

## Record F-16 Rotation to Poland

US Air Forces in Europe dispatched its largest F-16 rotation to date to Lask AB, Poland, for training with Polish F-16s in response to Russian aggression and unrest in Ukraine.

“Our commitment to Poland’s security, as well as the security of our allies in Central and Eastern Europe, is a cornerstone of our own security and it is sacrosanct,” said President Obama, addressing US and Polish airmen alongside Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski during a June 3 visit to Poland.

USAFE announced the rotation of 18 F-16s from Spangdahlem AB, Germany, the same day. The fighters marked the third flying rotation to the NATO ally this year, according to a Spangdahlem officials. Nearly 300 airmen deployed to Lask and about 100 more rotated to Powidz.

While in Poland, Obama announced the European Reassurance Initiative, a series of measures built around a persistent US air, land, and sea presence in the region, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, to assure NATO allies in the face of Russia’s aggression.

Obama asked Congress to provide up to \$1 billion in funding for the initiative in the next year.

## DLA Ends Embassy Support in Iraq

The Defense Logistics Agency ended its US Embassy support mission in Iraq, more than two years after US forces departed at the end of 2011, officials announced. DLA oversaw the demilitarization and disposal of US equipment and fuel stocks, in addition to supplying food, dry goods, planning, and daily support to State Department personnel.

“Those are skill sets we were able to provide that the State Department just didn’t have organically,” said Navy

Capt. Jim Liberko, former head of DLA operations in Kuwait. “Because we were running the military bases, we already had the logistics pipeline established,” he added.

The State Department signed an independent logistics and support contract last year, and DLA began transferring responsibility to the new contractors earlier this year. DLA

## ★ screenshot



## Russia’s Aggressive Global Reach

Russian air and naval forces have become “increasingly active” in the Asia-Pacific region following the Ukraine crisis, Pacific Air Forces Commander Gen. Herbert J. “Hawk” Carlisle said.

He said Russia’s long-range aviation assets, Tu-95 and Tu-160 airplanes, have expanded flights in four areas: around Japan, near Korea, in the western Pacific near Guam, and in and around Alaska.

The uptick in activity has been “significant,” Carlisle said speaking at the CSIS think tank in Washington, D.C., May 5. Flights near Japan and Korea have grown more assertive, notably near the disputed Kurile Islands.

Though specific reasons vary, Russian forces have been keen to demonstrate military capability as well as gather intelligence on US-Japan-South Korean drills such as the Exercise Foal Eagle with South Korea.

Although there is dialogue and engagement between Russia and some US allies in the Pacific, there is concern among the allies that Russia’s posture is related to events in and around Ukraine and has implications for other territorial disputes, Carlisle said.

—Marc V. Schanz

ceased support in Iraq May 15, according to the agency's news release.

### The Underappreciated Foundation

Some 220,000 airmen provide vital support to combat operations daily around the world, yet their contributions are often unfairly reduced to the term "enablers" in Pentagon budget conversations, said Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

This representation does not capture these airmen's value to the nation, he said in a speech before leaders of the New York business and finance community on May 13.

"It is not evil intent. It is just lack of understanding, but it is crushing the Air Force," said Welsh, the symposium's concluding speaker. "This is a big deal and it is our fault. We haven't told [the] story [of these airmen] well enough," he said. Welsh equated the work of these airmen—who serve in missions like airlift, command and control, and many oth-

ers—to the Statue of Liberty's foundation. "That foundation is not visible so people don't really understand it," he said. "There is all of this stuff in the background going on all of the time that benefits so much more than just the military."

The Air Force Association's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies sponsored this event, its first airpower symposium in New York City, together with AFA's Iron Gate Chapter and the Union League Club of New York.

### Nigerian Search

The Pentagon tasked an MC-12 Liberty and RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft to aid efforts to locate more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by terrorists in Nigeria.

