Air Force World

By **Aaron Church,** Associate Editor

EOD Airmen Killed in Afghanistan

TSgt. Kristoffer M. Solesbee, 32, of Citrus Heights, Calif., and SSgt. Joseph J. Hamski, 28, of Ottumwa, Iowa, died in operations in Afghanistan, Defense Department officials announced May 27.

The two airmen died of wounds inflicted when enemy forces attacked their unit with an improvised explosive device, in the Shorabak district of Kandahar province May 26.

Both airmen were explosive ordnance disposal technicians. Solesbee was assigned to the 775th Civil Engineer Squadron at Hill AFB, Utah, while Hamski was a member of the 52nd CES at Spangdahlem AB, Germany.

Dempsey To Chair Joint Chiefs

President Obama introduced the final two leaders in his new national security team in May, nominating Army Chief of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr.—currently head of NORAD and US Northern Command—as vice chairman.

Obama selected US Joint Forces Command boss Gen. Raymond T. Odierno to be Army Chief of Staff to succeed Dempsey, who had only been in the job a few weeks.

Dempsey and Winnefeld "will make an extraordinary team," Obama said during remarks at the White House. "Between them, they bring deep experience in virtually every domain—land, air, space, sea, cyber."

If approved by the Senate, Dempsey will replace Adm. Michael G. Mullen, who is stepping down this fall, and Winnefeld would succeed Marine Corps Gen. James E. Cartwright, whose term ends this summer. Mullen and Cartwright have served in their current posts since 2007.

Hostage To Lead ACC

The Senate has approved the nomination of Lt. Gen. Gilmary Michael Hostage III for promotion to the rank of general for the purpose of assuming his next post as head of Air Combat Command at JB Langley-Eustis, Va.

Hostage has overseen the air campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq since August 2009, as commander of US Air Forces Central Command. He will replace Gen. William M. Fraser III, who has headed up ACC since September 2009. As of mid-June, it had not been announced whether Fraser will go to a different position or retire.

The Senate also has confirmed the nomination of Maj. Gen. David L. Goldfein to receive a third star as he heads to his new assignment, replacing Hostage in Southwest Asia as chief of AFCENT. Goldfein has been ACC's director of operations since August 2009.

First USAF Production F-35A

The Air Force accepted the first of 1,763 planned F-35A production aircraft from prime contractor Lockheed Martin, May 9.

The airframe, AF-7, is actually the second production F-35A to roll off Lockheed's assembly line in Fort Worth, Tex. Though AF-6 was constructed first, AF-7 was the first to complete acceptance testing. "AF-6 is close behind" in completing the acceptance process, Lockheed spokeswoman Laurie Quincy noted.

Lockheed's industry team built AF-6 and AF-7 as part of Lot 1 F-35 low-rate initial production. Both aircraft are slated to support F-35 flight testing at Edwards AFB, Calif., before moving to Eglin AFB, Fla., and becoming part of the joint F-35 schoolhouse.

AF-8, the first F-35A built under Lot 2 LRIP, made its maiden flight May 10. It will be the first F-35 production aircraft to fly directly to Eglin.

Early Lightning Jolt, Maybe

The Air Force may be able to deploy some F-35A strike fighters in combat even before it's formally declared ready for operations, Lt. Gen. Herbert J. Carlisle, Air Staff lead for operations, plans, and requirements, told lawmakers May 24.

"If the combatant commanders said, 'We need this capability,' then we would clearly provide it," he told the Senate Armed Services Committee's air-land panel. The Air Force anticipates reaching F-35A initial operational capability sometime between 2017 and 2018. The first officially combat-ready F-35As will likely incorporate Block 3 mission software suites, said Carlisle.

Photo by Richard VanderMeulen

Before this milestone, the Air Force expects to have "on the order of a hundred airplanes" in the earlier Block 2B configuration delivered to operational units, he explained, adding that the aircraft will still possess "very impressive" capabilities. Those units will have been trained in F-35 tactics, techniques, and procedures, and the logistics infrastructure will be maturing, he said. Depending on the circumstances, "we would, with all the safety considerations, be ready to go," said Carlisle.

SBIRS Satellite on Station

The Air Force's first Space Based Infrared System geosynchronous satellite, GEO-1, has reached its intended operational orbit and is performing well, lead contractor Lockheed Martin announced May 24.

"Successfully reaching orbit and conducting deployments is a tremendous milestone for the SBIRS GEO-1 spacecraft. Thanks to a very talented and dedicated team, this first-of-its-kind spacecraft has performed flawlessly," said Col. Roger W. Teague, USAF's director of infrared space systems, in the Lockheed release.

USAF and its industry partners launched GEO-1, a sophisticated early warning satellite, atop a United Launch

06.07.2011

A C-17 prepares to touch down on the runway at Nellis AFB, Nev., backlit by the Las Vegas skyline. This was mission No. 6 of seven in the mission employment phase that culminates six months of training at the US Air Force Weapons School. Ninety-three out of 108 students who entered weapons school Class 11A have since graduated and become weapons school "patch wearers."

John R. Alison, 1912-2011

Retired Maj. Gen. John Richardson Alison, a highly decorated and influential World War II ace who helped found the air commandos, served a key role in Lend-Lease, and was a major figure in the Air Force Association, died June 6 at the age of 98.

