

## ■ All Three Bombers in Guam

The Air Force deployed its three bomber types to the Pacific at the same time, with all three present on the Andersen AFB, Guam, flight line in August.

B-1s from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., deployed to Guam as part of the continuous bomber presence rotation to the Pacific, replacing B-52s from Minot AFB, N.D., that were still on the flight line when the Lancers arrived, according to Pacific Air Forces. Meanwhile, three B-2s from Whiteman AFB, Mo., landed at Andersen for a short-term deployment.

The stealth bombers flew local and regional training sorties in the Pacific to “demonstrate our readiness and commitment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region,” according to an Air Force news release on the deployment.

At the same time, Air Force Global Strike Command and US Central Command are working on a continuous bomber presence rotation to CENTCOM, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein said Aug. 10. “We’re managing the bomber force not only for what we push forward, but also what we do from a global strike perspective from the United States.” (See “A New Continuous Bomber Presence,” p. 17.)

## ■ More Flying Needed To Increase Pilot Retention

The Air Force needs to do more to address its shortage of fighter pilots, such as increasing flight time at home,

in addition to giving pilots more money to stay in uniform.

The service is looking to increase the bonus for pilots who elect to stick around following their Active Duty commitment to handle a “crisis” in its pilot levels—a shortage of about 700 right now, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said during a State of the Air Force briefing on Aug. 10. The Air Force is also standing up new F-16 training units, with candidate locations expected to be announced by the end of the year, and augmenting up to two existing training locations to increase pilot production by October 2017.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein, himself a former fighter pilot, said the dramatic change in flying from his time in the cockpit is impacting pilot morale negatively. Goldfein said when he was a captain, he would fly in three flag exercises per year, along with a rotation to the National Training Center—all skills that he came to use in Desert Storm. But now, pilots are getting about half that training due to the decrease in the fighter fleet and an increased operations tempo.

“I’m a believer that morale and readiness are absolutely linked,” Goldfein said. “And where we have high readiness, we have reasonably high morale. The quality of service is high. And where we have low readiness, we have our largest morale issues.”

**My, What Big Teeth You Have:** Colombian air force Capt. Juan Monsalve readies for takeoff from Barksdale AFB, La., during a Green Flag East exercise. The aircraft is a Super Tucano. Green Flag East is a joint close-air-support exercise to improve interoperability between the US and Colombia.



USAF photo by SrA. Mozer O. Da Cunha



**Ready, Aim ...** : MSgt. Audra Jimenez mounts an AIM-120 air-to-air missile to an F-15 on the flight line at Graf Ignatievo, Bulgaria. Elements of four F-15 squadrons conducted air policing missions with the Bulgarian air force, keeping watch on the nation's airspace. The deployment was part of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

USAF photo by SSgt. Joe W. McFadden

#### ■ USAF Considering Upgrading Chapman's Award

The Air Force is pressing to upgrade the valor award for fallen TSgt. John A. Chapman from an Air Force Cross to a Medal of Honor after new video shows he continued fighting alone after a Navy SEAL team he was with left him on an Afghan mountainside.

Chapman was killed in a 2002 battle on an Afghan mountain, after the SEAL team he was with retreated, thinking he was already dead. But new video suggests Chapman was still alive and killed two more insurgents and provided cover fire to an Army rescue helicopter before he was killed, the *New York Times* reported on Aug. 28. Opinions seemed to change when Air Force officials, using new video enhancement technology, reviewed video from the battle caught by a Predator overhead, the *Times* reported.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James is reportedly pressing for the Air Force Cross to be upgraded to a Medal of Honor. It would be the Air Force's first Medal of Honor awarded in the Global War on Terrorism. Air Force officials said Defense Department policy prohibits the discussion of possible award upgrades, and there has been no official update since the service said last year it was reviewing previously awarded medals.

#### ■ Wolters Takes Command of USAFE

Gen. Tod D. Wolters on Aug. 11 received his fourth star and took command of US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa during a ceremony at Ramstein AB, Germany. Wolters took command from Gen. Frank Gorenc, who retired after running USAFE for three years.

Wolters previously served as the director of operations for the Joint Staff. He said during the ceremony that USAFE needs to continue to "get better" in Europe because as the Air Force improves its presence and operations in the region, adversaries are doing the same.

#### ■ Engine Failure Led to F-16 Crash

An unrecoverable engine malfunction caused an F-16 assigned to the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, to crash in August 2015, USAFE-AFAFRICA investigators found.

They concluded a structural failure of the bearing cage within the lower governor ballhead bearing caused the main engine control to malfunction and, as a result, prohibited fuel flow, according to an executive summary of the findings. The pilot was unable to restart the failed engine despite five attempts because the lack of fuel caused a loss of thrust. The pilot, assigned to the 480th Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem, ejected after jettisoning



ANG photo by SSgt. Edward Eagerton

**Rescue Whirllys:** An HH-60 helicopter takes off from a field near Kotzebue, Alaska, after loading simulated casualties during Arctic Chinook. The joint US Northern Command and Coast Guard exercise focused on multinational search and rescue, in case a mass rescue operation is needed in the Arctic.

the fuel tanks and experienced minor injuries. The aircraft was destroyed on impact near Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Loss of the jet was valued at \$39.8 million. The investigation board found maintenance records did not suggest there were problems with the aircraft before the crash, according to a news release announcing the findings. There were no civilian injuries or casualties.

