

Boeing Eating KC-46 Overrun

The Air Force won't bear any costs stemming from a previously undisclosed redesign and necessary rework of KC-46 tanker test models being built by Boeing, the service said July 24. Company CEO W. James McNerney Jr. told financial reporters the company is taking a \$272 million charge against earnings in the second quarter to cover the cost of fixing a problem with wiring harnesses on test and production aircraft.

Air Force spokesman Ed Gulick said, "All costs above the \$4.9 billion ceiling" on the fixed-price program "will continue to be Boeing's responsibility," and government costs "will not go up as a result" of Boeing's announcement.

McNerney said the problem is "well-understood," and the fix is being installed to keep the program "on track to the next major milestone," the first flight of the "fully provisioned tanker" near the end of the third quarter. Investors should keep in mind that Boeing sees the KC-46 as a highly profitable "\$80 billion ... franchise" with potential orders of 400 aircraft and "decades" of probable production and "in-service support" work, he said.

The "KC-X" program calls for 179 airplanes to be delivered by about 2027. His forecast likely includes winning both a follow-on KC-Y contest as well as export orders.

Boeing Chief Financial Officer Greg Smith had earlier told financial reporters in a July 23 teleconference that fixes to the wiring problem were "in hand," and the project was doing well overall. Aside from a need to redesign and reroute wiring harnesses, Smith said the sections of the four prototype KC-46s "came together extremely well," and the harness problem is the type of issue normally discovered during initial integration.

Bomber Request Sent to Industry

The Air Force in mid-July released its Long-Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B) request for proposals to industry, officially putting the program in the competitive phase. USAF did not disclose when proposals are due, but Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said in a brief statement released July 10 that the RFP will lead to a competitive selection of the prime contractor in the spring 2015 timeframe.

"The LRS-B is a top modernization priority for the Air Force," said James. "It will be an adaptable and highly capable system based upon mature technology. We look forward to industry's best efforts in supporting this critical national security capability."

Airman Awarded Silver Star

MSgt. Michael F. Sears received the Silver Star, the nation's third highest decoration for gallantry in combat, for his valor during an enemy ambush in Afghanistan in 2012. Sears is an explosive ordnance disposal technician with the New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing located near Atlantic City. Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, New Jersey's adjutant general, presented Sears with the Silver Star on June 28 at the wing's headquarters.

On Sept. 29, 2012, Sears led a three-man EOD team that came under attack in Ghazni province, Afghanistan. During the two-hour firefight, Sears provided life-saving aid to a wounded Polish soldier, directed his team to return fire while exposing himself to enemy fire, and continued to fight after a rocket-propelled grenade blast temporarily knocked him unconscious, according to a wing news release. "It is just phenomenal how

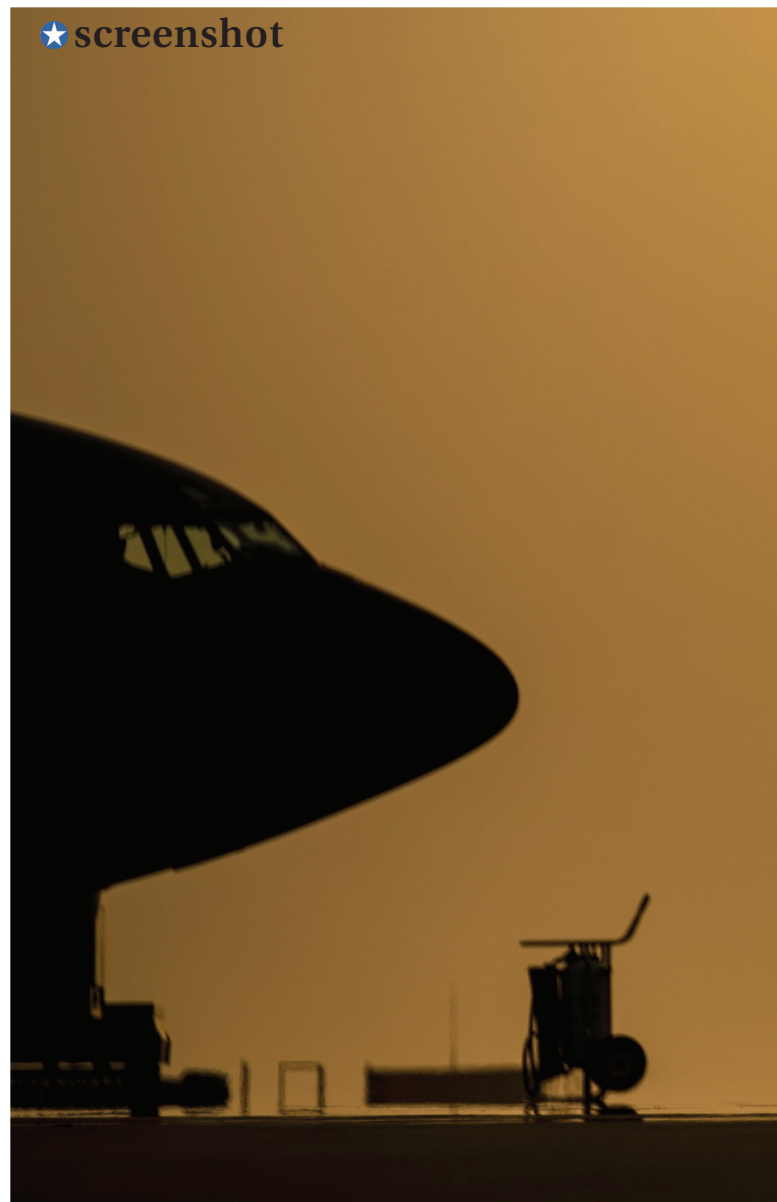
he just stepped out away from safety to save others," said Army Gen. Frank J. Grass, National Guard Bureau chief.

