

Air National Guard Pilot Killed in F-15C Crash

An F-15C pilot from the Massachusetts Air National Guard was killed when his F-15C crashed Aug. 27 in the mountains of western Virginia.

Lt. Col. Morris Fontenot Jr., a 1996 Air Force Academy graduate, was a full-time Air Guardsman with the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Arpt., Mass. Fontenot, who was serving as wing inspector general and as an F-15 instructor pilot, had more than 2,300 flight hours, the Air Guard said. A graduate of the USAF Weapons School, he served as a squadron commander at multiple locations and was a decorated combat veteran.

Fontenot's F-15 Eagle was on a solo flight to Naval Air Station New Orleans for an aircraft upgrade. He reported a mechanical problem shortly before radio communications were lost. Search parties that reached the wreckage determined that Fontenot did not successfully eject before the crash.

"The 104th Fighter Wing is extremely grateful for the outpouring of support demonstrated by our local community, and [the] nearly 30 agencies in the Virginia area that spent more than 30 hours scouring over dangerous terrain, committed to finding our fallen airman and to bring him home," said Col. James Keefe, 104th Fighter Wing commander, in an Aug. 29 news release.

Eighty-three F-16Ds Grounded for Structural Cracks

The Air Force grounded 83 of its two-seat F-16D Fighting Falcons due to structural cracks discovered on the canopy sill between the front and rear pilot seats.

Cracks found on one aircraft during a routine postflight check led to an immediate action time compliance technical order to inspect all 157 F-16Ds. The inspections found cracks in the canopy sill longer on 83 aircraft. The remaining D models were restored to flight status as of Aug. 18.

Air Force F-16 Systems Program Office and Lockheed Martin engineers were still analyzing the F-16 structures and developing repair procedures in late August to allow a limited return to flight by the affected aircraft until a permanent fix can be made.

The F-16Ds are used primarily for flight training by Air Education and Training Command and the Air National Guard. Air Force officials are working with the operational units to mitigate the impact of the grounding.

AFSOC Airman Awarded Silver Star

TSgt. Matthew McKenna, a combat controller with the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron at JB Lewis-McChord, Wash., was awarded the Silver Star, the third highest award for valor, for his bravery during a 13-hour firefight with Afghan insurgents in 2013. Supporting ground troops during the battle, McKenna called in air strikes and two aerial resupply drops to replenish ammunition. He then exposed himself to heavy enemy fire to coordinate danger-close air strikes to counter an intense assault.

McKenna was awarded a Bronze Star, as well, for other missions supporting ground troops in Afghanistan.

At the same ceremony, Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, presented the Bronze Star Medal with Valor Device to combat controller SSgt. James Sparks, who also is assigned to the 22nd STS.

Kadena Rescue Airman Awarded DFC

SSgt. Zachary C. Hoeh, a pararescueman with the 31st Rescue Squadron at Kadena AB, Japan, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor Device on Aug. 1 for his heroism retrieving a wounded soldier from a mine-laden ambush site in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 2011.

On May 26, 2011, Hoeh was sent on a "harrowing rescue mission into the Shorbak district, Kandahar province, where a squad of United States Army Pathfinders had been decimated by multiple improvised explosive device attacks,"

 screenshot



reads his DFC citation. At the time, Hoeh was serving with the 46th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron.

Guardian Angels in the lead HH-60 successfully rescued two patients before the aircraft lost power, causing the helicopter to rapidly descend and “narrowly escape crashing to the desert floor.” Hoeh “immediately volunteered” to recover the remaining casualty.

Surrounded by mines and explosives, he was hoisted down to the ambush site, secured the patient, and signaled for extraction in less than 15 seconds, according to the citation. Once onboard, Hoeh helped to evaluate and treat the soldier as the flight returned to Kandahar Airfield.

Hyten Takes Charge of Space Command

Gen. John E. Hyten became the 16th commander of Air Force Space Command, succeeding Gen. William L. Shelton, in an Aug. 15 ceremony at Peterson AFB, Colo.

Hyten, who had been AFSPC’s vice commander since May 2012, received his fourth star prior to taking charge. He now oversees the Air Force’s space and cyber forces, some 42,000 airmen and civilians worldwide.

Shelton is retiring from the Air Force after more than three-and-a-half years as AFSPC’s leader and a career of 38 years in uniform.

First Female Bomb Wing Commander

Col. Kristin E. Goodwin took command of the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, La., on Aug. 1, becoming the first woman to command an Air Force bomber wing, according to an Air Force Global Strike Command news release.

