

# 177 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



## MISSION

## LINEAGE

177 Airlift Squadron designated and allotted to North Dakota ANG, 2008  
Extended federal recognition and activated, 1 Mar 2008

## STATIONS

Fargo, ND

## ASSIGNMENTS

119 Operations Group, 1 Mar 2008

## WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-21, Jan 2007

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 177th Airlift Squadron accomplishes several missions including Operational Support Airlift (OSA), transportation of distinguished visitors, and a responsive aeromedical airlift system to move eligible patients.

The squadron was authorized by the North Dakota Military Department in 2008 and activated at Fargo AFB when the 119th Airlift Wing was equipped with the MQ-1 Predator UAV. The 178th Airlift Squadron was re-designated as the 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, with the C-21A Learjet being assigned to the new 177th AS. Support equipment and personnel from the 178th AS were re-assigned to the 177th AS.

In 2009, the 177th AS deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was the first deployment into a combat zone for the North Dakota Air National Guard. The squadron transported more than 400 service members during their two-month-long rotation in theater. They accomplished this by flying more than 200 sorties during 90 missions, as part of the 379th Expeditionary Operations Group.

The 177th squadron took part in the Happy Hooligan's first aircraft deployment to Southwest Asia, Ripperger said. "In only 60 days, from May through July 2009, C-21 aircrew flew 234 sorties amassing 309.9 combat hours while carrying 462 passengers and 3,839 pounds of cargo," she said. "In fiscal year 2009, the 177th completed 822 sorties with 1,464.1 hours flown in support of Joint Operational Support Aircraft-directed missions. These missions provide airlift to military and civilian dignitaries to airfields throughout the United States," Ripperger said. In March, the 177th Airlift Squadron was the recipient of a prominent Defense Department honor, the 2009 Joint Operational Support Airlift Center Squadron of the Year award for the Air Force in the small aircraft category. JOSAC is the airlift branch of the U.S. Transportation Command which has its headquarters at Scott AFB, Ill. This is a major win for the 177th, competing against active duty from all branches of the military and after only two years of having this particular mission, Ripperger said.

IRAQ (8/3/09) -- The "Happy Hooligans," who operate C-21 missions across U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility, completed the final combat sortie of their rotation here July 27. This marks the completion of the first deployment into a combat zone for the North Dakota Air National Guard. The Hooligans, officially the 177th Airlift Squadron and part of the 119th Wing, transported more than 400 service members during their two-month-long rotation in theater. They accomplished this by flying more than 200 sorties during 90 missions, as part of the 379th Expeditionary Operations Group. "A third of the time we haul DVs (distinguished visitors) around and the other portion of the time we're flying around the worker bees," said Lt. Col. Rick Omang, 379th Expeditionary Operations Group C-21 pilot and squadron commander. The Happy Hooligans have flown the C-21 since 2006. The squadron, based at Hector

International Airport, Fargo, N.D., picked up the executive transport and homeland defense mission following recommendations from the 2005 base realignment and closure commission. "It's the first time the Happy Hooligan tail flash has flown in combat," said 1st Lt. Lee Teigen, 379th EOG, C-21 pilot. The squadron traces its origin back to 1947, when it began operations in the F-51D. The Hooligans were mobilized on April 1, 1951, during the Korean Conflict for bomber escort duty at Moody AFB, Ga. Throughout their history they have flown the F-51D, F-94, F-89, F-102, F-101, F-4 and F-16. "Yet this is the first aircraft we have ever flown into combat," added Capt. Hayden, another squadron pilot, "which is interesting, to fly our combat Learjet into war." Squadron members are proud of the contributions they made and places they travelled while deployed. "As a primary source for DV airlift, we get to travel to quite a few different places," said Hayden, 379th EOG, C-21 pilot. During this deployment, the pilots supported the recent surge of service members in Afghanistan and witnessed the continuing reconstruction efforts across the theater. "One of the interesting things about flying into Afghanistan is seeing the buildup of troops and resources in the country," said Maj. Caleb Christopherson, 379th EOG, C-21 pilot. "A lot of work is going into rebuilding the country which is [evident] each time we fly somewhere." For Christopherson, this deployment gave him a different perspective than he had from his last tour here. "Before, when I was deployed as a tanker pilot, I never got to set foot on the ground," said Christopherson. "But as a C-21 pilot, I get to interact with the Soldiers on the ground and see the places that we're supporting." Flying the C-21 in contingency operations seems like a natural fit to the pilots, even with the special considerations of weather and terrain. "The heat and altitude play a huge factor for us," said 1st Lt. Ed Crary, 379th EOG, C-21 pilot. "We also have to take into account the airfield tactical situations and procedures when landing on certain airstrips. Taking all that into account, it's a pretty capable aircraft to fly over here." As the Happy Hooligans wrap up their deployment here, a pilot reflected on one of the best reasons for serving in a deployed location: helping out fellow service members. It's nice to give people a ride who have been to who knows where for who knows how long. Getting them where they need to go or on their way home is one of the most gratifying things about this deployment, Christopherson said. Displaying the incredible range of contributions made by Airmen from the Air National Guard both in the United States and abroad, many of the squadron's members recall filling sandbags to protect Fargo, N.D., from devastating floods prior to deploying here to support a war-time mission. "It's interesting how in a few months time, we have gone from sand to sand," said Hayden. "Being here allowed us a better appreciation for what we have and I will be happy to get back home."

---

USAF Unit Histories  
Created: 30 Apr 2013  
Updated:

#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.  
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.