Roughly 80 airmen deployed to neighboring Chad "in support of one of our [remotely piloted] ISR assets," Pentagon spokesman Army Lt. Col. Myles Caggins said in a statement May 22. In addition to the launch, recovery, and maintenance,

06.08.2014

*Paratroopers jump into the "Iron Mike" drop zone outside St. Mere Eglise, France, on June 8. More than 600 American, German, Dutch, and French service members jumped into Normandy as part of a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of D-Day.*



a small security forces detachment deployed to protect Air Force assets and personnel.

The Nigerian government requested US assistance after the group Boko Haram abducted the girls from a boarding school in April.

President Obama notified Congress of the deployments to “support the operation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft for missions over northern Nigeria and the surrounding area,” as required by law, May 21.

US Africa Command also dispatched a 16-strong advance force to Nigeria to aid search efforts. Manned ISR flights commenced on May 12, according to the Pentagon.

**Mighty Eighth Back on English Soil**

Three B-52 bombers left their US bases in June to conduct training and exercises from RAF Fairford, England, with allied forces in Europe.

The roughly two-week deployment was part of a larger strategic effort to rotate US and NATO forces in the region in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and trouble-making in Ukraine.

The B-52s supported two US European Command exercises and were scheduled to fly other “single-sortie” training missions, said Brig. Gen. Michael E. Fortney, Air Force Global Strike Command’s director of operations, during a recent interview with *Air Force Magazine* at the command’s headquarters at Barksdale AFB, La.

***BUFFs Show the Colors: A B-52 from Barksdale AFB, La., gets into position to take on fuel during a deployment to RAF Fairford, England, on June 11. Three Stratofortresses were there for a two-week deployment aimed at familiarizing aircrews with the air base and operations in the region. One B-52 participated in the D-Day commemorations in Normandy, France, during the European deployment.***

**By the Numbers**

**New Nuke Stats**

**103** Six-month drop in US deployed nuclear warheads

**1,015** Total US deployed

**112** Six-month growth in Russian deployed nuclear warheads

**1,512** Total Russian deployed

The bombers brought no live weapons from the US.

An Air Force advanced echelon team recently visited Fairford—a standby airfield—to ensure it was prepared to support the B-52s. One of the B-52s departed from Minot AFB, N.D. Two were from Barksdale, home of “The Mighty Eighth” air force that in World War II was stationed in England.

**Missileer Cure**

Air Force Global Strike Command surveyed airmen across its three missile wings and will adopt 98 percent of the more than 300 recommendations made through the command’s Force Improvement Program, officials announced May 28.

Air Force leadership initiated the effort following a cheating scandal that revealed widespread career malaise across



USAF photo by SrA. Christine Griffiths

# The War on Terrorism

## Operation Enduring Freedom

### Casualties

By June 20, a total of 2,329 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,326 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,824 were killed in action with the enemy while 504 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 19,803 troops wounded in action during OEF.

### Red Tails Downrange

The Alabama National Guard F-16s of the 100th Fighter Squadron at Montgomery made the unit's first deployment to Afghanistan this spring.

The aircraft touched down April 27 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, for a six-month combat deployment. Alabama Air Guardsmen will serve the entire deployment, instead of splitting the rotation with other units, as Air Guard fighter units often do, according to a press release.

The 100th's Vipers replaced Air Force Reserve Command F-16s deployed from Homestead ARB, Fla., and NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas.

The Alabama airmen and jets will provide overwatch and close air support to ground forces alongside AFRC A-10s deployed to Bagram from Whiteman AFB, Mo., for a similar six-month stretch.

### Afghanistan Endgame

The US will sharply draw down its military presence in Afghanistan as US forces transition from a combat, to a support and advisory role next year, President Obama said, announcing his plan to end America's longest war.

The number of US service members in Afghanistan will drop from some 30,000 today to around 10,000 by early 2015, Obama said after returning from Afghanistan in May.