Born in Florida in 1912, Alison grew up with a keen interest in aviation. He got his Army commission in 1935—a year before graduating from the University of Florida—and in 1937

earned his wings. He was posted to Langley Field, Va., where he flew many aircraft, ranging from B-10 bombers and biplanes to the Curtiss P-40.

Alison's skill in demonstrating the P-40 for a delegation of Chinese Nationalists sold them on the airplane. Claire L. Chennault said that when Alison landed, the delegation said it wanted "100 of these," pointing to the fighter. Chennault, their advisor, said, "No, ... you need 100 of these," and pointed to Alison.

Alison's skill in the P-40 prompted the Air Corps to send him and Lt. Hubert A. Zemke to Britain to facilitate the Lend-Lease supply of P-40s and to teach Royal Air Force pilots to fly it. They did so well that by 1941, the two were sent on a secret mission to teach Russia's air force how to assemble and fly Lend-Lease P-40s.

When World War II broke out, Alison requested combat duty, but was posted to Basra, Iraq, supervising the transfer of Lend-Lease North American B-25s, Douglas A-20s, and other aircraft to Russia. Alison got to fly them all. He reported directly to Army Air Corps chief Gen. H. H. Arnold, who eventually relented to Alison's constant requests for a combat assignment.

Sent to Hengyang, China, Alison joined the 75th Fighter Squadron, under the 23rd Fighter Group, which owed its nickname to Chennault's "Flying Tigers." Alison showed an innovative spirit. He attacked Japanese bombers making a nighttime raid, despite the P-40's lack of night-flying gear. His airplane severely damaged and his arm wounded, Alison nevertheless downed three bombers before having to ditch in a nearby river. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

In another battle, Alison took off while his airfield was under attack, then shot down one Japanese fighter while vectoring reinforcements from other bases. For this action, he received the Silver Star.

During more than a year with the unit, Alison was credited with six aerial victories and one ground kill. Chennault wrote that Alison's air combat record—both as a pilot and squadron commander—was "brilliant."

In 1943, to assist the British with commando attacks on Japanese forces in Burma, Arnold sent Alison to be co-commander of Project Nine, which would resupply ground forces and conduct nighttime raids using cargo aircraft, gliders, and a novelty at the time: the helicopter. Arnold instructed Alison: "To hell with the paperwork: Go out and fight."

Carving airfields out of teak jungle, Alison in March 1944 led the deployment of more than 9,000 troops, thousands of horses and mules, and over a half-million pounds of supplies to landing fields in Burma in just six days, providing both the transportation and airborne heavy artillery to support British forces.

On the first night of Operation Thursday, Alison himself flew a glider full of troops into combat—despite having never flown one before—landed hard, grabbed a rifle and grenades, and jumped out to do battle. The operation marked the genesis of the air commandos, one of the US military's first special operations units.

Three weeks later, he was summoned back to his base in India. There, he had two identical messages waiting for him, one from Arnold, the other from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Both said, "Report to me without delay."

Arnold allowed Alison a delay to talk to Eisenhower, who was preparing the D-Day invasion and wanted Alison's expertise on the use of assault gliders.

Arnold, in turn, wanted Alison to grow the air commandos, which he did, organizing two more groups for the invasion of the Philippines and in support of air operations against Japan from Okinawa.

When the war ended, Alison joined the Air Force Reserve, rising to the rank of major general. He was President Truman's assistant secretary of commerce for aeronautics, and later joined the Northrop Corp. as a senior vice president. Alison is credited with convincing the Air Force to buy the T-38 trainer/F-5 fighter, moves which likely saved Northrop from being consolidated into another contractor. He retired from the company in 1979.

He was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 2005.

Alison was AFA President in 1954-1955 and Chairman of the Board the following year. He remained an active member and advisor to the organization until his death.

Alliance Atlas V booster from central Florida, May 7. The government-industry team successfully executed a series of six apogee engine burns, propelling the spacecraft to its geosynchronous orbital slot.

Once on orbit, the team deployed the satellite's solar arrays, light shade, and antenna wing assemblies in preparation for activating its infrared sensors to begin early orbital testing.

Supremely Unsatisfying

The Supreme Court has unanimously sent the Navy's 20-year-old A-12 stealth bomber case back to the lower courts. The May 23 decision nullified a lower court ruling against contractors General Dynamics and Boeing (formerly McDonnell Douglas), which would have required them to repay $1.35 billion to the Navy for work the service never accepted.

The court stated that the government could not prevail by invoking a "state secrets" privilege, barring the companies from discovery of crucial facts needed to make their case.

Apparently the ruling does not, however, give the companies leeway to charge comparable losses to the government. Justice Antonin Scalia wrote for the court that when state secrets are involved, "the proper remedy is to leave the parties where they were on the day they filed suit," and so "we leave the parties where they are." He acknowledged, "Neither side will be entirely happy with this resolution."

The A-12 was the Navy's planned successor to the A-6 Intruder carrier-based attack aircraft that the companies were developing under a fixed-price contract. When the project far exceeded budgets, falling more than two years behind schedule, then-Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney ordered its termination in January 1991.

The A-12's cancellation ultimately led to the creation of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.

USAF Detachment Rotates to Poland

The United States and Poland have agreed to establish an Air Force aviation detachment in Poland next year, and it will begin training with the Polish Air Force by early 2013.