**Hill F-16s To Find New Life as Trainers**

The Air Force in August announced new possible homes for the F-16s at Hill AFB, Utah, as the base moves to the F-35 and the service looks to fill a need for new fighter pilots.

It's the third possible move for the Hill Vipers, first expected to move on to replace A-10 units, then expected to stay through

2018. The Air Force on Aug. 11 announced it will augment pilot training at up to two existing F-16 locations: Luke AFB, Ariz.; Holloman AFB, N.M.; JBSA-Lackland's Kelly Field Annex, Texas; or Tucson Arpt., Ariz., according to a news release. The service was to begin site surveys in mid-August, and Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said USAF will select the locations by the end of the year.

The Air Force in 2015 used the Hill F-16s to warn about the need for retiring A-10s. At the time, the service wanted to use the F-16s as a replacement mission for some A-10 units in the Air National Guard at Whiteman AFB, Mo., and Fort Wayne Arpt., Ind., and planned to send the F-16s to the Boneyard at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., if the A-10s were kept flying. However, after Congress blocked that move, the service devised a new plan for the F-16s.

As part of the Fiscal 2017 budget request, the service said it would keep them at Hill until at least 2018. Under the new plan, 45 F-16s will transition from the Utah base before then, and there will be no manpower lost as a result of the move, Col. David B. Lyons, commander of the 388th Fighter Wing, said in a Hill press release.

**From Bad to Worse**

Downwash from an HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopter assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in August 2014 caused a rock to dislodge. It knocked a hiker uncon-

**By the Numbers**

**617,000**

The number of new airline pilots the industry will need by 2035, along with 679,000 maintenance technicians, according to a Boeing projection released in August. The projected need comes as the Air Force projects its own shortfall in pilot ranks.

# The War on Terrorism

## US Central Command Operations: Freedom's Sentinel and Inherent Resolve

### Casualties

By Sept. 19, a total of 25 Americans had died in Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, and a total of 25 Americans had died in Operation Inherent Resolve.

The total includes 48 troops and two Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 16 were killed in action with the enemy, while 34 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 121 troops wounded in action during OFS and 16 troops in OIR.

### Busy Month for US Aircraft in Afghanistan

July marked the first full month that US aircraft had the authority to target the Taliban in Afghanistan, and that authority resulted in the busiest month of the past year.

US aircraft in July dropped 130 bombs in Afghanistan, bringing the total for the year to 675 bombs dropped in 3,029 close air support sorties, according to US Air Forces Central Command statistics. These air strikes are not "unilateral"; instead they are specifically tied to what the Afghan forces are doing on the ground, said US Army Brig. Gen. Charles H. Cleveland, the deputy chief of staff for communications for the Resolute Support Mission. In early July, most of the air strikes focused on the Kunduz region, and after that calmed down there was increased fighting in Helmand province, Cleveland said. About 80 of the strikes were tied to the authority to target the Taliban, he said.

At the same time, the Afghan air force has increased its capability. The AAF on Aug. 25 received five more MD-530 attack helicopters, in addition to the 23 that are already operational. These helicopters have seen action in Helmand in particular, Cleveland said. The AAF also has eight A-29 Super Tucanos that it is using for close air support across the country, he said.

### A New Continuous Bomber Presence

The Air Force will begin a continuing rotation of B-1 and B-52 aircraft to the US Central Command area of operations, switching between the two aircraft as the current B-52 deployment wraps up.

B-52s in April deployed to CENTCOM for the first time after the Air Force was able to expand a runway to fit the massive bombers. These aircraft replaced B-1Bs, which were forced to leave CENTCOM for the first time since 2001 and return to the continental US for upgrades.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein said during an Aug. 10 briefing that the newly upgraded B-1s

and the B-52s, with the recently improved infrastructure in CENTCOM, will rotate through the area of operations much like USAF bomber squadrons rotate through the Pacific.

However, unlike the Pacific bomber rotation, it is not likely that B-2s would rotate through CENTCOM, and because of current operations tempo, there is not a need for more than one squadron deployed at a time, Goldfein said.

### Jets Scrambled To Protect Ground Forces in Syria

The US scrambled aircraft ready to take down Syrian jets that were bombing in the vicinity of US special operations forces near the village of Hasakah on Aug. 18, the Pentagon said.

Two Syrian air force Su-24s dropped unguided munitions in Kurdish-held areas near the village in northeast Syria where US forces were training allied Kurdish fighters, Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said during an Aug. 19 briefing. When the bombing started, the US combined air operations center immediately called Russian officials, who confirmed they were Syrian aircraft.

