



Capt. Paul Barbour

### ■ Airman Killed in T-38 Crash

A T-38 crashed at Laughlin AFB, Texas, on Nov. 20, killing Capt. Paul J. Barbour, 32. Barbour was the aircrew flight equipment commander with the 47th Operations Support Squadron and an instructor pilot (IP) with the 87th Flying Training Squadron.

Capt. Joshua Hammervold, also an IP for the 87th FTS, was injured in the crash.

"Tragic events like this are difficult for everyone—family, friends, coworkers, supervisors, and our entire Air Force," said Col. Charlie Velino, 47th Flying Training Wing commander. "Every day our pilots take a risk as they step into the cockpit, and every day they operate with the utmost skill, professionalism, and dedication to train the next generation of flying airmen and to ensure the safety of this great nation."

Laughlin temporarily grounded its aircraft after the crash, which took place during a training flight near the Texas-Mexico border. The 47th Flying Training Wing is responsible for undergraduate pilot training in the T-38, along with flying T-6s and T-1s. Flying operations resumed at Laughlin on Nov. 27.

### ■ JBER Airman Dies During Deployment to South Korea

A1C Darrick Jones, a JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, airman who was deployed to train Republic of Korea forces, collapsed and died on Nov. 6. Airmen attempted to resuscitate Jones, but were unable to revive him.

"The grief felt as a result of the loss of Airman 1st Class Jones cannot be overstated," said 673rd Air Base Wing Commander Col. George Dietrich. "On behalf of everyone at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, I offer our most sincere condolences to the family and friends."

Jones, 23, enlisted in the Air Force in September 2015 and had been stationed at JBER since August 2016. He served as a water and fuels systems apprentice with the 773rd Civil Engineering Squadron. At press time, his death remained under investigation.



A1C Darrick Jones



An F-35 from Hill AFB, Utah, taxis at Kadena AB, Japan.

### ■ F-35As Deploy to Japan

Twelve F-35As and about 300 airmen touched down in Japan on Nov. 2 for the first Pacific deployment of the Air Force's newest fighter. The jets, from the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings at Hill AFB, Utah, deployed to Kadena AB, Japan. They were part of a US Pacific Command theater

security package. Two of the aircraft also participated in a Seoul, South Korea, air show in late October.

During the deployment, the F-35s will "integrate various forces into joint, coalition, and bilateral training across many different environments," according to Pacific Air Forces. The deployment is

"long-planned," according to the Air Force, and follows the deployment of US Marine Corps F-35Bs to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. The F-35 is "ideally suited" for the Pacific and will be integrated both into training and "operations," PACAF Commander Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy said in the release.



T-6A Texans resumed flying operations Dec. 5.

### ■ T-6As Grounded at Vance after Physiological Incidents

The 71st Flying Training Wing at Vance AFB, Okla., grounded all T-6A trainers flying on Nov. 15 after pilots reported four physiological incidents there since Nov. 1. In each incident, "the aircraft's backup oxygen system operated as designed," and the pilot landed safely, according to a Vance press release. T-6A flying operations were halted while the wing analyzed the data from the reported events.

"Vance AFB is committed to ensuring aircrew safety is paramount, and [officials] are conducting a full investigation of the reported cases," said Col. Darrell Judy, 71st FTW commander, in the release. In the meantime, instructor pilots and students were briefed on the incidents to raise their awareness of the issue. Because all incidents were limited to the T-6A, training operations with the T-1A and T-38 continued as usual.



Lt. Gen. Steven Kwast addresses First Command for the first time as the new head of AETC.

### ■ Kwast Leaves Air University, Takes Charge at AETC

Lt. Gen. Steven L. Kwast assumed command of Air Education and Training Command in a ceremony at JBSA-Randolph, Texas, on Nov. 16, 2017. "When it was time to select the new AETC

commander, Gen. Steven Kwast was the obvious choice," said Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein, who presided over the ceremony. "In Kwast, we have an airman whose resume strikes a balance between combat warrior, intellectual, and leader. And perhaps most impor-

tantly, he exudes humility, credibility, and approachability."

Kwast served as commander and president of Air University at Maxwell AFB, Ala., since November 2014. He succeeds Lt. Gen. Darryl Roberson, who had led AETC since July 2015.

## ■ ACC Removes Logistics Chief

Air Combat Command's one-star general in charge of engineering, logistics, and force protection was removed from command on Nov. 27 for not maintaining a "healthy command climate." Brig. Gen. Carl Buhler was removed from command by ACC head Gen. James M. "Mike" Holmes following an inspector general investigation that found Buhler misused the official time of his subordinates, violated travel regulations, and abused his authority by improperly reassigning staff duties, according to an ACC statement to *Air Force Magazine*.