By the end of this year Afghan forces will be "fully responsible" for their own security, Obama said May 27. "American personnel will be in an advisory role. We will no longer patrol Afghan cities or towns, mountains or valleys. That is a task for the Afghan people." He added that the US will be "cooperating with Afghans" on two specific missions: "training Afghan forces and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al Qaeda."

"By the end of 2015, we will have reduced that presence by roughly half, and we will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and on Bagram Airfield," said Obama.

"One year later, by the end of 2016, our military will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul, with a security assistance component, just as we've done in Iraq," the President said.

the ICBM force and is pushing ahead reforms in three key areas: inspections, leadership development, and personnel reliability program.

AFGSC is changing the career structure to allow new missileers to "focus on mastering the weapons system" before being evaluated at the same level as an experienced crew commander or instructor. "Training now focuses on providing learning opportunities ... and the instruction is tailored to the experience level of each crew," said AFGSC boss Lt. Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson in a statement.

"Evaluation has shifted to a recurring 15-to-18-month cycle, similar to the aviation community," increasing the emphasis on daily operations instead of looming evaluations. The command is also reworking the personnel reliability program that gauges a crew's personal mission suitability to presumed ready state, instead of presumed "down," according to command officials.

### Global Hawk Earns the Name

An Air Force RQ-4 Global Hawk transited British airspace for the first time as part of a NATO exercise aimed at developing operational concepts ahead of the arrival of the alliance's own RQ-4s.

"It is good to see existing airspace procedures enabling the seamless integration of remotely piloted air systems ... within European airspace," said RAF Air Vice Marshal Phil Osborn, alliance RPA capability director, in a May 29 news release.

"From an air traffic control perspective ... there is no discernible difference in our operation with the pilot being remotely located," said Osborn.

The Global Hawk flew a segmented route at approximately 50,000 feet altitude from a base in the Mediterranean Sea to exercise airspace in Norway as part of the alliance's Unified Vision 2014 exercise. Several alliance members are purchasing a fleet of five pooled RQ-4s under the Alliance Ground Surveillance program.

A separate RQ-4 landed for the first time in Japan, touching down at Misawa Air Base for a six-month Pacific rotation beginning May 24. The Global Hawk Block 40 and some 40 airmen redeployed from Andersen AFB, Guam, to dodge the island's rainy season.

### Air Jordan's Double Slam-Dunk

California Air National Guard C-130Js and F-16s from Misawa AB, Japan, recently joined armed forces from 22 countries for Exercise Eager Lion in Jordan.

The F-16s practiced escorting transports during a combat airdrop drill at the combined combat and humanitarian relief event in June, US Air Forces Central Command stated.

"There are a lot of pilots who haven't gotten to see these situations during real-world operations," said Hercules pilot Capt. Sean Smith of the 115th Airlift Squadron, from Channel Islands ANG, Calif.

The flying scenarios aimed to "standardize flight tactics to make it easier to fly with people and aircraft we've never flown with before," said Royal Jordanian Air Force F-16 pilot 1st Lt. Saddam Mardini.

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Some 6,000 personnel took part in Eager Lion, May 25 to June 8. It was the second Jordanian exercise Air Force fighters flew in less than a month. The first was Eager Tiger—also known as Falcon Air Meet—beginning on May 11.

**13,000 Miles To Drop a Bomb**

A pair of B-1B Lancer bomber crews recently flew a 30-hour strike training mission from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., hitting ground targets at a Pacific range near Guam.

“The success our aviators have had in Operations Enduring Freedom and Odyssey Dawn does not happen by accident,” said 28th Bomb Wing Commander Col. Kevin B. Kennedy in a May 21 news release.

The nonstop, 13,200-mile mission tested cooperation between Air Combat Command, US Pacific Command, and US Strategic Command, as well as between the bombers and tankers needed en route.

Ellsworth B-1s were called on to fly global strike missions directly from South Dakota both during Operation Odyssey Dawn over Libya and Operation Desert Fox in 1998, according to the wing.