At the same time ground forces—it's unclear whether they were US or Kurdish—used the emergency guard frequency to try to contact the Syrian jets, which did not respond. The US did not intercept the Syrian fighters, but was ready to "take whatever action is necessary" to protect US forces if they were threatened, said Davis.

### B-52s Strike in Afghanistan

B-52s recently struck targets in Afghanistan for the first time since arriving at al Udeid AB, Qatar, in April, and are ramping up sorties targeting ISIS, the Air Force's top officer said during a visit to the base. B-52s conducted two strikes in Afghanistan, dropping 27 weapons in support of counterterrorism operations, Air Forces Central Command said in a news release.

The aircraft have flown almost 270 sorties for Operation Inherent Resolve, dropping more than 1,300 bombs during 325 strikes, according to AFCENT.

"We got the B-52 back in the fight in Afghanistan and Iraq," said Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein. "We have the B-52 contributing to a significant ground effort and employing weapons in close proximity of friendly troops who are under attack, who are preparing the battlefield in new ways."

scious and inflicted a critical head wound, Pacific Air Forces investigators found.

The helicopter was hovering to rescue another hiker who was already injured and stuck on Copper Mountain, near a ridgeline, when the mishap occurred, according to an accident investigation board report released Aug. 16. The rock struck the previously uninjured hiker while he watched the rescue, causing the head wound. The need for a quick extraction of the first injured hiker; inability to use an alternate, safer rescue site; and the then-uninjured hiker's lifting of his head

to watch the rescue hoist—despite instructions to use his backpack to protect himself against falling rocks—substantially contributed to the mishap, investigators found. The second hiker recovered from his wounds at an Alaskan hospital, according to news reports.

### ■ Air Force Buys 30 More Reapers

The Air Force recently awarded General Atomics Aeronautical Systems a \$371 million contract for 30 more MQ-9 Reapers.



USAF photo by SrA. Dillian Bamman

**Say Hello to My Little Friends:** A B-1, part of the continuous bomber presence at Andersen AFB, Guam, flies over Osan AB, South Korea, accompanied by four F-16s. The show of force came after North Korea tested a nuclear weapon in September.

The sole-source contract calls for providing the aircraft in its 2015 production configuration, with delivery expected to be completed by 2019. The contract comes as the Air Force is working to build up its remotely piloted aircraft fleet, including new operating locations. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said the service will release a list of candidate bases for two new RPA operating bases—one wing and one operations group—this fall. The Air Force had earlier announced plans to procure a total of 75 more MQ-9s as a way to address overworked manpower and capacity issues.

#### ■ Additional Duties Reduction Announced

In an effort to “streamline demands” on airmen’s time, Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein released an Air Force-wide memorandum on Aug. 18 announcing a broad reduction in airmen’s additional duties.

The announcement emerges from a series of meetings with airmen at installations around the world and focuses on duties articulated in Air Force policy. According to a fact sheet released with the memo, immediate changes include the reassignment of some duties—like voting assistance counselor and approving official for government purchase cards—and the elimination of others—like buddy care monitor and records custodian.

Reassigned duties will be transferred from squadrons to commander support staff at the group or wing level. Reassignment will in some cases be slowed by personnel limitations, as the Air Force is working to rebuild commander staffing levels. Beginning Oct. 1, the inspector general will revise unit-level inspection standards in accordance with the reductions.

The memo also announced the intention to conduct a similar review of computer-based training requirements and duties originating from laws and from Department of Defense policies. USAF’s review of additional duties is motivated in

part by recognition of the unique challenges placed on units in an era of force reduction.

#### ■ Air Force’s 100th F-35

The Air Force’s 100th F-35 Lightning II strike fighter arrived at Luke AFB, Ariz., on Aug. 26, less than a month after the service declared its latest fifth generation aircraft ready for combat, according to a news release.

Luke, which received its first F-35 in 2014, now boasts more than 40 strike fighters, including Australian and Norwegian jets. The base also recently activated its third of six F-35 training units, the 63rd Fighter Squadron.

“This marks a milestone and shows the fact that the F-35 program has continued to grow, progress, and support initial operational capability,” Brig. Gen. Brook J. Leonard, the 56th Fighter Wing commander, said.

“It is also a ‘scare factor’ for our enemies that we are able to produce such an incredible platform at such a high production rate and that it’s getting out in the field in larger and larger numbers.”

#### ■ F-35 Targets Last Unmanned Phantom

The last unmanned QF-4 Phantom targeting drone flew as an F-35 target in August at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

Manned Phantoms will continue to be flown through December, when the 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron, Det. 1, will finish its transition to flying QF-16s, according to a 49th Wing news release. The QF-4 was also flown at Tyndall AFB, Fla., but the last was shot down in May 2015.

The 82nd ATRS has been flying the QF-16s since September 2014. The use of the modified F-16s “initiates the next chapter in advanced aerial targets, predominantly in support of more technologically superior air-to-air weapons test and evaluation programs,” said Lt. Col. Ryan Inman, the former 82nd ATRS commander, in the release. ★