"The aviation detachment will strengthen joint interoperability through regular training exercise rotations in Poland, largely with US F-16 or C-130 aircraft," stated a White House fact sheet released May 28. It was released as President Obama concluded a visit to Poland, where he met with Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski and Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

"The aviation detachment that is being finalized will be significant, and we're proud that we've gotten that completed," said Obama during a joint press conference with Tusk in Warsaw the same day.

F-16s from the California Air National Guard will rotate to Poland this month to train with Polish F-16s in preparation for Poland's hosting of the European soccer championship in June 2012.

Continuing Iraqi Presence?

Although the current agreement with Iraq calls for US military personnel to leave the country by year's end, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said he sees benefit in keeping between 8,000 and 15,000 troops deployed there to continue training Iraqi forces.

The Iraqis "still have a lot of work to do with logistics and things like intelligence," he told soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., May 19. "They basically have no air defense capability."

Gates said Iraqi officials see benefits to keeping a modest US presence, but the idea remains "political dynamite" for them. "So the question that is unsettled at this point is whether the Iraqi leadership will come together, and all the different factions will hold hands and jump off the cliff together, in terms of seeking authority and going forward with a continuing US presence," he summed up.

New JSF Engine Contract

Pratt & Whitney received a $1.13 billion contract from the Defense Department to supply 37 F135 engines for the F-35 strike fighter in Lot 4 low-rate initial production (LRIP).

"This contract provides our customer with a 15 percent savings on the conventional takeoff and landing/carrier variant, compared to LRIP 3, and demonstrates our commitment toward meeting aggressive cost-reduction goals," said Bennett Croswell, the company's military engines president.

"It also speaks to the maturity of our engine, which builds on the proven technology of our F119 engine." The contract contains fixed-price and cost-plus-incentive-fee elements and also covers spare parts and sustainment support.

Of the LRIP 4 engines, 18 will be for F-35A CTOL aircraft and 19 for F-35B short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft.

Engine deliveries are slated to begin in late 2011. Pratt delivered the first Lot 3 engine in early May.

Bye-Bye, Black Sheep

Airmen at Holloman AFB, N.M., held an inactivation ceremony for the 8th Fighter Squadron, May 13.

The "Black Sheep" are standing down, after less than two years of oper-

Mobility Leads Combat Assets in Readiness

Despite "robust and dynamic" operational requirements, mobility air forces maintain exceptionally high readiness levels, though combat assets are coping less well, asserted Lt. Gen. Loren M. Reno, USAF deputy chief of staff for logistics.

The mission capability rate for USAF mobility assets currently is holding at 82.7 percent despite heavier utilization demands in Southwest Asia, he told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee's readiness panel May 18.

Meanwhile, the readiness of combat air forces aircraft is deemed "adequate," despite flying older aircraft longer and accumulating flight hours more quickly than first envisioned.

The mission capability rate for CAF assets is now 75 percent, having declined three percent over the past five years.

CAF aircraft availability rates have declined almost five percent during that same span, settling today at 65.5 percent, Reno told the committee. However, the MC rate for combat platforms in Southwest Asia remains high, at 84 percent. "This is to be expected due to the focus on warfighter support," he said.

Index to Advertisers

Now With Fewer Nukes

The State Department released the aggregate numbers of US and Russian strategic nuclear arms June 1. According to data current as of Feb. 5, the United States has 1,800 nuclear warheads on 882 deployed launchers (i.e., ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers), while Russia has 1,537 warheads on 521 deployed launchers. The United States has a total of 1,124 deployed and nondeployed launchers; Russia has 865.

Under the terms of the New START arms control agreement, the two nations were required to reveal their respective inventories by late March, with US inspectors concluding their first visit to a Russian SS-19 ICBM base April 16.

There no major surprises during the first inspection, said James N. Miller, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy. "I can say that the inspection went about as expected," Miller told a Senate Armed Services Committee panel in May.

The United States exhibited a denuclearized B-1B to Russian officials in March, and a nuclear capable B-2A in April, while the Russians exhibited an RS-24 road-mobile ICBM for US officials. Russian officials are due to inspect a US missile site in the near future.

New START took effect on Feb. 5, for a duration of 10 years. Both states are required to have no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads, 700 deployed launchers, and 800 deployed and nondeployed launchers within seven years.

The two nations will update the inventory totals every six months while the treaty is in force.

ating F-22s, due to the Air Force's Raptor fleet consolidation plan, which calls for Holloman to give up its two squadrons of F-22s for two F-16 training squadrons.

"We flew 2,500 sorties and over 3,000 hours. That's more than 10 sorties a day, with less than nine F-22s," said Lt. Col. Craig Baker, 8th FS commander, in highlighting his unit's accomplishments during the ceremony.

The inactivation takes effect on July 15. Some of the 8th FS F-22s will go temporarily to Holloman's 7th FS, while others will bolster the ranks of F-22 units at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; JB Langley-Eustis, Va.; and Nellis AFB, Nev.

The remaining Holloman F-22s will eventually shift to Tyndall AFB, Fla. This is the second time in the 61-year history of the 8th that the unit has been inactivated. The first inactivation was in April 2008, with the retirement of the F-117 Nighthawk.

Over the years, the Black Sheep have flown 15 types of different aircraft.

Waste Not

The Air Force authorized Northrop Grumman to proceed with work on the US military's next generation weather monitoring satellite. The Defense Weather Satellite System received $428 million in funding.

