

Pilot Dies in Strike Eagle Crash

Capt. Francis D. Imlay, 31, of Vacaville, Calif., was killed in an F-15E crash near an undisclosed base in Southwest Asia, March 28.

US Air Forces Central said the back-seat weapon systems officer survived and was taken to a military medical facility with minor injuries following the accident.

Imlay was assigned to the 391st Fighter Squadron, deployed from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

F-35 Costs Officially Up

The estimated cost of the total F-35 strike fighter program, including all variants and life cycle costs, grew some \$17 billion, from \$379 billion to \$396 billion, according to the Pentagon's quarterly program cost report sent to Congress in late March.

The Selected Acquisition Report shows F-35 aircraft costs have increased by some \$10.7 billion to \$332 billion in 2011, compared to the 2010 SAR.

Reasons for the cost increase cited by the Pentagon included DOD's slowing the rate of aircraft production and extending the production run by two years to 2037.

F-35 engine costs also rose by roughly \$5.6 billion to \$63.9 billion through December 2011, due to an increase in initial engine spares as well as the slowed production ramp-up.

No X-37 Follow-Ons

The Air Force is satisfied with the performance of its X-37 unmanned vehicles and doesn't plan to build "anything larger," or a successor craft, according to Air Force Space Command chief Gen. William L. Shelton.

Launched from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., last March, the second X-37 has "had a very successful mission," Shelton reported, and USAF is "very happy with its performance" after a year in space. While Shelton declined to specify the craft's mission or targeted return date, he told reporters in Washington, D.C., that the craft is "doing very well."

Two X-37s have flown in space, performing secret missions. The vehicles ride into space aboard a booster rocket but glide back to Earth as the space shuttle did. The craft are about the length of an MQ-1 Predator but with short, stubby wings.

Due to the expense of building new vehicles, USAF has no plans to increase

Eagles Make Quiet Return to Gulf Region

Without fanfare, the Air Force deployed F-15C Eagles to the Persian Gulf region in January, operating them from the undisclosed air base that is home to the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Long absent from the region, the F-15Cs were deployed to buttress "regional stability and security," according to a US Air Forces Central spokesman.

AFCENT declined to specify whether the deployment is meant to dissuade aggression from Iran, which has been making belligerent statements about blocking sea traffic in the Strait of Hormuz. Tensions with Iran have also been high due to that country's unwillingness to quit its nuclear weapons program.

Multirole F-15E Strike Eagles and F-16s have been a fixture in Southwest Asia and the Middle East in recent years, but not F-15Cs, whose primary mission is establishing air superiority. The type was withdrawn from the region soon after the Iraqi air threat was neutralized in 2003.

The Eagles are training and exercising with partner air forces in the region, as well as with an air warfare center in the same, unnamed partner country, according to AFCENT's spokesman.

The F-15s are from 44th Fighter Squadron at Kadena AB, Japan, according to a 380th AEW news release.

The unit's F-15s are equipped with active electronically scanned array radars, making them the most capable fourth generation air superiority fighters in the Air Force inventory.

NASA photo by Robert Markowitz



the size of the fleet. Shelton added, “we can sustain this capability for quite some time.”

Once and Future JSTARS

The Air Force is going to stick with E-8C JSTARS fleet, aided by the Global Hawk Block 40 remotely piloted aircraft, for tracking moving targets on the battlefield, Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz said.

An analysis of alternatives found that retaining the JSTARS was the most

cost-effective option versus replacing it with a new system, Schwartz told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March testimony. Though the cost of replacement is too high, Schwartz didn’t rule out upgrades.

Actually, the analysis determined “a blend of Global Hawk Block 40 and a business-class [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] platform was the least-cost, highest-performing alternative,” Schwartz said, but “we

simply don’t have the resources” to build a new business-class ISR aircraft from the ground up.

In addition to the existing JSTARS fleet, the Air Force plans to buy 11 Global Hawk Block 40s equipped with the sophisticated synthetic aperture MP-RTIP radar to track ground targets.

Feeling Less Alert

Next year, the number of fighter bases standing alert to defend US airspace



04.17.2012

The space shuttle Discovery, carried by NASA’s modified 747 shuttle carrier aircraft, passes Washington, D.C., en route to the National Air and Space Museum’s Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles, Va., where it will be on permanent display. Before it was retired, Discovery completed 39 missions, spent 365 days in space, orbited the Earth 5,830 times, and traveled 148,221,675 miles.

