. 15 received a Bronze Star Medal for valor. Williams was critically injured by an anti-personnel landmine during a patrol Aug. 2 near Mushan village, Afghanistan.

Although he lost the lower portion of his left leg, he continued a post-blast crater analysis, gathering critical intelligence,

Let It Snow: B-1 bombers collect snow and ice during the season's first big snowfall at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., on Oct. 29. The 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth's host unit, supports B-1 operations.



USAF photo by A1C Corey Hook



Extra Vigilant at Minot: A B-52H takes off at Minot AFB, N.D., during the rapid launch portion of Exercise Prairie Vigilance, a combined-wing nuclear operational readiness exercise. One after the other, seven B-52s successfully launched, confirming the wing's agile and timely response capabilities.

while insurgents engaged his team with small-arms fire. Williams also aided his own medical care and manned his weapon to help protect his colleagues as they evacuated him.

Ex-POW Johnson Honored

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society awarded the National Patriot Award, its highest civilian recognition, to Rep. Sam Johnson (R-Tex.) on Oct. 10 during a gala dinner in Dallas with more than 30 living MoH recipients in attendance.

Johnson, a 29-year Air Force veteran who spent nearly seven years as a pris-

oner of war in Vietnam, was recognized for his tireless work to support America's men and women in uniform as well as his efforts on behalf of veterans.

"It is a deep honor to be surrounded by so many living Medal of Honor recipients," said Johnson at the dinner. He added, "I do not take this recognition lightly." Past recipients of the National Patriot Award include retired Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf (2002) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) (2005).

Land-Use Plan Scrapped

The Michigan Air National Guard no longer plans to have long-unused land

at Selfridge Air National Guard Base undergo commercial redevelopment because government business at the facility is now booming.

The *Detroit News* reported Oct. 17 that the Air Guard had selected Beztak Companies to develop the land by building a hotel, retirement community, medical facilities, and more on about 670 acres.

However, the federal government now plans to build a new intelligence operations center on the base that the US Border Patrol, Michigan State Police, and their Canadian counterparts will use.

Obituary

Richard T. Whitcomb, 88, famed aviation engineer who developed the so-called "Area Rule" that overcame drag problems in transonic flight, died of pneumonia Oct. 13 in Newport News, Va. In 1951, while working for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (predecessor to NASA), Whitcomb discovered that aircraft could travel faster using the same amount of fuel by incorporating a "wasp-waist" body design. Convair was the first to take advantage of the Area Rule, redesigning an F-102 prototype that flew with 25 percent less drag and about 100 mph faster. Other companies followed suit. He received the 1954 Collier Trophy at the age of 34 and the Exceptional Service Medal from the Air Force in 1956. Whitcomb was born Feb. 21, 1921, in Evanston, Ill.; he grew up in Worcester, Mass. ■

News Notes

■ Adm. Timothy J. Keating relinquished command of US Pacific Command to Adm. Robert F. Willard during an Oct. 19 ceremony at PACOM headquarters at Camp Smith, Hawaii. Keating, who is retiring after 38 years of service, led the command since March 2007.

■ President Obama on Oct. 16 nominated Army Lt. Gen. Keith B. Alexander for promotion to the rank of general to take command of the new US Cyber Command, a subunified command under US Strategic Command. In this post, Alexander would continue to lead the National Security Agency.

■ Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., Air Force Reserve chief and Air Force Reserve Command commander, on Oct. 11 moved his permanent residence from Bolling AFB, D.C., to Robins AFB, Ga., home of AFRC.

■ The Air Force announced Oct. 21 that it has a new "X-plane" with the designation of its Advanced Composite Cargo Aircraft technology demonstrator

as the X-55A. The ACCA is a Dornier 328J aircraft modified with an advanced composite structure.

■ The US military's first triservice facility, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., officially stood up on Oct. 1. The joint base is an amalgam of McGuire Air Force Base, Ft. Dix, and NAES Lakehurst mandated by BRAC 2005.

■ A C-17 loaded with supplies for troops in Afghanistan flew a new route from Ramstein AB, Germany, to Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan, on Oct. 7, becoming the first Air Force transport to traverse Russian airspace under a new US-Russia transit agreement signed in July.

■ SrA. Joshua Livingston of the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., was selected as the Department of Defense's Firefighter of the Year, the Pentagon announced Oct. 16. Among his achievements, he has saved an infant's life.

■ Recognized with a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in Southwest Asia was SMSgt. Shawn Ricchuito,

a firefighter with the 886th Civil Engineer Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany. TSgt. Rudy Moreno of the 355th Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., on Oct. 16 received an Army Bronze Star Medal for his leadership during convoy operations in Iraq.

■ One dozen airmen each carrying 50-pound rucksacks on Oct. 16 completed an 11-day, 824-mile march from Lackland AFB, Tex., to Hurlburt Field, Fla., in honor of special tactics airmen who have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

■ A C-17 from the 12-nation Strategic Airlift Capability consortium's Heavy Airlift Wing at Papa AB, Hungary, on Sept. 29 flew the unit's first mission to Afghanistan in support of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

■ The US military in September vacated Forward Operating Location Manta at Eloy Alfaro AB, Ecuador, and formally returned the installation to the control of the Ecuadorean military on Sept. 18, according to press reports. ■