Sears credited his two colleagues that day, TSgt. Jay Hurley and SSgt. Josh Jerden, for their courage under fire. "Their actions showed what kind of team I had," he said.

Carlisle To ACC, Robinson To PACAF

The Senate on July 23 confirmed Gen. Herbert J. "Hawk" Carlisle to take over Air Combat Command and Gen. (sel.) Lori J. Robinson to replace Carlisle as Pacific Air Forces commander. Carlisle, a veteran pilot with more than 3,000 flight hours, mostly in fighters, will replace Gen. Gilmary Michael

★ screenshot



Hostage III, who's led ACC since September 2011. Hostage plans to retire from the Air Force after 37 years of service. Carlisle has commanded PACAF since August 2012.

Robinson will be the first woman and the first non-pilot to command one of the Air Force's combat component commands. A senior battle manager with more than 900 flight hours in E-3 AWACS and E-8 JSTARS aircraft, Robinson currently is ACC's vice commander.

She will rise to the rank of general for her new assignment, making her the Air Force's second serving female four-star, along with Gen. Janet C. Wolfenbarger, head of Air Force Materiel Command.

Second Air Force Gets New Boss

Brig. Gen. Mark A. Brown assumed command of 2nd Air Force during a July 3 change of command ceremony at Keesler AFB, Miss.

Brown, who previously served as Air Force Materiel Command comptroller at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, replaced Maj. Gen. Leonard A. Patrick, who has led 2nd Air Force since July 2011. Leonard now serves as vice commander of Air Education and Training Command at JBSA-Randolph, Texas.

The numbered air force "is responsible for conducting basic military and nonflying technical training for the Air Force, joint, and coalition enlisted members, and support officers," according to a June 30 news release.

New Leader Coming to 10th Air Force

Brig. Gen. Richard W. Scobee will become commander of 10th Air Force, one of Air Force Reserve Command's three numbered air forces, announced the command on July 7. He will succeed Maj. Gen. William B. Binger, who has led 10th Air Force since November 2011.

Scobee has served as the director of Air Force Reserve plans, programs, and requirements at the Pentagon since October 2013.

Headquartered at NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas, 10th Air Force oversees AFRC's cyber, space, special operations, strike, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

Heithold Becomes Air Force's Top Commando

Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold assumed command of Air Force Special Operations Command in a July 3 ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla. He replaced Lt. Gen. Eric E. Fiel, who led the organization since June 2011.

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The crew of a KC-135 tanker belonging to the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron—Capt. Andrea Delosreyes at right, with Capt. Trent Parker and A1C Kevin Haggith—step to their aircraft before a refueling mission over Iraq.



USAF photo by SSgt. Vernon Young Jr.

USAF photo by A1C Rebecca Imwalle



“I’m fortunate to take a command that’s in the shape that it is,” said Heithold. He noted that AFSOC has the best readiness posture it’s ever had.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III presided over the ceremony. Navy Adm. William H. McRaven, head of US Special Operations Command, also participated.

Heithold took the helm of AFSOC, which comprises some 19,000 airmen, after three years as SOCOM’s vice commander.

