

AFCENT Airpower Summary

Operation Freedom's Sentinel & Resolute Support Mission

After the historic Afghan ceasefire in June 2018, U.S. pilots and aircrews in support of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces fully resumed in July 2018 an air campaign designed to convince the Taliban they can't win militarily and to pressure them toward reconciliation with the Afghan government.

"The U.S. is committed to supporting the Afghan peace process, the Afghan government and our ANDSF partners fighting from the air and the ground against the Taliban and other nefarious actors who seek to destabilize Afghanistan," said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigian, Combined Forces Air Component Commander for U.S. Central Command. "However, the fact remains that unless and until the Taliban reconcile, we will strike the enemy to deny them important resources and capabilities."

For July, strike metrics saw highs across the board as the result of a surge in operations post-ceasefire. The U.S. flew 749 strike sorties, 88 of which included a weapons release. Both are monthly highs this year. Also, the U.S. employed 746 weapons in July, the highest monthly total since November 2010.

"U.S. strikes, coupled with the increasing capability of and strikes by the Afghan Air Forces, strengthens the position of the Afghan government," said Harrigian. "In support of Afghans and the Afghan government, the U.S. and our international partners will continue using military pressure to drive the Taliban to reconcile."

In order to develop targets and monitor the adversary, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flew 1,316 sorties in July, an increase over previous months this year. The increase reflects CENTCOM direction earlier this year to prioritize operations in Afghanistan over those in Iraq and Syria.

U.S. tankers and air mobility assets remain in the fight, as well, with tankers having now refueled more than 10,000 receivers in OFS this year. In July, tankers flew 492 sorties and offloaded more than 19 million pounds of fuel to 1,915 receivers. C-17s and C-130s flew 916 sorties, delivering 6,146 short tons of cargo and more than 10,000 passengers.

In support of the Afghan Air Force, NATO Train Advise and Assistance Command – Air trainers helped Afghans achieve notable milestones in July. Two UH-60s from Camp Shorab performed their first operational mission for forward deployed UH-60s, July 10, with AAF crews transporting 22 passengers around Helmand province with the support of U.S. TAAC-Air Advisors. This milestone highlights the rapid success of the AAF UH-60 program, which fields capabilities while continuing to grow and develop.

Also last month, three Afghans were appointed as weapons load trainers. TAAC-Air Advisors will evaluate and certify them as the first AAF A-29 weapons certifying officials, enabling the AAF the capability to organically train Afghan forces without the need to attend training in the United States.

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Operation Inherent Resolve

Nearly four years after combat operations began against ISIS, U.S., Coalition and partner forces have devastated ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Air operations in Iraq and Syria as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, continue to focus on striking the enemy, preparing for the final phase of Operation Roundup – the latest phase in the defeat ISIS campaign – and continuing to protect ground forces from above.

In July 2018, U.S. and Coalition pilots and aircrew flew 1,325 strike sorties. The primary airpower weight of effort remains on force protection, which includes defensive counter air, armed over-watch and close air support missions.

“With airpower overhead, U.S., Coalition and partner ground forces can put more pressure on ISIS in the Middle Euphrates River Valley and in northeast Syria, and can better support Iraqi Security Forces in Iraq as they root out the remnants of ISIS,” said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigan, Combined Forces Air Component Commander for U.S. Central Command. “Let there be no illusions: there is hard fighting ahead in the MERV. But four years into this fight, ISIS’ lasting defeat is upon them thanks to the resolve and hard-fought victories by the Iraqis, Syrian Democratic Forces and the Coalition effort.”

The July sortie total is consistent with the monthly average of 1,353 sorties and on par with the operations tempo since Operation Roundup began May 1. In July, 20 sorties included at least one weapon release, and 292 weapons were released for the month.

Additionally, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flew 419 sorties in July, while tankers flew 797 sorties. Tankers offloaded more than 46 million pounds of fuel to 4,529 receivers. Airlifters flew 755 sorties in order to deliver 4,053 short tons of cargo and 6,277 passengers ensuring Coalition forces are properly positioned and supplied to hasten ISIS’ defeat.