DWSS will use hardware and knowledge developed under the now-canceled National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System, or NPOESS, which Northrop led.

USAF charged the company with transitioning work from the NPOESS contract to the new DWSS program. "We have defined an effective program plan that leverages the high level of maturity achieved on the spacecraft and sensors that are already in production," said Linnie Haynesworth, Northrop Grumman's DWSS program director, in the company's release May 25.

DWSS satellites will replace the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program constellation in providing time-sensitive support of military operations. First launch of a DWSS spacecraft is anticipated in 2018.

Coming to Romania: Missile Defense

The United States and Romania jointly designated Deveselu Air Base near Caracal, Romania, to host land-based Standard Missile-3 interceptors, starting from about 2015, forming part of the US contribution to NATO's ballistic missile defense architecture.

The BMD site, encompassing about 430 acres, will consist of a radar deckhouse, command element, and SM-3 interceptor launch modules, according to State Department officials.

Collectively known as the Aegis Ashore System, the fixture comprises part of the second phase of the Obama Administration's BMD phased adaptive approach, designed to protect Europe and the United States from missile threats emanating from the Middle East. "The site has many advantages, including existing infrastructure and advantageous geography," said Ellen Tauscher, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security,

USAF photo by SSgt. John Wright

Real Life Savers: *Two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters take off June 11 from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, on a rescue mission. Pararescue airmen from the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron saved the lives of two wounded Afghan police. On average, it takes the 83rd ERQS just 10 minutes from the time they receive an alert call to get a helicopter in the air.*

The War on Terrorism

Operation Enduring Freedom—Afghanistan

Casualties

By June 14, a total of 1,608 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 1,606 troops and two Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,262 were killed in action with the enemy, while 346 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 12,002 troops wounded in action during OEF.

Afghan Light Lift

The Air Force awarded Cessna Aircraft an $88.5 million contract to provide 32 light lift aircraft to the Afghan Air Force under the Afghanistan Basic Trainer/Lift Family program.

With this foreign military sale, Cessna will deliver six T-182Ts and 26 C-208Bs, based on the company's 182 Skylane and 208 Caravan civil models. Together, these aircraft will provide light airlift for AAF counterinsurgency operations.

USAF is simultaneously considering procurement of an additional 15 Cessna aircraft to support the training of USAF air advisors at JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., holding open the possibility of purchasing a further 24 aircraft sometime in the near future, according to online aviation publication Flightglobal.

C-17 Lands at Shindand

A C-17 touched down for the first time at Shindand Air Base in western Afghanistan June 1, following refurbishment of the base's all-weather concrete runway last December.

By later this summer, the Shindand flight line will be able to support two C-17s around-the-clock and simultaneous Afghan Air Force activities, ushering in a new era of air mobility support for coalition operations in west Afghanistan.

Originally built by the Soviets in 1961 and damaged in the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom, the runway is 8,530 feet long and 90 feet wide.

Chopper Shop Parts

Five airmen with the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing in Kabul aided the Afghan Air Force in recovering part of an AAF Mi-17 helicopter which crashed in the mountainous east-central border region of Nuristan.

With the assistance of Army Pathfinders, the airmen documented the crash site, stripping reusable sections from the aircraft, which were then sling-loaded under a US Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter for recovery. Airmen and soldiers destroyed components deemed unrecoverable on site.

Nine Afghan personnel were injured in the crash May 11, though none were killed. The Afghan Air Force is convening a board of inquiry into the mishap. "This board is made up of various specialties of the AAF," said Maj. Jay Troxell, 438th AEW safety officer. USAF airmen will play a strictly advisory role in the investigation, which was expected to wrap up last month.

speaking of Deveselu in Bucharest, May 3.

Grand Forks Welcomes Global Hawk

Airmen at Grand Forks AFB, N.D., gathered with local community leaders and industry representatives to celebrate the arrival of the first Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft at the base. "What a great day for Grand Forks and North Dakota—this is cutting-edge technology," said Maj. Gen. Thomas K. Andersen, Air Combat Command's requirements director, during the ceremony June 1.

The event marked the start of a new era there after the base's KC-135 tanker mission concluded last December after 50 years of operations. A Global Hawk Block 20 arrived from Beale AFB, Calif., for the ceremony, though only Block 40 models fitted with the Northrop-Raytheon Multiplatform Radar Technology Insertion Program (MP-RTIP) radar will be stationed at the base.

The first Block 40 aircraft could arrive by this month, according to the *Grand Forks Herald.*

Thunderbirds' Bio-Fuel Sensation

The Air Force Thunderbirds became the Defense Department's first air demonstration team to use an alternative fuel blend during a performance.

Thunderbird No. 5 and No. 6 ran on a mix of half traditional JP-8 fuel and half hydrotreated renewable jet fuel during performances for the Joint Services Open House at JB Andrews, Md., May 20 and 21.

The HRJ mix is derived from the seeds of the camelina plant, but other forms of biomass, such as beef tallow, can also be used as a fuel source. To date, the Air Force has tested and certified the A-10, C-17, F-15, and F-22 to operate on the JP-8-HRJ blend.

Fleetwide certification is on track for completion in 2013, say Air Force officials. "Over the past five years, the Air Force has certified more than 99 percent of its aircraft to operate on various blends of synthetic and traditional fuels, and we are moving ahead in certifying biofuels as well," said USAF Undersecretary Erin C. Conaton during an Air Force Association-sponsored speech in Arlington, Va., May 11.