Leaders Boost F-35 Despite Engine Fire

Although the triservice F-35 fleet continued to fly under restricted flight rules more than a month after the damaging engine fire on an Air Force F-35A at Eglin AFB, Fla., Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III strongly defended the fighter and insisted the fire would not be a showstopper for the crucial program. In a July 30 Pentagon briefing, Welsh said a thorough inspection of all the F-35s indicated the problem causing the fire in the Pratt & Whitney engine was unique to that aircraft.

Although the Air Force F-35s will continue the restricted flights until the root cause of the fire is identified, Welsh said he did not believe the incident would affect the F-35A’s reaching its planned initial operational capability in late 2016. And he said the Lightning II was “the only answer” for the Air Force’s future fighter force.

The F-35 also received support from Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel who praised the fighter during a visit to Eglin in late July. Although he acknowledged there “are issues” with the F-35, Hagel said, “I don’t know of a platform that we’ve ever had” that made it into operational service without going through “issues.”

A Panama Chat: A 96th Bomb Squadron B-52 is readied for takeoff at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., Aug. 11. The Air Force Global Strike Command airmen were participating in PANAMAX 2014, an annual exercise hosted by US Southern Command that focuses on the protection of the Panama Canal zone. The US and 17 partner nations participate in the exercise, which provides interoperability training for USAF airmen and allied nations’ aircrews.

“Brad, your new command is now globally postured, and the air commandos of AFSOC will never, ever let you down,” said Fiel, who is retiring from the Air Force, effective Sept. 1, following 33 years of service. McRaven credited Fiel with transforming “AFSOC and its magnificent air commandos to meet the demands of the 21st century.”

Nuclear Career Fields Plus-Up

The Air Force will inject 1,100 additional airmen into eight key nuclear career specialties this fall to bring them up to full Manning and alleviate strain on the force. These crucially undermanned roles are “principally in the field,” Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said when she first announced the initiative in June.

The career fields impacted include security forces, nuclear weapons, aircraft armaments, bomber maintenance, ICBM electronic and systems maintenance, missile alert facility maintenance, and command post controllers, Air Force spokesman Maj. Eric Badger told *Air Force Magazine* on July 10.

“When you’re undermanned that means the existing people have to work harder and that impacts morale and it could impact other things as well,” said James during a June 18 breakfast meeting with reporters in Washington, D.C. The Air Force exempted nuclear career fields from current force reduction measures and initiatives to increase Manning across the nuclear mission, James said.

Sub for Russian RD-180 Sought

Although the Russians have not acted on their threat to stop deliveries of the RD-180 engines that are used in many US military and commercial space launches, the threat has triggered action by the Air Force and Congress to reduce the dependency on the rocket motor.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said July 30 she expects the service to announce changes to its space launch procurement program later this year. “We are heavily reliant” on the RD-180 engine, James said, “and our desire is to get off of that reliance.”

A senior Russian official had warned that Moscow would withhold the powerful RD-180 in response to the economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union over Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

The Air Force is working through both near-term and long-term options, said James, to include possibly speeding up purchases of the US-produced Delta V program, even though that could mean incurring greater costs.

Earlier in July, Gen. William L. Shelton, then commander of Air Force Space Command, said he did not expect any changes to the current launch schedule despite uncertainty surrounding the supply of the RD-180 engine, which powers United Launch Alliance rockets. The US has a stockpile of 15 of the Russian heavy-lift engines, and ULA is expecting delivery of two more this month, followed by another three in October, Shelton told Pentagon reporters.

If there were an interruption of the supply or they were told they could not use those engines for national security space missions, the financial impact would be between \$1.5 billion and \$5 billion, depending on the scenario, he said. The range really comes down to satellite storage cost and whether a more expensive booster would be required.

Headquarters Realignment and Cuts

Making good on promises the service would realign its headquarters, major command, and numbered air force organizations, USAF announced changes July 14 that it projects will save \$1.6 billion over the next five years.

“We are aggressively pursuing reductions within the first year, rather than spread them out over five years as allowed by DOD,” said Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James. “It’s better for airmen because it provides them predictability and allows us to restabilize our workforce sooner. It also allows us to harvest the savings earlier so that we can plow it back into readiness and some of our key modernization programs.”

As part of that effort, James said the Air Force would eliminate 3,459 positions in headquarters in response to the Defense Department’s directive to reduce costs and staff levels by at least 20 percent. Acting Deputy Chief Management Officer William H. Booth Sr. said the reductions would allow the Air Force to bolster personnel at the wing levels and maintain optimal readiness.

