

## A Cultural Shift in Space

The Air Force is changing its training and creating a “cultural shift” in its space domain to prepare for possible future conflicts that could threaten America’s assets in orbit, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said.

“We are going to start treating space the way we treat everything else in the US military,” James said on Jan. 14 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. “We need to get our heads around the fact that one day there could be a conflict on Earth that, in some way, bleeds into space.”

To prepare, the Air Force is shifting resources and experimenting on how it can train to defend its constellation of satellites, much like the service trains to protect its assets in other domains, James said. She said investments and tests by China and Russia are spurring the change.

★ screenshot



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*An F-35A team parks a Lightning II for the first time at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. The Air Force version of the strike fighter arrived there for testing by the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron from Edwards AFB, Calif. In this first test simulating deployment, the F-35A was to carry out suppression of enemy air defenses, close air support, and air interdiction flights.*



Winston A. Beauchamp, deputy undersecretary of the Air Force for space, said on Jan. 29 the transition is a work in progress.

“The need for improved mission assurance is not new, but the realization that we’re not currently postured to provide assured access to critical space capabilities—that’s one that’s only a couple of years old,” Beauchamp said at an Air Force Association Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies space breakfast on Capitol Hill.

“We have put together an architecture that accomplishes [the] mission very efficiently, but it will not have the capability to protect itself and be resilient in the face of [a] threat,” he added.

#### **DOD’s New Maternity, Paternity Policy**

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter on Jan. 28 announced a new standardized maternity leave for new mothers as part of

his “Force of the Future” initiative, saying the policy will put the Defense Department in the “top tier of institutions nationwide.”

Under the new policy, new mothers will receive 12 weeks, doubling what was previously standard, though it is just two-thirds of what the Navy had approved and what Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said she wanted to implement.

The move is “imperative for attracting and retaining talent,” Carter said. The Department of the Navy previously set its maternity leave at 18 weeks for female sailors and marines. In December, James said she wanted the Air Force to follow in the Navy’s footsteps, but the service will now stay at the 12-week standard.

“I applaud Secretary Carter and welcome these announcements as a positive step forward for our airmen and their families,” said James in a statement.

DOD is pushing to increase paternity leave from 10 days to 14, Carter said. The military also will extend adoption leave from three weeks for one parent by adding two weeks of leave for the second parent.

**F-35s To Fly at Farnborough**

Air Force F-35As will make their debut at the Royal International Air Tattoo and the Farnborough Air Show in July, the service announced. F-35As from Luke AFB, Ariz., will join Marine Corps F-35Bs in both static displays and a heritage flight at the shows.

“The plan for F-35 aircraft to take part in air shows here in the UK this summer is a significant milestone for our RAF and Royal Navy personnel training hard to fly the F-35; for British industry who are contributing an impressive 15 percent of every aircraft; and for the British public who will have their first opportunity to see this remarkable aircraft in action,” said British Defense Secretary Michael C. Fallon in the release.

**First KC-46A Fill Up**

The KC-46A Pegasus on Jan. 24 conducted its first aerial refueling, transferring fuel through its boom to an F-16C during a test flight from Edwards AFB, Calif., the Air Force announced. The tanker passed 1,600 pounds of fuel to an F-16C as a requirement to connect to a light/fast receiver.

Two weeks later, the KC-46 refueled an F/A-18, using the tanker’s hose and drogue system.

**By the Numbers**

**103,419**

Flight hours flown by KC-135s supporting US Central Command from Al Udeid AB, Qatar, in 2015. The aircraft, assigned to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, set a flying hour record, completing more than 20,000 sorties, and offloaded some 700 million pounds of fuel for Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom’s Sentinel, according to Air Forces Central Command. The wing operates USAF’s largest fleet of KC-135s, with more than 60 aircraft.



USAF photo by Greg L. Davis

**Shoveling It:** SrA. Joshua Forren of the 436th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Dover AFB, Del., shovels ice from under the wing of a C-5M. In the background are piles of snow, plowed off the runway after a January winter storm dumped 22 inches of the white stuff on the base.

