

Airman Killed in Crash in Colombia

MSgt. Martin L. Gonzales, 39, died in the crash of a US-contracted DH-8 aircraft in Colombia, announced US Southern Command.

The aircraft was monitoring for drug smugglers near the Panamanian border on Oct. 5 when it went down, reported the *Miami Herald*. The cause of the crash is under investigation; there is no evidence someone shot down the airplane, according to the newspaper.

Gonzales, who was reportedly an interpreter on the mission, was one of six persons aboard the airplane, only two of whom survived the crash. Two unnamed American defense contractors and Panamanian National Air-Naval Service Lt. Elroy Nunez also died.

Colombian military forces rescued two other US contractors from the crash site and brought them to a hospital in Bogota where they were in stable condition after surgery, said SOUTHCOM.

"Our hearts remain with the families of the men who lost their lives in this tragic crash," said Marine Corps Gen. John F. Kelly, SOUTHCOM commander. "It is a terrible tragedy, but we remain committed to finding out what happened and hopefully bring some sort of peace to the families."

Aggressors Stay at Eielson

The Air Force has changed course and decided to keep the 18th Aggressor Squadron at Eielson AFB, Alaska, near Fairbanks, and not alter the size of the remaining base operating support functions, announced service officials.

"Given what we've learned about the strategic rebalance to the Pacific in the last year, the reaffirmation of the importance of Air Force presence in Alaska, and the decrease in expected savings, the Air Force has elected to retain the 18th AGRS at Eielson while we finalize our long-range plans for this region," said Acting Air Force Secretary Eric Fanning in an Oct. 2 release.

Eielson's F-16 aggressor aircraft serve as adversary forces in training exercises such as Red Flag. Air Force officials had originally estimated the move to JB Elmendorf-Richardson, near Anchorage, coupled with curbing other activity at Eielson, would save some \$240 million.

Alaska's congressional delegation had fought the proposal.

KC-135 Emergency Landing

A KC-135 tanker assigned to McConnell AFB, Kan., had to make an emergency landing on the Spanish island of Mallorca on Sept. 30 due to a suspected fuel leak, reported *Stars and Stripes*. The tanker touched down at Sol San Juan airport in Palma de Mallorca on the Mediterranean island off Spain's eastern coast.

There were no reported injuries and the airplane was expected to leave the airport on completion of repairs, according to the newspaper's Sept. 30 report. It cited an Air Force official and a statement from the US Embassy in Madrid. The tanker had taken off from Moron Air Base in southern Spain, outside of Seville.

Airman's Medal

Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III presented SSgt.

Edward Grant, a member of the 902nd Security Forces Squadron at JBSA-Randolph, Tex., with the Airman's Medal for his heroism following a fuel storage tank explosion at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, last year.

📷 screenshot

10.7.2013

SrA. Larry Webster, a loadmaster with the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, scans for potential threats using night vision goggles after a cargo airdrop in Ghazni province, Afghanistan.



"This is about somebody choosing to put himself in danger to save a life," said Welsh during the Sept. 12 award ceremony.

On Nov. 21, 2012, Grant sprang into action after the tank exploded on base, according to a Randolph news release. He entered a compound near the explosion and began to evacuate personnel. In all, Grant and a team liberated 35 people. "I was just being human," Grant said. "I saw people who needed help."

 [\[\[Read more about Grant's heroic actions at www.airforcemag.com. Search "Edward Grant."\]\]](http://www.airforcemag.com)

Order of the Sword

The Air Force's enlisted force inducted former Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley into the Order of the Sword.

CMSAF James A. Cody led the Sept. 13 ceremony at JB Anacostia-Bolling, D.C.

Donley, who retired in June, became the ninth person in Air Force history to enter the order at the service's headquarters level, stated the service's news release.

The order is the highest honor the enlisted force can bestow on an individual. "I am sincerely touched and humbled to be placed in the company of the many great Air Force leaders who have been honored to receive this award," said Donley.

Cashing Out

President Obama relieved Vice Adm. Timothy M. Giardina of his post as deputy commander of US Strategic Command amid a Navy investigation into allegations Giardina used \$1,500 in counterfeit chips at a casino in Iowa.



