

Crimson Sky



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein speaks with Team Osan during an all-call on Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 31, 2016. While visiting Osan, Goldfein fielded a variety of questions and explained his priorities as chief of staff and how he plans to tackle them. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Steffen)

Evolution, not revolution: CSAF discusses focus areas, receives Osan immersion

By Senior Airman Victor J. Caputo
51st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

OSAN AIR BASE, Republic of Korea -- Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein visited Osan October 30 – 31 during an immersion tour of the base and its capabilities.

Goldfein, who was sworn in as the 21st chief of staff in July, learned about 7th Air Force and the 51st Fighter Wing missions firsthand, hearing from dedicated experts in a variety of fields throughout the base while passing on information about what is happening at higher headquarters to help ease the burden on the force.

One of the most emphasized pieces of the Team Osan mission was the strong alliance with the Republic of Korea air force members also stationed here.

“I could not be prouder of the men and women here at Osan and what you are doing every single day,” said Goldfein. “It’s an unpredictable challenge to the north, [but] it’s an incredible alliance that we have in place here.”

Goldfein hosted an all-call at the end of his immersion, sharing his views and experiences with hundreds of Airmen. He stressed that one of his top priorities is to revitalize squadrons, and he explained why he believes it is so important.

“Most Airmen, when they first enter a unit, it’s at the squadron level and that’s where they get the culture of an Airman,” said Goldfein.

Goldfein also addressed a prevalent complaint that Airman have been voicing for years: an overabundance of ancillary and computer-

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Wolf Pack, local elementary school celebrate Halloween

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Mustangs mark new elementary school opening

By Senior Airman Victor J. Caputo
51st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

OSAN AIR BASE, Republic of Korea -- Students, faculty, other members of Team Osan and key individuals from Department of Defense Education Activity gathered at the new Osan American Elementary School for a ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 25.

The ceremony marked the culmination of three years of construction, and the students dedicated the beginning of a new era with a time capsule, which will be buried in front of the school until 2041.

“Our children have been a big part of this, even since the groundbreaking in 2013,” said Mona Morgan, OAES principal. “They certainly have a feeling of ownership for this new facility.”

The key design element in the new facility is a 21st century learning environment in which students will see collaborative and communicative skills become a focus, in addition to traditional educational topics.

“When you come in, everything is open,” said Morgan. “There are no closed walls; it’s a neighborhood. They are all working together, the kids learn to talk together, collaborate and think critically... it’s just awesome when you walk into one of these neighborhoods and see the flow of it all.”

Since the groundbreaking in 2013, local Korean contractors, personnel from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the 51st Civil Engineer Squadron, and other units from throughout the base worked together to ensure everything met or exceeded expectations.

The effort provides some of Team Osan’s youngest members one of the most state-of-the-art educational facilities in the entire Department of Defense.

“Our mini-Mustangs at the elementary school are being set up for future success,” said Col. Andrew Hansen, 51st Fighter Wing commander. “This amazing new facility, staffed by an incredible group of educators, is the perfect place for Team Osan’s children to learn how to achieve their goals and grow into the best people they can be.”



Students at Osan American Elementary School sing their school anthem after a ribbon cutting ceremony at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 25, 2016. The ceremony marked the opening of the new OAES facilities after three years of construction. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Victor J. Caputo)



Key members of Team Osan, Department of Defense Education Activity and the local area cut a ribbon symbolizing the opening of the new Osan American Elementary School at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 25, 2016. The ribbon cutting ceremony also included the students dedicating a time capsule, which will be buried in front of the new school until 2041.

7th Air Force capabilities on display at Sacheon Airshow

By 1st Lt. Lauren Linscott
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SACHEON BASE, Republic of Korea -- For the first time in years, aircraft from Kunsan and Osan Air Bases appeared on the aprons of Sacheon Base. On Oct. 20, 2016, an F-16 from the 80th Fighter Squadron and an A-10 Thunderbolt II from the 25th Fighter Squadron landed at the annual Sacheon Airshow to provide static support to our Republic of Korea Air Force partners.

Over the next four days, children and adults alike stopped to take photos with the pilots and aircraft, ask questions, and learn about the capabilities the United States brings to the peninsula.

"The ROK maintains F-16's in their fleet, so the 8th Fighter Wing has the privilege to bring even more firepower to the fight," said Capt. Matthew Alexander, 80th Fighter Squadron pilot. "We work together to be able to deter aggression from any potential adversaries we may encounter."

