

## Three Airmen Die in KC-135 Crash

Three airmen from the 93rd Air Refueling Squadron at Fairchild AFB, Wash., were killed when their KC-135 tanker crashed near Chon-Aryk, Kyrgyzstan, May 3. Killed in the mishap were: Capt. Victoria A. Pinckney, 27, of Palmdale, Calif.; Capt. Mark T. Voss, 27, of Colorado Springs, Colo.; and TSgt. Herman Mackey III, 30, of Bakersfield, Calif.

"These airmen leave behind an incredible legacy of service and honor in protecting our nation and the world," said Col. Brian M. Newberry, 92nd Air Refueling Wing commander at Fairchild. "They show what we all know; freedom is not free."

The cause of the accident was under investigation as of May 6. The crash occurred shortly after the KC-135 took off from the Transit Center at Manas, near Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. The tanker, from McConnell AFB, Kan., and crew were assigned to Manas, a major air hub for sustaining coalition operations in Afghanistan.

The first operational KC-135 was delivered to the Air Force in 1957. The bulk of its accidents occurred when the aircraft was relatively young. The last KC-135 accident where the aircraft and crew were lost happened in Germany in 1999.

## Donley Stepping Down

Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley announced in April he will step down as the service's leader on June 21—five years to the day since he began his tenure, first as Acting Secretary and then, beginning on Oct. 17, 2008, as Secretary.

Donley is the longest serving Secretary in Air Force history, including his four months as acting Secretary in 2008 and his seven months as acting Secretary in 1993.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to serve with our Air Force's great airmen," said Donley in an April 26 release. In a statement, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called Donley "an outstanding leader" and "an unwavering champion for our airmen, their families, and for American airpower." Hagel added, "The Air Force he leaves behind is more re-

silient and more respected because of his leadership and personal dedication."

## New USAF Undersecretary

Eric K. Fanning became the Air Force's undersecretary on April 29, filling a position that had been vacant since June 2012.

"I look forward to being part of the Air Force family," said Fanning, who took the oath of office during a ceremony in the Pentagon, according to an April 29 service release. He added, "I am honored by this opportunity and look forward to stand[ing] beside [the Secretary of the Air Force] in making sure the men and women of this great service receive the support they need in undertaking the mission of defending our country."

President Obama nominated Fanning in February. The Senate confirmed him for the post on April 18. Since 2009, Fanning served as the Navy's deputy chief management officer. The undersecretary is responsible for Air Force matters on behalf of the Secretary and serves as the service's chief management officer, its senior energy official, and focal point for space at the headquarters level.

Jamie M. Morin, acting undersecretary since last July, will continue in his role as the Air Force's assistant secretary for financial management and comptroller.

## Wilsbach Leads Task Force

Maj. Gen. Kenneth S. Wilsbach, former deputy director of operations for US Pacific Command, in April assumed command of the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan during a ceremony at Kabul Airport. Wilsbach took the task force's reins from Maj. Gen. H. D. Polumbo Jr. during the April 25 change-of-command ceremony. Polumbo led the organization since May 2012 and moved on to lead the 9th Air Force at Shaw AFB, S.C.

"It is my distinct honor to pass the guidon between two of the very finest airmen and leaders our service has ever raised," said Lt. Gen. David L. Goldfein, Air Forces Central Command chief, who presided over the ceremony.

Addressing the airmen at the ceremony, Wilsbach said, "We will continue to work as hard as humanly possible to ensure coalition forces in the country

USAF photo by SSGT. Stephanie Rubi

 screenshot



have the decisive airpower they need to accomplish their missions.” He added, “We will continue to aid and assist our Afghan partners to continue to grow their air force and establish a national airspace system that supports a stable and prosperous society.”

#### **Not-So-Red Line in Syria**

Despite evidence that chemical agents were used in Syria, President Obama said there were still too many unan-

swered questions to significantly alter US strategy toward the Syrian conflict at the moment.

For example, it was still not clear “how they were used, when they were used, who used them,” he said during an April 30 press conference at the White House. “We don’t have a chain of custody that establishes what exactly happened. And when I am making decisions about America’s national security and the potential of taking additional action, ... I’ve

got to make sure I’ve got the facts,” said Obama. “If we end up rushing to judgment without hard evidence, then we can find ourselves in a position where we can’t mobilize the international community to support what we do,” he added.