The successful May 13-14 flight affirmed the bomber fleet’s “extended lethality” and underscored the “importance of air refueling to expand our global reach,” commented Kennedy.

**Lockheed Martin Earns Space Fence Contract**

Lockheed Martin won a \$914.7 million contract to supply the Air Force’s Space Fence ground-based radar system designed to detect and track objects on orbit, Pentagon officials announced June 2.

The company won out over Raytheon to develop, manufacture, and deploy the system that will be capable of tracking even small debris as part of the broader US space surveillance network.

Space Fence is slated to reach initial operational capability from its first site at Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands in 2018, giving Lockheed Martin 52 months from contract award to IOC, according to the Pentagon.

Space Fence will replace the Air Force’s Space Surveillance System. It ceased operations in 2013 after more than five decades of service.

**SASC Me Again, We’ll Keep the A-10**

The Senate Armed Services Committee markup would prohibit USAF from “retiring or preparing to retire” any A-10 or E-3 AWACS aircraft, or from making significant crew cuts in the Fiscal 2015 defense authorization bill.

The Senate committee’s mark of the bill was slightly more accommodating of pay and personnel costs than the full House version, but the SASC took a tough line on most of the Air Force’s proposed aircraft reductions, particularly its ISR portfolio.

If SASC marks prevail, they would increase A-10 operation and maintenance funding by \$256.5 million and AWACS O&M by \$34.6 million.

The panel also cut \$63 million in procurement funds for the next generation JSTARS ground surveillance aircraft effort and ordered the service to integrate “existing technologies” into a replacement aircraft.

The mark prohibited the retirement of operational JSTARS pending the completion of a report outlining the service’s modernization plan for the ISR platform. The SASC mark also directed the continuing modernization of the U-2, which USAF intends to retire, with an additional \$62.3 million in modernization funds.

USAF’s requested \$244.5 million for RQ-4 Global Hawk research and development was slashed to \$108.5 million because the money would be duplicative of U-2 capabilities, according to the mark.

—Marc V. Schanz

**Sikorsky Snags Presidential Helo**

Sikorsky landed a \$1.24 billion contract to build an initial six S-92 presidential helicopters for test and evaluation purposes, the Navy announced May 7.

Under the contract, Sikorsky will deliver six FAA-certified S-92 helicopters and two trainer simulators to the Marine Corps. The company will deliver a total of 21 aircraft by 2023 to replace the current mixed fleet of VH-3D Sea King and VH-60N White Hawk helicopters used to transport the President.

Sikorsky is expected to deliver the first two aircraft, both engineering development models, to the Navy in 2018. The remaining four aircraft will perform operational test and evaluation and then transition to operational status, the company stated.

Lockheed Martin and Augusta-Westland previously won a bid to recapitalize the presidential helicopter fleet. The Pentagon canceled the VH-71 helicopter program due to cost overruns and schedule delays in 2009 after spending nearly 10 years and \$3.3 billion.

**USMC Leaving Joint Schoolhouse**

The Marine Corps plans to shift F-35B flight training out of the joint service schoolhouse at Eglin AFB, Fla., to a separate training location at MCAS Beaufort, S.C.

When Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501 departs next March, only Air Force, Navy, and international pilots will remain at Eglin’s F-35 initial joint training schoolhouse, 1st Lt. Hope Cronin, spokeswoman for Eglin’s 33rd Fighter Wing, told *Air Force Magazine*. The wing runs the schoolhouse. Eglin cur-



## Russian Engine Wars

The House version of the Fiscal 2015 defense authorization bill includes \$220 million to develop an alternative to the Russian-made RD-180 engine that powers the United Launch Alliance Atlas V rockets. These are one of the US military's main satellite launchers.

In addition, the Senate Armed Services Committee's markup of the bill prohibits "the use of Russian rocket engines on the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle at the end of the current block buy contract," according to a press release from Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), SASC chairman. The SASC mark also calls on the Defense Department to "pursue new domestic development in a world-class liquid rocket engine."