While the U.S. F-16 units fly in conjunction with ROK F-16's, the A-10 is strictly an American asset.

"The 25th Fighter Squadron offers one of the best means of close air support

here, providing sustainment of the front lines in the event of war," said Staff Sgt. Jason Crowell, 25th Aircraft Maintenance avionics system craftsman. "One of our first priorities would be the search and rescue of downed Airmen, in which the A-10 is truly in a class all its own."

Showcasing these two aircraft alongside our Korean partners creates a unique opportunity for our host nation citizens to see how closely our two nations work together.

"It's been a pleasure working with the ROKAF representatives to be a part of this airshow," said Alexander. "It's been a great opportunity to build even better relationships with our community."

The sentiment was shared by ROKAF as well.

"Despite all difficulties, we were able to overcome it with the cooperation of all sectors," said ROKAF Lt. Col. Soon-Guen Bae, Sacheon Airshow planning chief. "I would like to express my gratitude of the participation of the United States Air Force."

The airshow, which was attended by more than 260,000 people, featured 33 static aircraft displays and more than eight performance teams, including the ROK's premier air performance team, the Black Eagles.



(Left) Capt. Matthew Alexander, 80th Fighter Squadron pilot, prepares his F-16 Fighting Falcon for a tow after landing at the Sacheon Airshow at Sacheon Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 20, 2016. 7th Air Force provided both an F-16 and A-10 Thunderbolt II static display for the four-day airshow, showcasing U.S. Air Force capabilities to over 260,000 attendees.

(Right) Staff Sgt. Joseph Withers, 8th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, cleans the wheel of an F-16 Fighting Falcon at the Sacheon Airshow at Sacheon Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 20, 2016. 7th Air Force provided both an F-16 and A-10 Thunderbolt II static display for the four-day airshow, showcasing U.S. Air Force capabilities to over 260,000 attendees.



Crew chiefs for the Black Eagles demonstration team stand behind the T-50B aircraft as the pilots conduct their pre-flight checklist prior to a show at the Sacheon Airshow at Sacheon Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 21, 2016. 7th Air Force provided both an F-16 and A-10 Thunderbolt II static display for the four-day airshow, showcasing U.S. Air Force capabilities to over 260,000 attendees. (U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Lauren Linscott)

Fueling the fight for RF-A 17-1



A pair of U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons assigned to the 36th Fighter Squadron out of Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, fly in formation next to a KC-135 Stratotanker out of McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., Oct. 10, 2016, during a RED FLAG-Alaska (RF-A) 17-1 mission. RF-A exercises are conducted within the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, which provides expansive co-located air and land ranges within a more than 67,000 square mile area, including one conventional bombing range and two tactical bombing ranges containing 510 different types of targets and 45 threat simulators, both manned and unmanned to provide a realistic training environment for participants.



(Above) A U.S. Air Force Airman First Class Maxwell Smesny, a boom operator assigned to the 350th Air Refueling Squadron out of McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., follows a preflight checklist prior to take off from Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Oct. 10, 2016, during RED FLAG-Alaska (RF-A) 17-1. Aircrews operating KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft are vital to the success of RF-A, a series of Pacific Air Forces commander-directed field training exercises for U.S. and partner nation forces, enabling joint and international units to sharpen their skills by flying simulated combat sorties in a realistic threat environment.

(Right) A U.S. Air Force F-15 Eagle assigned to the 44th Fighter Squadron out of Kadena Air Base, Japan, connects with a KC-135 Stratotanker out of McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., Oct. 10, 2016, during a RED FLAG-Alaska (RF-A) 17-1 mission. RF-A exercises enable joint and international units to sharpen their skills by flying simulated combat sorties in a realistic threat environment inside the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, the largest instrumented air, ground and electronic combat training range in the world. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Karen J. Tomasik)



O'Malley's Dining Facility on track with renovations

By Senior Airman Colville McFee
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea -- O'Malley's Dining Facility remains closed for renovations and is projected to open back up on Nov. 6, 2016.

The renovations are being made to update equipment, revamp various areas of the facility and to ultimately improve the quality of life for airmen.

"Construction is on schedule and there haven't been any problems with the progress" said Master Sgt. Peter Maselli, 8th Force Support Squadron food service section chief.

To help support airmen with the closure, Maselli said midnight meals will be moved from O'Malley's Dining Facility to the Delta Pad Dining Facility, located near the flightline, from Sunday through Thursday 11

p.m.-1 a.m.