Obama has called on the United Nations to investigate the use of the chemical agents in the two-year civil war. “If I can establish in a way that not only the US, but also the international community, [feels] confident in the use



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*Three flight suits and aircrew oxygen masks were displayed during a memorial service at Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan, on May 9, remembering the airmen who died in the KC-135 crash there on May 3. Each uniform bore the name of one of the deceased airmen. (See “Three Airmen Die in KC-135 Crash,” p. 16)*

of chemical weapons by the [Bashar al] Assad regime, then that is a game changer because what that portends is potentially even more devastating attacks on civilians, and it raises the strong possibility that those chemical weapons can fall into the wrong hands," he said.

### No Distinguished Warfare Medal

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has eliminated the Distinguished Warfare Medal, intended to honor remotely piloted aircraft controllers, cyber operators, and other airmen who made significant combat contributions while not located on the actual battlefield. Hagel opted instead to create a new distinguishing device to affix to existing medals in order to recognize military personnel who have an extraordinary impact on combat operations while distant from the battlefield.

"Utilizing a distinguishing device to recognize impacts on combat operations reserves our existing combat medals for those service members who incur the physical risk and hardship of combat, perform valorous acts, are wounded in combat, or as a result of combat give their last full measure for our nation," reads Hagel's April 15 memorandum explaining his decision.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, concurring with the service Secretaries, recommend Hagel forego the medal. His April memo directs the Defense Department to develop the award criteria and other details of the distinguishing device for his final approval.

The Pentagon had originally unveiled the DWM in February. The medal's order of precedence—above the Bronze Star Medal—raised objections among some lawmakers and veterans' organizations.

### Another Sequester Casualty

The Air Force is shuttering its Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nev., due to budget sequester-related cuts, said Gen. G. Michael Hostage III, commander of Air Combat Command, in April during an Atlantic Council event in Washington, D.C.

"That is going to affect the Air Force for years," as the availability of certified "patch wearers"—Weapons School graduates—will have wider effects on readiness as time goes on, he said.

Hostage said he is truncating the Weapons School's current class and will graduate it without the final capstone exercise as a result of the cutbacks. In addition to the Weapons School closing, ACC also implemented "tiered readiness" over a large portion of the combat air forces. As the sequester bills pile on top of the bills for paying overseas contingency operations out of ACC's base operations

## Limiting the Force

Numerous Active Duty combat units in the United States, Europe, and the Pacific in early April began standing down as the Air Force absorbs the funding cuts imposed by budget sequestration, announced Air Combat Command. Taking this step, which affects about one-third of Active Duty combat aircraft, will ensure other combat units supporting worldwide operations can maintain sufficient readiness through the remainder of the fiscal year, said ACC officials in an April 9 release.

"Approximately one-quarter of ACC's Active Duty squadrons and Active Duty pilots in our active associate units have stopped flying," command spokeswoman Kelly Sanders told *Air Force Magazine*. "The resources from these units will enable units deployed or preparing to deploy to maintain their currency and flight operations," she added.

The standdown stems from the funding cuts to ACC's operation and maintenance account from the sequester. ACC is absorbing the cuts in part by having pilots fly about 45,000 fewer training hours between now and the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

"We must implement a tiered readiness concept where only the units preparing to deploy in support of major operations like Afghanistan are fully mission capable," said ACC Commander Gen. G. Michael Hostage III. "The current situation means we're accepting the risk that combat airpower may not be ready to respond immediately to new contingencies as they occur."

Specifically, flying hours for two-and-a-half Air Force fighter squadrons in Europe were reduced to zero, leaving three-and-a-half squadrons to fulfill the command's missions, stated US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa officials. "Units preparing to deploy in support of major ongoing operations will remain fully mission capable," said Lt. Gen. Noel T. Jones, now USAF-AF-AFRICA acting commander. "The risk we face is that combat airpower may not be ready to respond to unforeseen contingencies and crises when called upon." This particular standdown also will reduce Air Force participation in NATO missions.

