

Civilian Furloughs Begin

Beginning on July 8, most Defense Department civilian personnel will face as many as 11 days of furloughs for the remainder of the fiscal year, announced Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

Speaking to DOD employees during a town hall meeting in Alexandria, Va., Hagel said he based this decision on "fairness" to employees after conducting an "extensive review" of all available options. "I have made this decision very reluctantly because I know that furloughs will disrupt lives and impact DOD operations," he said in a statement released after the May 14 meeting. "I recognize the significant hardship this places on you and your families."

Employees will be asked to take one furlough day per week, or two per pay period. Some "essential" civilian personnel will be exempt, such as those on temporary assignment to a combat zone, said Hagel. He told the town hall it's possible officials might be able to reduce the total number of furlough days after they get "through the front end." However, he did not make any promises.

Initially, Pentagon officials anticipated that most of DOD's 800,000 civilian employees around the country would have to stay home for up to 22 days through September. Pentagon officials have said the 11 furlough days would save an estimated \$1.8 billion.

Breedlove Now the SACEUR

Gen. Philip M. Breedlove became NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, during a ceremony at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium on May 13. Breedlove, who previously oversaw Air Force units in Europe, succeeded Adm. James G. Stavridis, who had held the position since summer 2009.

"As I take command today, I am humbled by the great company I am joining, intrigued by the challenges we will face together, and inspired by the recent achievements of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines from across this incredible Alliance," said Breedlove. "As SACEUR, my first and enduring priority will be to ensure that NATO remains vigilant and prepared

to meet the challenges and threats of the future with agile, capable, and interoperable military forces."

Breedlove is the 17th American officer and third Air Force general to hold the SACEUR post since its inception in 1951. In an earlier ceremony in Stuttgart, Germany, he also took charge of US European Command.

Preferred Sites for KC-46A

McConnell AFB, Kan., is the preferred location for the first Active Duty-led KC-46A main operating base, announced Air Force officials in May. Altus AFB, Okla., is the preferred place to host the KC-46A formal training unit, while Pease Intl. Tradeport ANG, N.H., is the preferred site for the first Air National Guard KC-46A main operating base.

"The Air Force chose these locations using operational analysis, results of site surveys, and military judgment factors," said Timothy K. Bridges, the service's deputy assistant secretary for installations. Before the Air Force can render final decisions, it must complete the environmental impact studies launched in April at all of the candidate locations, he said.

McConnell prevailed as top choice over Fairchild AFB, Wash., and Grand Forks AFB, N.D. Pease emerged as the MOB 2 top candidate over Forbes Field, Kan.; JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.; Pittsburgh Arpt./ARS, Pa., and Rickenbacker ANGB, Ohio.

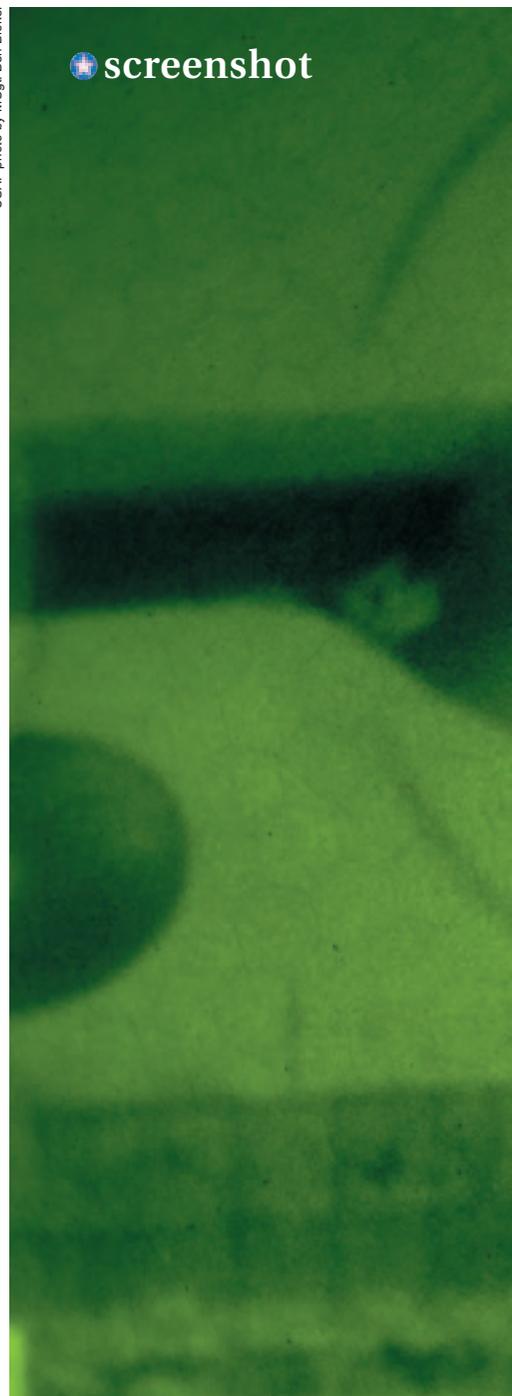
Among the reasons cited, McConnell "has the lowest military construction costs," Altus requires "less Active Duty manpower" to stand up the training operation, and Pease has a "highly successful existing Active Duty association," stated the release.