Goodwin is a command pilot with nearly 2,900 hours in the EC-130 Compass Call, B-2 stealth bomber, and other aircraft. Goodwin, who previously served as vice commander of the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., is now responsible for providing B-52H Stratofortress aircraft, aircrew, and associated support personnel and resources to conduct global bomber taskings.

“Make no mistake, Kristin knows airpower. She has advocated long-range combat airpower in many circles. There is no doubt the B-52 will see the results of those efforts in coming years,” said Maj. Gen. Scott A. Vander Hamm, 8th Air Force commander, during the ceremony.

09.04.2014

C-17 Globemaster IIIs are prepared to be loaded with 2nd Cavalry Regiment Stryker armored vehicles during Steadfast Javelin II at Ramstein AB, Germany. The NATO exercise took place across Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.



USAF photo by S/A Damon Kasberg

USAF photo by TSgt. Regina Young



The command change came on the 20th anniversary of the 47-hour globe-circling flight by two 2nd BW B-52s that were the first ever to drop bombs—over Kuwait’s Udairi Bomb Range—during a circumnavigation mission.

New Boss at 24th Air Force

Maj. Gen. Burke E. “Ed” Wilson assumed command of 24th Air Force at JBSA-Lackland, Texas, during a July 31 change-of-command ceremony.

Wilson, who previously served as director of space operations in Washington, D.C., replaced Maj. Gen. James K. “Kevin” McLaughlin, who led the numbered air force since June 2013, according to a release. McLaughlin was promoted to lieutenant general and has become deputy commander of US Cyber Command at Fort Meade, Md.

The 24th Air Force is the Air Force’s cyber unit.

Pease Named First KC-46A ANG Main Operating Base

Pease Intl. Tradeport ANG, N.H., will be the first Air National Guard-led main operating base for the KC-46A Pegasus, the Air Force announced Aug. 6.

Pease, which was named as the preferred alternative in May 2013, was selected as a main Guard operating base after officials analyzed operational considerations, installation attributes, economic, and environmental factors. It was chosen because of its highly successful Active Duty association, which would lead to a lower Active Duty manpower requirement, and its location in a region of high air refueling demand.

The KC-46A “remains one of our top acquisition priorities. Making a final basing decision is an important step in recapitalizing the tanker fleet,” Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said.

The formal Pegasus training unit at Altus AFB, Okla., and the first Active Duty-led main operating base at McConnell

You’re Supposed to Zipper Merge: Airmen maneuver an F-15 through traffic on a road near the City Hall in Warner Robins, Ga. The aircraft was loaned to the city by the Georgia Air National Guard to serve as a static display for a new veteran’s memorial.

AFB, Kan., will begin receiving aircraft in 2016, and the first KC-46As are scheduled to arrive at Pease beginning in Fiscal 2018.

Eielson Preferred for PACOM’S First F-35As

The Air Force has selected Eielson AFB, Alaska, as the preferred alternative to host the first F-35A Lightning II squadrons in the Pacific area of responsibility, the service announced Aug. 7.

The air base, located near Fairbanks, was selected due to its ability to support the mission, economic factors, and environmental considerations, officials said in a press release.

By the Numbers

848

The number of airmen Air Force Global Strike Command will add to its missile and bomber wings beginning this fall, in an effort to improve the culture and mission effectiveness of the nuclear force.

“Basing the F-35s at Eielson will allow the Air Force the capability of using the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex for large force exercises using a multitude of ranges and maneuver airspace in Alaska,” Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said. “This, combined with the largest airspace in the Air Force, ensures realistic combat training.”

The F-35A basing decision will become final on successful completion of the required environmental impact assessment. The Air Force expects the first of 48 F-35As to begin arriving at Eielson in 2019. The service still must decide where to base the 18th Aggressor Squadron’s F-16s, currently at Eielson.

Operations Group Formed for AFGSC Helicopters

Air Force Global Strike Command formed a provisional helicopter operations group that will provide a more focused command chain for the three helicopter squadrons in 20th Air Force.

The operational group, established at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., will work to “identify, prioritize, and create the facility, personnel, communication, and process infrastructure required” to take control of the three squadrons at the end of its provisional period, said Col. Dave Smith, the helicopter operations group commander, in a July 31 news release.

The group was recommended by the Force Improvement Program, said Maj. Gen. Jack Weinstein, 20th Air Force commander.

Look Out Below: Maj. Zensaku Munn relays drop clearance to an inbound C-130 over Shimoda bay, Japan, during the Shizuoka Comprehensive Disaster Drill, an exercise honing tactical air delivery of low-cost, low-altitude bundles containing disaster relief. US airmen and marines cooperated with Japanese military members in three disaster relief management exercises in the region over a three-day period in August.