Airmen living in dorms 1401, 1406, 1418 and 1431 will be receiving BAS II because those buildings do not have kitchen facilities; they will receive \$736.58 monthly while O'Malley's Dining Facility is closed. All other airmen in dorms will receive standard BAS of \$368.29 because they do have kitchen facilities. Also, for those airmen receiving BAS II, they will be entitled to full-rate Cost of Living Allowance COLA during the closure.

Rates for COLA can be obtained at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm>.

For DFAC out-processing requirements, e-mail the dining facility at AFFSS.DFAC@US.AF.MIL.

For finance questions, contact Staff Sgt. Justin Prince at JUSTIN.PRINCE.2@US.AF.MIL.



The inside of O'Malley's Dining Facility during construction at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 21, 2016. The dining facility remains closed for renovations and is projected to open back up on Nov. 6, 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Colville McFee)

PACAF hosts ROKAF Academy cadets to promote interoperability, partnership



Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) Lt. Gen. Keon Wan Lee (left), ROKAF Academy superintendent, talks with U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Mark C. Dillon, Pacific Air Forces vice commander, during the recent PACAF-hosted ROKAF Academy cadet visit to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Oct. 19, 2016. This marks the third visit by ROKAFA cadets who after commissioning, will likely work alongside U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula. The visit is an opportunity for PACAF to show the cadets how PACAF and U.S. Pacific Command operate and gain a better understanding of the region and the importance of regional security.



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Mark C. Dillon, Pacific Air Forces vice commander, presents a briefing to over 90 Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) Academy cadets during their visit to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Oct. 19, 2016. This marks the third visit by ROKAFA cadets who after commissioning, will likely work alongside U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula. The visit is an opportunity for PACAF to show the cadets how PACAF and U.S. Pacific Command operate and gain a better understanding of the region and the importance of regional security. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kamaile Chan)

By Capt. Candice Dillitte
Headquarters Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii -- Pacific Air Forces hosted 78 Republic of Korea Air Force Academy cadets during an immersion here Oct. 19. The visit was part of an effort to build a foundation of partnership and interoperability between PACAF Airmen and future ROKAF leaders.

“Since 1950 our two nations have fought together to defend the Korean peninsula and that relationship grows stronger each and every day,” said Maj. Gen. Mark Dillon, PACAF vice commander, speaking to the cadets.

The visit included U.S. Pacific Command strategy and PACAF command briefs to highlight the command’s role and mission in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and further the cadets’ understanding of that role. Additionally, the cadets visited and had the opportunity to pay their respects at the USS Arizona Memorial, the USS Missouri Memorial and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific where they participated in a wreath-laying ceremony.

During the PACAF briefing, Dillon correlated the ROKAF’s part in

presence, partnership, power projection and people. He discussed how joint and combined exercises such as Red Flag-Alaska, Vigilant Ace, Cope North and Ulchi Freedom Guardian, help the alliance remain strong for the future.

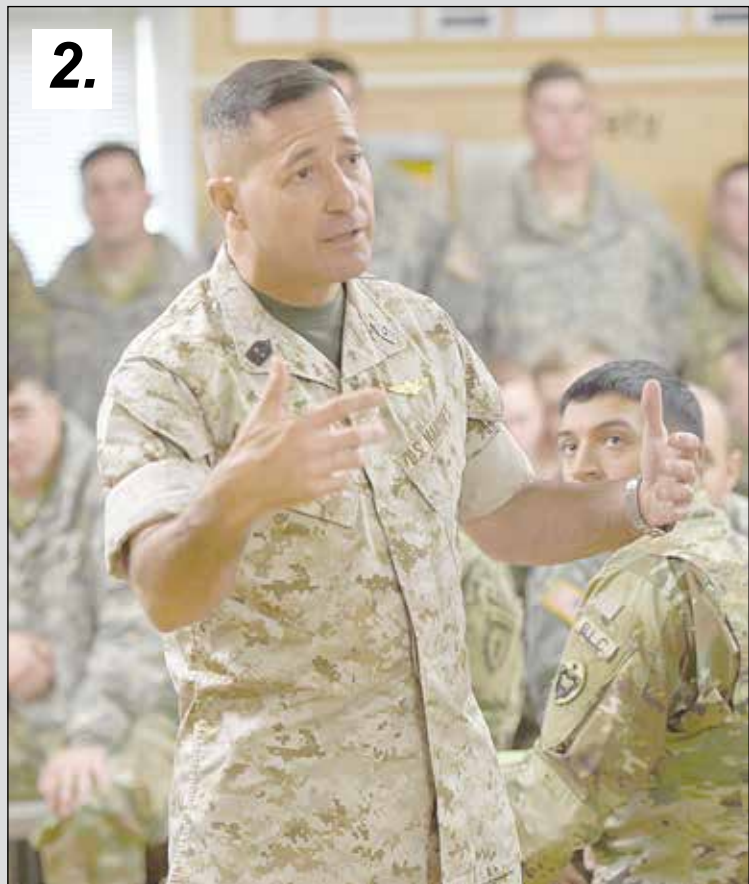
“The incredibly strong alliance between our two air forces and the presence of the United States around the theater allows us to project power and presence and partnerships across the entire region,” Dillon said. “It’s all underpinned by our great Airmen.”