Whistle-blowers Vindicated

The Air Force has initiated “disciplinary proceedings” against former supervisors at the service-run military mortuary at Dover AFB, Del., reported Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley.

A US Office of Special Council investigation found that three Dover supervisors retaliated against four mortuary employees who warned higher-ups of the mishandling of service personnel remains in 2009 and 2010. According to the report, the four mortuary employees alleged they were threatened with job termination, indefinite administrative leave, and five-day suspensions, OSC stated earlier this year.

OSC’s report, publicly released on March 16, recommended “substantial disciplinary action” against Col. Robert Edmondson, former mortuary commander, and Quinton R. Keel, then mortuary director. It also called for less severe discipline for Trevor Dean, then deputy director.

In response, Donley stated, “The Air Force will not tolerate wrongdoing, especially prohibited personnel practices, by employees.” The Air Force appointed a two-star general to review the OSC’s report and determine appropriate disciplinary actions, a process Donley predicted would be completed by the end of April.

“The individuals who reported the allegations in this matter performed an important service to the Air Force and the nation,” Donley said.

Edmondson received a letter of reprimand last April, the report states, and Keel resigned from a lower mortuary position in late February, according to the *Washington Post*.

Corrective actions on behalf of the whistle-blowers are complete, according to OSC’s report, which was released in March.

will drop from 16 to 14, said Army Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., NORAD commander and head of US Northern Command.

The decision to take fighters off around-the-clock alert at JB Langley-Eustis, Va., and in Duluth, Minn., was “very difficult,” said Jacoby. The reductions are part of NORTHCOM’s effort to cut costs and find more efficient means of operating.

“I believe we can mitigate any additional risk that we assume by reducing the 24/7 presence,” he stated in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, March 6.

NORAD has the “authority to move to another level of alert and go from

Making Waves: An HH-60G Pave Hawk hovers over a Chinese fishing vessel some 700 miles off the coast of Acapulco, Mexico. California Air National Guard pararescuemen parachuted from an MC-130P into the ocean, boarded a Zodiac boat, and, equipped with medical supplies, boarded the Chinese boat to treat two fishermen badly burned in an onboard fire. The HH-60 crew then hoisted the injured men and PJs onto the Pave Hawk for transport to the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, Calif.

ANG photo by A1C John Pharr



14 bases with 28 fighters, to 23 bases with 46 fighters in just a matter of 48 hours," he explained. If needed, combat air patrols can be re-established "over each one of those bases in less than an hour," he said.

Renewing Special Ops

Several programs to recapitalize special operations aircraft are on track, reported US Special Operations Command boss Adm. William H. McRaven.

Air Force Special Operations Command has fielded 23 of its 50 planned CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, and the Osprey "continues to deliver unmatched speed and range to SOF battlefield commanders," he told lawmakers early in March.

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, McRaven said AFSOC has completed modifying 12 MC-130Ws with a precision strike package and has begun the effort to replace legacy AC-130U gunships with new AC-130Js. The new gunships will incorporate the MC-130W's precision strike package as "a key risk reducing capability," noted McRaven.

Developmental testing of the MC-130J wrapped up last June, and the aircraft is set to replace the command's elderly MC-130E/P special-mission fleet, he said.

Gliding Through Checkout

The first Advanced Extremely High Frequency military communications



USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua J. Garcia

Can You Hear Me Now?: A1C Justin Glass, a crew chief with the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, speaks with the pilot of an F-16 during a pre-flight check at a base in Southwest Asia. Vital communications between crew chiefs and pilots are aided by high-tech headsets and no-tech, old-fashioned hand signals.

satellite completed testing in geosynchronous orbit at the end of February and is now known as SV-1, Lockheed Martin announced. The milestone paves the way for transfer to the 50th Space Wing at Schriever AFB, Colo., which will operate the satellite in space.

Due to a problem with the SV-1's propulsion unit, the satellite took more than a year to attain its intended operational orbit.

AEHF satellites will provide significantly improved global protected communications to the US military

and national leadership, compared to the Milstar constellation currently in use.

SV-1 was launched in August 2010. The Air Force's second AEHF spacecraft arrived at Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., in February this year for a scheduled launch date in late April.

Relief for the Weary

The Air Force has taken the first step toward replacing its war-weary HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue fleet, issuing a draft solicitation to industry in March.

The service hosted a meeting with prospective bidders for the future Combat Rescue Helicopter in Dayton, Ohio, requesting industry feedback to the draft request for proposal by the beginning of April.

