



The Gem State Guardian

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Air Force officials announce FY15 force structure changes

by Mountain Home Air Force Base Staff

3/13/2014 - WASHINGTON -- Air Force officials released force structure changes resulting from the Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget announced March 4.

To ensure the service successfully transitions to a leaner force that remains ready, the Air Force plans to remove almost 500 aircraft across the inventories of all three components over the next five years.

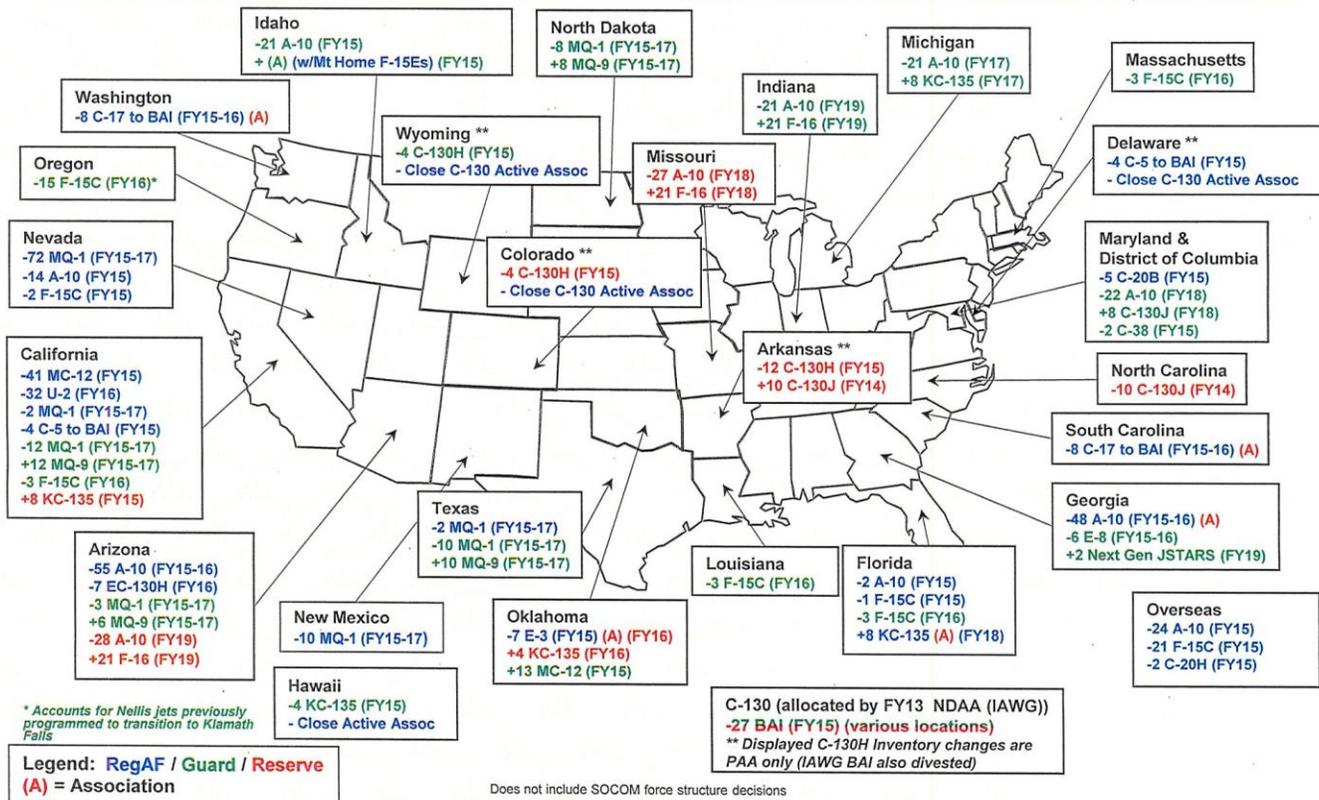
"The FY15PB request favors a smaller and more capable force -

putting a premium on rapidly deployable, self-sustaining platforms that can defeat more technologically advanced adversaries," said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, at a FY15 budget preview on Feb. 24.