The next boom tests will be with an A-10 as a light/slow receiver and with a C-17 as a heavy receiver. The KC-46A will then test its centerline drogue system and wing aerial refueling pods with an AV-8B Harrier, according to Air Force Materiel Command.

The remaining tests are required before the Air Force makes its Milestone C low-rate initial production decision. The first production contract is expected shortly after. USAF plans to purchase 179 tankers, with the first 18 KC-46s expected by August 2017.

**A Costly ICBM Mishap**

In May 2014, in the midst of a Pentagon review of the nuclear enterprise, the 90th Missile Wing experienced a mishap that resulted in \$1.8 million in damage to an intercontinental ballistic missile, the Air Force announced Jan. 22.

The Minuteman III ICBM, assigned to the 90th MW at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., “became nonoperational during a diagnostic test,” and the accident happened when maintenance personnel were troubleshooting the problem, according to the press release. No one was injured, and the mishap did not create a public safety hazard, the Air Force said.

An investigation found that the maintenance team chief was properly trained but “mistakenly performed an action not

## The War on Terrorism

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

As of Feb. 17, a total of 22 Americans had died in Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the mission in Afghanistan, and 14 Americans had died in Operation Inherent Resolve, the mission in Iraq and Syria.

The total includes 34 troops and two Department of Defense civilians.

There have been 86 troops wounded in action during OFS and five troops in OIR.

### In it for the Long Run

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said the US support for the Afghan military will last through 2017 and beyond, saying the country is "in this for the long run."

The Afghan military is still a force in development, Carter said, and will need US support. However, the upcoming fighting season will see a much more capable Afghan military, he said, citing increased use of its long-range artillery and the delivery of A-29 Super Tucano close air support aircraft.

The Afghan forces will be "stronger [while] completely independent of US participation," Carter said. This is necessary to face a resurgent Taliban and a growing threat of ISIS in the country, he added.

Carter said the current rules of engagement are well thought out and "allow us to do what we think needs to be done." However, the US will adjust its plans in the future to better provide support to the Afghan forces, he noted.

### Super Tucanos Land in Afghanistan

The US Air Force on Jan. 15 delivered the first four of 20 A-29 Super Tucanos to Hamid Karzai Airport in Kabul, giving the Afghan Air Force its own fixed wing close air support capability.

US Army Brig. Gen. Wilson A. Shoffner, Operation Resolute Support spokesman, said the aircraft are expected to go into service in April. The US Air Force's

81st Fighter Squadron at Moody AFB, Ga., is expected to train 30 Afghan A-29 pilots over the next three years, according to an Air Forces Central news release. The first class of pilots and maintainers graduated in December.

"This is a fighting aircraft which will destroy the centers of enemies in the country," said Colonel Bahadur, public affairs director of the Afghan Air Force, in the release.

### Bones Leave the AOR

B-1s have taken a break from the fight in the Middle East for the first time since 2001, as aircraft assigned to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing returned home in January for aircraft modifications.

During the unit's most recent six-month deployment, aircraft and crews, deployed from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., flew 490 sorties and dropped 4,850 bombs. The group dropped 2,224 bombs in one month, more than any other B-1B unit, topping the previous deployed team's mark of 1,068 bombs, said Capt. Abraham Smith, officer in charge of the 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, in a press release.

"Hundreds of thousands of manpower hours have been put into the past six months to keep these aircraft running and it's been a very challenging and an exhausting deployment," Smith said.

The B-1B modification is one of the largest ever. Lt. Col. Michael Williams, who leads the 419th Flight Test Squadron at Edwards AFB, Calif., told *Air Force Magazine* last year the modification is so big it "ought to be called the B-1C." It includes the Vertical Situation Display Upgrade, which adds a digital cockpit; Fully Integrated Data Link to enhance targeting and command and control; and the Central Integrated Test System Upgrade, which gives aircrew real-time aircraft diagnostics and simplifies maintenance and troubleshooting.