Eight other Air Force fighter and bomber units ceased flying and entered a dormant status, with five additional units expected to standdown when they returned from deployment, said Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley.

In light of such drastic changes, funding flight hours must be a priority in Fiscal 2014, Donley told members of the House Armed Services Committee during an April 12 hearing to discuss the Air Force's Fiscal 2014 budget request. The Air Force seeks 1.2 million flying hours next fiscal year—an increase of 40,000 hours from Fiscal 2013. In the past, the Air Force relied heavily on overseas contingency authorizations to fund its flying hours, but as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan come to a close, the service is moving those accounts back into its base budget.

budget, the steady toll on readiness is going to build, he added.

"This is challenging within a normal fiscal process," he said, but the flexibility to manage the CAF is decreasing the longer the sequester goes on. "The degradation is not something immediately visible," he said, noting that on March 8, he put nine fighter squadrons and three bomber squadrons in a low state of readiness. As time wears on, getting those units back to a higher state will be increasingly challenging as currencies begin to lapse, he said.

### UCMJ Changes Recommended

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced in early April he's directed the Pentagon to prepare legislation for Congress that would modify Article 60 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. He wants the code amended so that

convening authorities could no longer change the findings of a court-martial for major offenses such as sexual assault. He also wants Article 60 modified so that the convening authority would have to explain in writing any changes made to court-martial sentences.

"These changes, if enacted by Congress, would help ensure that our military justice system works fairly, ensures due process, and is accountable," read Hagel's April 8 statement.

His action came after the Pentagon's general counsel completed a review of Article 60 that Hagel ordered in March after Lt. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, 3rd Air Force commander, overturned the sexual assault conviction of an Air Force colonel at Aviano AB, Italy. Some lawmakers have condemned Franklin's action, but there has been no public pronouncement from Hagel

or the Air Force leadership thus far that Franklin's justification for dismissing the conviction was flawed.

The Defense Secretary also said he is reviewing other options and actions to strengthen sexual-assault prevention and response efforts and would announce his decisions soon.

### Minuteman III Test Delayed

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has delayed the scheduled test of a Minuteman III ICBM from Vandenberg AFB, Calif., in an attempt to ratchet down tensions between the United States and North Korea, a Pentagon official told *Air Force Magazine*. The Pentagon leadership believes an ICBM test that was scheduled for early April might be "misconstrued by some as suggesting that we were intending to exacerbate the current crisis with North Korea," said this official. "We wanted to avoid that misperception or manipulation," he added.

The Air Force conducts several of these Minuteman III operational tests each year—shooting a missile from Vandenberg westward over the Pacific Ocean toward the Kwajalein Atoll—to validate the accuracy and reliability of the missile, one leg of the US strategic nuclear deterrent.

When a new date is determined for the postponed test, the Defense Department will make an announcement, said the spokesman on April 8.

US officials have stressed that US and South Korean activities in April in response to North Korea's bellicose rhetoric have been defensive in nature but meant to show strength in order to prevent North Korean aggression.

### KC-135s, V-22s for Israel

During his official visit to Israel in April, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced a new arms package for the US ally. In a joint appearance with Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon at Israel's defense headquarters in Tel Aviv on April 22, Hagel said the proposed deal would include anti-radiation missiles, radar upgrades for Israel's tactical fighters, KC-135 refueling

## Doolittle Raiders Celebrated

Three of the four surviving Doolittle Raiders gathered in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., in April for what they've said will be the Raiders' final public reunion. Retired Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole, retired Lt. Col. Edward J. Saylor, and former SSgt. David J. Thatcher took part in the reunion festivities, which ran from April 17 to April 20, marking the 71st anniversary of the Doolittle Raiders' B-25 bombing raid on Japan on April 18, 1942. Retired Lt. Col. Robert L. Hite, the fourth surviving Raider, was not in attendance.

"Who could imagine volunteering for our mission in 1942 and celebrating its success 71 years later?" asked Cole in a video on the reunion. "We were just doing our job helping our country win the war."