New Air Force Chief Scientist

Mica R. Endsley became the Air Force's chief scientist on June 3, replacing Mark T. Maybury, who had held the post since October 2010, according to a service release.

"I deeply respect the challenges and sacrifices that all of our airmen, at every level, make daily in service to our nation," said Endsley, who is the Air Force's first female chief scientist.

USAF photo by MSgt. Ben Bickler



screenshot

"To be asked to join them and do what I can to support them was simply an opportunity I could not pass up."

Endsley has been president of SA Technologies in Marietta, Ga., which specializes in cognitive engineering and situation awareness innovation. She has also served on the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board.

"I'm confident she'll continue a proud legacy of chief scientists who use innovation and strong leadership to keep

our Air Force the world's finest," said Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III of Endsley.

AFRC's New Command Chief

Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, head of Air Force Reserve Command, selected CMSgt. Cameron B. Kirksey to be AFRC's next command chief. Kirksey had served as command chief of AFRC's 482nd Fighter Wing at Homestead ARB, Fla., since June

2011. He will replace CMSgt. Kathleen R. Buckner, who resigned in April for personal reasons. She had held the post since December 2011.

"I look forward to being the eyes, ears, and voice of our enlisted ranks to General Jackson, and I want every airman who is a part [of] AFRC to know that I am extremely honored to serve them as their senior enlisted leader," said Kirksey.

A native of Silas, Ala., he enlisted in the Air Force Reserve in March 1988.



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A1C Everardo Torres scans an airfield for potential threats as night falls in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, while equipment and personnel transfer from a C-130. Torres is a security forces Fly-away Security Team (FAST) member. FAST personnel fly on missions when a location requires an extra measure of security or to protect the aircraft and air crew from hostile fire or potential security breaches.

F-35 IOC Dates

The Air Force intends to declare initial operational capability for the F-35A strike fighter sometime between August and December 2016, meaning the aircraft will be ready for initial real-world operations, service officials told Congress.

That's when the first F-35A operational squadron will have 12 to 24 aircraft in place and sufficient airmen will be trained to fly and maintain them, stated a Pentagon report issued to lawmakers on May 31. At IOC, the F-35As will be capable of conducting basic close air support, interdiction, and limited suppression and destruction of enemy air defense operations in a contested environment, stated the report.

Also, at IOC, the Air Force variant of the F-35 will utilize Block 3i software. While the F-35As in that configuration will be adequate for threats of 2016, the report stated that "the Air Force will require the enhanced lethality and survivability inherent in Blocks 3F and beyond" to meet requirements in later years.

The Marine Corps, on the other hand, anticipates declaring IOC for its F-35B variant between July 2015 and December 2015. That is when the first F-35B operational unit will have adequate pilots and maintenance crews in place and will be equipped with 10 to 16 aircraft in the Block 2B software configuration making the aircraft capable of close air support, offensive and defensive counterair, air interdiction, assault support escort, and armed reconnaissance.

The same report stated the Navy projects its carrier-based F-35C will be ready for combat by February 2019. It also said the F-35C will reach IOC between August 2018 and February 2019.

His background is in the logistics career field, specializing in fuels management.

Retraining for Responders

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel directed all sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR) personnel and military recruiters to be retrained, recertified, and rescreened. His directive, announced by Pentagon spokesman George E. Little on May 14, came after revelations that an Army NCO serving as a SAPR coordinator at Fort Hood, Tex., is facing allegations of sexual misconduct. This followed a case earlier in May of an Air Force SAPR officer assigned to the Pentagon who was arrested on charges of sexual battery.