The solicitation wasn't publicly released, but "the Air Force remains committed to modernizing crucial combat search and rescue (CSAR) capabilities," according to its 2012 posture statement. Issued early this year, the paper stated the CRH program "remains on track to produce a replacement for the HH-60G through a full and open competition, with initial operational capability planned for FY18."

The Air Force included funds in its Fiscal 2013 budget request to purchase two CRH test aircraft.

First All-Super Galaxy Squadron

The 9th Airlift Squadron at Dover AFB, Del., is the first all-C-5M Super Galaxy squadron in the Air Force. Dover has the "largest aerial port on the East Coast; it [makes] sense to put the most capable, strategic airlifter right next to it, so that we can move more cargo faster," said Lt. Col. Dave Herbison, 9th AS operations director.

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With more efficient engines, a variety of reliability-enhancing modifications, and a glass cockpit, the Super Galaxy “allows us to do more things,” he said March 12.

Last To Fly

The Air Force’s final F-22 Raptor lifted off on its first test flight from Marietta, Ga., March 14.

The fighter—last of 187 production F-22s built at Lockheed Martin’s Marietta, Ga., facilities—is slated to complete flight test by the end of this month.

Raptor 4195 rolled off the assembly line in mid-December, some 15 years after the first F-22. After the company formally hands it over to the Air Force, the final Raptor is set to join USAF’s 3rd Wing at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Walking on Air: Airmen from the 820th Base Defense Group step out of an HC-130 at Moody AFB, Ga., during a static line jump. About 30 airmen jumped to maintain their airborne qualifications.

Warhead Watch

The United States’ three nuclear warhead life extension programs continue at a slightly slower pace due to budget limitations, said Thomas P. D’Agostino, head of the National Nuclear Security Administration.

“Over the last two years, the Administration’s been very consistent at putting out a fairly significant program to do life extension work on the stockpile itself,” D’Agostino said, speaking at a roundtable in Washington, D.C.

The US commitment to regenerating the Air Force’s B61 freefall tactical warhead and the Navy’s W76 warhead carried on the Trident ballistic missiles “hasn’t changed. ... Just the pace has slowed down a little bit,” he said March 8.

NNSA is also studying future life extension needs for W78/88 warheads, fitted to the Minuteman III and Navy Trident II missiles, to keep the Air Force’s strategic arsenal reliable in the years to come.

“What’s being slowed down are what’s typically been called ‘hedge warheads,’” said D’Agostino. “We’re going to slow down and stretch out that particular piece” to meet budget constraints over the short term, he said.

The Navy’s W76, now in production, is the highest current funding priority, D’Agostino said. After that, the B61—arguably the most complex rework—is the next priority, tentatively entering the rework line in 2019.

Due to their age and condition, the Minuteman and Trident W78/88 warheads are the least-pressing priority. As a result, funds will be limited in the near term to routine care and monitoring of these warheads, he said.

USAF photo by ATC Douglas Ellis



Operation Enduring Freedom

Casualties

By April 17, a total of 1,929 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 1,926 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,523 were killed in action with the enemy while 406 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 15,672 troops wounded in action during OEF.

Training at Home Again

Three Afghan Air Force Cessna 182s lifted off March 24 from Shindand Air Base on the first fixed-wing undergraduate pilot training sorties from Afghan soil in 30 years, according to US Air Force advisors there.

"The main goal here is to transition all of the training to the Afghans, so these first students are key to the success of a fully independent Afghan Air Force," said flight instructor Lt. Col. James Bands of the 838th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group.

Over six months, the students will complete UPT in the Cessna 182 before upgrading to the Cessna 208 for 10 months of intermediate training.

Working with civilian contract instructors, advisors are tracking the first students to "determine which students will continue flying these aircraft and which ones will return to instruct other AAF pilot candidates," noted Bands.

AAF students previously completed all UPT training abroad with US and partner air forces.

Broken Hawk Defies Explanation

Air Combat Command investigators were unable to determine with certainty why an RQ-4B Global Hawk communications-relay aircraft crashed during a mission in Afghanistan last summer, ACC announced.

Several hours into the mission on Aug. 20, 2011, the 9th Reconnaissance Wing controller at Beale AFB, Calif., lost all sensor and control data links with the remotely piloted aircraft, ACC's accident investigation board said.

The controller followed proper procedures, but was unable to regain contact with the RPA. Radar tracks showed that the RPA continued flying, until—buffeted by normal atmospheric turbulence—it departed controlled flight, plummeting from 51,000 feet.