Path to a New Gateway

The Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment at Lackland AFB, Tex., is planning a new $21.8 million facility at the base to serve as the primary in-processing and information center for USAF recruits entering basic military training.

"The building will be the first thing that Air Force recruits and their families see," said Ben Kindt, AFCEE capital investment execution branch chief.

The 70,000-square-foot building will feature modernized information stations, a multistory glass atrium, and an outdoor 3,000-seat auditorium to support BMT graduation activities.

Its front entrance, dubbed the "Gateway to the Air Force," will sport six pillars representing the Air Force's core values (Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do) and operational domains (air, space, and cyberspace).

Golden BUFFs

Air Force Global Strike Command's B-52H fleet has surpassed 50 years of continuous service in the tactical and nuclear strike roles.

On May 9, 1961, Boeing delivered the first B-52H model to Strategic Air Command's 379th Bomb Wing, based at Wurtsmith AFB, Mich. Named *State of Michigan,* serial No. 60-001 was the first of 102 B-52Hs delivered to USAF, 74 of which remain in the total active inventory today.

Intended to carry the GAM-87A Skybolt ballistic missile, the B-52H boasted improved range and performance over previous models, incorporating new Pratt and Whitney TF33 engines.

With continuing upgrades, the B-52H is slated to serve beyond 2040, meaning the last ones will be 80 years old or more when they retire.

More Special Super Hercs

The Air Force has added 48 MC-130J special operations aircraft to its HC/MC-130J recapitalization program of record, increasing the intended buy from 74 to 122 airframes.

Thirty-two of the newly added MC-130Js will supplant Air Force Special

Senior Staff Changes

RETIREMENTS: Lt. Gen. Glenn F. **Spears,** Maj. Gen. Randal D. **Fullhart,** Maj. Gen. John M. **Howlett,** Maj. Gen. Richard E. **Webber,** Brig. Gen. Scott D. **Chambers,** Brig. Gen. Richard A. **Hersack.**

PROMOTION: To Brigadier General: David J. **Buck.**

NOMINATIONS: To be General: Gilmary Michael **Hostage III. To Be Lieutenant General:** David L. **Goldfein,** Bradley A. **Heithold,** Mark F. **Ramsay. To be Brigadier General:** Giovanni K. **Tuck.**

CHANGES: Brig. Gen. David W. **Allvin,** from Cmdr., 438th AEW, Kabul, Afghanistan, to Vice Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Ctr., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Brig. Gen. James S. **Browne,** from Cmdr., 325th FW, AETC, Tyndall AFB, Fla., to Dir., Ops., AFGSC, Barksdale AFB, La. ... Maj. Gen. Floyd L. **Carpenter,** from Cmdr., 8th AF, ACC, Barksdale AFB, La., to Spec. Asst. to the Cmdr., AFGSC, Barksdale AFB, La. ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Samuel D. **Cox,** from Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops., Ctr., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Dir., Strategy, Policy, Prgms., & Log., TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Brig. Gen. Carlton D. **Everhart II,** from Vice Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Ctr., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Ctr., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Lt. Gen. David S. **Fadok,** from Vice Cmdr., Air University, AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala., to Cmdr., AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala. ... Brig. Gen. Morris E. **Haase,** from Dir., Force Structure, Rqmts., Resources, & Strat. Assessments, SOCOM, MacDill AFB, Fla., to Dep. Cmdr., JTF, Horn of Africa, AFRICOM, Camp Lemonier, Djibouti ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Russell J. **Handy,** from Cmdr., 9th Air & Space Expeditionary Task Force, Baghdad, Iraq, to Dir., Ops., Plans, Rqmts., & Prgms., PACAF, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii ... Maj. Gen. Ronnie D. **Hawkins,** from Vice Dir., DISA, Arlington, Va., to Dep. Dir., C^4 Sys., Jt. Staff, Washington, D.C. ... Maj. Gen. James M. **Holmes,** from Principal Dir., Middle East Policy, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, Policy, OSD, Pentagon, to Dir., Strat. Planning, DCS, Strat. P&P, USAF, Pentagon ... Lt. Gen. Gilmary Michael **Hostage III,** from Cmdr., AFCENT, Southwest Asia, to Cmdr., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va. ... Maj. Gen. Michell D. **Johnson,** from Dir., Strategy, Policy, Prgms., & Log., TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill., to DCS, Ops. & Intel., SHAPE, NATO, Casteau, Belgium ... Maj. Gen. Richard C. **Johnston,** from Dir., Strat. Planning, DCS, Strat. P&P, USAF, Pentagon, to Asst. Dep. Undersecretary of the AF, Intl. Affairs, Office of the Undersecretary of the AF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. James R. **Marrs,** from Sr. Mil. Asst. to the USD, Intel., OSD, Pentagon, to Dep. to the DCS, Intel., Intl. Security Assistance Force, CENTCOM, Kabul, Afghanistan ... Brig. Gen. Robert D. **McMurry Jr.,** from Dir., Iraq Security Assistance Mission, US Forces-Iraq, CENTCOM, Baghdad, Iraq, to Dep. Dir., Spt., Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq, CENTCOM, Baghdad, Iraq ... Brig. Gen. Kenneth J. **Moran,** from Dir., Enterprise Log. Directorate, ESC, AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to Spec. Asst. to the Cmdr., AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... Maj. Gen. Robert P. **Otto,** from Dir., ISR Capabilities, DCS, ISR, USAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., AF ISR Agency, Lackland AFB, Tex. ... Maj. Gen. H. D. **Polumbo Jr.,** from Dir., Strategy, P&P, AFRICOM, Stuttgart, Germany, to C/S, AFRICOM, Stuttgart, Germany ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Mark F. **Ramsay,** from DCS, Ops. & Intel., SHAPE, NATO, Casteau, Belgium, to Cmdr., 18th AF, AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Brig. Gen. Timothy M. **Ray,** from Dir., Ops., AFGSC, Barksdale AFB, La., to Cmdr., 438th AEW, Kabul, Afghanistan ... Brig. Gen. John D. **Stauffer,** from Dep. to the DCS, Intel., Intl. Security Assistance Force, CENTCOM, Kabul, Afghanistan, to Vice Dir., Intel., Jt. Staff, DIA, Pentagon ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Thomas J. **Trask,** from Dep. Dir., Theater Plans & Synchronization Element, CENTCOM, MacDill AFB, Fla., to Dir., Force Structure, Rqmts., Resources, & Strat. Assessments, SOCOM, MacDill AFB, Fla. ... Brig. Gen. David C. **Uhrich,** from Dir., C^4, JFCOM, Norfolk, Va., to Dir., Comm., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va. ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Joseph S. **Ward Jr.,** from Dir., Budget Ops. & Personnel, Office of the Asst. SECAF, Financial Mgmt. & Comptroller, Pentagon, to Commandant, Jt. Forces Staff College, NDU, Norfolk, Va. ... Brig. Gen. Stephen W. **Wilson,** from Dir., Jt. Integration, DCS, Ops., P&R, USAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., 8th AF, ACC, Barksdale AFB, La. ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Timothy M. **Zadalis,** from Dir., Air Plans, Intl. Security Assistance Force Jt. Command, US Forces-Afghanistan, CENTCOM, Kabul, Afghanistan, to Dir., Intel., Ops., & Nuclear Integration, AETC, Randolph AFB, Tex. ▪