Vigilance in the Skies

WARSAW, POLAND—NATO and Russia responded cooperatively to mock hijacked airliners along their shared border during Exercise Vigilant Skies 2013, a sign the two sides are building trust in areas of their security relationship. During the four-day event, which concluded on Sept. 26, NATO and Russian personnel practiced detecting, tracking, intercepting, and handing off control of mocked hijacked commercial aircraft traversing NATO's Polish and Turkish borders with Russia.

The exercise included simulated computer activities and two days of live-flight drills with Polish and Turkish F-16s and Russian Su-27s. During the exercise, NATO and Russian air controllers put to the test the NATO-Russia Council's Cooperative Airspace Initiative Information Exchange System that's designed to enable data-sharing between the two sides' air control operations centers so that they could effectively coordinate the control of a hijacked airliner in a real-world situation.

Air Force Magazine was one of the media organizations invited to observe the exercise from NATO's coordination center in Warsaw, Poland.

On the morning of the first live-fly event on Sept. 25, a Polish Casa 295, serving in the role of a civilian aircraft in the exercise scenario, took to the sky from Krakow, Poland, headed for Oslo, Norway. Shortly after takeoff, air traffic controllers lost communication with the aircraft, causing officials to initiate a set of procedures to deal with such situations. Eventually a radio message came from hijackers aboard the Casa 295, informing that they intended to divert the aircraft to St. Petersburg, Russia.

Two Polish F-16s then scrambled. They intercepted and followed the hijacked airplane to Poland's border with Russia.


At that point, two Russian Su-27s originating from Kaliningrad, Russia, assumed responsibility for following the aircraft as it entered Russian airspace some 20,000 feet above the Baltic Sea. The crew aboard the hijacked aircraft eventually regained control, after which controllers redirected the airplane back to Poland. Throughout the nearly three-hour drill, NATO and Russian operators openly communicated these movements with each other using the IES.

"Our cooperation is going very, very well," said Col. Sylwester Bartoszewski, deputy director for the Warsaw coordination center, in response to a reporter's question on possible barriers to progress due to past and current tensions in the overall NATO-Russia relationship caused by events like Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and NATO's ballistic missile defense plans. "We are not working on political levels," he said.

"Common goals and common tasks and common aspirations unite us," said Lt. Gen. Yevgeni Potapov, Russia's event director, through an interpreter during a video teleconference from Moscow with reporters in Warsaw on Sept. 25. Speaking on the importance of cooperation, Potapov said "only joint efforts may yield results" for combatting such serious threats as terrorism.

NATO project officer retired Lt. Col. Michal Kalivoda said, looking ahead, officials seek to continue refining the IES for greater effectiveness, expanding the coordination into greater portions of European airspace, and attracting the participation of more non-NATO nations.

—Merri M. Shaffer

 [Read the full story in www.airforcemag.com's "In More Depth" section.]

Obama made the decision on Oct. 3 based on recommendations from Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and STRATCOM Commander Gen. C. Robert Kehler, reported ABC News. Giardina has been reassigned to the Navy staff while the Naval Criminal Investigative Service continues to investigate, reported the *Des Moines Register* Oct. 9. There have been no criminal charges filed against him at this point, according to the press reports.

Kehler reportedly suspended Giardina on Sept. 3, but Giardina remained with the command until the President dismissed him. Giardina has also lost one star, falling in rank to rear admiral, as a result of what has transpired. He had held STRATCOM's No. 2 post since December 2011 and was scheduled to leave the command.

Back in July, Obama nominated Lt. Gen. James M. Kowalski, who heads Air Force Global Strike Command, to replace Giardina. The Senate confirmed Kowalski's nomination on Oct. 12.

Relieved of Duty

Air Force Global Strike Command chief Lt. Gen. James M. Kowalski relieved Maj. Gen. Michael J. Carey of duty as 20th Air Force commander "due to a loss of trust and confidence in his leadership and judgment," announced the command. The numbered air force, headquartered at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo., oversees the Air Force's three Minuteman III ICBM wings, constituting one leg of the nation's nuclear triad.