To help with the headquarters cuts, the Air Force is offering voluntary early retirement authority and voluntary separation incentive pay to civilian personnel.

Another of the initiatives will split the operations, plans, and requirements office on the Air Staff (A3/5), and merge planning functions with strategic plans and programs (A8). The A3 operations office will stand alone, and planners will be consolidated in a new A5/8 office. Programming duties performed by A8 will be sent to the service’s financial management organization. The new A5/8 will be responsible for developing, managing, and constantly assessing USAF’s strategy, while the finances will be in another organization. This will allow USAF to move forward on long-range goals, despite short-term budgeting challenges.

Bird Strikes Caused Fatal HH-60 Crash

Multiple bird strikes caused the fatal HH-60 Pave Hawk crash on the Norfolk coast of England back in January, US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa investigators determined.

The flight of two HH-60s diverted over a marsh area to avoid populated areas during a night search training mission from RAF Lakenheath, England, Jan. 7. The helicopters startled a flock of geese, several of which took flight and crashed through the Pave Hawk’s windscreen and cabin, knocking the pilot, copilot, and gunner unconscious, according to the aircraft accident investigation, released July 8.

“The types of geese that hit the [Pave Hawk] weigh between six and 12 pounds,” states the report. “A bird weighing 7.5 pounds would impact with 53 times the kinetic energy of a baseball moving at 100 miles per hour. The impact from the geese exceeded the design tolerance of the [mishap aircraft’s] windscreen.”

The impact also disabled the helo’s flight-path stabilization system, allowing the HH-60 to roll left, stall the rotors, and impact the ground, killing all four crew members. The crash caused minimal damage to civilian property, but accident investigators pegged the loss of government property at an estimated \$40.3 million.

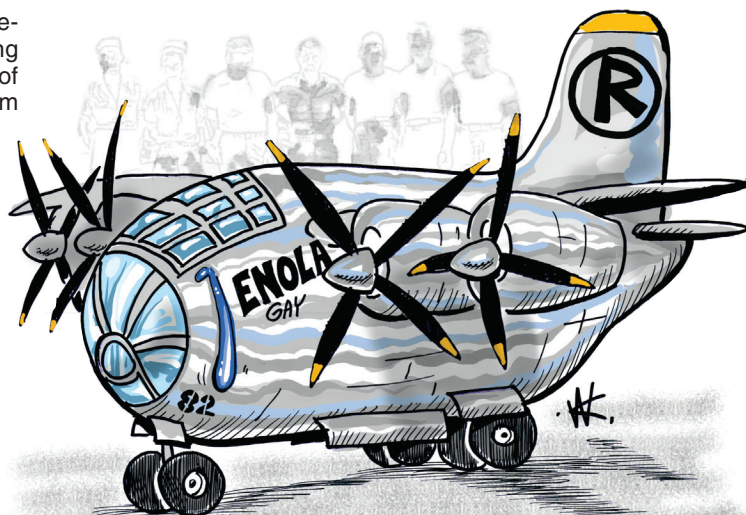
Pave Hawk serial No. 88-26109 was assigned to the 56th Rescue Squadron at Lakenheath.

Last *Enola Gay* Crew Member Dies

The last surviving crew member of the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 Superfortress that dropped the atomic bomb on Hi-

roshima, Japan, to hasten the end of World War II, has died. Retired Maj. Theodore Van Kirk died July 28 at a nursing home in Stone Mountain, Ga. He was 93.

Van Kirk, known as “Dutch,” was the navigator in the *Enola Gay* crew, led by Col. Paul W. Tibbets Jr., who commanded the 509th Composite Bomb Group, formed to conduct the atomic bomb missions. Flying from an airfield on the captured Japanese island of Tinian, the crew dropped the 9,000-pound weapon, called “Little Boy,” over Hiroshima early on Aug. 6, 1945. Three days later, another B-29 from the 509th dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered Aug. 15.



USAF photo by SSGT. Vernon Young, Jr.



Van Kirk always supported the atomic bombings for avoiding an invasion of Japan that could have killed hundreds of thousands of allied troops and Japanese.

Confused Predator

Investigators determined that a coolant leak, which led to a digital control system error, caused the loss of the MQ-1B Predator that ditched in the Mediterranean Sea on Jan 17, Air Combat Command officials announced on July 10.

The remotely piloted aircraft was airborne for 10 hours before spiking a high engine temperature, causing a loss of thrust and uncommanded descent from 14,000 feet, according to the accident investigation's executive summary.