Operations Command's MC-130H/W fleets, service officials said. The other 16 airframes will undergo postproduction conversion to AC-130J gunships, according to AFSOC.

Plans for the original 74 HC/MC-130Js remain unchanged: Air Combat Command will acquire 37 HC-130J combat rescue tankers, replacing its 1960s-era HC-130P fleet, while AFSOC is to receive 37 MC-130Js, retiring its legacy MC-130E/P inventory.

Because of the added 48 airframes, projected cost for HC/MC-130J program procurement rose more than 60 percent from $8.8 billion to $14.1 billion, according to the Pentagon's most recent selected acquisition reports sent to Congress in April.

4G Would Impair GPS

A new US 4G wireless broadband network would interfere with Global Positioning Satellite signals, said Gen. William L. Shelton, head of Air Force Space Command. Data from hardware testing appears to confirm initial concerns about the interference.

"Although the data is still being analyzed, I would tell you that the empirical data appears to be consistent with the analytical data," Shelton told the Senate Armed Services Committee's strategic forces panel, May 11. "We have concerns" for civil, commercial, and military applications involving GPS, Shelton added.

A telecommunications company, LightSquared, based in Reston, Va., is seeking Federal Communications Commission approval to establish a broadband network, featuring thousands of cellular towers and space-based augmenters.

The towers could disrupt the GPS signal, a fear seemingly confirmed by tests using various GPS receivers with LightSquared equipment at Kirtland AFB, N.M., said Shelton at the hearing.

Big Day for Phantom Ray

Boeing's Phantom Ray unmanned aircraft flew for the first time under its own power on April 27, taking to the skies at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center on Edwards AFB, Calif.

On its 17-minute first flight, Phantom Ray climbed to an altitude of 7,500 feet, achieving a speed of 205 mph, validating basic airworthiness, Boeing announced.

The aircraft was intended to be an Air Force demonstrator as the X-45C, but that program was terminated. Boeing completed the aircraft and is flying it at its own expense as a technology demonstrator and testbed.

"Autonomous, fighter-sized unmanned aircraft are real, and the UAS [unmanned aircraft system] bar has been raised. Now I'm eager to see how high that bar will go," said Craig Brown, Boeing's Phantom Ray program manager.

Boeing will continue expanding the vehicle's flight envelope. Company officials say they see a wide variety of potential roles for the aircraft, including intelligence gathering, air defense suppression, and electronic warfare.

The aircraft completed taxi testing in March, arriving at Edwards in December, atop NASA's modified Boeing 747 shuttle carrier aircraft.

AESA Antenna for the B-2

Northrop Grumman received a $372 million contract in May to design the B-2 bomber's new active electronically scanned array antenna. The new antenna will vastly improve the B-2's ability to send and receive battlefield information securely over satellite links.

Part of Increment 2 of the stealth bomber's three-increment extremely high frequency satellite communications upgrade, the AESA is the largest effort undertaken to augment the B-2's original lethality to date, according to the company.

"This important enhancement will ensure that the B-2 retains its strategic communications capabilities well into the future," said Dave Mazur, Northrop's B-2 program manager.

When the upgrade is complete, B-2s will be able to communicate up to 100

times faster than they can today, said Northrop Grumman.

