



25th IS: AFSOC won't leave home without 'em

MH-53J Pave Low III

photo by Master Sgt. Rosie Reynolds

by Airman 1st Class Jennifer Gregoire
HQ AIA/PA
Kelly Air Force Base, Texas

The 25th Intelligence Squadron, one of the few Air Intelligence Agency units entirely embedded with another command, has been the model for AIA's goal of integrating and embedding information operations detachments with Numbered Air Forces.

Collocated with Headquarters, Air Force Special Operations Command and the 16th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla., the 25th provides more than just support to the AFSOC mission.

Enhanced situational awareness and direct threat warning, intelligence expertise, information protect opera-

tions and personnel participating in contingencies and exercises are four mission areas that are tailored to AFSOC by funneling AIA-unique capabilities and products.

Only seven years ago, this 78-member squadron was a detachment with less than 10 people. "We don't have tradition to rely on, just the skills of our people," said Lt. Col. Mike Riede, 25th IS commander.

The 25th provides direct support operators to fly onboard seven AFSOC airframes; the AC-130H/U Gunships, the MC-130E/H Combat Talon I/II, MC-130P Combat Shadow, MH-60G Pave Hawk and the MH-53J Pave Low III. So far this year, the DSOs have accumulated more than 3,173 flying hours, 216 of them combat or direct combat support.

In Operations Northern and Southern Watch, 25th DSOs supported U.S. Central Command Special Operations Forces as part of MC-130E/Talon I and MH-53J aircrews. They also flew on AC-130H/U and MC-130P aircraft out of Brindisi, Italy, during Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard.

During Patriot Challenge in El Salvador, DSOs supported U.S. Special Operations Command by providing translator and interpreter services. DSOs and analysts supported the 169th



photo by Airman 1st Class Jennifer Gregoire
Senior Airman Brad Schrack, ESSA technician, monitors unsecure phone lines.

Intelligence Squadron onboard a C-130 Senior Scout in Panama.

DSOs worked with non-combatant evacuation order operations in Africa to evacuate U.S. and allied personnel from Rwanda and Zaire during civil unrest.

Analysts also deployed to provide



AC-130U Gunship

the Joint Special Operations Task Force commander with Analytical and Tactical Information Broadcast Service support, as well as intelligence expertise.

Before they are allowed to fly, DSOs are required to complete a four-tier training program through the 25th's operations training branch. The program includes all aspects of survival, language and equipment training.

Depending on the linguist's previous experience, this process can take anywhere from two to eight months. After the DSOs are qualified on one platform, they can qualify for all seven, making them more valuable assets to AFSOC.

"It is such a dynamic job and one of the best places to be if you want to fly as a linguist in real world missions," said Tech. Sgt. John Faherty, language program manager and DSO.

The first AIA DSOs endured AFSOC crews who didn't understand why they were on the aircraft. Eventually, they were written into AFSOC

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director, AFSOC Intelligence



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regulations as AFSOC crewmembers.

"The original guys assigned to the 25th were pioneers who had to force their way into the mission. These guys made it work so well that they got accepted and even more, built credibility in real-world situations so that they don't want to go anywhere without a DSO," said Tech. Sgt. Mac McMahan, chief, mission operations and DSO.

"This is the greatest job anyone in AIA can do. Anybody who passes it up does not know what they're missing. AFSOC is the best command to work for, period, even though we are a tenant unit," said McMahan.

"Special operators depend on face-to-face recognition and trust in performing the critical mission the nation has given us. Nothing else will suffice," said Col. Richard Comer, commander, 16th Special Operations Wing.

"The men and women of the 25th IS are people we recognize and depend on and who we trust in every way. No relationship could be stronger or better embedded than the capa-

AC-130U/H Gunships

Air Force Mission: Nighttime close air support for special operations and conventional ground forces; air interdiction; armed reconnaissance; air base, perimeter and point defense; land, water and heliborne troop escort; drop, landing and extraction zone support; forward air control; limited airborne command and control; and combat search and rescue.

Length: 97 feet, 9 inches

Height: 38 feet, 6 inches

Wingspan: 132 feet, 7 inches

Speed: 300 miles per hour at sea level

Range: AC-130U 2,200 nautical miles, AC-130H 1,300 nautical miles, both unlimited with aerial refueling

Ceiling: AC-130U 30,000 feet, AC-130H 25,000 feet

Armament: AC-130U, One 25-millimeter General Electric Gatling gun, one 40-millimeter Bofors cannon and one 105-millimeter cannon. AC-130H, Two 20-millimeter Vulcan cannons, one 40-millimeter Bofors cannon and one 105-millimeter Howitzer.

MC-130P Combat Shadow

Air Force Mission: Clandestine or low visibility, single or multi-ship, low-level missions intruding politically sensitive or hostile territory to provide air refueling for special operations helicopters.

Length: 98 feet, 9 inches

Height: 38 feet, 6 inches

Wingspan: 132 feet, 7 inches

Speed: 289 miles per hour at sea level

Ceiling: 33,000

Range: beyond 4,000 miles

MH-60G Pave Hawk

Air Force Mission: Infiltration, exfiltration

and resupply of special operations forces in day, night or marginal weather conditions and combat search and rescue.

Length: 64.8 feet

Height: 16.8 feet

Rotary Diameter: 53.7 feet

Speed: 193 knots

Range: 504 nautical miles or unlimited with aerial refueling

Armament: Two 7.62-millimeter miniguns.

MC-130E/H Combat Talon I/II

Air Force Mission: Provide global, day and night, adverse weather capability to airdrop and airland personnel and equipment.