Among their activities, the three Raiders on April 17 attended the dedication of an F-35 hangar at Eglin AFB, Fla., in Saylor's honor. That same day, they took part in the unveiling of the Doolittle Raiders' exhibit on the campus of the Northwest Florida State College in Niceville. On April 18, they spoke to airmen at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Two days later, they participated in Fort Walton Beach's parade of heroes, which included flyovers of vintage World War II aircraft, including the B-25, the model the Raiders flew.

Meanwhile, back in Washington, D.C., a bipartisan group of senators and House members introduced legislation that would award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders of World War II. HR 1209 and S 381, the respective House and Senate bills, would honor all 80 of the airmen for their "outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States" in conducting their daring bombing mission against Tokyo less than four months after the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor.

Rep. Pete G. Olson (R-Tex.) introduced HR 1209 in March. As of May 7, the bill had 100 co-sponsors. Sen. Sherrod C. Brown (D-Ohio) presented S 381 in late February. It had 15 co-sponsors as of May 7.

aircraft, and V-22 Ospreys. This would mark the first foreign sale of the V-22.

"These decisions underscore that military-to-military cooperation between the US and Israel is stronger than ever," said Hagel, who was on his inaugural trip to the Middle East as Defense Secretary.

US defense officials also announced during Hagel's trip that the United Arab Emirates would move forward with the purchase of 25 additional F-16 Block 60 fighters to add to its existing fleet of some 80 of these airplanes. The United States also intends to sell advanced air-launched standoff weapons to the UAE and to Saudi Arabia for their respective fighters.

### Russian Bomber Gets Green Light

The Russian Air Force has approved the design and specifications of a new flying-wing type stealth bomber, dubbed

the PAK-DA, reported Russia's state-owned RIA Novosti news agency.

Lt. Gen. Victor Bondarev, commander in chief of the Russian Air Force, told Russian lawmakers the bomber's development "is going as planned," according to the April 11 report. "The outline of its design and characteristics has been approved and all relevant documents have been signed, allowing the industry to start the development of systems for this plane," he said.

The Tupolev design bureau, builder of most of Russia's Cold War-era bombers, has reportedly received the contract for the PAK-DA, which will replace Russia's aging Tu-95 Bear and Tu-160 Blackjack bombers. The aircraft will have a dual-role nuclear and precision conventional mission and will feature advanced electronic warfare systems, said the Russian Defense Ministry.

Production is expected to begin in 2020 at the Kazan plant, which assembled the Bear and Blackjack. Initial operations are projected in the 2025-2030 timeframe. Russia had hoped to build a hypersonic bomber, but has opted for the subsonic, stealthy design, potentially to be armed with hypersonic missiles, as an interim step.

### USAF Bolstering Andersen

Air Force officials have begun detailing plans to beddown additional US military assets at Andersen AFB, Guam—a key component of the Defense Department's "rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific. In addi-

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## Budget Overview for DOD, Air Force

The Defense Department is requesting \$526.6 billion in discretionary budget authority to fund defense programs in its base budget for Fiscal 2014, announced Pentagon officials in April.

“Even while restructuring the force to become smaller and leaner and once again targeting overhead savings, this budget made important investments in the President’s new strategic guidance—including rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region and increasing funding for critical capabilities such as cyber, special operations, and global mobility,” said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in a release. “Most critically,” continued Hagel, it “sustains the quality of the all-volunteer force and the care we provide our service members and their families.”

The request at the time did not yet include a detailed budget for overseas contingency operations. DOD budget officials were preparing an OCO request for submittal to Congress in the following weeks. The request also does not reflect the full amount of cuts under the budget sequester. Instead, it incorporates the White House’s “balanced deficit reduction proposals” meant to cut about \$150 billion from the defense budget out to Fiscal 2021 as opposed to the approximately \$500 billion sequestration would strip over that span.

Of that base budget, the Air Force is requesting \$114.1 billion to fund its base operations, according to Maj. Gen. Edward L. Bolton Jr., the service’s budget deputy. These funds also do not include overseas contingency operations or spending cuts that would be necessary if budget sequestration drags into Fiscal 2014, Bolton noted to Pentagon reporters. The \$114.1 billion topline includes: \$46.6 billion for operation and maintenance; \$29.2 billion for military personnel; \$18.8 billion for procurement; \$17.6 billion for research, development, test, and evaluation; and \$1.9 billion for military construction, according to the documents. Bolton said the budget request has “no major muscle movements”—meaning no major new program starts or other changes.

tion, US Pacific Command officials have noted they are proceeding with initiatives to make the island more resilient against potential attack.

