

DEPLOYMENT NEWS

'Hercs' deploy

C-130Hs operated by the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Airlift Wing have begun flying their first combat missions in support of the 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. The deployed assets are assigned to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing in South-west Asia. The unit is making its first combat deployment with the Hercules since converting from the C-21A in 2013. Meanwhile, 'Hercs' operated by the North Carolina Air National Guard's 145th Airlift Wing will soon fly their last combat sorties as the unit prepares to convert to the C-17A.

ANG C-130s at Powidz

The Delaware Air National Guard's 166th Airlift Wing completed a bilateral training exercise with the Polish Air Force as part of its support for Aviation Detachment 17-2 at Powidz, Poland, on March 27. The wing's 142nd Airlift Squadron detached two C-130Hs and around 80 airmen to Powidz. While deployed, the unit conducted numerous training evolutions that included formation flights, fighter engagements, and aeromedical

evacuation evolutions. The training concluded with two USAF and two Polish Air Force teams competing in events that showcased the C-130's capabilities. Each aircraft was judged on an air-drop and tactical landing, the Polish teams winning both events.

Patrol squadrons swap out

The 'Red Lancers' of Patrol Squadron (VP) 10 returned to NAS Jacksonville, Florida, at the conclusion of a six-month deployment in the western Pacific in support of Commander Task Force 72. While deployed to NAF Atsugi and NAF Kadena, Japan, VP-10 participated in a number of international, bilateral naval exercises with naval and air forces from the Philippines, Brunel, Australia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Republic of Palau and Japan. The squadron was relieved by the 'Tridents' of VP-26, which began its first deployment since completing its transition from the P-3C to the P-8A.

The last P-8A operated by the 'Pelicans' of VP-45 returned to Jacksonville at the conclusion of

a seven-month deployment in support of Commander Task Force 67 at NAS Sigonella, Italy, on April 9. VP-45 was relieved by VP-16.

Global Hawks will return to Japan

The USAF plans to deploy five unmanned RQ-4Bs and around 105 airmen to Yokota Air Base, Japan, from May to October 2017. The Global Hawks, which are currently based at Andersen AFB, Guam, will

be relocated to Japan to avoid typhoons and other inclement weather that typically affect Guam during the summer months. The move also contributes to the security of Japan and to the stability of the region. The USAF deployed two Global Hawks from Andersen to Misawa Air Base, Japan, in 2014 and three in 2015. The unmanned aircraft remained at Andersen in 2016 due to runway construction at Misawa.

'T-Bolts' return home

Mission-marked F-15E Strike Eagles from the 366th Fighter Wing at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, passed through RAF Lakenheath, UK, from April 6 en route home from a deployment under Operation 'Inherent Resolve'. The deployment, led by the 389th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron 'Thunderbolts', was replaced by aircraft from the resident 492nd FS, which deployed down-range. The example shown here is 91-0333, from the 391st FS 'Bold Tigers', but was previously assigned to Lakenheath. Duncan Monk



MARINES SEEK LIGHT ATTACK PLATFORM

THE US MARINE Corps recently released 2017 Aviation Plan contained several interesting changes to previous annual plans. Among the most innovative was the creation of Marine Composite Training Squadrons that would support fixed-wing adversary, fleet Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) and Forward Air Controller (Airborne) training requirements. Headquarters Marine Corps Aviation is currently examining alternatives and solutions that could support these high-demand/low-density requirements. The composite training squadron would likely be assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 4th Marine Aircraft Wing and would provide fixed-wing adversary and light attack airframes to support training requirements. The concept would utilize the F-5N Tiger II or a similar aircraft to support adversary training for fixed- and rotary-

wing squadrons, as well as for low-altitude air defense (LAAD) and command and control (C2) training. Additionally, a turboprop aircraft and/or unmanned platform would augment close air support (CAS) training for TACP and FAC(A). To support this plan the Marines would acquire 12 additional F-5-type fighters and up to 24 turboprop-powered light attack platforms.

The Training Squadrons (VMT) would be based at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina; MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina; MCAS Miramar, California; and MCAS Yuma, Arizona. Each would operate six of each aircraft type. The Corps currently flies just 12 F-5N/Fs with VMT-401 'Snipers' from Yuma that are deployed to the other locations to support training. Plans are already under way for VMT-401 to establish a detachment at MCAS Beaufort to support F-35 training requirements in Fiscal 2018.

CAG BIRD CORNER

'SEAHAWKS' ON 'RED FLAG'

The US Marine Corps' VMAQ-4 'Seahawks' will become the first front-line EA-6B Prowler squadron to disband, later this year. The unit deployed from its home base at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, and participated in exercise 'Red Flag 17-2' at Nellis AFB, Nevada, in late February into early March. BuNo 163527 is seen on approach to Nellis. Peter R. Foster

**CLASSY 'COWBOY'**

Pictured at its home base of NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas, in April, the US Marine Corps' VFMA-112 'Cowboys' has a new commander's jet — F/A-18A++ BuNo 162848. Henk de Ridder