"I cannot convey strongly enough his frustration, anger, and disappointment over these troubling allegations and the breakdown in discipline and standards they imply," said Little of Hagel's reaction to the case with the Army sergeant first class. The soldier is accused of pandering, abusive sexual contact, assault, and maltreatment of

Might as Well Jump: Army paratroopers jump from a C-17 over Malamute Drop Zone at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, during Operation Spartan Reach, a mass tactical airborne training event. USAF C-17s and a C-130 dropped more than 1,400 paratroopers in addition to heavy equipment, including two 105 mm howitzers.

ANG photo by SSgt. Leelan Buehrer



Warrior Spirit

The Air Force came away from the 2013 Warrior Games with 30 medals: three gold, 11 silver, and 16 bronze. This total nearly doubled the service's medal count from last year.

The six-day event, which took place at the Air Force Academy and the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., wrapped up on May 16. It drew 260 athletes, including 50 from the Air Force. The Warrior Games are "designed to introduce injured service members and veterans to paralympic sport competition and encourage them to stay physically active when they return to their local communities," states the US Paralympics website.

Military personnel and veterans with combat-related injuries, noncombat-related injuries, and those with what's known as "invisible" wounds are eligible to compete in the Warrior Games.

Triathlete and first-time Warrior Games competitor Air Force Capt. Mitchell Kieffer won the title of the Ultimate Champion for his performance in five competitions: the 50-meter freestyle swim, 10-meter prone air rifle shooting, a 100-meter sprint, cycling, and shot put. He won the silver medal in the rifle shooting. This was the first time an airman won the Ultimate Champion title.

Kieffer suffers from traumatic brain injury and compression fractures in his back from injuries sustained in Afghanistan in 2010.

"It's almost euphoric just to be connected to so many great people, and I feel everyone is better than myself," he said. "It's a very exciting honor just to be here."

Athletes at the all-services paralympics games competed in seven different sports: archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field, and wheelchair basketball.

One of the reasons why the Warrior Games is so popular is because athletes view it as a form of therapy. TSgt. Axel Gaud-Torres signed up for the games because he and his wife knew it would be good for him. Gaud-Torres suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and residual pains from injuries sustained from an explosion in Iraq eight years ago. He competed in archery, rifle shooting, and sitting volleyball.

Every time he steps onto the shooting field, "it's like I'm back before everything happened, before I even deployed," he said. "It's so peaceful when I'm out there on the line. ...It's just me and the target and perfect peace and harmony."

The Defense Department partners with the US Olympics Committee Paralympics Military Program each year to host the Warrior Games. This year was the fourth year of the games.

—June L. Kim

strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan would come down as the United States disengages from combat in Afghanistan, but vigorous oversight of such operations outside of combat zones has been the norm with Congress.

"Not only did Congress authorize the use of force, it is briefed on every strike that America takes," said Obama. The use of standoff air strikes is in lieu of the riskier option of putting US troops on the ground in a sovereign nation, which could incur immense backlash, he noted.

The President also urged Congress to revisit the post-9/11 authorization on the use of military force. After more than 10 years of war, "we must define the nature and scope of this struggle," he said, since the nation cannot sustain a continual war footing.

Today, Obama said, al Qaeda is largely dismantled, but the threat from affiliate organizations still remains.

North Korea's Missile Launches

North Korea launched short-range ballistic missiles off its coast for three consecutive days in late May, according to press reports. North Korean officials declared the launches of the six short-range missiles to the east and north of its territorial waters over that span a part of regular military exercises, reported Bloomberg.

The official North Korean news agency accused the United States and South Korea of "brigandish sophism" for criticizing the launches and cited recent joint US-South Korean exercises as far greater provocations, reported the *New York Times*. South Korean officials said the launches raised tensions on the peninsula.

Pentagon Press Secretary George E. Little said while North Korea's rhetoric has calmed—compared to recent months—any activities such as launches "could be construed" as provocative and concern US officials. He noted that the short-range launches do not necessarily violate North Korea's international obligations, but that the United States and its allies would monitor developments closely.

Women in Combat

Each of the four services submitted implementation plans to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel detailing how to integrate women into combat roles, Pentagon spokesman Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Christensen told *Air Force Magazine*. Christensen said DOD is "conducting a thorough review" of the plans, received on May 15, and anticipates submitting its proposal to Congress later this summer.