If enacted, the language becomes even more critical as tensions between the US and Russia over the RD-180 heat up.

In early May, a judge with the US Court of Federal Claims lifted a preliminary injunction that barred United Launch Alliance from purchasing RD-180 engines, noting US officials had sufficiently convinced her that the purchases did not violate US Treasury Department sanctions against Russian officials, enacted in March in the wake of Russian military aggression in Ukraine.

Following the announcement, Russian officials shot back, saying the engines will not be sold to the US for use on defense projects. "Russia is ready to continue deliveries of RD-180 engines to the US only under the guarantee that they won't be used in the interests of the Pentagon," Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin tweeted on May 13 following a press briefing on international space cooperation.

In a statement released the same day, ULA officials denied knowledge of the new constraints, but assured stakeholders that any disruption would not be fatal to the program.

"United Launch Alliance (ULA) and our NPO Energomash supplier in Russia are not aware of any restrictions. However, ... ULA has two launch vehicles that can support all of [our] customers' needs. We also maintain a two-year inventory of engines to enable a smooth transition to our other rocket, Delta, which has all US-produced rocket engines."

During a space conference in Colorado in May, Air Force Space Command boss Gen. William L. Shelton said there "have been no official pronouncements out of the Russian government on the RD-180" other than the one tweet from

"one government official that has caused everybody concern," reported Space Politics.

This is "a time to pause and find out if this is the official position," added Shelton. "Right now, I don't think we have an indication that is really where the government comes down on this in the long term, and there are other indications that 'business as usual' is kind of the state of play with Russian industry."

Shelton did say, however, that he supports the development of an American alternative to the Russian-made engine. "There's a debate to be had, and I think it will occur over the next four-to-five months," he said. "All of the studies we did in the past indicated that the cost to co-produce [an alternative engine], versus the cost of developing a new engine, were about in the same ballpark."

Retired Maj. Gen. Howard J. "Mitch" Mitchell and former NASA Administrator Michael D. Griffin led a commission, formed earlier this year as tensions between Ukraine and Russia began to escalate, to study potential issues with the RD-180 supply line, reported *Aviation Week*, citing industry officials.

Although the commission's findings were not made public, *Aviation Week* published a summary of the commission's report. It says that "regardless of RD-180 viability, [the] US needs to develop a domestic engine" and that the "national baseline manifest [is] not supportable beyond March 2016" without additional RD-180 engines. Specifically, there are 38 Atlas missions manifested and only 16 RD-180 engines in the stockpile, states the summary.

During the May 13 briefing, Rogozin said Russia "will proceed from the fact that we can no longer deliver these engines to the United States, and that we can no longer maintain and repair previously shipped engines, unless we receive guarantees that our engines are used only for launching civilian payloads."

Rogozin went on to outline other actions Russia was considering, including ending participation in the International Space Station.

"We've repeatedly warned our colleagues at the political and professional levels that sanctions are always a boomerang. They always come back around and are simply inappropriate in such sensitive spheres as cooperation in space exploration, production of spacecraft engines, and navigation, not to mention manned spaceflights. Sanctions are like releasing a bull in a china shop."

—Autumn A. Arnett

rently has 15 F-35Bs, including three British airplanes, she said. The Royal Air Force and Royal Navy F-35s "will transfer with VMFAT-501 when they transition to Beaufort" by March 2015, added Cronin.

The bulk of non-British international flight training will eventually shift to Luke AFB, Ariz., as the new formal training unit there spools up, she said.

The Marines stood up their first operational F-35B squadron at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., in November 2012.

VMFAT-501 was initially assigned to Eglin to help develop Marine Corps F-35 training concepts and doctrine before standing up their own training center at Beaufort. "Between June and September, we'll have all the VMFAT-501 aircraft and squadron personnel relocating, and in October we'll start training," said Marine Lt. Col. Luis E. Villalobos, training facility chief at Beaufort in a press release June 3.