Brig. Gen. Carl Buhler

Buhler, who is now working as a special assistant to Holmes, had served in the position since September 2015 and previously commanded the Ogden Air Logistics Complex at Hill AFB, Utah. The deputy director of logistics, Marc Novak, is serving in the position until a new director is appointed, according to ACC.



USAF Thunderbirds Demonstration Squadron.

## ■ Thunderbirds Commander Relieved of Duty

The commander of the Air Force Thunderbirds was relieved of command following a loss of confidence in his "leadership and risk management style," Air Combat Command announced.

Lt. Col. Jason Heard was serving in his first season as commander of the US Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron and

Thunderbird 1. Heard was previously an F-15E expeditionary squadron commander with more than 3,000 flight hours.

Brig. Gen. Jeannie M. Leavitt, commander of the 57th Wing at Nellis AFB, Nev., relieved Heard effective Nov. 20. Leavitt determined a change was needed "to ensure the highest levels of pride, precision, and professionalism within the team," according to ACC.

## ■ Surge-Level Tempo Returns to Afghanistan as F-22 Debuts

US aircraft are striking targets in Afghanistan at a pace not seen since the peak of the surge seven years ago. In October, US aircraft conducted 653 strikes in Afghanistan. That tally is the highest total since aircraft conducted 866 air strikes in November 2010.

By the end of October, US aircraft had dropped 3,554 bombs in 2017—almost double 2016's final tally of 1,337.

The October total does not include the US and Afghan military's new offensive targeting of Taliban opium production. On Nov. 19, Operation Jagged Knife took advantage of new authorities to unleash a tidal wave of airpower including B-52s, F-22s, and A-29s targeting opium production in the mountains of the country.

The strikes marked the first time the

F-22 was publicly disclosed to have conducted a mission in Afghanistan. The F-22 Raptor "was used because of its ability to deliver precision munitions, in this case a 250-pound bomb, small diameter, that causes the minimal amount of collateral damage," said Army Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., commander of US Forces-Afghanistan.

This high operations tempo in Afghanistan is possible because operations targeting ISIS in Iraq and Syria have eased recently. US efforts there "have gone well," Nicholson said, "so we're beginning to see the effects of a shift of resources, which will increase over the course of the winter, going into the spring, as the situation continues to improve there."

In October, US-led coalition aircraft conducted 1,642 strikes as part of Operation Inherent Resolve. That is the lowest total since November 2014.



An F-22 Raptor being refueled for Operation Jagged Knife in Afghanistan.

**■ Pilot Shortage Worsens**

The Air Force's pilot shortage is getting worse, and service efforts to stem the exodus have not yet paid off, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson reported Nov. 9.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2017, the Air Force was 1,926 pilots short, across all categories. That, she said, represents nearly 10 percent of a pilot requirement of 20,000. The previous year, the shortage was 1,500.

The service is 1,300 fighter pilots short of requirements, Air Force spokeswoman Erika Yepsen added.

Yepsen also clarified that when Guard and Reserve pilots are included, the actual number is "approximately 2,000 Total Force" pilots USAF was short at the end of Fiscal 2017.



F-35 pilot 1st Lt. David Moore gets ready for flight.



An MQ-1 Predator's left tail is important for flight.

**■ Predator's Left Tail Broke Off, Causing 2015 Crash**

A mechanical failure of the left tail clamp on an MQ-1B Predator caused the remotely piloted aircraft to crash during a mission in an undisclosed area in the Middle East. On Nov. 8, 2015, an MQ-1B assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech AFB, Nev.,—operated by a deployed launch and recovery element from the 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron—crashed as it approached landing.

An Air Combat Command investigation found a left tail clamp or tail clamp bolt failure resulted in the airborne loss of the left tail. This caused an "unrecoverable departure from controlled flight," which happened as the pilot was conducting an arrival checklist. As the pilot alternated left and right inputs, mechanical and aerodynamic loads broke the weakened left tail clamp. The Predator was destroyed on impact, at a loss of \$5.3 million.



The new Block 5 MQ-9 Reaper.

**■ Air Force Picks Tyndall for New Reaper Wing**

The Air Force has selected Tyndall AFB, Fla., as the preferred location to host a new MQ-9 Reaper wing, including 24 aircraft. The new wing will include an operations group, mission control elements, a maintenance group, and launch and recovery capability. The Air Force picked Tyndall because the area has fewer aircraft competing for airspace, nearby training ranges, good weather, and lower up-front costs, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said.

**■ The War on Terrorism**

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

**Casualties**

As of Dec. 13, a total of 46 Americans had died in Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, and 50 Americans had died in Operation Inherent Resolve, primarily in Iraq and Syria.

The total includes 92 troops and four Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 43 were killed in action with the enemy while 52 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 239 troops wounded in action during OFS and 58 troops in OIR.

Photos: USAF; Johnny Saldivar/USAF; TSgt. Gregory Brook; ATC Greg Erwin; SMSgt. Cecilio Ricardo; SrA. Christian Clausen