The RPA crashed in an uninhabited area about 121 miles northwest of Kandahar, without additional damage or injury.

Loss of the RPA was estimated at \$72.8 million. The AIB was able to determine, however, that partial separation of a connector interrupting power to aileron and spoiler actuators rendered the aircraft uncontrollable, which was likely a "substantially contributing factor" to the mishap, according to its report released in March.

Brit Reaper Milestone

Royal Air Force MQ-9 Reapers operating with the US Air Force recently achieved 30,000 combat flight hours supporting operations in Afghanistan, according to the RAF.

"The continuing success of our Reaper operations is the result of fine collaborative work between the RAF and [the US Air Force]," said the British air commodore who heads RAF air reconnaissance operations.

Launched and recovered by RAF personnel detached to USAF's 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at Kandahar Air Base, the RPAs are flown operationally by RAF 39 Squadron controllers detached to Creech AFB, Nev.

"The British contribution is significant to our operations here. They are embedded in our squadron; they are an integral part of it," said a 62nd ERS officer.

RAF Reapers began operating over Afghanistan in October 2007. The RAF's current fleet of five Reapers is expected to double with the purchase of several more aircraft in the near future.

Company test pilot Bret Luedke took the aircraft aloft on its first test sortie.

A Pact With the Blue Devil

USAF will continue experimental Blue Devil persistent ISR support of US Central Command operations next fiscal year, said Steven H. Walker, head of Air Force science, technology, and engineering.

The technology has been "instrumental" in identifying several "high-value individuals" as well as improvised explosive devices in theater, said Walker. "Feedback on the situational awareness provided by Blue Devil Block 1 has been overwhelmingly positive," he told House defense authorizers in March.

Walker said the system is the first-ever wide-area sensor fully integrated with a narrow-field-of-view system cued by advanced signals intelligence sensors.

The Air Force plans to support CENTCOM with four Blue Devil Block 1 sorties per day in Fiscal 2013, he said.

Mounted on a modified executive jet, Blue Devil Block 1 is a suite of high-definition imagery sensors with classified capabilities, reported *Wired* Magazine.

Blue Devil Block 2 would integrate the sensors in a large airship, but the Air Force is mulling whether such "boutique" ISR systems are still affordable, said ISR chief Lt. Gen. Larry D. James, speaking earlier this year.

Jet Fuel, Act III

A new type of alternative fuel known as alcohol-to-jet, or ATJ, is undergoing suitability testing for use in USAF aircraft, said Terry A. Yonkers, the service's installation, environment, and logistics chief.

The Air Force anticipates certifying ATJ, derived from cellulosic materials such as wood waste, grasses, or corn stalks, for blended use with JP-8 fuels by 2014, Yonkers told legislators at a House Armed Services Committee panel March 29.

Depending on funding availability, ATJ would become the third type of alternative fuel certified for Air Force use to help reduce US dependency on foreign energy sources.

The service is working to meet half of all its domestic jet fuel needs with alternative blends by 2016. Synthetic paraffinic kerosene blend is already approved for servicewide use.

The Air Force expects to clear a blend of JP-8 and biofuel known as hydro-treated renewable jet fuel for all fleets by the end of this year, said Yonkers.

Africa Air Meet

US Air Forces Africa launched the inaugural Africa Partnership Flight,

Capt. Barry Crawford Awarded Air Force Cross for Heroism in Afghanistan

Capt. Barry F. Crawford Jr., an Air Force Special Operations Command special tactics officer, was on April 12 awarded the Air Force Cross—the second highest honor for valor in combat—for his “extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy.” His heroic actions took place in Laghman province, Afghanistan, on May 4, 2010.

Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz presented Crawford with the award during a ceremony in the Pentagon’s Hall of Heroes.

That May, Crawford was working with an Army Special Forces detachment and Afghan partners. Their operation was part of a larger plan to work with International Security Assistance Forces to re-establish control of a completely denied area east of Kabul that coalition forces had not been able to operate in for some time.

The area was known to be sympathetic to the Taliban, but the assault force, which included about 100 US and Afghan personnel, only expected light resistance. Unbeknownst to them, however, the mission had been compromised. The coalition assault force was actually walking into a trap and would be ambushed by a numerically superior enemy force roughly 10 times the expected size.