"It would be inappropriate to discuss the content of those recommendations or

subordinates, according to a May 15 Pentagon release.

"Sexual assault is a crime, and will be treated as such," said Little. "Secretary Hagel is looking urgently at every course of action to stamp out this deplorable conduct and ensure that those individuals up and down the chain of command who tolerate or engage in this behavior are appropriately held accountable."

Obama Defends RPA Strikes

President Barack Obama defended his Administration's use of remotely piloted aircraft to target terrorists, saying this counterterror method has saved American lives, is proportional, and legal.

In remarks at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., on May 23, Obama said the number of these

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Getting Back on Track

Almost two months after missile crew members from the 91st Operations Group at Minot AFB, N.D., were temporarily relieved of their authority to control Minuteman III nuclear missiles, 10 of 19 returned to duty after completing recertification training. The remaining crew members were expected to complete their recertification in early June, according to an Air Force Global Strike Command news release.

In April, members of the 91st Missile Wing were sidelined after the wing earned a “marginal” rating in one of 22 areas covered during a consolidated unit inspection. The inspection revealed several shortfalls and an attitude of complacency among a “small number of officers,” stated the command’s June 7 release.

Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, speaking to the House Appropriations Committee’s defense panel on May 9, said the wing commander and the group commander at Minot “immediately started an investigation into what had caused the lower-than-expected performance by their crew members.” The review included a “comprehensive, top-to-bottom assessment of training, performance on routine testing, simulations, et cetera,” he said.

task force or commission to analyze the Veterans Affairs Department’s disability benefits claims processing system.

“We hope to establish a revised evidenced-based process that will help VA break its claims backlog once and for all in 2015, just as department leaders have promised,” said Miller.

The claims process, on average, takes about nine months, but some claims take years. The task force would examine the reasons for the backlog and offer solutions to correct the problem by 2015, stated the release.

“The entire country is counting on VA to end the backlog by 2015, and Congress is committed to holding the department accountable until they achieve that goal,” said McCarthy. “Our veterans deserve the care they earned while protecting and defending our country, and continued failure by the VA cannot and will not be tolerated.”

WGS-5 Launched

The Air Force and its industry partners launched WGS-5, the fifth Wideband Global Satellite Communications spacecraft, into orbit aboard a United Launch Alliance Delta IV booster fired from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla. Within an hour of its launch at 8:27 p.m. local

speculate on any decisions the Secretary may come to subsequent to the review,” he said. “The successful integration of women into currently closed positions requires the department to be thoughtful and deliberate in determining the next steps.”

The Pentagon announced in late January plans to open more combat roles to women. Unlike the other ser-

vices, most Air Force specialty codes already are open to women, except for some special operations positions.

Another Look at Claims

House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) and House Majority Whip Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) introduced legislation that would establish an independent

Walk Toward the Light: TSgt. Sean Buck and A1C Pedro Cahua prepare to hook up an 1,800-pound cargo bag to a hovering Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a nighttime sling-load training mission at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. The ability to deliver goods with pinpoint accuracy reduces ground convoys’ vulnerability to IEDs.



USAF photo by Capt. Brian Maguire

Operation Enduring Freedom

Casualties

As of June 19, a total of 2,233 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,230 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,756 were killed in action with the enemy, while 475 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 18,795 troops wounded in action during OEF.

Afghan Air Force Grows

The Afghan air force continues to grow in capacity and capability as Afghan National Security Forces take the lead in the fight against insurgents and NATO troops move into an advisory role, according to a news release from coalition air advisors in Kabul.

Following the success of a winter campaign, the AAF increased support by more than 60 percent in the first three months of 2013, airlifting more than 9,400 personnel and more than 642,000 pounds of equipment and humanitarian supplies, stated the May 13 release.

"The Afghan air force's unprecedented progress is now growing from the inside out," said Maj. Gen. Abdul Wardak Wahab, AAF commander. "We are employing our force as well as ... developing it," he said.

Back in October 2012, it took an average of 72 hours for the AAF to respond to an emergency call and move a wounded Afghan to a medical treatment facility. Currently, the response time stands at less than three hours, approaching NATO standards, stated the release.