The RPA operator diverted the Predator to the nearest available airfield, consulted with an instructor pilot, and conducted proper troubleshooting procedures. A loss of engine coolant then exposed a temperature sensor to the ambient air, causing the aircraft's computer to misinterpret the condition as a cold-start and override pilot commands.

To the Mountaintop: SSGT. Daniel Leavindofske and SrA. David Babcock help load 28,224 halal meals onto a C-17 for a humanitarian mission over the Mount Sinjar region of Iraq on Aug. 9. The humanitarian aid includes bottled water and was delivered to members of an Iraqi religious minority who had fled to the mountaintop to avoid attacks from ISIS militants.

The digital control increased and enriched the fuel flow, forcing the crew to guide the RPA to a forced landing at sea. Loss of the RPA and mission equipment is estimated at \$4.6 million, according to the accident investigation report.

Sabbatical From Service Offered

Air Force officials announced plans to allow up to 40 Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Reserve personnel to take from one-to-three years of partially paid time out of uniform to focus on other personal or professional purposes, under the congressionally authorized Career Intermision Pilot Program. The program allows officers and enlisted airmen who meet the specified eligibility requirements to take a sabbatical from service and then return seamlessly to duty, according to a July 30 news release.

"This program offers a few high performing airmen the opportunity to focus on priorities outside of their military careers without having to choose between competing priorities," said Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. Applications will be accepted through Oct. 15, and a Total Force selection board will meet Nov. 12 to pick 20 officers and 20 enlisted airmen for the intermission.

"This is a first for the Total Force," said Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James. "We've been working together for a couple of years to develop common personnel practices and implement tools used by each component, but this panel represents our first opportunity to truly assess our airmen, whatever their component, as equal members of the Total Force."

By the Numbers

100

The number of Minuteman III missile silos destroyed under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, with three to go to meet the treaty limit of 1,550 deployed US nuclear warheads.

The War on Terrorism

Operation Enduring Freedom

Casualties

As of Aug. 20, a total of 2,340 Americans have died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,337 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of those deaths, 1,833 were killed in action with the enemy and 507 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 19,952 troops wounded in action.

New ISAF Commander Confirmed

The Senate confirmed in July the nomination of Army Gen. John F. Campbell to become the next commander of the International Security Assistance Force and US Forces in Afghanistan. Campbell, the Army vice chief of staff, replaces Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., who was confirmed to become the next Marine Corps Commandant. He replaces Gen. James F. Amos, whose four-year tour will end in October. The timing of the transition in Kabul has not been set.

During their confirmation hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee, both Dunford and Campbell supported President Obama's plan to reduce US forces to 9,800 next year and expressed confidence in the ability of the Afghan security forces to defeat the Taliban insurgency while US and coalition troops pull back to advising, assisting, and training roles.

Dunford also countered the opposition of Republicans on the committee to the US purchase of Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters for the Afghan Air Force. Dunford said the helicopters, which the Afghans are familiar with, will

be crucial to the capabilities of the Afghan special mission wing. And, he added, that unit will play a key part in the force protection of the residual US troops.

US Continues Drawdown, Dismantles Bases

As US forces continue their drawdown to a train-and-assist force of 9,800 next year, they are aggressively dismantling bases and shredding for scrap or selling at enormous discounts billions of dollars worth of vehicles and equipment that are worn out or considered excess and too expensive to ship back to the United States. American commanders reported by the end of July they had reduced their infrastructure from about 800 bases and outposts in 2011 to less than 60 and plan to take it down even further by the end of the year.

Among the equipment being reduced to scrap are dozens of the mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles purchased to save US troops from deadly improvised explosive devices. A few of the MRAPs were transferred to allies that would pay to ship them out of Afghanistan and some to the Afghan security forces.

Getting equipment out of land-locked Afghanistan with its primitive transportation network is much more difficult and expensive than it was removing gear from Iraq, which had a good highway system and easy access to ports and supply bases in Kuwait.

Read more in the September 2013 article "Afghanistan in Retrograde" at www.airforcemag.com.

More Fighters to PACOM

A theater security package of F-15E Strike Eagles deployed to South Korea in early August, while other USAF fighters shifted to a new deployment in Australia.

Twelve F-15Es from the 366th Fighter Wing at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and support personnel left for Osan AB, South Korea, on Aug. 1 to participate with their Republic of Korea counterparts and allies in exercises and other training.