Kowalski said he based his decision on information that came to light in an inspector general's investigation into Carey's behavior during a temporary duty assignment, according to the command's Oct. 11 news release.

"It's unfortunate that I've had to relieve an officer who's had an otherwise distinctive career spanning 35 years of commendable service," said Kowalski. "20th AF continues to execute its mission of around-the-clock nuclear deterrence in a safe, secure, and effective manner."

AFGSC did not offer additional details on the allegations as of Oct. 15, other than they were "not related to operational

QF-16 Flies Remotely

The Air Force and Boeing completed the first unmanned flight of a QF-16 full-scale aerial target.

Two Air Force test pilots in a ground control station flew the QF-16 remotely during the Sept. 19 test mission at Tyndall AFB, Fla., stated Boeing's Sept. 23 release. The mission profile included auto takeoff, a series of simulated maneuvers, supersonic flight, and an auto landing, according to the release.

"It was a little different to see an F-16 take off without anyone in it, but it was a great flight all the way around," said Lt. Col. Ryan Inman, commander of Tyndall's 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron.

Boeing is under contract to modify up to 126 retired, early model F-16s to the QF-16 standard for use as aerial targets in weapons testing and air-to-air combat training. They will succeed QF-4s in those roles. Boeing has produced six QF-16s so far. The first QF-16 destined for use in developmental testing arrived at Tyndall last November.



USAF photo by A1C Pedro Meza

readiness or the inspection results of any 20th AF unit, nor do they involve sexual misconduct.” Carey had led 20th Air Force since June 2012. Maj. Gen. Jack Weinstein, AFGSC vice commander, is serving as the 20th’s interim commander. The Air Force has reassigned Carey to Air Force Space Command headquarters, a service spokeswoman told *Air Force Magazine*.

12th Air Force

Lt. Gen. Tod D. Wolters assumed command of 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) from Lt. Gen. Robin Rand during a Sept. 24 ceremony at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. Wolters previously served as the director of the Air Force’s legislative liaison office at the Pentagon.

Rand, who had led 12th Air Force since December 2011, will put on a fourth star for his next assignment as commander of Air Education and Training Command at JBSA-Lackland, Tex. The Senate approved Rand for the post in August. Rand will succeed Gen. Edward A. Rice Jr. as AETC commander.

Scaparrotti Takes Reins

Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti assumed command of US Forces Korea from Army Gen. James Thurman during a ceremony in Seoul, South Korea, on Oct. 2. South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey participated in the ceremony. Scaparrotti also took charge of United Nations Command and the Combined Forces Command.

V-22 as Aerial Tanker

A V-22 recently completed an initial test in the role of an aerial refueling tanker, announced Bell Boeing.

Mind the Gap: SSgt. Adam Clement clears a path to place a disruption charge on a suspected IED during predeployment training at Luke AFB, Ariz. When terrain precludes using an explosive ordnance disposal robot to reach an IED, EOD airmen must go in on foot.

During the demonstration over north Texas, a V-22 fitted with a prototype aerial refueling system safely deployed, held stable, and retracted a refueling drogue as an F/A-18C and an F/A-18D aircraft flew just behind and to the side of

Former Soldier Receives Medal of Honor

President Obama on Oct. 15 awarded the Medal of Honor to William D. Swenson, a former Army captain, for his conspicuous gallantry in Afghanistan in 2009. Swenson earned the MOH for his courageous actions in thwarting the enemy and saving the lives of comrades after an ambush by a large, well-armed insurgent force on Sept. 8, 2009, in Kunar province, Afghanistan. He was serving as an embedded trainer and mentor of the Afghan National Security Forces.

The nomination statement reads in part that Swenson “braved intense enemy fire and willfully put his life in danger against the enemy’s main effort, multiple times in service of his fallen and wounded comrades, his unit, his country, and his endangered Afghan partners.”