For Republic of Korea Air Force Academy Senior Cadet Seungtae Han, a highlight was visiting a U.S. Air Force base for the first time and learning about how the U.S. and ROK work together.

“My favorite part of the visit was visiting and speaking with members of the U.S. Air Force,” Han said. “I learned about U.S. Air Force tasks and strategies and how the U.S. continues to support the Republic of Korea through various exercises and engagements. This allowed me to have a better understanding of our relationship.”

This was the third time a ROKAFA cadet class visited Headquarters PACAF.

PACOM senior enlisted leader visits Alaska



(1) U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) senior enlisted leader, prepare to tour C-17 Globemaster III, on the flightline at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, Oct. 21, 2016. Spadaro, a native of New Brunswick, New Jersey visited JBER for a three day immersion tour Oct. 19 to 21, 2016.

(2) U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro talks to soldiers at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Oct. 19, 2016. Spadaro provides the PACOM commander with the enlisted perspective on theater security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, and deterring aggression throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

(3) U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro tours the Airborne Sustainment Training Area, at JBER, Alaska, Oct. 19, 2016.

(4) U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro holds on as a Pratt and Whitney F119 engine performs an engine run at JBER, Alaska, Oct. 21, 2016. Spadaro provides the PACOM commander with the enlisted perspective on theater security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, and deterring aggression throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. This was his first visit to Alaska.

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based training. He was pleased to announce that almost 25,000 Airmen were surveyed about 42 courses, resulting in the elimination of 15 and streamlining or consolidation of 16 CBTs.

“This is just the beginning,” said Goldfein. “We’re going to keep swinging at this for the next four years until we get the balance right.”

Base leadership highlighted that the tight-knit nature of many of the squadrons at Osan are what makes the units so strong and cohesive.

“We have an unbeatable team, and they took advantage of this incredibly unique opportunity to show Gen. Goldfein the critical role they play in executing our PACAF commander’s goals and priorities while deterring any possible threats to regional stability,” said Col. Andrew Hansen, 51st FW commander. “We were honored to host him during his first visit here as CSAF.”



(Left) U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Christina Bair, 51st Fighter Wing weapons safety manager, receives a coin from Air Force Chief of Staff David L. Goldfein during a coining ceremony at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 31, 2016. Goldfein rewarded high-performance Osan Airmen with his coin for their part in executing the 51st Fighter Wing mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dillian Bamman)

(Right) Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein speaks with Team Osan during an all-call on Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 31 2016. While visiting the base, Goldfein shared his priorities of revitalizing squadrons, strengthening joint leaders and teams, and advancing command and control. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Steffen)



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein speaks to 25th Fighter Squadron pilots during a briefing at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 31, 2016. Goldfein spoke with the pilots about upcoming changes and plans for fighter pilot retention. Goldfein visited Osan to communicate his focus areas of revitalizing squadrons, strengthening joint leaders and teams, and advancing command and control. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dillian Bamman)

8th Fighter Wing hosts combined special operations exercise



A U.S. Air Force MC-130H Combat Talon II, assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Group, prepares to take off at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 22, 2016. Members from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron and 1st SOS worked with the ROK 255th Special Operations Squadron to enhance U.S. and ROK Air Force Special Operations Forces' capabilities. They conducted infiltration methods, jump clearing team operations, airfield establishment, aircraft control and close air support familiarization.