The base is eventually slated to receive a second F-35B training squadron as more aircraft are delivered.

## Golden Raiders, Aces, and CAP

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole, one of four surviving Doolittle Raiders, stood behind President Barack Obama as the Commander in Chief approved Congress' highest civilian honor for the airmen.

Obama signed legislation bestowing the Congressional Gold Medal on the World War II Doolittle Raiders as well as the collective group of American fighter aces.

President Obama also signed a bill awarding Civil Air Patrol's World War II veterans the Congressional Gold Medal on May 30, which he will present sometimes this fall, according to a CAP spokesman.

## Royal Rivet

A Royal Air Force RC-135W Rivet Joint crew flew the type's first sortie in British airspace since delivery from the US, RAF officials announced. The flight took place from its home base at RAF Waddington.

"We have worked very closely with our colleagues in the US on this project, and today's first flight signifies the commencement of a new and potent" intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability, said RAF RC-135 procurement boss Air Marshal Simon Collum in a May 28 release.

The RAF ordered three "off the shelf"—in the words of British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond—RC-135s as replacements for the service's prematurely retired Nimrod R. 1 intelligence fleet, slashed in 2011 as a result of a cost-driven 2008 defense review.

RAF aircrews have flown with the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, Neb., to enhance interoperability. "Having jointly operated

## Senior Staff Changes

**PROMOTIONS: To Lieutenant General:** Christopher F. **Burne**, Darryl L. **Roberson**.

**NOMINATIONS: To be Lieutenant General:** William J. **Bender**, Carlton D. **Everhart II**, Samuel A. **Greaves**, John F. **Thompson**. **To be Brigadier General:** Walter J. **Lindsley**, Ricky N. **Rupp**, Lee E. **Payne**. **To be ANG Brigadier General:** Warren H. **Hurst Jr.**, Richard W. **Kelly**.

**CHANGES:** Lt. Gen. Gregory A. **Biscone**, from Cmdr., Office of the Defense Representative, Pakistan, to IG, OSAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Robert I. **Miller**, from Command Surgeon, Medical Svcs. & Tng., AETC, JBASA-Randolph, Texas, to Dir., Education & Tng., Defense Health Agency, JBASA-Fort Sam Houston, Texas ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Thomas E. **Murphy**, from Dep. Dir., Ops & Plans, TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill., to Vice Cmdr., 24th AF, AFSPC, JBASA-Lackland, Texas ... Lt. Gen. Ellen M. **Pawlikowski**, from Cmdr., SMC, Los Angeles AFB, Calif., to Mil. Dep., Asst. SECAF for Acq., USAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. Stephen W. **Oliver Jr.**, from Sr. Mil. Asst., SECAF, OSAF, Pentagon, to Dep. Dir. for Planning & Mgmt., AFRICOM, Stuttgart, Germany ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Kirk W. **Smith**, from Spec. Asst., Cmdr., SOCOM, MacDill AFB, Fla., to Dir., Plans, Rqmts., & Prgms., AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla. ... Brig. Gen. Roger H. **Watkins**, from Cmdr., 379th AEW, ACC, Southwest Asia, to Dep. Cmdr., Jt. Warfare Ctr., Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, Stavanger, Norway.

**SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGES:** Scott M. **Anderson**, to Dir., Log., Instl., & Mission Spt., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo. ... Nancy K. **Andrews**, to Dir., Contracting, AF Sustainment Center, Tinker AFB, Okla. ... Lorna B. **Estep**, to Dir., Resource Integration, DCS, Log., Instl., & Mission Spt., USAF, Pentagon ... William C. **Redmond**, to Exec. Dir., AFOTEC, Kirtland AFB, N.M. ... Bobby **Smart**, to Dep. Asst. Sec. (Acq. Integration), Office of the Asst. SECAF (Acq.), Pentagon.