Around 5 a.m., bullets began raining down inside the village. “One of my teammates referred to it as getting shot at like fish in a barrel,” Crawford told *Air Force Magazine* during a March interview. “Once the enemy started firing on us, it didn’t stop for 10-plus hours.” Crawford described the scene as being like “running the gauntlet,” something straight out of a movie.

Multiple mission participants “painted a consistent and compelling picture of Captain Crawford’s technical expertise and exceptional courage under fire during the day-long battle with the enemy,” said Lt. Col. Parks Hughes, commander of the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Crawford’s home unit at the time. “They credited his decisive actions with enabling the US ground force and their Afghan partners to survive and escape an extremely dire situation.”

Three Afghans were severely wounded in the battle and two others were killed. Crawford knew the casualties didn’t have long to live and the conditions on the ground were making it difficult for the medical evacuation helicopter to land.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Crawford “ran out into the open in an effort to guide the helicopter to the landing



USAF photo by Andy Morataya

Capt. Barry Crawford in the field.

zone,” according to his Air Force Cross citation. “Once the pilot had eyes on his position, Captain Crawford remained exposed, despite having one of his radio antennas shot off mere inches from his face.”

Crawford then bounded across open terrain, engaging the enemy with his assault rifle and calling in strafing attacks from Army AH-64 Apache helicopters. He controlled the Apaches, which were unleashing gun, rocket, and Hellfire missile attacks on the mountainside.

As Crawford and his team made the perilous journey to the exfiltration point, the attacking insurgents kept launching new ambushes. At one point, Crawford’s element was ambushed from multiple fighting positions by an enemy less than 500 feet away. The insurgents were firing from caves, houses, and a ravine that had been dubbed the “green zone” because of its thick, concealing vegetation. The men were pinned down in the open, so Crawford again brought in the air assets.

After roughly 10 hours of constant battle, coalition forces were running out of ammunition so Crawford integrated AH-64s and F-15s in a coordinated air-to-ground attack plan that included strafing runs, Hellfire missiles, 500- and 2,000-pound bombs. This burst of airpower allowed the men to successfully evacuate the village without additional casualties.

“Captain Crawford braved effective enemy fire and consciously placed himself at grave risk on four occasions while controlling over 33 aircraft and more than 40 airstrikes on a well-trained and well-prepared enemy force,” reads his Air Force Cross citation.

Crawford, who now serves with the Air National Guard’s 104th Fighter Squadron in Baltimore, is the fourth air commando to receive the service’s second highest honor since Sept. 11, 2001. Only seven other airmen have earned an Air Force Cross since 1975.

—Amy McCullough



USAF photo by Andy Morataya

Crawford receives congratulations on April 12, 2012, from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz.

Senior Staff Changes

RETIREMENT: Maj. Gen. Charles E. **Reed Jr.**

NOMINATIONS: To be General: Janet C. **Wolfenbarger. To be Lieutenant General:** Salvatore A. **Angelella**, Andrew E. **Busch**, Bruce A. **Litchfield. To be Major General:** David W. **Allvin**, Howard B. **Baker**, Thomas W. **Bergeson**, Charles Q. **Brown Jr.**, Darryl W. **Burke**, Richard M. **Clark**, Dwyer L. **Dennis**, Mark C. **Dillon**, Carlton D. **Everhart II**, Samuel A. R. **Greaves**, Morris E. **Haase**, Garrett **Harencak**, Paul T. **Johnson**, Randy A. **Kee**, Jim H. **Keffer**, Michael J. **Kingsley**, Jeffrey G. **Lofgren**, James K. **McLaughlin**, Kurt F. **Neubauer**, John F. **Newell III**, Craig S. **Olson**, John N. T. **Shanahan**, Michael S. **Stough**, Scott D. **West**, Kenneth S. **Wilsbach. To be ANG Major General:** Steven A. **Cray**, William J. **Crisler Jr.**, Jon F. **Fago**, Michael A. **Loh**, Eric W. **Vollmecke. To be ANG Brigadier General:** Steven M. **Balsler**, Mark H. **Berry**, Ondra L. **Berry**, Allen D. **Bolton**, Robert C. **Bolton**, Walter A. **Bryan Jr.**, Gregory S. **Champagne**, William D. **Cobetto**, Sean T. **Collins**, Douglas D. **Delozier**, John L. **D'Errico**, Dawne L. **Deskins**, Scott A. **Dold**, Gary L. **Ebben**, Kenneth L. **Gammon**, Bruce R. **Guerdan**, Leonard W. **Isabelle Jr.**, Clifford W. **Latta Jr.**, Wade A. **Lillegard**, Paul C. **Maas Jr.**, Peter R. **Masciola**, Edward P. **Maxwell**, David M. **McMinn**, Michael A. **Meyer**, Thad L. **Myers**, Thomas C. **Patton**, Braden K. **Sakai**, Janet I. **Sessums**, Peter J. **Siana**, Jeffrey M. **Silver**, James K. **Vogel**, Sallie K. **Worcester. To be AFRC Lieutenant General:** James F. **Jackson.**