Good Fences, Good Neighbors

The Air Force wants to establish a ground-based radar in Australia, forming part of a future Space Fence surveillance network. The site would be operated jointly by the US and Australia, said Maj. Gen. John E. Hyten, Air Force acquisition director for space programs.

The Space Fence would comprise "two ground-based radar sites" providing "timely information on launch detection, maneuvers, and breakups to support protection of space assets," Hyten told the Senate Armed Services Committee strategic forces panel May 11.

Slated to begin operations in 2015, the S-band fence is due to replace a 1960s-era VHF-based Air Force Space Surveillance System, the terrestrial network currently monitoring space objects, which is "rapidly becoming unsustainable," according to Hyten.

The Air Force in January awarded contracts to Lockheed Martin and Raytheon for preliminary design work on their respective concepts.

MALD From a Cage

Raytheon announced deployment of two instrumented Miniature Air Launched Decoy-shaped rounds from the ramp of a C-130 transport using a new company-funded launch system May 25.

The test at Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz., marked MALD's first deployment from a cargo aircraft.

The MALD Cargo Air Launched System, or MCALS, houses up to eight MALDs in a cage-like launcher. Loaded on a standard cargo pallet, the launch system is placed on a transport aircraft, and rapidly ejects MALD drone decoys at a predetermined altitude.

"MCALS opens the door for the non-traditional use of a high-capacity aircraft to deliver hundreds of MALDs during a single combat sortie," said Harry Schulte, Raytheon's vice president of air warfare systems.

In addition to the decoy configuration, Raytheon is also developing a MALD variant for stand-in jamming of enemy radar.

Fueling Ingenuity

Officials at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, christened the Air Force Research Lab's new Assured Aerospace Fuels Research Facility with a ribbon-cutting, May 23. AFRL researchers, along with scientists from the University of Dayton and the Battelle Memorial Institute, will use the $5 million facility to investigate blends of synthetic jet fuel partially derived from coal, algae, and various animal- and plant-based biomass, such as beef tallow or switch grass.

USAF photo by A1C Laura Goodgame

Haters to the Left: ***Soon to be deployed, airmen train for dismounted patrol at Eielson AFB, Alaska. The 354th Civil Engineer Squadron, EOD flight, trains airmen in the fundamentals of tactical troop movement and countering improvised explosive devices.***

The facility will enable production of up to 15 to 20 gallons of synthetic fuel per day for testing, the *Dayton Daily News* reported.

The Air Force uses roughly 2.5 billion gallons of jet fuel annually, accounting for roughly 10 percent of the US market. Service officials seek to reduce US dependence on foreign energy sources through USAF's use of synthetic fuel blends.

IFF To Leave Laughlin and Vance

Randolph AFB, Tex., was chosen as the preferred site for consolidation of USAF Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals training units, Air Force officials announced May 3.

Due to a decrease in IFF output requirements from 450 airmen to 380 per year, the Air Force is downsizing from five training locations to three.

IFF training at Laughlin AFB, Tex., and Vance AFB, Okla., will end as part of the change, leaving Randolph, Columbus AFB, Miss., and Sheppard AFB, Tex., as the three remaining schools.

As the preferred alternative, Randolph "would accept 15 additional T-38 [Talons] and train approximately 80 additional students annually," said Kathleen I. Ferguson, USAF's deputy assistant secretary for installations.

Since Sheppard is already operating at full capacity for IFF, Columbus is the only "reasonable alternative" if Randolph isn't chosen due to a negative environmental impact assessment, according to a USAF news release.

New Schoolhouse Needed

Increased demand for tactical air control party personnel and air liaison officers, and a lack of space at the schoolhouse at Hurlburt Field, Fla., is driving the Air Force to seek new TACP-ALO training base arrangements.

Under the basing criteria announced May 4, service officials will look at factors such as mission and training requirements, facilities and infrastructure, support capacity, environmental impacts, and cost, in drawing candidates from the USAF and Army installation pool within the continental United States.

"These criteria will help to ensure that all aspects for basing of this important training are considered," said Kathleen I. Ferguson, USAF's deputy assistant secretary for installations.

Air Force officials anticipate releasing the list of candidate bases this summer. After that, a formal environmental impact analysis will begin and surrounding communities will have the chance to provide input.

Iraq Airlift Inactivates

The Air Force inactivated the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at JB Balad, Iraq, May 15.

The "Dueling Dragons" began operations from Balad in February 2006 as "the most forward-deployed" C-130 unit supporting operations in Iraq, a US Air Forces Central news release said. According to Balad officials, the busy squadron moved more than 500,000 passengers and 79,000 tons of cargo in 43,000 airlift sorties since its inception, flying the C-130E, -H1, and -H3 aircraft.

Unit members came together at Balad's flight line to celebrate their accomplishments, casing the unit colors in a ceremony, May 6.

"The Dueling Dragons' can-do attitude allowed us to seamlessly support warfighters, airlift personnel, equipment, and supplies throughout [US] Central Command's area of responsibility," said Lt. Col. Dennis King, 777th EAS commander, during the ceremony.

The 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, deployed at a base in Southwest Asia,

will absorb the squadron's former mission.

Seymour Johnson Associate Unit

Air Force officials activated the newly formed 414th Maintenance Squadron in a ceremony at Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.

The unit is one of two Air Force Reserve Command squadrons that will partner with the active duty 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson and the 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, S.C., to maintain those units' F-15Es and F-16CJs, respectively.