(Left) A U.S. Air Force combat controller assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, parachutes out of a U.S. Air Force MC-130H Combat Talon II, assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Group, at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 22, 2016. Members from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron and 1st SOS worked with the ROK 255th Special Operations Squadron to enhance U.S. and ROK Air Force Special Operations Forces' capabilities. They conducted infiltration methods, jump clearing team operations, airfield establishment, aircraft control and close air support familiarization.

(Right) U.S. Air Force combat controllers assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 320th Special Tactics Squadron and Republic of Korea (ROK) 255th Special Operations Squadron, pull security and establish a line of communication at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 22, 2016. Members from the 320th STS and 1st SOS worked with the ROK 255th SOS to enhance U.S. and ROK Air Force Special Operations Forces' capabilities. They conducted infiltration methods, jump clearing team operations, airfield establishment, aircraft control and close air support familiarization. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Colville McFee)

AF takes steps to reduce non-primary mission training

By Tech. Sgt. Robert Barnett
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- The Air Force plans to reduce training not related to Airmen's primary jobs in order to address concerns that excessive and non-mission related demands are impacting Airmen's ability to focus on and accomplish their core duties, officials announced October 31.

As part of ongoing efforts to take care of Airmen and revitalize squadrons, Air Force leadership recently directed the "Airmen's Time" task force to review 42 ancillary training courses (i.e., training outside of an Airman's core job). Functional training requirements were not part of this review.

According to the official memorandum, of those 42 courses, the Air Force will eliminate 15 stand-alone training courses and streamline 16 courses reducing associated training time.

In a recent survey, Airmen identified 10 courses as the most burdensome. The service will eliminate or significantly reduce nine of them as part of this initiative.

Air Force leaders emphasized that while this is another positive step following the recent announcement eliminating some additional duties, more work remains.

"We've taken some modest steps to ensure we use our Airmen's time in the smartest way, but this is a journey," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein. "We'll continue to be deliberate about what we cut or streamline, but more is required as we continue to focus our efforts on the business of warfighting, respecting our Airmen's time, and still meeting the necessary requirements to take care of our mission and our force."

The courses reviewed include total force awareness training, which is required of all Airmen on an annual basis; selected force training, which is targeted to specific groups, including commanders, civilians and supervisors; event-driven training, which is triggered by some event, such as moving to a new assignment or duty station; and basic Airman readiness training, which is expeditionary-focused training required of all Airmen every three years.

While each of these training modules provide important information, the review found that many of the requirements duplicated information already provided in other trainings. These reductions will, in many cases, eliminate redundant requirements across the service.

"This initiative represents the next step in giving time back to our

Airmen," said Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James. "All these training requirements were created to provide valuable information to our Airmen. The intent was right, but as the lists of requirements increased, our Airmen spent more time away from their core duties."

Reducing ancillary training, according to Air Force leadership, is not intended to reduce emphasis on the need to have well-trained and educated Airmen. Instead, the effort is specifically designed to give the Air Force greater flexibility in how it meets and implements these requirements.

"Our Airmen are certainly busy, and that dynamic will likely not decrease in the foreseeable future. We understand that dynamic, and we're willing to accept some risk where we can to better balance our Airmen's time," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody. "Computer-based training impacts our Airmen's time, so we're looking at what we can eliminate, consolidate or substantially relax to cut the demand."

The Air Force believes the initiative will benefit the total force by not only allowing active-duty Airmen more time to focus on their core mission but also giving Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen more time to focus on honing their core skill sets during drill, unit training assembly and annual tour periods. The initiative builds upon a similar effort from the Guard in 2015.

"Our Airmen have repeatedly stepped up to increased deployment tempos and manpower shortages," Goldfein said. "Reducing the number of hours our Airmen spend on non-critical training requirements goes directly to the heart of secretary James's priority of taking care of Airmen and our efforts to revitalize the squadron and is another small step in the right direction. Squadrons are the engines of innovation and esprit de corps and the warfighting core of our Air Force, and today, we are giving back time so our Airmen can better focus on their core mission."

Changes will be implemented between January and April 2017; however, Airmen are no longer required to complete the courses set for elimination. To ensure the revisions are implemented in a timely manner, all applicable Air Force instructions will be updated to reflect these changes no later than January 1, 2017, and the Advanced Distributed Learning Service will be updated no later than April 1, 2017.

Headquarters Air Force will also establish a screening process to review new policies in order to identify areas that create additional duties or training requirements for Airmen in units. The goal is to prevent unchecked growth of these functions in the future.