Dempsey Talks Afghan Transition

The NATO mandate for combat troops in Afghanistan will expire at the end of 2014, but there remain many options for the presence and disposition of foreign troops in the country after this date, according to Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

His comments on May 15 followed two days of discussions in Brussels with NATO officials, including Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, NATO's top military commander, and Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the top general in Afghanistan. Dempsey said NATO chiefs examined whether the Alliance should take a regional approach to the training and advising mission after 2014 or whether it should proceed at the institutional level, or at the battalion, brigade, or corps level for the Afghan military. Each scenario has different requirements for troops, equipment, basing, and funding, he said.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel met with NATO and partner defense ministers also in early June for discussions on topics including Afghanistan, cybersecurity, a possible Libya training mission, and collective defense.

Afghan Airmen Test New Gun

The Afghan air force took another step toward bolstering its close air support capabilities with the test of GSh-23 guns on the Mi-35 attack helicopter.

Members of the AAF's 377th Rotary Wing Squadron at Kabul fired 23 mm rounds from newly mounted twin-barreled GSh-23s for the first time May 15 during a live-fire exercise, stated a May 31 news release.

"This weapons system provides a vital air-to-ground capability," said Lt. Col. Brandon Deacon, 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron commander. The exercise, involving two Mi-35s, also marked the first time the Afghans have had the GSh-23 as well as the Yak-B 12.7 mm machine gun and the S-5 57 mm rocket pod mounted on the Hind.

Once Afghan pilots complete certifications, they will be able to use the GSh-23 in combat to support Afghan ground troops.

time on May 24, controllers in Australia confirmed initial contact with the military communications satellite, indicating that it was "functioning normally and ready to be moved into geosynchronous Earth orbit," stated a release that day from Boeing, the satellite's manufacturer.

WGS-5 should enter operations by the end of 2013, following several months of orbit-raising activities to

reach its operational perch and on-orbit testing to verify its performance, according to a release from Air Force space officials at Los Angeles AFB, Calif.

WGS-5, which will give the US military and allied militaries greater access to fast and secure communications, joins four WGS satellites already operating on orbit. It is the second WGS

spacecraft in the Block II configuration; like WGS-4, it offers more robust communications throughput. The WGS-5 mission was the second space launch from Cape Canaveral in 10 days, following the May 15 launch of the fourth GPS IIF navigation satellite.

F-35 Costs Decrease

The Pentagon's selected acquisition report to Congress noted a \$4.5 billion reduction in the acquisition, operating, and support costs of the F-35 strike fighter program. Prime contractor Lockheed Martin said this marks the first time a SAR reflects a cost reduction in the program.

"We will work with the F-35 joint program office to implement further cost-saving measures, which will result in additional significant decreases to the total program cost," said a company spokeswoman.

The F-35 aircraft program has an estimated total cost of \$326.9 billion, down 1.5 percent from the previous \$331.9 billion estimate, stated the report, issued on May 23. However, that savings is partially offset by a \$442 million increase in the cost of F-35 engine acquisition, which jumped from \$63.9 billion to \$64.3 billion. Those costs rose primarily due to revised escalation indices, correction of cost allocations between the aircraft and engine subprograms, and a lower ramp-up of engine production in the near term, stated the report.

Chinese Anti-Satellite Test?

A Chinese space launch in May ostensibly for peaceful scientific research may actually have been a test of a new Chinese anti-satellite weapon, according to US press reports. China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported the May 13 launch of a high-altitude sounding rocket from southwestern China that was meant to investigate energy ions and magnetic fields in space.

However, the mission actually was a test of the so-called Dong Ning-2 missile that China could fire to attack a satellite, reported the *Washington Free Beacon*, citing US officials. The test reflects a significant advance in Chinese counterspace capabilities, claimed the *Beacon*.

A Reuters report citing a US defense official made similar claims. Asked for comment, Pentagon spokeswoman Lt. Col. Monica Matoush told *Air Force Magazine*: "We detected a launch on May 13 from within China. The launch appeared to be on a ballistic trajectory nearly to geosynchronous Earth orbit. We tracked several objects during the flight, but did not observe the insertion of any objects into orbit and no objects

Senior Staff Changes

RETIREMENTS: Lt. Gen. Ralph J. **Jodice II**, Lt. Gen. William J. **Rew**, Brig. Gen. Gregory J. **Touhill**.

NOMINATIONS: To be Brigadier General: James E. **McClain**. **To be ANG Brigadier General:** Robert C. **Bolton**.