Flight Restrictions on Test F-35As Eased

The Pentagon in mid-August relaxed some flight restrictions on the test fleet of F-35 strike fighters following a June engine fire at Eglin AFB, Fla. Under the restrictions, the 20 test aircraft can fly six hours between mandatory engine inspections, instead of the three-hour limit still imposed on the 79 other Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps F-35s.

Program officials said the older F-35s are considered less likely to have the engine problem because they are already “broken in,” and engineers think if the problem were to occur on those jet aircraft, it would have happened already.

Program Executive Officer Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan said Sept. 3 the natural “flex” of the mishap engine under high-G conditions caused fan blades to “rub” and “dig too deep” in the rubber-like seal around the power plant.

From 138 possible causes, “we’ve narrowed it down to four” and the root cause could be some combination of them all, Bogdan said.

Steps to address the issue are underway, including a “burn in” technique requiring two sorties per engine that could prevent the problem on other jets.

Bogdan expects a permanent fix in late October, but “I need 21 test airplanes” back to full capability “by the end of the month or else there will” be delays to the flight test program.

—Otto Kreisher and John A. Tirpak



USAF photo by Osakabe Yasuo

Sometime next year, the new group will assume control of the 37th, 40th, and 54th Helicopter Squadrons and a newly formed operations support squadron tailored for the three helicopter units.

Installation and Mission Support Center Activated

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center was activated on Aug. 8 at its temporary headquarters at JB Andrews, Md.

Maj. Gen. Theresa C. Carter was named provisional commander of the center, which is intended to consolidate major command-level installation and mission support activities into a single location.

The center will also “become the parent organization for several existing field operating agencies,” including “Air Force Security Forces Center, Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Air Force Installation Contracting Agency, the services directorate of the Air Force Personnel Center, and other FOAs,” states the Aug. 7 press release.

The center was established in response to a 2013 Defense Department mandate to identify ways to reduce overhead and redundancies and consolidate staffs.

50 More Former ICBM Sites Destroyed Under New START

The last of 50 deactivated Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile launch facilities once operated by the 564th Missile Squadron at Malmstrom AFB, Mont., was demolished Aug. 5, another step toward US compliance with the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, signed with Russia in 2010.

Contractors used heavy equipment to bury the site’s 110-ton launcher closure door and fill the launch tube with dirt, eliminating it as a usable missile launch silo.

The removal of the 564th ICBM sites now leaves the 341st Missile Wing with 150 Minuteman III missiles on alert. In

addition, another 50 silos already were destroyed at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., leaving only three ICBM test silos at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., yet to be destroyed before the US meets the New START mandate.

The treaty, which became effective Feb. 5, 2011, limits both countries to 1,550 nuclear warheads deployed on 700 ICBMs, sea-launched ballistic missiles, and nuclear-capable bombers.

Aggressor Unit Inactivating

Budget cuts and service “right-sizing” are claiming one of the Air Force’s two Aggressor units based at Nellis AFB, Nev., according to Air Combat Command.

The 65th Aggressor Squadron, which flies 18 older model F-15Cs, stood down on Sept. 26. Six of the F-15s—painted to look like Russian-made Flankers—plus a spare airplane, as well as nine pilots and 90 maintainers, will temporarily transfer to Nellis’ 64th Aggressor Squadron. The aircraft will later shift to other units or retire to the Air Force’s aircraft “Boneyard.” The F-15Cs not going to the 64th will be retired in September.

There was a Nellis ceremony to inactivate the unit in September. Asked if the move will affect the quality of Red Flag and other exercises at Nellis, ACC spokesman Capt. Andrew Schrag told *Air Force Magazine* on Aug. 11, “We are confident the quality of training ... will remain world-class.” Schrag said, “Details of future training presentations are being discussed and evaluated.”

Dusty Reapers: Airmen with the 451st Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron pass by MQ-9 Reapers at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in August. The Reapers at Kandahar are launched, recovered, and maintained at the facility, in addition to being remotely operated by pilots in the US.



USAF photo by SSgt. Evelyn Chavez

The War on Terrorism

Operation Enduring Freedom

Casualties

By Sept. 17, a total of 2,344 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,341 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,835 were killed in action with the enemy while 508 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 19,987 troops wounded in action during OEF.

US Army General Killed in Insider Attack in Kabul

Army Maj. Gen. Harold J. Greene was killed Aug. 5 after a man believed to be a uniformed Afghan army soldier opened fire on coalition forces during a routine "site visit" at the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Kabul, officials said. Greene was the highest-ranking service member to die in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Maj. Gen. Harold J. Greene's family and the families of our soldiers who were injured today in the tragic events that took place in Afghanistan," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno Aug. 5, adding, "These soldiers were professionals, committed to the mission. It is their service and sacrifice that define us as an Army."

Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. John Kirby said that despite measures put in place to mitigate insider attacks since 2012, Afghanistan is still at war and insider threats are "pernicious" and "difficult to always ascertain." The shooter was killed shortly after the attack.

A joint ISAF-Afghan investigation is underway.

Air Force EOD Presence Ending in Afghanistan

The 466th EOD Operating Location Bravo Flight, the last Air Force explosive ordnance disposal unit operating in Afghanistan, completed its final mission Aug. 19.

Since its initial assignment to Afghanistan in 2004, the flight's airmen—more than 600 explosive ordnance disposal technicians—have completed 20 rotations of more than 10,000 missions.

The unit lost eight airmen during this time.

"Our impact [on] Operation Enduring Freedom has been huge," said Capt. Justin Shultz, the flight's executive officer. "Because of our abilities and technical expertise, I feel like we have become one of the frontline EOD units in Afghanistan," he said.

In addition to Kandahar Airfield, the flight operated from six forward bases. "Our unit responded to any explosive hazard on and off base, such as unexploded ordnances, improvised explosive devices, and post-blasts," said Shultz.

Liberty Mission Coming to End in Afghanistan

The 361st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, is winding down for its return to the United States after four years of ISR missions in southern Afghanistan. The squadron flew more than 25,000 air tasking order sorties in the MC-12W Liberty, racking up 115,000 combat flight hours, according to a Kandahar news release.

"A lot of sacrifice and commitment has gone into this [mission]," said 361st ERS commander Lt. Col. James Mansard. The squadron "eliminated 450 insurgents, ... provided overwatch for more than 50,000 friendly forces, and scanned [more than 8,000 miles] of roads supporting ground forces outside the wire," states the release.

NATO forces will remain at Kandahar to continue the mission.

Campbell Takes Command of US, Coalition Troops

Army Gen. John F. Campbell assumed command of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and US Forces in Afghanistan on Aug. 26, relieving Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., who held the joint command for 18 months.

Campbell will be the last ISAF commander as NATO will shift to an advise and assist mission with a sharply reduced force next year.

Campbell is starting his third tour in Afghanistan.

Dunford is slated to become the next Marine Corps Commandant in October, relieving Gen. James F. Amos.

AWACS Block 40/45 Upgrade Declared Operational

Air Force E-3 AWACS aircraft equipped with new Block 40/45 hardware and software are ready for real-world operations, according to an Aug. 15 news release.

Air Combat Command chief Gen. Gilmary Michael Hostage III declared initial operational capability for the new E-3G Block 40/45 configuration on July 28.

"This modification represents the most significant upgrade in the 35-plus year history of the E-3 AWACS and greatly enhances our crew members' ability to execute the command and control mission while providing a building block for future upgrades," said Col. Jay R. Bickley, commander of the 552nd Air Control Wing at Tinker AFB, Okla.

The wing has taken delivery of six E-3Gs, two of which have been deployed to support counterdrug operations, said Gordon Fitzgerald, the 552nd ACW's requirements director.

The entire AWACS fleet is scheduled to receive the Block 40/45 upgrade by Fiscal 2020, he said.

Space Command Seeks Info on New Rocket Engine

Air Force Space Command has asked industry to provide information on a potential new booster propulsion and launch system for evolved expendable launch vehicle-class

spacelifts. USAF is seeking a domestic alternative to the Russian RD-180 engine to ensure continued access to space.

According to the request for information notice, the new domestic solution may be a near carbon copy with "similar performance characteristics to currently used engines," or it can consist of different configurations (such as a multiple engine configuration) that provide similar functionality. Use of completely different launch vehicles also is a possibility.

Moody Selected as Afghan A-29 Training Site

The Air Force has selected Moody AFB, Ga., to be the US training location for the Afghan Air Force's A-29 pilots and maintainers.

The service recently completed the assessment of the environmental impact of establishing the mission at the Georgia base, clearing the way for the final basing decision, according to an Aug. 22 press release.

Over the next four years, Moody will be the site for 20 A-29s, 17 Air Force instructor pilots, 24 maintenance and support personnel, and 30 Afghan pilots and 90 maintainers. Training is expected to begin in February 2015.

The Air Force opted for Moody "because of the availability of the airfield, airspace, and suitable facilities," said

Senior Staff Changes

NOMINATIONS: To be Major General: Veralinn Jamieson. **To be ANG Brigadier General:** Dennis D. Grunstad II.