CHANGES: Maj. Gen. (sel.) David W. **Allvin**, from Vice Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Center (Tanker Airlift Control Center), AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Center, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Brig. Gen. Stephen A. **Clark**, from Dir., Plans, Prgms., Rqmts., & Assessments, AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla., to Dep. Cmdr., Jt. Spec. Ops. Command, SOCOM, Fort Bragg, N.C. ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Carlton D. **Everhart II**, from Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Center (Tanker Airlift Control Center), AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Vice Cmdr., 3rd AF, USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Michael S. **Stough**, from Dep. Dir., Strat. Plans, Rqmts., & Prgms., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Vice Dir., Jt. Staff, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. Giovanni K. **Tuck**, from Cmdr., 379th AEW, ACC, Southwest Asia, to Cmdr., Defense Log. Agency-Distribution, New Cumberland, Pa. ... Brig. Gen. Marshall B. **Webb**, from Asst. Cmdr., Spt., Jt. Special Ops. Command, SOCOM, Fort Bragg, N.C., to Dir., Plans, Prgms., Rqmts., & Assessments, AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGES: William H. **Booth Sr.**, to Dep. Asst. SECAF, Reserve Affairs, Office of the Asst. SECAF, Manpower & Reserve Affairs, Pentagon ... Robert F. **Bussian**, to Sr. Advisor for Intel. Innovation, Intel. Sys. Spt. Office, OSAF, Fort Washington, Md. ... Russell J. **Frasz**, to Dir., Force Dev., DCS, Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., USAF, Pentagon ... Jeffrey T. **Gossel**, to Sr. Tech. Advisor, Space & Missiles, Space & Missiles Analysis Group, Natl. Air & Space Intel. Center, AF ISR Agency, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... Richard W. **Lombardi**, to Exec. Dir., ASC, AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... Michelle S. **Lowesolis**, to Dir., Plans & Integration Directorate, DCS, Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., USAF, Pentagon. ... John T. **Park**, to Dep. Dir., Force Mgmt. Policy, DCS, Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., USAF, Pentagon ... Marilyn M. **Thomas**, to Principal Dep. Asst. SECAF, Financial Mgmt. & Comptroller, Pentagon.

bringing several air forces from East Africa together for military-to-military exchange at Accra, Ghana, earlier this year.

"At the end, if we do nothing more than strengthen relationships, old and new, that's value added," said Col. Dave Poage, APF mission commander, of the two-week event that began March 12.

"Just getting to know each other and creating partnerships among a myriad of organizations will make it successful," he said.

Hosted by the Ghanaian Air Force, airmen from several major commands, including AFAFRICA and US Air Forces in Europe, met with more than 160 personnel from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo.

"Good knowledge of best practices ... is very crucial to the success of any modern air force," said Air Commodore Emanuel Ahadome, GAF logistics chief. US Africa Command is incorporating APF into its outreach activities

this year as a routine, small-footprint capacity-building tool.

Pilot Error in A-10 Mishap

US Air Forces in Europe investigators attributed the crash of a 52nd Fighter Wing A-10C near its home base at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, in April 2011 to pilot error stemming from spatial disorientation.

Investigators said the pilot lost visual contact with his wingman and descended in poor visibility.

Switching from visual reference to instrument flight, the pilot became disoriented, rolling inverted before exiting the cloud deck. Regaining visual reference, he attempted to recover the aircraft before ejecting at 600 feet.

The pilot's parachute only partially deployed, resulting in serious injury, according to the accident investigation board. Weather conditions and procedural errors also contributed to the crash, according to the AIB report.

The A-10 struck a field north of Laufeld, Germany; the aircraft loss totaled \$16.1 million.

Back to Korat

More than 1,600 combined civilian and military personnel from the United States, Singapore, and Thailand participated in Exercise Cope Tiger 2012 at Korat RTAB, Thailand.