Kathleen I. Ferguson, the Air Force’s acting assistant secretary for installations, told lawmakers on April 12 the Air Force is committed to hardening “select hangars” as part of the Pacific Airpower Resiliency initiative.

In Fiscal 2014, the Air Force also plans to invest in building a Silver Flag fire and rescue training facility and a RED HORSE engineer operations facility on Guam to promote the skills necessary to maintain and recover basing in forward locations, she noted.

Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III also told lawmakers on April 12 that hardening and dispersal activities will ramp up on Guam.

“This is not a choice between dispersal or hardening, it’s a combination of factors that will help make our bases ... resilient in any number of threat scenarios,” Donley told the House Armed Service Committee.

**Reflections:** SrA. Adrian Alvarez and A1C Steven Adler, both response force members with the 509th Security Forces Squadron, scan the perimeter during a training exercise at Whiteman AFB, Mo.

USAF photo by SSGT. Nick Wilson



### Operation Enduring Freedom

#### Casualties

As of May 15, 2013, a total of 2,212 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,209 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,737 were killed in action with the enemy, while 469 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 18,535 troops wounded in action during OEF.

#### Post-2014 Afghanistan Picture Emerging

The Air Force will maintain a small airlift and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance presence in Afghanistan into 2015 and possibly beyond, said Maj. Gen. H. D. Polumbo Jr., then commander of the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, in April. Polumbo has since moved on to lead 9th Air Force at Shaw AFB, S.C.

"The types of airmen that we'll have besides the advise-and-assist airmen will be primarily airlift—people that assist in regards to any of the drawdown that might not yet be done and assisting with the aerial ports of demarcation for our retrograde ops," Polumbo told Pentagon reporters on April 23 from his location in Kabul via a satellite-enabled video connection. "Some manned ISR" also will remain in theater, he said. He noted that this "would be a small footprint."

Polumbo said the United States will be able to maintain its ISR capability "with very few people forward" following the 2014 withdrawal because most remotely piloted aircraft flying over Afghanistan are operated from Stateside locations such as Creech AFB, Nev., or Holloman AFB, N.M.

Defense Department and State Department officials have been saying the US would continue to provide support in Afghanistan following the 2014 withdrawal of American combat troops, but haven't yet provided the details of what the footprint would look like.

#### Mission Transition

NATO's International Security Assistance Force is to begin assuming more of a support role as Afghan security forces take the lead for security in Afghanistan, Maj. Gen. H. D. Polumbo Jr., then director of ISAF's Air Component Coordination Element in Kabul, told Pentagon reporters.

US and coalition forces would continue to work alongside the Afghans to achieve four "mutual goals," he said. The first is to build a "competent and self-reliant Afghan National Security Force," said Polumbo during the April 23 video teleconference.

The second is to deprive al Qaeda of a safe haven, rendering the terrorist organization ineffective. The third goal is to achieve an "acceptable political transition" through "free and fair elections next year," he said.

Finally, Afghan and coalition partners hope to "improve regional security relationships," particularly with Pakistan. "The ISAF commander is confident these goals are achievable, but he also reminds us, his staff, every day that they're not inevitable," said Polumbo.

#### Aircraft Mishaps Top Cause of US Deaths in Afghanistan

As combat operations wind down in Afghanistan, aircraft accidents have become the main cause of combat-related deaths among US military personnel there, reported McClatchy news service.

Of the 33 US lives lost since the start of the year, 13 have been in five aircraft crashes, including the four airmen who were killed on April 27 in the crash of an MC-12 surveillance airplane near Kandahar Airfield, according to McClatchy. The four other crashes involved an F-16, Apache attack helicopter, Black Hawk helicopter, and Kiowa reconnaissance helicopter.

Among the remaining deaths, eight came from improvised explosive devices, four from small-arms fire, two from indirect fire, and six more from some other means, including two so-called "green-on-blue" attacks, states McClatchy's April 30 report. The latter are cases in which Afghan security forces suddenly turned their guns on US forces.