"The unfurling of a unit's guidon is a rare event that many of us have never been a part of before," said Maj. Lydia Black, who assumed the squadron's command during the May 26 stand-up ceremony.

The 414th MXS, together with its sister squadron, will be part of the new 414th Fighter Group that is due to stand up Aug. 5 at Seymour Johnson. The group is due to add a total of 279 airmen to the maintenance force at the two bases by 2014.

Air Defense Handoff

The 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, S.C., turned over air defense responsibility for the southeast United States to the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th FW at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, Shaw officials announced, May 16.

F-16s from Shaw stood air sovereignty alert from Aug. 1, 2006, to May 9, 2011, after an earlier two-year stint directly following the 9/11 attacks.

"Shaw's role in the alert mission was to defend the Southeast Air Defense Sector and the 79 million American citizens within that sector from airborne threats," said Col. James Sears, commander of Shaw's 20th Operations Group.

The South Carolina Air Guardsmen also fly F-16s. The ASA mission requires three dedicated, armed alert aircraft—two primaries and one spare—at an alert location, with two pilots and associated maintenance and support personnel on duty at all times.

F-22 Fleet Grounded

Air Combat Command grounded the F-22 fleet in May, following reports about potential malfunctions with the aircraft's onboard oxygen-generation system that provides the pilot with breathable air in flight.

"The safety of our airmen is paramount, and we will take the necessary time to ensure we perform a thorough investigation," responded ACC officials when queried. According to the command, the investigation will focus on pinpointing the cause of pilot "hypoxia-like" events reported through Air Force safety channels, then devising, testing, and fielding the appropriate solutions.

Oxygen system malfunctions can cause a pilot to black out in flight, posing a potentially life-threatening situation for airmen. In one incident, a pilot at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, scraped the underside of an F-22 on trees during a landing approach, but was unable to recall the incident afterward, news agency Bloomberg reported.

The grounding came six months after a fatal F-22 crash in Alaska. Since the November crash is still being investigated, ACC officials declined to specify whether the oxygen system may have been a factor in the loss.

In January, ACC restricted the flight ceiling for F-22 training, however, prohibiting pilots from flying above 25,000 feet due to oxygen system concerns. The normal operational ceiling for the F-22 is in excess of 50,000 feet.

As of June 11, the Raptors were still grounded.

Distinguished Half-Dozen

Six rescue airmen from Moody AFB, Ga., received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor Device for extraordinary achievements during missions in Afghanistan.

Gen. William M. Fraser III, head of Air Combat Command, presented the medal to Maj. Charles McMullen, Capt. Nathan Dennen, Capt. Daran Gaus, Capt. Evan Roth, MSgt. Jerrod Morse, and SrA. Brett Taylor in a ceremony at Moody, May 20.

All serve with the 41st Rescue Squadron, an HH-60G Pave Hawk unit. Gaus, Roth, and Morse were recognized for their role in rescuing two wounded soldiers, one of whom was badly injured, in the face of intense enemy gunfire. McMullen, Dennen, and Taylor were honored for their actions in a separate mission.

Your Tanker Host: Bulgaria

KC-135 tankers supporting NATO operations in Afghanistan temporarily shifted operations to Burgas Airport, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. With the runway at their usual staging base in the region closed for routine maintenance, members of the 621st Contingency Response Wing from JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., arrived at Burgas May 9 to prep the airfield for operations.

Within three days of their arrival, KC-135s and airmen of the 927th Air Refueling Squadron, deployed from MacDill AFB, Fla., began flying daily sorties. "We have been able to complete 100 percent of our tasked missions," said Lt. Col. Andrew H. Stephan, commanding the expeditionary KC-135 contingent.

Tankers were expected to continue refueling aircraft going into, or coming out of, Southwest Asia from their temporary base in Burgas through the end of May.

News Notes

■ Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) introduced a measure into the House version of the Fiscal 2012 defense authorization bill to permanently transfer the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Va., from the Army to Air Force administrative control.

■ The Air Force Museum Foundation accepted a $10 million donation from Lockheed Martin, May 9, in support of constructing a 200,000-square-foot expansion at the National Museum of the US Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. The expanded space is due to open in 2014.

■ First Lt. Ryan McGuire became the first amputee to complete Air Force pilot training May 20. After losing his leg below the knee in a boating accident in 2009, McGuire was allowed to return to flight training. Currently transitioning to the C-17, he will be posted to JB Lewis-McChord, Wash.

■ Two C-130Js of the 37th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany, dropped more than 400 Bulgarian and US paratroopers in Exercise Thracian Spring in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, which ran April 26 to May 6. Crews also conducted low-level and night vision training during the exercise.

■ Boeing delivered its first C-17 to the United Arab Emirates in a ceremony at the company's plant in Long Beach, Calif., May 10. UAE has ordered six C-17s, four of which will be delivered this year, with the final two slated for handover in 2012.

■ The Italian Air Force's first two Boeing KC-767 tankers entered service in a ceremony at Pratica di Mare air base near Rome, May 17. Boeing is building a total of four KC-767 tankers to replace the current 707-based fleet.

■ High winds caused an Air Force Tethered Aerostat Radar to slip its mooring at an Army installation near the Mexican border, May 9. The blimp crashed into a residential neighborhood south of Tucson, Ariz., causing property damage but no injuries. ■