"Our cooperation will not only ensure regional security and stability but also provide our aircrews and personnel an opportunity to gain valuable insights and build long-lasting relationships that will benefit all nations in this region," said Col. Marc Caudill, Cope Tiger US exercise director and deployed wing commander.

Losing the Drug War

US Southern Command spends about half its time focused on transnational crime, most of which revolves around the drug trade, said SOUTHCOM chief Gen. Douglas M. Fraser.

But due to a lack of assets, the command can only interdict a third of narcotics shipments transiting its area of responsibility in Central and South America, Fraser told reporters in March.

Many Central American partner air forces lack the capacity to respond to drug-carrying aircraft landing in their countries or transiting their airspace, he said.

The Drug Enforcement Agency is "providing some capacity to respond, but it's just limited as you look at their capability to cover the large territories and be able to get to the right place at the right time," he noted.

The command's interdiction rate is actually dropping, Fraser said, meaning more drugs are getting through. Narcotics smugglers "are moving into areas beyond the Western hemisphere," as well, he said. "We see increasing movement from Brazil, from the northern parts of South America, even down through Argentina, into West Africa, and up into Europe and the Middle East."

To make matters worse, SOUTHCOM is seeing an increase in substances such as methamphetamine from India and China funneling through Mexico and eventually ending up in the United States, he said.

Getting Your TacSat's Worth

TacSat-3 ended its operational life in March after a phenomenal mission during which the experimental satellite was retasked multiple times to perform crucial operations.

"This satellite did some amazing things during its relatively short life," said Lt. Col. Mike Manor, commander of the 1st Space Operations Squadron at Schriever AFB, Colo.

The 880-pound experimental spacecraft was briefly made an operational reconnaissance asset, supporting combat operations.

After its on-orbit experiments were complete, Air Force Space Command pressed the satellite into service in June 2010 to support real-world combat and humanitarian operations worldwide. "We were able to squeeze two additional years of mission operations out of it," explained Manor.

Among its accomplishments, TacSat-3 provided multispectral imaging of earthquake- and tsunami-ravaged Japan, including the badly damaged Fukushima nuclear facility in 2011, in addition to its uniformed tasks.

Controllers at Schriever recently handed the satellite to airmen at the Space and Missile Systems Center at Los Angeles AFB, Calif., to guide it through its fall from orbit and atmospheric burn-up.

Built as an Air Force Research Lab experiment, TacSat-3 was launched by the Air Force into orbit in May 2009 with an intended life of one year.

The air combat exercise featured field training and large-force air employments involving a total of 92 aircraft and 34 air defense units.

The US air contingent included A-10s, C-17s, C-130s, and F-15s as well as personnel from JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Jacksonville Arpt., Fla.; JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; Osan AB, South Korea; and Yokota AB, Japan.

The two-week exercise ran from March 12 to March 23 at Korat.

Viper Lost in Korea

An F-16C assigned to the 36th Fighter Squadron at Osan AB, South Korea, crashed on a routine training sortie to Kunsan Air Base, March 21.

The pilot ejected safely, but the fighter was destroyed when it crashed into a rice paddy near the base, Kunsan officials announced.

"We are grateful the pilot is safe and that no one was injured," said Col. Patrick McKenzie, commander of Osan's 51st Fighter Wing, parent unit of the 36th FS. "Our main priority now is conducting an investigation to determine what happened," he said.

Southern Liberty

US Southern Command wants to use the Air Force's MC-12 Liberty intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance fleet when demand for the type in Afghanistan winds down.

"I think it's a very, very useful capability for the region," said SOUTHCOM Commander Gen. Douglas M. Fraser, speaking in Washington, D.C.

Fraser said he's already made his request known within the Air Force,

but it's too early yet to say the number of aircraft and support the command could potentially expect.

The MC-12 is based on the Beechcraft Super King Air, and partner air forces in the region have seized quite a number of similar aircraft in their war on narcotics trafficking. They have suggested converting the aircraft into ISR assets offering potential commonality, he said. SOUTHCOM uses the C-26 and other ISR aircraft in the region, and USAF Secretary Michael B. Donley has

noted the potential usefulness of the MC-12 to the ANG counternarcotics-smuggling mission.

The service recently proposed transferring the planned 42-aircraft fleet to the Air National Guard in Fiscal 2014.

Low and Slow Threats

US Northern Command is studying how to confront "low, slow airborne threats" to infrastructure and populations within the US homeland, said Army Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., NORAD and NORTHCOM boss.