With the support of the Coalition Aviation Advisory and Training Team and other Coalition advisors, the Iraqi Aviation and Air Defense Enterprise continued to achieve notable milestones in developing more capability in July.

Airmen with the 447th Air Expeditionary Group continue training Iraqi airfield operators to handle airfield operations and take on a more prominent role at many locations. Also, Air Force civil engineers with the CAATT instructed Iraqi civil engineers on supporting air operations during a training course at Camp Taji, Iraq, in order to build partner capacity. Finally, with support from Coalition trainers, Iraqi forward air controllers participated in an air controller currency course in July, which included directing simulated strikes by Iraqi helicopters. The “train the trainer” course helps Iraqis train others on forward air control.

Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2013-2018 Airpower Statistics

United States Air Forces Central Command
Combined Air Operations Center

Afghanistan

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL/RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

Strike Aircraft (manned)

Sorties	
2013	21,900
2014	12,978
2015	5,774
2016	5,162
2017	4,603
2018	4,398

Sorties with at least one weapon release	
2013	1,408
2014	1,136
2015	411
2016	615
2017	1,248
2018	500

* Number of Weapons Released (Manned & RPA strike assets)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	193	297	250	284	368	337	256	158	232	189	118	76	2,758
2014	92	114	95	115	164	272	205	437	441	217	87	126	2,365
2015	40	30	47	31	41	109	79	156	111	203	69	31	947
2016	127	115	58	62	89	94	160	108	162	205	92	65	1,337
2017	54	200	203	460	328	389	350	503	414	653	352	455	4,361
2018	378	469	396	562	591	572	746						3,714

*Statistics provided includes numbers of sorties (not strikes) and munitions expended by aircraft under CFACC control

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties	31,049	32,999	21,634	19,681	15,404	4,864
Airlift Sorties	32,000	17,040	6,900	10,300	11,166	8,247
Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)	201,000	158,400	50,000	69,200	84,208	60,579
Airlift Passengers	506,000	202,700	78,000	111,100	120,554	98,235
Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)	10,883,000	28,000	0	0	33,423	483,340
Tanker Sorties	12,319	9,085	5,323	4,910	5,714	2,454
Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)	723	636	201	150	170	89
Aircraft Refuelings	53,266	46,793	26,162	18,137	17,989	10,210

- CORRECTION:** The March 2018 "Number of Weapons Released (Manned & RPA strike assets)" has been updated from 339 to 396 due to inaccurate accounting of that data for OFS that month. The table has been updated to reflect the accurate number.
- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification
- Assets under CFACC control include a compilation of aircraft from all U.S. military branches of service, as well as Coalition aircraft; however, not all aircraft flying in the AOR fall under CFACC control.

Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2015-2018 Airpower Statistics

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

Strike Aircraft (manned)

* Number of Weapons Released (Manned & RPA strike assets)

Sorties		Sorties with at least one weapon release	
2015	21,116	2015	9,912
2016	21,181	2016	11,825
2017	19,680	2017	9,944
2018	9,471	2018	481

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2015	2,426	1,853	1,685	1,862	2,145	1,683	2,823	2,758	2,380	2,694	3,242	3,145	28,696
2016	2,718	2,090	2,052	2,582	2,341	3,160	2,439	2,244	2,427	3,038	2,709	2,943	30,743
2017	3,600	3,439	3,878	3,274	4,374	4,848	4,313	5,075	3,550	1,642	1,000	584	39,577
2018	780	747	294	254	431	356	292						3,154

*Statistics provided includes numbers of sorties (not strikes) and munitions expended by aircraft under CFACC control

Iraq & Syria

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties	9,514	12,270	14,015	3,972
Airlift and Airdrop Sorties	10,050	8,400	9,448	5,479
Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)*	78,500	72,800	68,537	27,903
Airlift Passengers*	47,200	46,900	76,802	53,066
Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)	111,200	822,171	641,746	203,440
Tanker Sorties	14,737	13,064	13,243	5,220
Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)	912	804	778	412
Aircraft Refuelings	84,381	80,912	70,536	33,378

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