These casualties do not include the commercial 747 cargo airplane under contract to the Defense Department that crashed on April 29 while taking off from Bagram Airfield, killing the seven civilian crew members, or the three airmen killed when their KC-135 crashed in Kyrgyzstan, May 3.

"Andersen is a very important asset to us," added Donley. If the US military expects to survive an attack and continue to operate from there, "hardened facilities will be mandatory," Welsh said.

#### Patriots Could Extend Allies' Reach

Patriot batteries based in Turkey to shield against Syrian ballistic missiles could also, if closer to the Syrian border, help establish a safe zone in northern Syria to protect civilians and aid opposition forces fighting Bashar al-Assad's regime, said Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, then commander of US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa, in April.

"They have the capability to do it," said Breedlove in response to questioning during the Senate Armed Services Committee's April 11 hearing held in consideration of his nomination to be NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and head of US European Command.

There are six Patriot batteries stationed in Turkey: two US, two Dutch, and two German. While Breedlove agreed, when asked, that the presence of the Patriots would be a powerful deterrent to Syrian pilots flying over parts of Syria, he said "creating a safe zone in northern Syria" would require "much more" than just the Patriots.

"It would probably require fixed wing air and other capabilities," he said. Establishing a no-fly zone in Syria would start "with having to take down" the Syrian military's integrated air defenses, he said.

#### ANG Below End Strength

The Air National Guard has fallen below its congressionally authorized end strength in Fiscal Year 2013, largely because of recent uncertainties regarding missions and budget turmoil, Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, ANG director, told lawmakers in April.

As of March 8, there were 104,204 Air Guardsmen, 1,496 under the Fiscal 2013 authorized level, stated Clarke in his April 17 prepared testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense panel. Clarke noted that throughout Fiscal 2013, Air Guard recruiters have "met or exceeded" monthly accession goals; however, monthly losses were higher than expected.

"Fiscal uncertainty, force structure changes, and mission turmoil, combined with the drawdown of the war in Afghanistan, are the primary causes of the increased loss rate," said Clarke. To attack the problem, ANG officials have taken steps such as increasing recruiting goals and offering bonuses or incentives to more career fields. The Air Guard also is introducing tools so that unit commanders can better identify loss trends.

Senior Staff Changes

**RETIREMENTS:** Maj. Gen. Robert C. Kane, Brig. Gen. Francis L. Hendricks.

**NOMINATION: To be Brigadier General:** Andrew P. Armacost.

**CHANGES:** Brig. Gen. Balan R. Ayyar, from Dep. Commanding General, Detainee Ops., Combined Jt. Interagency Task Force-435, US Forces-Afghanistan, CENTCOM, Kabul, to Commanding General, Combined Jt. Interagency Task Force-435, US Forces-Afghanistan, CENTCOM, Kabul ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Paul H. McGillicuddy, from Cmdr., 380th AEW, ACC, Southwest Asia, to Dir., Ops., Plans, & Prgms., PACAF, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Edward M. Minahan, from Principal Dir. to the Dep. Asst. SECDEF, Middle East Policy, Office of the USD, Policy, Pentagon, to Dir., Strategy, Policy, Prgms., & Log., TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Michael T. Plehn, from Dep. Dir., Spec. Plans Working Gp., CENTCOM, MacDill AFB, Fla., to Principal Dir. to the Dep. Asst. SECDEF, Middle East Policy, Office of the USD, Policy, Pentagon ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Margaret B. Poore, from Sr. Mil. Asst. to the SECAF, OSAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., AFPC, JBSA-Randolph, Tex.

**SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE RETIREMENT:** Steven F. Butler.

**SES CHANGES:** Michael A. Gill, to Exec. Dir., AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... Stephen R. Hayden, to Tech. Dir., Data Exploitation, Natl. Air & Space Intel. Center, AF Intel., Surveillance, & Recon. Agency, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio ... William A. LaPlante, to Principal Dep. Asst. Secy, Acq. & Management, Office of the Asst. SECAF, Acq., Pentagon ... Patsy J. Reeves, to Exec. Dir., AF Life Cycle Mgmt. Center, AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

“Overall, I’m very confident in our ability to not only meet end strength, but to recruit and retain the skill sets necessary to perform the missions the nation asks of its Guard airmen,” stated Clarke.

