



Capriglione flightlines AFA Chapter 190

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WISHING OUR MEMBERS A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES. THEY PROTECT OUR FREEDOMS

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Raptors Return to Flight: The Air Force's F-22s are flying again. Bases temporarily grounded their Raptor fleets after two Virginia-based pilots [experienced hypoxia-like symptoms](#) during a training sortie on Oct. 20. Officials temporarily paused operations over the weekend as a precaution following the incident in Virginia. The restriction on Langley-Eustis' aircraft was lifted by 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday US East Coast time and the F-22s are once again flying the Raptor pilots are not operating under any new restrictions. However, the commander continues to closely monitor operations. The Air Force declined to release any additional information on the Oct. 20 incident.

Of Tinsel and Tubing: Lockheed Martin technicians will begin assembling the GeoEye-2 Earth-imaging satellite at the company's facility upon arrival of the satellite's integrated propulsion system. Completion of the propulsion system installation and the start of vehicle integration is a critical step forward in maintaining GeoEye-2's schedule of on-orbit operations in 2013. Due to launch aboard an Atlas V booster next year, GeoEye-2 will move more quickly between assignments and collect imagery more rapidly than previous satellites using its modern high-resolution sensor.

New Numbers on US, Russian Strategic Nuclear Arms: The State Department data on the aggregate numbers of US and Russian strategic nuclear arms. According to the data, current as of Sept. 1, the United States has 1,790 nuclear warheads on 822 deployed launchers (i.e., ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers), and a total of 1,043 deployed and non-deployed launchers. Russia has 1,566 warheads on 516 deployed launchers and a total of 871 deployed and non-deployed launchers. The two nations are required to exchange this information every six months under the provisions of the New START agreement. New START requires each nation, by February 2018, to have no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads, 700 deployed launchers, and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers.

Maintaining Air Dominance: The Air Force's ability to dominate the skies may come into question if the service's budget is severely reduced. Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Philip Breedlove told members of the House Armed Services Committee's readiness panel "the future budget would severely constrict our ability to approach those requirements, those weapons, those new aircraft, or other weapons, that would give us a capability to operate in anti-access/area-denial environments, "Quite frankly, in some portions of the world, if we are not able to break that A2/AD environment . . . we will not be able to guarantee that air dominance, or air supremacy to our sea and land forces as we operate over them." Breedlove was responding to the question about the effect of the 2011 Budget Control Act's sequestration mechanism on the service's ability to assure air



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dominance. That measure, could cut [up to nearly \\$100 billion annually](#) from the Pentagon's budget over the next 10 years.

Bears Drop in on NATO: A pair of Russian air force TU-95 strategic bombers breached NATO airspace, triggering a scramble of alliance fighters from Britain's Royal Air Force. Typhoon fighters on quick-reaction alert at RAF Leuchars, Scotland, launched to intercept and identify the bombers— codenamed "Bear" by NATO. The aircraft entered UK airspace unannounced to civil or military air traffic control, failed to transmit a radar-tracking code, or to submit a required flight plan. The fighters escorted the bombers, which were assigned to Russian Long Range Aviation—the rough equivalent of Air Force Global Strike Command's bomber force—until they departed UK airspace. NATO members police alliance airspace under a common command and control structure to track and interdict potential air threats.

Fiscal 2011 was Strong Recruiting Year: Just as they did in Fiscal 2010, the Air Force active duty force met its Fiscal 2011 recruiting goals. The active duty component brought in 28,518 accessions in Fiscal 2011, three more than its goal of 28,515 (but still considered 100 percent). The Air National Guard accepted 7,182 new recruits, 550 more than its target. And, the Air Force Reserve surpassed its objective by 238 accessions, attracting 9,069 recruits. Compared to 2010. Across the Defense Department, only the Army National Guard did not meet or exceed its recruiting objective in Fiscal 2011.

USAF Continues Enlisted Date of Separation Rollbacks: The Air Force will continue enlisted date of separation rollbacks as part of its overall force management plan. The rollback plan will accelerate the date of separation or retirement for senior master sergeants and below with less than 14 or more than 20 years of service. Airmen must separate by March 31, 2012, or retire by April 1, 2012, according to a [release](#). Those wishing to submit their retirement request must do so through the Virtual Military Personnel Flight by Dec. 1. "Airmen with at least 180 days of active-duty service who are separated under the DOS Rollback are authorized transition and assistance benefits" that include "extended military care for themselves and their families and an ID card allowing base commissary and exchange privileges for two years," states the release. Those with more than six years of experience, but less than 20 years total active service, may receive one half of the separation pay, but they must also sign up for the Individual Ready Reserve for at least three years following the completion of their military service.