CHANGES: Brig. Gen. Christopher J. **Bence**, from Dep. Dir., Ops., Natl. Jt. Ops. & Intel. Center, Ops. Team Two, Jt. Staff, Pentagon, to Dir., USAFE-United Kingdom, USAFE, RAF Mildenhall, UK ... Brig. Gen. Michael A. **Fantini**, from Cmdr., 82nd Tng Wg., AETC, Sheppard AFB, Tex., to Cmdr., 451ST AEW, ACC, Kandahar, Afghanistan ... Brig. Gen. Scott A. **Kindsvater**, from Dep. Chief, Spt./Security Assistance, Office of Defense Rep-Pakistan, CENTCOM, Islamabad, Pakistan, to Cmdr., 82nd Tng Wg., AETC, Sheppard AFB, Tex. ... Brig. Gen. Lawrence M. **Martin Jr.**, from Vice Cmdr., 618th Air & Space Ops. Center (Tanker Airlift Control Center), AMC, Scott AFB, Ill., to Dir., Regional Affairs, Office of the Dep. Undersecretary of the Air Force, Intl. Affairs, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. Jon A. **Norman**, from Dir., USAFE-United Kingdom, USAFE, RAF Mildenhall, UK, to Cmdr., 31st FW, USAFE, Aviano AB, Italy ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Mark C. **Nowland**, from Dir., Strategy, Policy, & Plans, SOUTHCOM, Miami, to C/S, SOUTHCOM, Miami ... Maj. Gen. Joseph S. **Ward Jr.**, from Commandant, Jt. Forces Staff College, Natl. Defense University, Norfolk, Va., to Dep. Dir., AF Quadrennial Defense Review, Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, USAF, Pentagon.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGE: Mica R. **Endsley**, to Chief Scientist of the AF, USAF, Pentagon.

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT CHANGE: CMSgt. Cameron B. **Kirksey**, to Command Chief, AFRC, Robins AFB, Ga. ■

associated with this launch remain in space.”

China tested an ASAT weapon in 2007 that created thousands of pieces of debris on orbit. The Pentagon's newly issued 2013 annual report on Chinese military developments stated that China is acquiring “a range of technologies” to improve its space and counterspace capabilities.

F-15 Goes Down in Pacific

A pilot assigned to the 18th Wing at

Kadena AB, Japan, was in stable condition in a military medical facility after the crash of an F-15 in late May, in the waters of the Pacific, announced base officials. Japanese rescuers recovered the pilot, who had ejected from the

Testify: USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III (second from right in front row) and Air Force Judge Advocate General Lt. Gen. Richard Harding (right of Welsh), together with other service Chiefs and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to testify about combating sexual assault in the military. During the hearing, Welsh said, “Every airman is either part of the solution or part of the problem, and there is no middle ground.”

F-15 about 70 miles east of Okinawa at about 9 a.m. local time during his sortie, they said in a news release.

The cause of the mishap is thus far undetermined. As a result of the mishap, the wing announced that it would suspend F-15 training at Kadena for one day.

“It's common practice to stand down training operations after a major mishap to allow aircrews time and opportunity to reflect on what happened and refocus on training requirements,” stated the wing's May 28 release. “Every F-15 at Kadena will undergo an inspection to ensure they are safe to fly.”

No More O-3 Central Board

Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley in May approved the elimination of the Captain's Central Selection Board, meaning first lieutenants no longer meet a promotion central selection board to make captain, announced service officials. The change took effect immediately and returned the Air Force to the same promotion process that was in effect before July 2011. Accordingly, first lieutenants are now informed by their chain of command if they are recommended for promotion to captain.

“Senior raters will now provide a recommendation to promote or not to promote officers. All officers will get promoted unless their senior rater makes a recommendation of ‘do not promote,’”



USAF photo by Scott M. Ash

China's Secret

The Defense Science Board, in a confidential annex to a report issued earlier this year, found that Chinese hackers have engaged in a wide range of espionage activities targeting US aerospace and defense firms and have hacked into designs for more than a dozen major weapon programs, reported the *Washington Post*.

Among the weapon programs hacked or compromised by "cyber exploitation" are the F-35 strike fighter, V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, C-17 transport, RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft, AMRAAM missile, PAC-3 missile, and the THAAD missile defense system, according to the newspaper's May 27 report.