CHANGES: Brig. Gen. Paul H. Guemmer, from Dept. Dir., Strategy, Capabilities, Policy, & Log, TRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill., to Cmdr., Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions & Citizen Dev., AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala. ... Lt. Gen. Tod D. Wolters, from Cmdr. 12th AF, ACC, Davis Monthan AFB, Ariz., to DCS, Ops, Plans, & Rqmts., Pentagon.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGES: Miranda A. A. Ballentine, to Asst. SECAF, Instal, Env., & Log, Pentagon ... Gordon O. Tanner, to General Counsel, Office of the SECAF, Pentagon. ■

Timothy K. Bridges, the service's deputy assistant secretary for installations.

Sweeping Changes Proposed for Officer Training

Air Education and Training Command headquarters and the Air Staff are reviewing proposals from the Officer Training School that would make dramatic changes to the way the Air Force prepares its new officers. The proposal would merge OTS's three separate officer programs into a single course combining Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard officer candidates and new officers with direct commissions as judge advocates, medical professionals, and chaplains.

OTS, based at Maxwell AFB, Ala., currently runs the Basic Officer Training School for prospective Active Duty and Reserve officers, the Academy of Military Science for ANG officer candidates, and the Commissioned Officers School for direct-commissioned non-line officers.

"We want to change that," Lt. Col. Ryan J. Aerni, commander of the 24th Training Squadron, said. "We want a common officer training experience" to give Total Force officers a shared foundation.

The Beagles Are Back

The renowned World War II American Beagle Squadron was reactivated during an Aug. 22 ceremony at Tyndall AFB, Fla. During the ceremony, the 325th Operations Group Adversary Air program became the 2nd Fighter Training Squadron.

The squadron flies T-38 Talons against the base's F-22 Raptor in flight training, taking some of the pressure off the F-22 fleet and helping cut costs, according to a press release.

"The Air Force is not getting any more F-22s," said Lt. Col. Derek Wyler, squadron commander. "Every hour we fly on that airplane is an hour that we never get back. If we can save all those hours for mission training, it preserves the lifespan of those airplanes."

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Bernard F. Fisher, 1927-2014



Retired Col. Bernard F. "Bernie" Fisher, the first recipient of the Air Force-designed Medal of Honor, died Aug. 16 at his home in Idaho, at age 87.

Then-Major Fisher received the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson for action on March 10, 1966, in South Vietnam. Assigned to the 1st Air Commando Squadron at Pleiku, Fisher was leading a

two-ship of A-1E Skyraiders to the A Shau Valley on a close air support mission when his wingman, Maj. D. W. Myers, was hit by enemy fire.

Myers belied in on a nearby Special Forces airstrip, fled the aircraft, and hid on the edge of the strip. Fisher began coordinating a rescue, but as the enemy was closing in on Myers and a helicopter rescue was at least 30 minutes away, Fisher elected to act alone. He landed on the strip under heavy fire, taxied to Myers' position, then helped him into Fisher's own A-1E. Fisher was able to safely take off and return to base, despite numerous shell and bullet hits on his aircraft. Fisher had earned a Silver Star flying CAS the previous day in the same battle. He also is the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star Medal among others.

President Johnson presented the Medal of Honor to Fisher on Jan. 19, 1967, for "personal action above and beyond the call of duty."

Fisher started his military career in the Navy and spent time in the Idaho Air National Guard before receiving his Air Force commission in June 1951. In addition to the hundreds of CAS missions flown in the A-1E "Spad" in Vietnam, Fisher also flew the F-80, F-86, and the F-101. He retired from the Air Force in 1974 and was a Republican candidate for governor of Idaho in 1981.

Two parks, a portion of a Utah highway, and a Military Sealift Command vessel, *Maj. Bernard F. Fisher* (T-AK-4396), are named for him. The A-1E he flew during the Myers rescue was restored and is displayed at the National Museum of the US Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Al Qaeda Cites Air Force Academy as Possible Target

An English-language online publication produced by al Qaeda has cited the Air Force Academy as a possible target for a terrorist attack, among an array of American and international facilities and institutions, reported *The Gazette* newspaper of Colorado Springs, Colo.

USFA officials said they are aware the academy "is mentioned in a recent online publication. We remain vigilant and maintain all appropriate protocols of a military installation to include force protection and being cognizant of existing and emerging threats."

Other US targets listed by the terrorist publication include casinos and night clubs in Las Vegas, the Georgia Military College, Times Square in New York City, the General Atomic headquarters in San Diego, oil tankers, and trains. ★