Vigilant Shield: The Air Force employed ground-based radars and air defense missile systems along with Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and Canadian military assets in a force-wide mainland defense exercise, coordinated from command posts at Key West, Fla., and Peterson AFB, Colo. "The scenario for the exercise is based on potential military threats to the United States and Canada that require extensive military planning to provide a range of military options to our national leadership.

Investigating Mortuary Affairs: The Air Force Inspector General has completed a year-long investigation into the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations based at Dover AFB, Del., which was initiated after several whistleblowers reported, among several allegations, that the body parts of service members killed on active duty had been lost.



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Missile History Upgraded: The only former Minuteman ICBM site open to the public may soon get a permanent visitor's center, thanks to legislation introduced by Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.). The Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, located 70 miles east of Rapid City, S.D., became a historic landmark in 1999. If approved, Johnson's measure, S.1478, would grant 25 acres of National Forest Service land to the Park Service to construct an 8,000 square-foot historical center, as well as separate parking and office space nearby. The measure last week cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support, moving to the full Senate.

Doomsday Projections: The Defense Department's Fiscal 2013 budget would be slashed by 23 percent if the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction fails to reach an agreement on any deficit reduction measures. Under that scenario, the cuts would have to be applied evenly among the Pentagon's major investment and construction programs, essentially rendering "most of our ship and construction projects unexecutable," wrote Panetta. A similar 23 percent cut in DOD's weapons programs "would drive up unit costs and lead to reductions in quantity of one-third or more," stated Panetta. If the maximum sequestration is imposed—an estimated \$1 trillion over 10 years—DOD would be forced to cut \$100 billion a year compared to the Fiscal 2012 budget. "Rough estimates suggest after 10 years of these cuts, we would have the smallest ground force since 1940, the smallest number of ships since 1915, and the smallest Air Force in its history."

Royal Firstborn: Lockheed Martin completed assembly of the first international F-35 strike fighter, an airframe for Britain, [announced](#) the company Tuesday. This aircraft, designated BK-1, is in the F-35B short takeoff and vertical landing configuration. It left Lockheed's production line at Fort Worth, Tex., for the flight line on Nov. 20. The company will deliver BK-1 in 2012 following initial testing. "This first F-35 for the first international program partner is symbolic of the proud partnership we share with the United Kingdom," The F-35 is "ideally suited" to Britain's combat needs since it "is capable of operating from both the land and our new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier," said RAF Group Capt. Harv Smyth, British national deputy for the F-35. the British will use BK-1 as an operational test and training airframe.

The Case for Sticking with the Minuteman: The Air Staff recently asked RAND to look at what the Air Force could do with the current ICBM force of Minuteman III missiles after 2030, said [Chad Ohlandt](#), an associate engineer with RAND. He said RAND concluded that silos likely will continue to be the most cost-effective basing option—as opposed to mobile basing—since any nation-state adversary would have to expend most of its nuclear arsenal to attack the current-sized Minuteman force. Further, silos are more affordable and more survivable than they were in the Cold War, noted Ohlandt, making incremental modernization and sustainment of this enterprise "relatively inexpensive" and an option that the Air Force should seriously consider. The Air Force already has modernized parts of the Minuteman force. Upgrading it further between Fiscal 2012 and Fiscal 2050 would cost approximately \$2 billion a year, compared to about \$2.8 billion annually for a new missile fleet, estimated Ohlandt. 2030 is the projected date when the Air Force might retire the Minuteman IIIs.



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Changing the Way DOD Does Business: The Defense Department likely is going to have to change the way it conducts business in the current budget environment, Harrison outlined three ways that DOD can change its business model. First, Harrison suggested that the Pentagon form a study group to explore how much value troops place on the benefits they receive. Second, remotely piloted aircraft could offer savings in training and might not require DOD to purchase as many manned planes, he said. Third, the United States should examine the way it works with its allies. While the nation typically spends about four percent of its gross domestic product on defense, it allies often spend less than two percent of GDP, relying instead on the United States to shoulder much of the cost.

A Career That Blossomed: [Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers](#), USAF's longest serving airman and currently its deputy assistant secretary for budget, is retiring after 46 years of service. A native of Kinston, N.C., Flowers joined the Air Force at age 17. He began his active duty career in 1965 as a supply warehouseman. In 1968, he served as an air transportation specialist at Da Nang AB, Vietnam. After 13 years in the enlisted corps, Flowers, a financial management officer in 1978 went on to assignments including US Special Operations Command's director of resources and head of 2nd Air Force at Keesler AFB, Miss. In all, he's had 25 assignments. Flowers' retirement takes effect on Jan. 1, Air Force Secretary Michael Donley presented Flowers the Distinguished Service Medal.