The public version of the DSB report, dated January, warned that the Pentagon was not ready to engage in a full-scale cyber conflict, but avoided charging the Chinese government with orchestrating the cyber attacks. Conversely, the most recent edition of the Pentagon's annual report on China's military, released in May, charged the Chinese government specifically with hacking and cyber espionage attacks. US officials have charged China with using espionage to close the military capability gap with the United States.

While the DSB has uncovered the cyber espionage activities, there are plenty of Chinese activities the United States remains unaware of, especially in relation to nuclear activities. For example, the information the United States has on China's nuclear weapons buildup is quite thin and controversial, said Richard D. Fisher Jr., senior fellow of Asian military affairs at the International Assessment and Strategy Center. The United States estimates that China possesses between 200 and 400 nuclear warheads, but according to Russian experts, China holds 1,600 to 1,800 warheads, said Fisher during a May 24 address on Capitol Hill.

Further, US experts believe that China has 16 tons of highly enriched uranium, whereas the Russians believe the Chinese have 40 tons of HEU, he noted. Fisher also said North Korea either has or will soon have deployable ICBMs that can reach Anchorage, Alaska.

The transporter erector launchers for these weapons were "made in China, given to North Korea," he emphasized. He also mentioned that China is supplying nuclear weapons to Pakistan, although the United States is not doing much about it.

said Lt. Col. Colin Huckins, chief of the service's promotions, evaluations, and fitness policy branch.

The Air Force eliminated the boards "due to the significant amount of time and financial investment for a very small quality cut, which affected few officers due to high promotion rates," according to the service's official press release. The board's rate was 95 percent, said the officials.

Vietnam War POWs Reunite

Nearly 200 former Vietnam War POWs and their families arrived at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, Calif., in May to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the POWs' homecoming and the historic White House dinner that celebrated their return.

The event included a tour of the library's galleries with Ed Nixon, President Nixon's brother; Christopher Nixon Cox, President Nixon's grandson; and retired Cmdr. Everett Alvarez Jr., one of the longest held US POWs in Vietnam. There also was a wreath-laying ceremony in honor of President Nixon, a "missing man" flyover, and a POW celebration family BBQ, according to

the Richard Nixon Foundation's news release.

Events on May 24—the actual anniversary of the White House dinner—included a black-tie reception, banquet, and official portrait. The commemorative events in Yorba Linda, known as POW Week, began on May 20 with the open-

ing of a special exhibit highlighting the POWs' historic homecoming and White House dinner. It was "the largest dinner ever held at the White House," stated the release.

Combined Space Ops Eyed

US Strategic Command is looking to share space assets and capabilities with US allies, said USAF Brig. Gen. David D. Thompson, the organization's deputy director of global operations. An agreement of this kind promoting combined space operations would be the first of its kind.

"Our intent with combined space operations is to mirror some of the partnerships we have in other mission areas that are long-term and enduring," Thompson told American Forces Press Service in May. This agreement would build on an arrangement tested last year in which the United States and partner nations agreed to continue working toward closer cooperation in space. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, space-based communications, and global positioning systems are some capabilities covered in the agreement.

"This gives [participating allies] an awareness and understanding that enhances their capabilities to conduct operations the way no other armed forces can today," said Thompson. "We have enduring requirements and enduring interests that are common among ourselves. So, we see this as a longer standing coalition with these nations."

New START Decisions

Decisions on how the United States will structure its strategic nuclear arsenal to comply with the New START agreement "look like [they] will be made at the end of this calendar year," said Madelyn R. Creedon, assistant secretary of defense for global strategic affairs.



USAF photo by SrA. Daniel Hughes

Irregular Training: SrA. Matthew Crow speaks with the pilots of a B-1B at Nellis AFB, Nev., before they take off on a Green Flag-West mission. Green Flag-West is a realistic air-land integration combat training exercise with the US Army and allies. Green Flag missions replicate irregular warfare conditions found in overseas contingency operations.



A1C Tracy Barnhill stands amid the wreckage of her mother's home in Moore, Okla., in May, after it was destroyed by a massive tornado that left 24 dead. The twister hit three miles south of Tinker Air Force Base. Some 250 Active Duty and ANG airmen assisted victims with searches and security after the storm.