Sneak Peek: The first KC-46 Pegasus on the assembly line at Boeing's Everett factory outside of Seattle. The aircraft—767-2C—is a provisioned freighter that will eventually be finished as a KC-46. It has a baseline nonmilitary aircraft body but an enhanced flight deck, body tanks, tanker systems provisions, and a refueling boom. Next up for the assembly line is a fully provisioned KC-46 tanker, with refueling systems and military avionics. It will be given military certification.



Photo by Sagor Pathak

Senior Staff Changes

RETIREMENTS: Gen. William L. Shelton, Lt. Gen. Eric E. Fiel.

PROMOTIONS: To Lieutenant General: James K. McLaughlin.
To Brigadier General: Walter J. Lindsley.

CONFIRMATIONS: To be General: Herbert J. Carlisle, Lori J. Robinson. **To be Major General:** Mark A. Brown, Roger W. Teague. **To be Brigadier General:** Lee E. Payne, Ricky N. Rupp. **To be ANG Brigadier General:** Clarence Ervin.

NOMINATIONS: To be Lieutenant General: Steven L. Kwast, Terrence J. O’Shaughnessy.

CHANGES: Gen. Herbert J. Carlisle, from Cmdr., PACAF, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, to Cmdr., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va. ... Gen. John E. Hyten, from Vice Cmdr., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo., to Cmdr., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo. ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Terrence J. O’Shaughnessy, from Dir., Ops, PACOM, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii, to Cmdr., 7th AF, Osan AB, South Korea ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Steven L. Kwast, from Vice Cmdr., Air University, AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala., to Cmdr., Air University, AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala. ... Gen. (sel.) Lori J. Robinson, from Vice Cmdr., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va., to Cmdr., PACAF, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii ... Brig. Gen. Richard W. Scobee, from Dir., Plans, P&R, USAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., 10th AF, NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas.

COMMAND CHIEF RETIREMENT: CMSgt. Richard A. Parsons.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGE: Lisa Disbrow, to Asst. SECAF, Financial Mgmt., Pentagon.

In addition, an earlier TSP package of Air Guard F-16s deployed to Kunsan AB, South Korea, redeployed to Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal, Australia, to participate in multilateral training events.

Agreement Reached on VA Reform Bill

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), the heads of the Senate and House Veterans’ Affairs committees, respectively, announced on July 28 that House and Senate conferees have agreed on VA reform legislation.

“This bill makes certain that we address the immediate crisis of veterans being forced onto long waiting lists for health care,” said Sanders in a statement. “It strengthens the VA so

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that it will be able to hire the doctors, nurses, and medical personnel it needs so we can permanently put an end to the long waiting lists.”

Veterans’ health care needs should be considered a cost of war and funded as emergency spending, said Sanders. To that end, the bill contains \$15 billion in emergency spending, including \$10 billion for enabling veterans who live more than 40 miles away from a VA facility to seek outside care and \$5 billion for hiring more doctors and staff and for upgrades at existing VA facilities. Among its other provisions, the bill promises to improve delivery of care for those who experienced sexual trauma while in uniform and extends housing for veterans struggling with traumatic brain injury. ■

Force Cuts Blocked, Pay Raise Limited

The Senate Appropriations Committee July 17 approved a \$489.6 billion Fiscal 2015 defense funding bill that supports most of the Air Force’s top procurement requests, but rejects the service’s request to retire the A-10 fleet.

The Senate joined the House in approving procurement of the requested 26 F-35As, seven KC-46A tankers, 13 C-130Js, and 12 MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft. But the Senate panel refused to allow the Air Force to retire the A-10s, shifting \$338 million from “lower priority” accounts to A-10 operations. It also barred retirement of any of the 31 E-3 AWACS.

The Senate committee accepted the Air Force’s proposal to cut 12,000 Active Duty airmen and 4,000 Reservists, but does not cut any personnel from the Air National Guard.

The Senate bill holds the military pay raise at one percent, slows the growth of the basic allowance for housing (BAH), and continues the Air Force’s personnel reductions.

However, it balked at reducing support for military commissaries and requiring higher contributions for Tricare health coverage.

The appropriations panel accepted the Pentagon’s request to provide a smaller pay raise than the 1.8 percent the standard formula calls for and a lower BAH increase as part of the effort to slow the rapidly rising cost of military compensation. The House, however, provided the higher pay raise, meaning the issue will have to be compromised. Both chambers agreed to freeze pay for generals and admirals.

Despite the panel’s unanimous vote late July 17, committee leaders expressed doubt the bill would get a hearing on the Senate floor before the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. Congress recessed for six weeks on July 31 and will be in session only a couple weeks in September before going home again to campaign for re-election.