

## Air Combat Command clears selected F-15s for flight

1/9/2008 - **LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS)** -- Air Combat Command Jan. 8 cleared a portion of its F-15 A-D model aircraft for flying status and recommended a limited return to flight for Air Force units worldwide following engineering risk assessments and data received from multiple fleet-wide inspections.

The return to fly order and recommendation applies only to those F-15 aircraft, about 60 percent of the total Air Force F-15 A-D fleet, that have cleared all inspections and have met longeron manufacturing specifications.

The order and recommendation follows more than two months of stand-down actions after an Air National Guard F-15C aircraft experienced catastrophic structural failure and broke apart in flight during a basic fighter maneuver training sortie in Missouri on Nov. 2.

"The priority in resuming operations for a portion of the F-15 fleet is the defense of our nation -- America deserves nothing less," said Gen. John D.W. Corley, Air Combat Command commander. "Aircraft inspection results and counsel from both military and industry experts have made me confident in the safety of a portion of the fleet. As a result, I have cleared those F-15s to return to fly."

The decision follows detailed information briefed on Jan. 4 to Air Combat Command from the Air Force's F-15 Systems Program Manager, senior engineers from Boeing and the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, as well as a briefing received Jan. 8 from the Accident Investigation Board president.

The information included an analysis of the health of the Air Force's F-15 fleet from findings from the Nov. 2 mishap investigation, maintenance inspections and actions completed and taken to date as well as historical science and engineering trend data from F-15 fleet management.

Inspections are more than 90 percent complete. Remaining inspections have primarily focused on the forward longerons. The longerons are a critical support structure.

TCTO inspections have discovered nine other aircraft with longeron fatigue-cracks. Additionally, approximately 40 percent of inspected aircraft have at least one longeron that does not meet blueprint specifications.

Deviations in these longerons will be analyzed at the WR-ALC. The analysis is expected to take approximately four weeks to complete. Once the analysis is complete, ACC will be able to better determine which aircraft will need further inspection, or repair, before returning them to flight.