And Then There were Two: The Navy's second X-47B unmanned combat air system carrier demonstrator took to the skies on its maiden flight, During the roughly 30-minute hop on Nov. 22, the new UCAS-D airframe, designated AV-2, ascended to 5,000 feet after takeoff from Edwards AFB, Calif., flying several orbits over Rogers Dry Lake before touching down safely. Having two UCAS-D airframes will allow the Navy-contractor testing team to begin aircraft carrier suitability evaluations while simultaneously continuing [flight-envelope expansion](#) at Edwards. "With two aircraft now available, we can increase the amount of aircraft performance data we gather, which will allow us to meet our required aircraft capability demonstration goals in a timely manner," said Carl Johnson, Northrop's UCAS-D program manager.

Flying Tigers Reunion: Past and present members of the Flying Tigers gathered earlier this month for the latest in the series of reunions held since 1947. This year, five of the surviving original Flying Tigers pilots attended. So did some of the maintainers, intelligence, and medical staff who supported them when they flew P-40 Warhawks in defense of China against Imperial Japan during World War II. Today an A-10C unit that carries on the Flying Tigers name and shark's teeth nose art. "I've looked up to these guys since I was a little boy, so to actually meet them and hear their stories is truly, truly humbling," said Capt. Matthew Cichowski, a Moody A-10 pilot.

Civil Air Patrol Turns 70: On Dec. 1, 1941, just six days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Civil Air Patrol was born. On Thursday, this all-volunteer organization celebrates its 70th anniversary. Maj. Gen. Carr stated "On this historic day, I am reminded of the sacrifices of the founding members of CAP's Coastal Patrol, who—propelled by duty and love of country—quickly proved their worth during World War II by conducting aerial patrols that discouraged and eventually stopped deadly German U-



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boat attacks along America's shores," "These members helped save lives and preserve our nation's freedom." CAP had some 61,000 members during World War II. Today, this Air Force auxiliary provides essential emergency, operational, and public services to communities, states, the federal government, and the US military.

The Air Force has selected Lockheed Martin to demonstrate the Reusable Booster System, a winged, rocket-powered form of spacelift envisioned as a more affordable and responsive option to current expendable space launch vehicles, announced the company, Dec. 5, 2011. The company said it will conduct initial ground and flight experiments, leading up to a flight demonstration vehicle dubbed the RBS Pathfinder that is scheduled to launch in 2015.

Rand Takes Command of 12th Air Force: [Lt. Gen. Robin Rand](#) assumed command of 12th Air Force "I'm grateful to be able to command again and serve with our great airmen," said Rand during the Dec. 1 change-of-command ceremony. He added, "I'm firmly convinced the duties our remarkable airmen perform have never been more important than they are today." Rand received his third star that same day before taking command. In his new role, he will oversee 10 combat wings and one RED HORSE squadron. He also will lead US Southern Command's air component, overseeing security cooperation and air, space, and cyberspace operations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to this assignment, Rand was special assistant to the Air Force vice chief of staff.

It's Officially Over: Pentagon leaders officially ended the US military mission in Iraq in a solemn ceremony here that recognized the sacrifices of Americans and Iraqis throughout the nearly nine years of war. "no words, no ceremony can provide full tribute to the sacrifices that have brought this day to pass," said Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. Nearly 4,500 US military personnel were killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the follow-on Operation New Dawn and more than 32,000 were wounded. "For more than 20 years, Iraq has been a defining part of our professional and our personal lives. The road we have traveled was long and it was tough," said Joints Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey at the ceremony. Hundreds of troops were scheduled to fly out of Sather with the remaining 3,500 US military personal set to depart Iraq by month's end.

F-16 Pilot Reaches 4,000 Flight Hours: Lt. Col. Brian Egger, an instructor pilot with the 480th Fighter Squadron became only the 34th USAF pilot to amass 4,000 flight hours in the F-16, This is very rare, There are thousands of F-16s and tens of thousands of F-16 pilots, but only a small number to reach that hour mark. This is a very significant achievement. Egger achieved the milestone during a Dec. 14 sortie. He received the traditional celebratory dousing from his family and fellow airmen upon exiting his aircraft that day.

Historic View from the Cockpit: Two F-16 pilots flew the final US manned combat mission over Iraq, protecting the last US military ground convoy until it passed through the gates at Khabari crossing on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, [thereby completing](#) the US military's phased Iraq withdrawal. Both pilots sensed the historical significance of their mission while they were still in the air on Dec 18. "Seeing the last vehicle cross the border, and watching them actually shut the gate in my targeting pod" was "the first



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realization," said one of the pilots, Col. Rodney Petithomme, 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group commander. He continued, "The second was talking to command and control and having them tell us, 'You are the last manned US Air Force aircraft in Iraq. You are cleared to return to base.'" The second pilot, Lt. Col. Jason Plourde, 79th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron commander, added, "When they spoke those words is really when [the significance] set in. the MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft operating that same day was actually the last combat aircraft to leave Iraqi airspace.

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