In May testimony before the House Armed Services Committee's strategic forces panel, Creedon said Pentagon officials continue to build the implementation plan so that the United States will meet the treaty's caps on deployed nuclear warheads (1,550), deployed launchers (700), and overall launchers (800) before the February 2018 deadline.

They want a solution that "allows the most flexibility" in the US arsenal "for the longest period of time," she said.

"In every case, we are looking at retaining a triad," noted Gen. C. Robert Kehler, commander of US Strategic Command, at the hearing.

Panel Chairman Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.) reminded the witnesses that the Obama Administration still owes Congress a report on the implementation plan. Rogers also said the House "is not going to authorize" funding in Fiscal 2014 for implementation until Congress receives the report.

Seeking to Complement ASB

While the Air Force and Navy were first tasked to hammer out anti-access, area-denial solutions via the AirSea Battle office, the Army also is grappling with these issues, said Army Secretary John M. McHugh. The A2/AD concept is "a very important part of any successful defense strategy going forward," McHugh told reporters in Washington, D.C., in late April. The Army is now a "full partner" in ASB discussions and is moving forward with the Marine Corps in opening the Office of Strategic Land Policy, he said.

The OSLP, said McHugh, will seek to refine ideas about operations, such

as forcible entry, power projection, and the involvement of ground forces in A2/AD scenarios, much like the ASB office did for air and naval forces when it first opened its doors.

"Right now we're talking about how do the ground forces ... posture themselves to be a viable part of the national military strategy going forward," he said. "We envision [OLSP] as a complement to the other ongoing efforts, not a competition, in any way trying to slow down" either ASB or A2/AD discussions, he said. "But I recognize that some have tried to characterize it that way, but then I guess that's understandable."

Slowly Gaining Speed

Hypersonic technology like that successfully demonstrated in the flight of the fourth and final X-51A vehicle over the Pacific Ocean in May would bolster the effectiveness of a future strike missile design, said Charles Brink, the Air Force's X-51A program manager.

The May 1 flight of the X-51 was the longest ever air-breathing hypersonic flight, as the scramjet-powered vehicle reached Mach 5.1 while traveling more than 200 nautical miles in slightly more than six minutes. Briefing reporters on May 9, Brink said the ability to achieve such greater speed compared to a subsonic cruise missile of today would "enhance the survivability" of a strike weapon as it enters enemy territory. That speed would also allow for much greater responsiveness in reaching targets, he said.

"If you can get something that flies six times" the speed of a subsonic cruise missile, "instead of taking an hour to hit that target, it might only

take 10 minutes," explained Brink. "That kind of capability that can take out air defenses or high-value targets would be a great benefit."

Fielding such a strike missile will take years, however. "There's still a lot of work to be done," said Brink.

Guardsmen Recognized for Valor

SSgt. William Cenna, a pararescueman with the Alaska Air National Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron, received the Silver Star and two Bronze Star Medals with Valor Devices during a ceremony at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The May 18 ceremony recognized Cenna for his heroic actions on three separate occasions, all while deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 and 2012, according to a base news release.

At the same ceremony, four additional airmen with the squadron each received a Bronze Star Medal with Valor Device for actions in combat during the unit's deployment to Afghanistan in 2012: Capt. Chris Keen, MSgt. Chad Moore, TSgt. Chris Harding, and SSgt. Nic Watson.

"The efforts of all five Alaska Air National Guardsmen helped save American lives as they performed valiantly under fire in service to their state and nation," stated a second Elmendorf release. "They're true heroes in the purest form," said Col. Donald S. Wenke, commander of the Alaska Air Guard's 176th Wing at Elmendorf.

No-Shop Mondays

The Defense Commissary Agency announced that most military commissaries will close on Mondays when the Pentagon's furloughs of civilian defense employees begin in July as a result of budget sequestration. Commissaries that are normally closed on Mondays will close the following day as well.

The furloughs are scheduled to start on July 8 and run through Sept. 30, meaning the commissaries will be closed up to 11 Mondays through the end of the fiscal year, according to the agency's May 24 press release.

"We know that any disruption in commissary operations will impact our patrons," said Joseph H. Jeu, the agency's director. "We understand the tremendous burden this places on our employees, who, when furloughed, will lose 20 percent of their pay."

Jeu said Mondays should be the least painful days for customers, employees, and industry partners. The furloughs will impact all of the agency's more than 14,000 US civilian employees, stated the release.

The agency has 247 commissaries in 13 countries and two US territories. ■