James reiterates focus on modernization, efficiency

By Sean Clements
375th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AFNS) -- Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James took the stage Oct. 28, at the 48th annual Airlift Tanker Association Convention to address the Air Force's priority to maintain mission readiness and promote modernization in the coming years.

With increasing global threats, James reiterated her emphasis on the Air Force maintaining its global readiness. Air Mobility Command, assigned with enabling rapid aerial transportation missions, has been in the forefront of mobility efforts to support the current fight in Mosul, Iraq.

AMC professionals and capabilities enabled delivery of critical supplies, equipment, and ensured repairs of an airfield at Qayyarah West Airbase, near Mosul. Additionally, they also supplied ground forces in northern Iraq via a robust airdrop capability.

"(Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) tried to make sure that we could never go back to (Qayyarah West Airbase), detonating explosives and digging trenches in the runway to make it unusable for our aircraft," James said. "The logistics team had to move 1.9-million pounds of supplies and equipment to repair the field. What (ISIL) spent two years destroying, our Airmen were able to rebuild in three weeks."

Supporting combat and humanitarian missions abroad remains a primary focus, not only for AMC, but for the Air Force as a whole. These efforts can only be continued through modernizing the Air Force's fleet to make sure it maintains air dominance.

"We need to invest in our modernization programs without sacrificing our readiness to operate effectively today," James said. "We have to continue to repeat it to our Congress. This is not an either/or proposition. We need both readiness today, and we need to modernize for our future."

With the introduction of the KC-46A Pegasus aerial tanker due to be delivered to McConnell and Altus Air Force Bases in 2017, modernization efforts have already begun for the Air Force.

"The KC-46 is one of what we call the 'Big 3' modernization programs," said the secretary. "This is just a piece of the whole modernization picture. We are doing this across the entire enterprise. We have the future fighter, the F-35 (Lightning II), and the future bomber, the B-21 (Raider), which round out our 'Big 3.'"

Ensuring modernization, while maintaining readiness, has been an essential priority for James as she continues to work toward a more effective Air Force.

"Across the total force, with our allies and partners around the world, and with our industry partners, when we all come together, this mobility community creates unique capabilities that transform the fight," James said. "These bonds we have built have been the foundation of success the Air Force, and the Joint Force, have relied on for generations. It is essential today, and will be even more critical in the years to come."



Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James discusses modernization and how mobility Airmen enable the fight during the 48th annual Airlift Tanker Association Convention in Nashville, Tenn., Oct. 28, 2016. The symposium served as a key professional development forum for Air Mobility Command Airmen by enabling direct access to senior mobility leaders and fostering an environment encouraging open dialogue and honest discussions. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Melissa Estevez)

COMPACAF visit to Australia reaffirms commitment to Pacific Rebalance



U.S. Air Force Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) commander delivers a speech during the Institute for Regional Security (IFRS) Strategic Dialogue in Australia, Oct. 18, 2016. The IFRS marks the first opportunity O'Shaughnessy has had since assuming command of PACAF to meet Australian defense leaders and serve as U.S. Pacific Command's representative at several high-level Australian government meetings.

By Staff Sgt. Kamaile Chan
Headquarters Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii -- General Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, Pacific Air Forces commander, deepened ties with partner nations and reaffirmed PACAF's commitment to the rebalance in the Pacific during a trip to Australia October 17-20.

O'Shaughnessy traveled to Australia to discuss current and future partnership engagements with the goal of improving interoperability among air forces and ensuring increased security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

The key engagement while in Australia was the Institute for Regional Security (IFRS) Strategic Dialogue in Canberra, where O'Shaughnessy delivered a speech emphasizing the benefits of interoperability and highlighting the broad spectrum of U.S. capabilities relating to the challenges shared by Pacific partner nations. During his speech, the general emphasized the successes and promise of the current Australia-Japan-U.S. tri-lateral partnership and expansion.

"The North Korean threat is bringing the international community closer together in ways that were difficult to imagine just a year ago," O'Shaughnessy said. "From an Air Force perspective, despite the diversity and vastness of this region, we're well attuned to the importance of interoperability and leveraging our respective capacities to deal with these challenges," he continued. "Partnership and collaboration are foundational to the future of airpower and its contribution to regional security."

O'Shaughnessy also highlighted the importance of the development of fifth generation capabilities and noted that missions that once entailed multiple aircraft can be accomplished more efficiently with a single aircraft doing the job -- a remarkable evolution of technology.