**S&T Investment Priority**

The Air Force’s Fiscal 2014 budget request includes \$2.3 billion for science and technology projects—a slight increase from the service’s Fiscal 2013 request, David E. Walker, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for

science, technology, and engineering, told lawmakers during April’s budget hearings.

“This year’s budget request reflects a strong support for S&T from our leadership [even in] this challenging fiscal environment,” said Walker in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee’s intelligence, emerging threats, and capabilities panel. “It is a balance across ... needs for near-term, rapid-reaction solutions, midterm technology development, and revolutionary far-term capabilities.”

Walker also highlighted the Air Force’s efforts in the realm of cybersecurity, saying the Air Force Research Lab is leading efforts to draft a joint cyber S&T roadmap for the Defense Department, using the Air Force’s Cyber Vision 2025 as a blueprint.

**Reprogramming Requested**

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said the Pentagon is preparing to send “a large reprogramming” request to Congress to offset significant shortfalls in Fiscal 2013 operation and maintenance accounts.

“The military’s experiencing higher operating tempos and higher transportation costs than expected when the [Fiscal 2013] budget request was formulated more than a year ago,” said Hagel on April 17 before the Senate Armed Services Committee. “As a result, the department is now facing a shortfall in our operation and maintenance accounts for [Fiscal] 2013 of at least \$22 billion in our base budget for Active [Duty] forces.”

To mitigate the shortfall, DOD has already reduced official travel, cut back on facilities maintenance, and instituted hiring freezes, among other efforts. Even with the reprogramming, officials will still

***Birdman of Alcatraz: The Liberty Foundation’s B-17, painted in the iconic markings of the World War II airplane Memphis Belle, flies over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. Only a few of the bombers survive and are airworthy today.***

Photo by Saggar Pathak





have to consider additional measures—such as civilian furloughs.

The reprogramming “can only solve some of our problem,” said Hagel.

#### Space Investment 2014 Priorities

The Air Force has requested about \$6.5 billion for its space investment portfolio in Fiscal 2014, including some \$2.7 billion for research, development, test, and evaluation activities and another \$3.8 billion for procurement of satellite systems and associated ground assets, service officials told defense reporters in April.

The top five programs in the space portfolio for Fiscal 2014 are: the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (\$1.9 billion), Space Based Infrared System early warning satellites (\$964 million), Global Positioning System III navigation satellites (\$699 million), Advanced Extremely High Frequency Satellite System military communications satellites (\$653 million), and space situational awareness systems (\$400 million), according to an Air Force budget document.

“The Air Force is in a key time right now as we transition several major space programs from research and small-scale production into the core of their production. This is a period where we can and have worked hard to squeeze costs out,” said Jamie M. Morin, then Air Force acting undersecretary, during the April 15 briefing.

“I think you’re seeing a turning around from the environment where year after year the question was how much is the cost growth going to be in the space programs. We’re now at the point where we can truly start squeezing the cost down.”

#### Sequestration and Defense Health

The defense health program is expected to absorb about eight percent, or \$3.2 billion, of the Defense Department’s portion of the sequestration cuts in Fiscal 2013, said Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. Testifying before the House Appropriations Committee’s defense panel on April 24, he said about half of that shortfall would be in the accounts that DOD uses to reimburse Tricare claims.

“Our challenge is to find money from other areas to ensure that we have the ability to pay those claims,” he said.

To fill the health-funding gap, the department is reducing funding in areas including health-related equipment, research and development, medical facility maintenance, and restoration and modernization.

“This will produce significant, negative long-term effects on the overall military health system,” stated Woodson in his prepared remarks.

Despite the difficulties in managing the sequester cuts, Woodson wrote

***We Assume He’s a Volunteer: TSgt. Matthew Mensch, a parachute tester, exits an SC-7 Skyvan during a low-profile parachute jump over the Edwards Farm Drop Zone on Edwards AFB, Calif. New parachutes are slated to replace the ones currently used aboard AC-130 gunships.***

that wounded warriors “should see no difference in the care they receive,” and “to the greatest extent possible, we will work to sustain access to our military hospitals and clinics for our service members, their families, retirees, and their families.”