"As we built the force structure (cont'd on page 2)



TFP-15 Adjustments PB15-Level Force Structure





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(cont'd) plan associated with the FY15 President's Budget Request, we attempted to strike the delicate balance of a ready force today and a modern force tomorrow, while working to ensure that the world's best Air Force is the most capable at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer," said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James. "This force structure plan balances capability, readiness and capacity and prioritizes global, long-range capabilities and multi-role platforms required to operate in a highly-contested environment."

Air Force officials also said they plan to divest entire fleets, such as the A-10 and U-2 and focus on the multi-role aircraft that can deliver a variety of capabilities combatant commanders require. Divesting entire fleets will save the Air Force billions versus millions of dollars, because divesting fleets also saves the costs associated with infrastructure, logistics, personnel and base operating support.

"With the Air Force's announcement that it will divest itself of the A-10 mission next year, we are standing by to see exactly what that means for the Idaho Air National Guard," said Idaho Air National Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Michael

Nolan. "There are many details to work out over the coming months, and one of the issues that will require detailed planning will be a close association between the Idaho Air National Guard and our active-duty partners at Mountain Home Air Force Base.

"This association will be a continuation of the partnership our two organizations have always maintained as we uphold the unique identity and heritage of the Idaho Air National Guard," Nolan said. "While we are proud of our successes operating and maintaining the A-10 Warthog since 1996, we look forward to this new partnership with Mountain Home AFB and taking on the new mission of the F-15E Strike Eagle."

Col. Byron Anderson, 366th Fighter Wing vice commander, said he welcomed the opportunity to share experiences and discuss proposed plans to integrate 124th Fighter Wing aircrew and maintainers into the mission at Mountain Home Air Force Base.

"We're extremely proud of our longstanding relationship and close partnership with the state of Idaho, the local community and the Idaho Air National Guard," said Anderson. "Further integration with the Idaho Air National Guard

will add to the outstanding relationship we currently have through the Idaho Guard's 266 Range Squadron and will only strengthen the ability of our total force team to fight and win our nation's wars."

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said more changes were planned in addition to fleet divestment.

"We made the tough choice to reduce a number of tactical fighters, command and control, electronic attack and intra-theater airlift assets so we could rebalance the Air Force at a size that can be supported by expected funding levels. Without those cuts, we will not be able to start recovering to required readiness levels," said Welsh.

The service also developed an analytical process to help determine the proper mix of people and capabilities across the three components to meet current and future requirements. Leaders from the Active Duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, and two state adjutants general contributed to the process with the intent of preserving capability and stability across the Total Force. (cont'd on page 3)



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An F15E Strike Eagle from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, taxis on the flight line Jan. 23, 2013, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Benjamin Sutton/Released)

number of ISR CAPs, and no funds would be available for the next generation jet engine program."

In addition to the aircraft-driven force structure changes, the Air Force will continue to reorganize and realign missions to gain additional savings and efficiencies in the months to come. Details on those changes will be announced as they become available.

(cont'd) "Wherever possible the Air Force leveraged opportunities to rebalance personnel and force structure into the Reserve Component," said James. "For that reason, at most Air Reserve Component locations where we divested aircraft, we replaced the existing flying missions with a new mission and preserved the majority of the manpower to ease the transition."

Officials said this effort will help the Air Force maintain combat capability within mandated budgetary constraints by using the strengths and unique capabilities of the Guard and Reserve

components to make up for capabilities lost as active duty end strength declines.

James also warned that much deeper cuts in Air Force structure and modernization will be necessary if sequestration is not avoided in 2016.

"If we revert to sequestration funding levels in FY16, we'll have to retire up to 80 more aircraft which would include our entire KC-10 tanker fleet, defer sensor upgrades to the Global Hawk Block 30, retire the Global Hawk Block 40 fleet, buy fewer Joint Strike Fighters, reduce the planned

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