At the time, Swenson was a member of the Army’s 10th Mountain Division. He became the sixth living MOH recipient from actions in Afghanistan or Iraq. Swenson separated from the Army in February 2011.

the V-22, according to the industry team's Sept. 5 release. "Adding aerial refueling tanker capability to the V-22 will enable operators to execute a wider variety of missions with greater flexibility and autonomy," said Vince Tobin, Bell Boeing V-22 program director. The test activities began in August.

Bell Boeing said it would incrementally build in scope until the V-22 demonstrates the ability to refuel a variety of aircraft in flight.

GPS Launch-Readiness Exercise

Lockheed Martin and Raytheon completed the first launch-readiness exercise for the Air Force's next generation GPS III satellites, according to a Lockheed Martin news release.

"Completion of our first GPS III launch-readiness exercise is a major milestone for the entire GPS enterprise and is a solid indicator that our space and ground segments are well-synchronized," said

Col. Bernard J. Gruber, who oversees the Air Force's GPS directorate.

Lockheed Martin is building the GPS III satellites, while Raytheon is supplying the ground-based GPS Operational Control System, known as OCX, to run them.

The exercise, completed over a three-day period by mission operations personnel, validated the basic satellite command and control functions, tested the software and hardware interfaces, and demonstrated basic on-console procedures, stated the Sept. 5 release.

The exercise showed that the companies remain on schedule to support the first GPS III launch as early as 2014.

Special Duty

Changes to the Air Force's special duty program went into effect Oct. 1 and now require airmen to receive a nomination and go through a vetting process, announced Air Combat Command officials. Under the new procedures, commanders and those in leadership roles will recommend top performing airmen for positions previously filled on a volunteer basis, such as military training instructors, airman and family readiness noncommissioned officers, and enlisted accessions recruiters, stated ACC's Sept. 5 release.

"The Air Force is looking for the best-qualified airmen who have qualities of a leader and will be able to prosper in these positions," said CMSgt. Michael Helfer, chief enlisted manager for manpower, personnel, and services.

Airmen nominated for these special duty positions will still have to meet basic eligibility requirements and specific criteria for the position, stated the release. The Air Force will still take qualified volunteers, in some cases, if there are vacancies to fill.

It's Been Real: SSgt. David Billings preflights a C-130 on Sept. 28 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. This was the last load of cargo moved from Forward Operating Base Sharana before the base was transferred to the Afghan Ministry of Defense.

By the Numbers

1,688 The current number of deployed US nuclear warheads, according to New START counting rules. New START requires that the US and Russia possess no more than **1,550** each by February 2018. Russia has **1,400** deployed warheads. Data as of Sept. 1, 2013, according to a State Department Oct. 1 fact sheet.

USAF photo by MSgt. Benjamin Bloker



The War on Terrorism

Operation Enduring Freedom

Casualties

By Oct. 22, a total of 2,284 Americans had died in Operating Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,281 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,793 were killed in action, while 491 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 19,415 wounded in action during OEF.

Last Out of Sharana

A C-130J aircrew assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Bagram Airfield brought the last US personnel and cargo out of Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika province, Afghanistan, on Sept. 28, according to US Air Forces Central Command.

US and coalition partners transitioned the base to the Afghan government's control three days after the end of mission, stated an Oct. 6 AFCENT release. The handover is part of the phased pullout of US and coalition combat forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

"It's a big milestone for what we've been doing out here, finally shutting down something," said SSgt. Nick Sanborn, a loadmaster on the mission. The last US soldiers at Sharana had been training and advising the Afghan National Army in the region.

Moving On

The drawdown of forces and equipment at FOB Salerno, Afghanistan, is in full force. C-130 Hercules are moving between 80,000 to 100,000 pounds of cargo a day, and the 19th Movement Control Team—a small squadron of Air Force surface movement controllers and aerial porters—bears the responsibility of being the last team there.

"There's nobody else to make up for what we don't do. ... We're the last," said 1st Lt. Nicholas Gustafson, 19th MCT commander. "We have to account for every person, every bit of cargo."

The base, nicknamed "Rocket City" because of a history of rocket attacks, is located in Khost province and is right in the middle of retrograde, stated the Sept. 30 release. But at this point in the process, few luxuries are allotted the crew. Even Salerno's dining facility is only providing one hot meal a day and there are no stores.