#### The ISR Alliance

Britain and Australia both will have their own nodes of the Distributed Common Ground System, said Lt. Gen. Larry D. James, deputy chief of staff for Air Force intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, in April. The DCGS is a network of centers worldwide for processing, exploiting, and disseminating intelligence products from imagery and other data gathered by overhead ISR assets and other sources.

Speaking at an Air Force Association-sponsored Air Force breakfast program event in Arlington, Va., on April 18, James said the Air Force has “a tremendous partnership” with Britain, which stood up its first MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft squadron at Waddington this year, “a major milestone for them.”



The Royal Air Force has been flying Reapers and MQ-1 Predator RPAs out of Creech AFB, Nev., “for several years; in fact they’ve flown over 40,000 combat hours to date,” said James. “They also have a DCGS node there in the UK,” providing PED for “one line” of Predator/Reaper data, and this summer will start to perform PED for MC-12 Liberty aircraft as well, he added. Britain’s first of three RC-135-type signals intelligence aircraft is now undergoing testing and will be operational in October.

Australia has had four pilots flying MC-12s in Afghanistan, and the Air Force has been operating some space assets from Australia. “They’re also developing their own Distributed Common Ground System; they can help us with some of the data processing,” James added. “That coalition is extremely important.”

### Slip the C-17 SLEP

There’s no service life extension program in the Future Years Defense Program for the C-17 transport, Gen. Paul J. Selva, commander of Air Mobility Command, told defense reporters. While on a “micro” level, there are C-17s that have dramatically flown past their planned usage rates during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, on a “macro” level, the fleet is about at the 1,000-hours annual usage rate expected, and USAF hasn’t found a need for a SLEP yet, he said.

More worrisome to him is the “vanishing vendors” problem. Selva noted that the C-17 production line is winding down

and some suppliers are exiting the business. AMC is working toward a common configuration for the C-17s to eliminate separate engineering teams and logistics trains for each block variant, he said.

“A decade ago, we had five blocks of C-17s,” said Selva during the April 11 meeting with the press. That number is now down to four and he wants it down to one.

### Reaching More Vets

There are some 8.9 million veterans enrolled in the Veterans Affairs Department’s health care system; however, there are 22.4 million veterans eligible for these benefits, said Tommy Sowers, the VA’s assistant secretary for public and intergovernmental affairs.

“We’re working closely with [the Department of Health and Human Services] on information about the Affordable Care Act to make sure that veterans are informed and understand some of the changes moving forward,” said Sowers in explaining what the VA is doing to reach more veterans. He testified April 24 before the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

The hearing covered the VA’s outreach and community partnerships. Sowers said a large portion of Vietnam War veterans already use Facebook. He acknowledged that the department needs to do more to reach out to the older generation of veterans. Especially in rural regions of America, “face-to-face” action is required for “veterans to sign up,” said Sowers.

***My, What Big Eyes You Have: An A-10 Warthog taxis to the flight line as it readies for takeoff from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Long loiter time and the ability to fly in low-visibility conditions make the aircraft well-suited for the harsh conditions of Afghanistan.***

### Satellite Prototypes Unveiled

Boeing announced in early April it is developing a family of small satellite prototypes, called Phantom Phoenix, for missions ranging from intelligence collection to planetary science. Sharing a common architecture, flight software, and simplified payload integration options, these satellites are designed to be manufactured and configured for specific missions “quickly and affordably,” according to the company’s April 8 release.

“Our customers need greater mission flexibility from smaller satellites that can be built more affordably and delivered more quickly, without sacrificing quality,” said Boeing Phantom Works President Darryl W. Davis.

There are three Phantom Phoenix configurations: the Phantom Phoenix class of 500- to 1,000-kilogram satellites; the Phantom Phoenix ESPA class of 180 kg spacecraft; and the Phantom Phoenix Nano class of four- to 10-kg nanosatellites. Davis said the Phantom Phoenix line addresses the market “between large geosynchronous spacecraft and nanosatellites.”

Boeing intends to conduct initial technology development for these satellites at its facility in Huntington Beach, Calif. ■