"Based on our initial timelines, we anticipate having a way ahead by late summer," Jacoby told a House committee in March. NORTHCOM is busy identifying the assets and tactics needed to deal with single-engine aircraft or even rudimentary cruise missiles, said Jacoby.

NORTHCOM has put in a request for a capability to the joint requirements process and has begun work on an analysis of alternatives, he said.

School for Flying Medics

A new formal training unit is being set up alongside the School of Aerospace Medicine at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to train aeromedical evacuation personnel. The existing school is at Pope Field, N.C.

"This FTU will focus on enhancing the knowledge and performance required to operate in our AE aircraft," said Maj. Gen. Kimberly A. Siniscalchi, USAF



Drop and Give Me 10: 37th Airlift Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Joshua Olson (l) and Capt. Marci Walton, an instructor pilot, go through the preflight checklist on a C-130J at Ramstein AB, Germany. The 37th dropped a 10-pallet load of supplies to soldiers training in Grafenwoehr, allowing the airmen a rare opportunity to test a 10-bundle container deployment system.

assistant surgeon general for force development.

A new curriculum—and having the FTU nearby—“will reduce overall training time by 130 days, provide flexibility in completing the training requirements, eliminate redundancies, and save thousands of dollars in travel costs,” she told Congress in March.

The initiative aims to “standardize training” across the Air Force’s active and reserve components, “better preparing our AE community for any operational mission,” she said.

Old Home Depot

The last MC-130E Combat Talon I to undergo programmed depot maintenance was inducted at Robins AFB, Ga., this spring; the type is being retired and replaced by MC-130Js.

Tail No. 62-1843—the oldest Combat Talon I still in service—was in “pretty bad shape upon arrival,” said Kevin Johnson, 560th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron MC-130 line supervisor.

“There is generally a good bit of work for everyone involved—structural and avionics-wise,” said George Hoffman, 560th AMXS PDM flight chief.

Usually deployed in austere environments, often supporting clandestine operations, Combat Talons suffer “a lot of cracks and corrosion,” compared to a normal C-130, said Hoffman.

Air Force Special Operations Command’s fleet of 14 MC-130Es was originally serviced through the Big Safari program office, which oversaw the aircraft into the 1990s. Robins received the first MC-130E for PDM in 1998.

Sixth C-17 To Oz

The Royal Australian Air Force is purchasing a sixth C-17 airlifter in a \$297 million foreign military sales deal with the US government, Australia’s Defense Ministry announced.

The additional aircraft will greatly enhance Australia’s humanitarian- and disaster-response capability, doubling its mission-available fleet “from two to four,” according to the Defense Ministry.

Australia took delivery of its fifth C-17 last September, and in 2011 alone, its fleet flew some 141 airlift sorties, logging more than 1.3 million miles.

In addition to ferrying 755 tons of supplies to Australian forces in Afghanistan, RAAF C-17s carried 500 tons of supplies to Japan following last spring’s tsunami and earthquake. They also supported relief efforts in New Zealand after earthquakes and brought aid to parts of Australia hit by cyclones and floods.

Boeing’s plant at Long Beach, Calif., is scheduled to deliver the aircraft to the RAAF early next year, according to Australia’s Defense Ministry.

JPADS To the Rescue

The 58th Rescue Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nev., recently began adapting the GPS-guided Joint Precision Airdrop System to support combat rescuers in the field.

“We’re currently in the initial phase of building a true precision airdrop capability for Air Force rescue,” said Maj. Jose Cabrera, 58th RQS operations director.

Capable of steering a parachute with rescue equipment to a preprogrammed point, or allowing pararescuemen to guide it using a chest-mounted computer, JPADS is ideally suited to rescue needs, said SrA. Dalton Harper, 58th RQS equipment journeyman.

“Whether we jump in tow with a guided equipment bundle, remotely control a resupply bundle from the ground as the bundle falls from an aircraft, or simply airdrop a sustainment package to a downed airman while awaiting recovery,” the system revolutionizes rescuers’ ability to get the supplies they need almost anywhere, explained Cabrera. ■

Put 'er There, Pardner: Lance Cpl. Lydia Opoku, a security forces airman in the Ghanaian Air Force, guards a USAF C-130J at Accra, Ghana, during the exercise African Partnership Flight. USAF airmen participated in the multinational training exercise, focused on military-to-military partnership building with five African nations. See “Africa Air Meet,” p. 24.

USAF photo by SrA. Naiasha Stannard