US aircraft with British and American personnel for three years, this proven strategic intelligence and surveillance capability will be an excellent addition," Bollom said.

The fleet is slated for full operational capability in 2017.

### Great Falls Goes Heavy

The Montana Air National Guard's 120th Airlift Wing flew its first C-130 sortie after converting from F-15 fighter operations earlier this spring, unit officials announced.

The last F-15C from the former 120th Fighter Wing departed Great Falls for the California ANG's 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno last October.

The redesignated 120th Airlift Wing received its first C-130H in March, and all but one of seven airlifters arrived by the start of routine flying operations at the beginning of June, wing spokesman Maj. Cody Smith told *Air Force Magazine*.

C-130 maintenance and support personnel trained with the Wyoming ANG for several months before the airlifters arrived, while unit pilots cross trained to the C-130 at Little Rock AFB, Ark.

The unit flew fighters for 66 years before changing to the airlift mission.

### Tacking Down Djibouti

President Barack Obama secured basing rights in the Horn of Africa, agreeing to a 20-year lease deal for a US presence at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

"Obviously, Camp Lemonnier is extraordinarily important not only to our work throughout the Horn of Africa, but throughout the region," Obama said after meeting Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh at the White House May 5.

Roughly 4,000 defense personnel are deployed to Camp Lemonnier supporting anti-terror and counterpiracy missions in Yemen, the Gulf of Aden, and around the region.

Pending final approval, the new deal more than doubles the annual lease cost from \$30 million to \$70 million, due primarily to planned base expansion, the *New York Times* reported.

The Pentagon already invested in new hangars, taxiways, and utilities and plans to sink roughly \$1 billion to upgrade and expand the base from 88 acres to nearly 500 acres, according to the *Times*.

### Razorbacks' Final Stampede

Arkansas Air National Guard pilots recently flew their final A-10 training sortie from Fort Smith Airport ahead of the 188th Fighter Wing's conversion to intelligence and remotely piloted aircraft missions.

"I'm going to miss flying over Arkansas and seeing it through the cockpit canopy, for sure," said 188th Operations Support Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Marty Dahlem after the ground-attack training sortie May 16.

"As a wing, we've been flying manned aircraft for 60 years," Col. Mark Anderson, the unit's commander, said last fall. "While we're sad that our A-10s had to go, we're getting a cutting-edge mission."

The unit's first A-10 departed for Moody AFB, Ga., last September. Fort Smith converted to Warthogs in April 2007 and marked its largest-ever deployment with the aircraft to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in 2012.

Its last three A-10s were slated to depart Fort Smith in early June.

### 1,000 and Still Jamming

The Air Force recently took delivery of its 1,000th Miniature Air Launched Decoy jammer variant as part of Lot 5 production, manufacturer Raytheon announced.

"The MALD program has enjoyed a perfect 33-for-33 flight test record over the past two years," Mike Jarrett, company air warfare and missile systems vice president, in a press release May 13.

"The MALD has demonstrated it can simultaneously increase the combat capability of platforms, sensors, weapons, and decision-makers," he said.

Raytheon began delivering the 300-pound, radar-jamming decoy in late 2012 and sealed an \$81.7 million deal with the Air Force for production Lot 6 last spring.

### End of an Era in Wichita

Boeing recently completed the final Air Force overhaul at its plant in Wichita, Kan., before closing the facility.

The final USAF aircraft was an E-4B National Airborne Operations Center platform.

"Our division is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of some extremely important aircraft and we've always answered that charge," said Zane Boatright, Air Force Life Cycle Management deputy chief for special-mission aircraft, the *Wichita Eagle* reported. "We know that is due in large part to the tremendous support we have received there," he said.

Boeing is shifting depot-level maintenance for the Air Force's 747-based E-4B and VC-25 presidential fleets to a purpose-built facility in San Antonio. The Wichita facility opened in 1927 and famously produced B-29 bombers during World War II. The last E-4B departed Wichita to return to Offutt AFB, Neb., May 29. ■