Length: MC-130E 100 feet, 10 inches and the MC-130H 99 feet, 9 inches

Height: 38 feet, 6 inches

Wingspan: 132 feet, 7 inches

Speed: 300 miles per hour at sea level

Ceiling: 33,000 feet

Range: 2,700 nautical miles or unlimited with air refueling

Load: MC-130E 53 troops, 26 paratroops and the MC-130H 75 troops or 52 paratroops

MH-53J Pave Low III

Air Force Mission: Low-level, long-range, undetected penetration into denied areas, day or night, in adverse weather for infiltration, exfiltration and resupply of special operations forces.

Length: 92 feet

Height: 25 feet

Rotary Diameter: 72 feet

Speed: 165 miles per hour at sea level

Ceiling: 16,000

Range: 550 nautical miles or unlimited with aerial refueling

Armament: Combination of three 7.62 miniguns or three .50-caliber machine guns

bilities they bring to our mission. We work very well together," said Comer.

Col. Marty Winters, director, AFSOC Intelligence also echoed the importance of the 25th.

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them. This goes across the entire spectrum of what AFSOC does. It's not additional manpower, it is additional capabilities. Having the right intelligence at the right time means the difference between success and defeat," said Winters.

"Success is getting the full intelligence of a target, protect the information we have, get to the target without detection to execute the mission and



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Master Sgt. Charles Rollman, chief of logistics, and Tech. Sgt. John Booth, language program manager and DSO, test the direct support operator equipment aboard an AC-130U Gunship.

return home safely. The 25th is at the core of giving us new capabilities and new potential. If they're not at the core, they give their expertise so we can do the smart thing," said Winters.

AFSOC invested \$40 million into the Silent Shield program, allowing modifications in the equipment the DSOs are currently using. The program is a stepping stone to capture emerging future technologies.

The 25th IS and Detachment 1, 25th IS have recently taken national space-based assets and tailored them to AFSOC. The Proven Shadow concept has become an integral part of special operations worldwide because it allows DSOs onboard AFSOC aircraft to receive updated intelligence on threats to the mission and personnel in less than a minute from national-level collection sites.

Besides the support of the 25th's DSOs and analysts, information protect operations are conducted in the special operations community by electronic systems security assessments of telephone, radio frequency and computer monitoring to identify weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

"It is becoming a known product here on Hurlburt Field. The 16th SOW will request it for contingencies and exercises and we assist AFSOC with their computer security program. We try to educate people that the information they talk about on the phone may not be classified, but bits and pieces of phone calls put together may be sensitive," said Tech. Sgt. Kelly Sparks, noncommissioned officer in charge of ESSA. "We ask commanders to brief this at the lowest levels in their office and we also run reminders in the base papers," said Sparks.

So far this year, the seven-member ESSA team has been deployed more than 662 days and has responded to six no-notice monitors for the 16th SOW. The team also provides 70 percent of the manpower needed to complete inspections of headquarters and subordinate units.

Tactics analysis is a new initiative adopted by AFSOC. "A year ago, AFSOC saw the information the 694th Intelligence Group's tactics program was providing and was very impressed with AIA's knowledge of fighters," said Tech. Sgt. Jean Haun, NCOIC, Mission Analysis and chief SOF Tactics and Adversaries Studies Element.

"They came to us and wanted us to build the same program for their aircraft. For slow moving aircraft and helicopters, detection in some cases means death. They need to know how much time they have to get out or to use other options," said Haun.

The SOF Tactics Analysis Team is awaiting final approval from Air Staff. It will then be included in the tactics and analysis reporting program concept for operations as an annex in January.

"The operators will have a chance to put their concerns on a specific subject or tactic we are interested in. When we go into a country, we know what their system can do as far as hardware, but we need to know how the country employs that specific weapon system and other tactics," said Maj. Hank Sanders, chief of weapons and tactics for AFSOC Directorate of Operations.

"As intel specialists, we need SOF tactics. The 25th can get the information we need to plan missions better and to have more realistic training," said Sanders.

"The 25th accomplished a formidable task by helping AFSOC stand up Special Operations Tactics Analysis Team. Through the standup, we will gain valuable information previously not available to AFSOC or special operations forces," said Sanders.

The 15-member Mission Support branch is behind the 25th's visibility in AFSOC, providing all logistic sup-



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port for short-notice contingencies. Every support function, including the security police, communications, equipment maintenance, orderly room and supply, also have additional duties including finance management, engineering management, vehicle maintenance, safety and environmental taskings.

To support their people from a separate building makes their job even more challenging. "Ideally, we would have liked to be collocated with our unit, but the new building we are

getting next year will still be a great improvement. We designed the building ourselves because we knew what we needed," said Capt. Richard Thuermer, Mission Support Flight commander.

The Mission Support branch installed the first-ever direct support equipment on special operations Low Level II aircraft, as well as over 5,000 feet of LAN cable, 50 modular wall jacks and patch panels. They also installed the Satellite Continuous On-Line Access Language Training System that increased the 25th's language training capabilities, preventing a high TDY rate for DSOs to stay proficient in their language.

"We can't afford to be left behind. That's why the language training networks are so important," said Tech. Sgt. Jeff Cantrell, NCOIC, information systems security and LAN administration. Currently two LANs are being installed. "By making these improvements we are pulling the 25th into the 21st century." ■



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Members of the 25th Intelligence Squadron enjoy their early morning physical training session. The squadron has PT twice a week and participates in the Hurlburt Field-wide Commando Fitness program. This year, the 25th competed against other AFSOC units and won the 1997 Fit Eagle competition.