Teamwork and partnership have been a strong factor in their success thus far, said Gustafson. "We reach out to other organizations throughout the FOB and Regional Command East for assistance," he said. "Without that team we wouldn't be able to overcome" the challenges associated with the transitioning efforts.

Bridge To the Future

The Afghan Air Force has come a long way since 2007, said Brig. Gen. John E. Michel, commanding general of NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan.

"One of the things we're trying to overcome is many, many decades of more of a dependency mindset" within the AAF that the Soviets instilled years ago, he said, speaking Sept. 17 at the Air Force Association's 2013 Air & Space Conference in National Harbor, Md. This led to the Afghans not having "all the capability they need to stand alone," said Michel.

USAF has 39 months to complete the training mission to build the AAF in capability and in capacity to sustain itself, he said. The advisors Michel seeks must have versatility, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence as they interact and guide Afghans. The advisors are the "desired bridge" for the future, he said, and "if you don't have the ability to manage yourself and manage relationships," you won't be able to succeed in this area.

—June L. Kim

Afghanistan Lessons From Iraq

The head of US Central Command, Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, said he's applying some of the lessons learned in Iraq to complete the Afghanistan drawdown—something he referred to as a "herculean undertaking." Austin served as commander of US forces in Iraq when Operation New Dawn concluded in December 2011. Now he oversees the drawdown of the "largest coalition campaign in modern history," according to a Sept. 30 news release.

"The biggest challenge is simply coordinating the many different activities involved in the transition," Austin said. Another complication lies in the unstable security environment.

President Obama has ordered 34,000 troops home by February and a complete drawdown by the end of 2014. "Transitioning from a theater of war represents a complex undertaking that, unfortunately, does not have a 'one size fits all' solution," said Austin.

Still, US officials gleaned valuable logistical insights from Iraq. "The process of moving a mountain of equipment and tens of thousands of people out of that country, gradually reducing our physical footprint and transferring responsibilities to our Afghan and US State Department partners, is a carefully orchestrated effort," Austin said.

The challenge in many ways is "even more difficult than Iraq." The "major difference," he said, "can be summed up in two words: geography and infrastructure."



Pacific Air Forces @PACAF

"Drones get shot at for target practice. We are not drones," said Capt. Blain, a 29th Attack Squadron MQ-9 Reaper instructor. *Excerpt from Airman Magazine.*



George Little @PentagonPresSec

#SecDef #Hagel: #shutdown casts "a very significant pall over America's credibility with our allies." *Pentagon Press Secretary George Little referring to the 16-day partial government shutdown.*

South Korea Reboots F-X Competition

Despite news reports in August that Boeing's F-15SE Silent Eagle was the last contender standing in South Korea's F-X fighter competition, South Korean defense acquisition officials have reportedly opted against procuring the jet and reopened the competition.

This development seemingly breathes life into Lockheed Martin's offer of its fifth generation F-35 strike fighter. Concerns that the F-15SE was not stealthy enough to meet South Korea's future needs drove the decision, reported South Korea's Yonhap News Agency in late September.

South Korean defense officials said they would "promptly restart the project to minimize the security vacuum by consulting related organizations to revise the total budget and requirements," according to Yonhap.

In addition to Boeing and Lockheed Martin, Eurofighter has been offering its Typhoon in the competition.

Vietnam War Airmen Identified


Defense Department forensic scientists have identified the remains of four airmen who had been missing in action since the Vietnam War.

The remains of Maj. James E. Sizemore of Lawrenceville, Ill., and Maj. Howard V. Andre Jr., of Memphis, Tenn., were laid to rest with full military honors on Sept. 23 at Arlington National Cemetery, according to DOD's website. The burials took place four days after DOD officially announced their identification.

On July 8, 1969, Sizemore and Andre died in the crash of their A-26A Invader in Xiangkhoang province, Laos, during a night armed reconnaissance mission, according to DOD's release.