Combined with ongoing sustainment efforts, the modification package will extend the bomber's viability beyond 2040.

directed by the technical guidance." He and the two airmen on his team were decertified but returned to duty after being retrained and recertified. Despite the timing of the incident, the Air Force kept the details from Pentagon investigators, according to the Associated Press.

### Aviation Mishaps Increase After Record Safe Year

Fiscal 2014 was the safest ever for Air Force manned aviation, but the total number of Class A aviation mishaps increased in Fiscal 2015, bringing it more in line with historical norms. In Fiscal 2015 there were a total of 35 Class A aviation mishaps (categorized as flight, flight related, aircraft ground operations, and remotely piloted aircraft), and seven aircraft were destroyed, compared to 24 total Class A aviation mishaps and two aircraft destroyed in Fiscal 2014, Air Force Safety Center spokesman Keith Wright told *Air Force Magazine*.

A Class A mishap is any accident in which someone is killed or permanently disabled or there is at least \$2 million in damage. There were 19 Class A aviation flight mishaps—"nearly identical" to the 10-year average of 18.5—and 16 Class A RPA mishaps in Fiscal 2015, compared to just seven aviation flight mishaps and 12 RPA mishaps in Fiscal 2014.

The number of deaths resulting from an aviation mishap decreased, dropping from 10 in Fiscal 2014 to six in Fiscal 2015. However, the number of on-duty ground fatalities increased, rising from one in Fiscal 2014 to four in Fiscal 2015. Off-duty ground fatalities also increased from 42 in Fiscal 2014 to 47 in Fiscal 2015, according to an Air Force news release.

### Pentagon Reviewing Valor Awards for Upgrade

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter on Jan. 7 directed the services to review every service cross and Silver Star award



USAF photo illustration by S/A. Danielle Quilla

since Sept. 11, 2001, for a possible upgrade as part of a broad review of the Defense Department's awards process.

The review includes more than 100 service crosses, including seven Air Force Crosses, for a possible upgrade to the Medal of Honor, the military's highest honor. The review process began under the direction of former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in 2014.

A senior defense official, speaking with reporters on background on Jan. 6, said no specific case brought about the review and the reviews directed by the Secretary are not related to the Air Force's decision to review recent Air Force Crosses for a Medal of Honor upgrade.

The Air Force is the only service to not have a Medal of Honor recipient since Sept. 11, 2001. Reviews are to be completed by Sept. 30, 2017. In addition, the Pentagon will attempt to improve the timeliness of the awarding of the Medal of Honor through new guidelines. This includes mandating that nominations for valor awards be initiated within 45 days of valorous action, processed through the chain of command so it reaches the Defense Secretary within 12 months, and the award of a service cross, Silver Star, or other valor awards should be made within 12 months of the process beginning, according to a Pentagon announcement.

#### **DOD Creates New "Remote" Award Device**

The Defense Department is creating new devices for military

***Safely South: At MacDill AFB, Fla., SSgt. Darrell Prior examines a map of Colombia. A terminal instrument procedures (TERPS) specialist with Air Mobility Command, Prior helps ensure the safe landing of DOD aircraft in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. TERPS airmen evaluate host nation procedures and apply USAF criteria. The specialists work with their foreign nation counterparts and also visit their assigned countries to build partnerships.***

awards to further clarify how a service member contributed to the fight, including creating an "R" device for remote operations, the Pentagon announced Jan. 7.

The "R" device will be awarded to a service member who uses "remote technology" to directly impact combat operations, according to a Pentagon announcement. A senior defense official, speaking to reporters on background before the announcement, said the device will be for service members who, through a specific, direct, and hands-on action, immediately influenced a battle.

While currently the device will largely focus on remotely piloted aircraft pilots and sensor operators, officials said the criteria is written to include any future technology that could directly impact a battle remotely.

The Pentagon is also creating a "C" device for awards to recognize members who performed meritoriously in combat. This will be separate from the current "V" device, which is specifically awarded for valor actions in combat. ★