"The real story of fifth generation capability is that this is not just a U.S. story," he said. "It is really a story about a coalition of partner nations who will operate this platform in the very near future. Australia is already flying the F-35 and in late September I had the honor to be at the

F-35 rollout of Japan's first aircraft. This advancement to 5th generation capabilities amongst our allies and partners is happening now at a critical time for stability in this dynamic region."

General O'Shaughnessy's speech also provided insight to DoD's Third Offset Strategy, which leverages innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence, human-machine collaboration and network-enabled autonomous weapons that can operate in contested environments.

"The U.S. is not alone in working these critical offset dimensions -- our potential adversaries are also developing them," he said. "As we advance the Third Offset, our greatest competitive advantage comes from having an environment that fosters free thinking and innovation -- an advantage that democratic nations like the U.S., Australia, Japan and others enjoy.

Along with his remarks at the IFRS Security Dialogue, O'Shaughnessy also met with numerous Australian defense leaders throughout his visit, including Air Marshal Leo Davies, Chief of Air Force, and Air Vice Marshal Gavin Turnbull, Air Commander Australia. Their discussions focused on furthering Enhanced Air Cooperation initiatives, a key component of the Force Posture Agreement Australia and the U.S. signed in August 2014 that laid the groundwork for deeper bilateral defense cooperation.

The general also participated in several roundtables that addressed a variety of mutual topics including 5th generation capabilities and the F-35, access to and use of one another's training ranges and facilities, and international rules and norms that govern flying activities in the global commons.

"Each of our nations brings unique capabilities to the airpower domain," said O'Shaughnessy. "It's not just the size or capacity of one air force that will change the future of airpower. It's really about how we leverage our partnerships and capabilities -- how we interoperate, share best practices, and deepen friendship and trust between our nations. Working together will serve to bolster regional security at a time when threats to our collective security are growing. And by doing so, like-minded nations can bring stability to this dynamic region and ensure our future remains bright."

Overcoming cancer, embracing life



Lt. Col. Felicia Burks, the 92nd Medical Support Squadron commander, drops a pair of boxing gloves Oct. 21, 2016, at Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash. During her fight with cancer, Burks took up boxing as a way of staying physically fit. To her, the dropped gloves signify the end of her fight with cancer. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Nick J. Daniello)

By Tech. Sgt. Robert Barnett
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- (This feature is part of the “Through Airmen’s Eyes” series. These stories focus on individual Airmen, highlighting their Air Force story.)

She placed a pillow under her right shoulder and put her right arm behind her head on the bed. Using her left hand, she pressed the pads of her fingers around her right breast gently in small circular motions, covering the entire breast area and armpit.

These routine checks only took a few moments of her time. But her eyes widened as her fingertips suddenly found a lump on her left breast, and her breath caught in her throat as she realized what it might mean.

“I make it a practice to check myself,” said Lt. Col. Felicia Burks. “I had discovered a lump that felt like a marble in my left breast as I lay in bed one night. The lump...was hard and appeared mobile. ... It’s unusual when you’re under 40 and don’t have a history of breast cancer.”

It was May 2014, and she was a health services administrator finishing a tour in the 673rd Medical Support Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, only six weeks shy of assuming a command position at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England.

“I was beyond stoked to have that opportunity,” the medical professional said. “Command is a privilege.”

She went to the hospital and was diagnosed with “triple negative” breast cancer.

Breast cancer is called triple negative when it does not grow in the presence of three known receptors – the estrogen receptor, the progesterone receptor and the HER2, or human epidermal growth factor receptor 2. Approximately 15 to 20 percent of breast cancers are triple negative.

“When breast cancer interrupted my life, all those plans went out the window,” Burks said. “I was devastated. There were times of uncertainty, and I was still determined to go (to Lakenheath) but that just wasn’t the divine plan for me at the time. I started thinking about how to fight through this. I wanted to learn more about what had interrupted my life. I had to go to a medical board, and then go through surgery to remove the cancer.”

With no family in Alaska, she said the prospect of going at it alone was nerve-wrecking.

Burks’ Mother’s Day gift to her mother that year was the disturbing news she (Burks) had breast cancer.

“It shook something in me for a moment, but I realized I had to reach out so she could be a source of strength and support for me,” she said.

Unfortunately, her parents were unable to travel, but her sister was able to be with her for the surgery.