The identification of the remains of Lt. Col. Robert E. Pietsch, 31, of Pittsburgh, and Maj. Louis F. Guillermin, 25, of West Chester, Pa., also were announced in late September. The remains corresponding to both airmen, but not individually identified, were to be interred on Oct. 16 in a single casket at Arlington National Cemetery.

Guillermin and Pietsch went missing on April 30, 1968, during an armed reconnaissance mission when their A-26A crashed in Savannakhet province, Laos.

 [Discover more about the recovery efforts on our website at www.airforcemag.com. Search "A-26A."]

Remains of Two World War II Airmen Laid to Rest

The remains of Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Vernal J. Bird, 26, an airman who had been missing in action since World War II, were laid to rest with full military honors in Springville, Utah, on Sept. 28. Bird, a native of Lindon, Utah, was an A-20G Havoc pilot whose aircraft did not return to base from an attack mission on March 12, 1944, over the island of New Guinea, according to the Defense Department's Sept. 25 news release announcing the identification of his remains.

In 2001, DOD investigators located an aircraft crash site in a remote area of Papua New Guinea after a local resident

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turned in human remains and aircraft data plates that correlated to Bird's aircraft. This led to his identification.

Defense Department forensic scientists also identified the remains of 1st Lt. Robert G. Fenstermacher, 23, of Scranton, Pa., an airman who died in a crash in Belgium during World War II, announced the Pentagon. DOD officials returned Fenstermacher's remains to his family and he was buried with full military honors on Oct. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery. According to the Pentagon's Oct. 11 release, Fenstermacher's P-47D Thunderbolt went down near Petergensfeld, Belgium, on Dec. 26, 1944, during an armed reconnaissance mission against targets in Germany. A US military officer recovered Fenstermacher's identification tags from the burning wreckage at the crash site and the US military declared Fenstermacher killed in action.

In 2012, a group of local historians excavated a private yard in Petergensfeld, recovering human remains and aircraft wreckage that they turned over to DOD. The forensic scientists used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, such as dental comparisons, to help identify the remains. ■

Airpower After Sequestration

USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and CMSAF James A. Cody visited airmen in the Asia-Pacific region in August. There's no getting around it, they repeated often: The institutional and operational Air Force will look much different from what anyone had planned.

Air Force Magazine covered the trip firsthand.


"We're going to get smaller, and we're not going to get a whole lot more new stuff," said Welsh bluntly to airmen and in private calls with wing leadership at stops in Japan and South Korea. The service must commit to the F-35 strike fighter, the KC-46 tanker, the long-range strike bomber, and other core programs. Overall, however, few programs will be immune from budget reductions.

The Air Force now faces some of the starkest force structure decisions in years, said Welsh. Elimination of whole fleets of airplanes—from mobility to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to the combat types—are on the table for the program objective memorandum now unfolding in the Air Staff. That's where the real savings are, noted Welsh. He's now forced to assume budget sequestration will not go away over its planned 10 years. This is the impetus behind the "Air Force 2023" project that calls for reshaping the Air Force for the worst-case budget scenario.

Welsh shied away from using the word "turmoil" to describe the changes the Air Force is now experiencing, but conceded that the force is experiencing a number of changes and shifts all at once. They are: the end of more than two decades of constant war footing and the transition to a "peacetime Air Force"; the blunt instrument of sequestration wreaking havoc on operations and maintenance of every mission area; and the uncertainty created by the military's need to confront its ballooning personnel costs.

"But the most important thing is, I'm incredibly proud of our airmen," said Welsh in Japan. "Everywhere you go, they are just good. They are trying to do the right thing, they are working hard, and they are proud of what they do." Speaking with *Air Force Magazine* during some downtime in Tokyo, Welsh said he was reassured about the force's resilience from his conversations with junior enlisted personnel, NCOs, group commanders, and wing commanders at installations across the Pacific.

"At the unit level, they are taking good care of each other. So, despite the issues we sometimes deal with, where this breaks down at an individual level, it is such a positive experience to go out amongst our airmen," said Welsh.

—Marc V. Schanz
 [Read the full article at www.airforcemag.com. Search "Airpower After Sequestration."]