Coming to terms with the disease, Burks said she wondered how it would affect her 23-year-long career.

Growing up in Grady, Alabama, Burks wanted to enlist after being inspired by her uncle’s service in the Army Reserves.

“I was 17 at the time, my mom actually signed the papers for me to join the military,” she said.

The multi-service veteran served in the Army Reserves as an automated logistics specialist from 1993 to 1999 before being commissioned into the active-duty Army, where she spent several years in various roles including an executive officer, administrative officer and a company commander.

But she said she dreamed of a different path, one of putting others before herself by helping people heal as a health services administrator.

“I wanted to be a medical professional, to give back and help make a difference in the lives of others,” the lieutenant colonel said. “It’s amazing; it’s what I was born to do. It’s the best job I could have had, I’m really having the time of my life.”

After years of serving her country, it was her turn to be served.

Surgery to remove the cancer took place only five days after diagnosis. The surgery was followed by six weeks of fertility preservation and then four-and-a-half months of chemotherapy.

The chemotherapy took its toll. Burks was exhausted. She lost most of her eye brows. Her nails became brittle and dark. Her skin appeared dehydrated.

“When faced with anything, we can either fight it, or run from it,” she said.

She shaved her head, rather than watch her hair shed away. Combating the effects of the therapy, she took vitamins and monitored her diet – she was determined to win.

In addition to her sister, Burks also found support through her wingman and church families.

Burks and Maj. Jennifer Pearl, a colleague in the same field, had been friends since 2006 when they met at Health Service Administration School at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. They re-connected at Elmendorf in 2012.

“I did what any friend would do – (I was) just a shoulder for her to cry on,” Pearl said, who also served with Burks in the 673rd MSS. “She didn’t have



any family there, just a church nearby. She's one of the strongest people I've ever known. If you didn't know she was going through cancer, you wouldn't have been able to tell."

Pearl became Burks' rock.

"My period of adversity drew us closer and she taught me wingmanship on the next level," Burks explained.

The believer also said she found support through a non-military community she held close to her heart. Burks will always consider Shiloh Mission Baptist Church in Anchorage to be her church home. They became her extended family.

"It was shocking and a surprise for her," said Edwenia Brown, the executive pastor for the church. "We prayed for her in the services, and then we just listened to what she needed. Whatever she needed, (whether) at home or in the hospital, we had a team that would respond, but mostly we were there to listen and walk with her."

The treatments took place in medical facilities including the military treatment facility, Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, Providence Alaska Medical Center and Alaska Regional Hospital.

"It was an amazing dynamic, from my Air Force medical service providers, the whole medical team all the way to the providers within the community of Anchorage," Burks said. "It was outstanding, I was very impressed by the compassion, their professionalism and excellence."

Burks said the overall process developed her, and made her view life differently.

"I'll always reference the quote of Winston Churchill, 'Mountaintops inspire leaders but valleys mature them' because it reminds me that adversity almost always primes one for purpose," Burks said.

Burks advises women to pay careful attention to their bodies, to know when something isn't normal. She also stressed that its important people understand what resources are out there to help.

The Air Force officer and cancer survivor hopes people understand what resources are available. There are services to help patients get a wig or prosthetic, clean their house, or provide meals. There are a lot of options out there to help get through these difficult moments, she said.

"We're already trained to fight to overcome adversity, especially in the military," Burks said, sitting in her office at Fairchild AFB, Washington.

As a survivor, she hopes others will not quit, and will continue to believe in themselves and their purpose.

"As I look at myself today, I can clearly see the difference," Burks explained she finally feels normal again as she adjusted her hair bun, perfecting her professional appearance as she prepared for another day as commander of the 92nd Medical Support Squadron.

Wolf Pack, local elementary school celebrate Halloween



(Left Above) Children from Sinsido elementary school stand in front of an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct.28, 2016. The children participated in a base tour that included a trick-or-treat Halloween event.

(Left Below) Children from Sinsido elementary school wait in line to receive candy from Airman 1st Class Jamie Cline, 8th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct.28, 2016. The children participated in a base tour that included a trick-or-treat Halloween event.

(Right) Staff Sgt. Justin Prince, 8th Comptroller Squadron special actions noncommissioned officer, hands out candy to children from Sinsido elementary school at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Oct. 28, 2016. The children participated in a base tour that included a trick-or-treat Halloween event. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Michael Hunsaker)