

711 SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

711 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 6 Apr 1943
Activated, 1 May 1943
Redesignated 711 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 20 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 711 Bombardment Squadron, Light, 10 May 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active service, 17 Mar 1951
Inactivated, 21 Mar 1951
Redesignated 711 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 12 Apr 1955
Activated in the Reserve, 18 May 1955
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957
Redesignated 711 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 17 Jun 1971
Activated in the Reserve, 30 Jul 1971
Redesignated 711 Special Operations Squadron, 1 Jul 1975

STATIONS

Ephrata AAB, WA, 1 May 1943
Rapid City AAB, SD, 13 Jun 1943
Harvard AAFld, NE, 1 Aug-11 Nov 1943
Rattlesden, England, 1 Dec 1943-c. 3 Aug 1945
Drew Field, FL, 18 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Long Beach Muni Aprt, CA, 27 Jun 1949-21 Mar 1951
Dallas NAS, TX, 18 May 1955-16 Nov 1957
Eglin AF Aux Field #3 (Duke Field), FL, 30 Jun 1971

ASSIGNMENTS

447 Bombardment Group, 1 May 1943-7 Nov 1945
448 Bombardment Group, 27 Jun 1949-21 Mar 1951
448 Fighter-Bomber Group, 18 May 1955-16 Nov 1957
919 Tactical Airlift (later, 919 Special Operations) Group, 30 Jul 1971
919 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1943-1945
T-7, 1949-1951
T-11, 1949-1951
Unkn, 1955-1957
C-130, 1971
AC-130, 1975-1995
MC-130E, 1995

COMMANDERS

None (not manned), 1-25 May 1943
Lt Col Edward J. McRay Jr., 26 May 1943
Maj Donald S. Harris, 16 Mar 1945
Lt Col Robert D. Grandmontagne, 1 May 1945-unkn
Lt Col Thayer, Jun 1949-Jan 1950
Maj Jacques, c. Apr 1950-unkn
Maj Joseph L. Cromer, c. Jun 1955-unkn
Lt Col Roy E. Ayers Jr., by Dec 1971
Lt Col William R. Day, by Jun 1976
Lt Col Neils R. Poulsen, by Sep 1979
Col Gary L. Patterson, 1 Dec 1980
Lt Col Lee T. Weiland Jr., 18 Jun 1982
Col Jerry R. Rankin, 4 Sep 1982
Unkn, Jan-Jun 1986
Lt Col William W. Tyre Jr., 1 Jul 1986
Col Ronald E. Edinger, 1 Dec 1990
Col Charles T. Curry, 11 Jul 1992
Col Gregory L. Hanson, 5 Dec 1994
Lt Col Michael N. Wilson, 7 Feb 1998
Lt Col Richard S. Haddad, Nov 2000
Lt Col Jon Weeks, Sep 2005
Lt Col Thomas Miller, Feb 2008
Lt Col Anthony O. Lawrence, 3 May 2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Panama, 1989-1990

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

30 Jul 1971-31 Mar 1973

1 Jul 1975-31 Jan 1977

1 Oct 1983-1 Jun 1985

1 Jun 1987-31 May 1989

8 Dec 1989-7 Jan 1990

1 Jun 1990-31 May 1992

1 Jun 1992-31 May 1994

1 Jun 1994-31 May 1996

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000

1 Feb-30 Sep 2003

1 Oct 2003-31 Dec 2004

1 Jan-31 Dec 2005

1 Jan-31 Dec 2006

1 Jan-[30 Apr] 2007

1 Oct 2008-30 Jul 2010

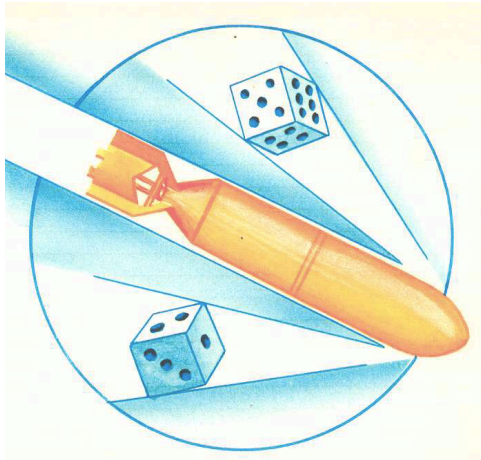
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



711 Bombardment emblem: Over and through a light blue disc, outlined dark blue, a yellow orange aerial bomb on white speed segment piercing lower rim of disc, and deflecting a pair of dice to top and bottom of disc on white impact rays dark blue spots 6,5,and 4 showing on upper die and 3,2,1 on lower die with the spots 5 and 2 on the top side of the dice.

This approved emblem no longer reflects the unit's mission. In accordance with AFR 900-3, we are submitting a modification of the old patch for approval. Because of the many mission changes in the past and possibility of more changes in the future, it was decided by the squadron to redesign the old 711 patch and bring it up to date. The new patch would reflect the past history of the squadron and also represent its present gunship mission. It would be of such a design that any future mission changes would not require any further modification other than changing the motto. The old 711 BS(H) patch consisted of a yellow bomb passing through a round disk with two dice on each side of the bomb. In the interest of history it was decided to leave the dice on the patch, as they had been previously approved in World War II. The dice also reflected the Gunship Mission. Dice in their various forms are the oldest gaming implements known to man. The most popular dice game among Americans in World War II was called craps. It is a game of skill and chance and in its most common form known as a craps game, as opposed to bank craps or open craps. In the traditional craps game, the players stand or sit in a circle; bets are placed in the center of the circle and the dice thrown or shot into the circle's center. If on the first roll the shooter shoots 1 or 11, he is the natural winner. The gunship is flown in a constant left banking pylon turn to bring its side mounted guns to bear on a target. In this shooting geometry, a circle is also formed and a barrage of gun-fired projectiles are shot into the circle center. To be a winner, the gunfire must be accurately directed and destroy the target. If the target shoots back the gunship could also be the loser. The analogy to the game of chance, and the significance of the shooter, the gunship geometric shooting circle and 711 as a winner is apparent. The dots on the dice of the new patch have been changed to read 7 and 11 respectively. The six faces of the dice represent the six guns carried by the AC-130. The precision computers aboard the aircraft are represented by the mathematical probabilities applying to dice and to the fact that players can calculate risk before placing bets or shooting dice. The yellow bomb of the old patch has been replaced by a yellow lightning bolt.

The bolt symbolizes the firepower, speed and pinpoint accuracy of the gunships. The lightning bolt also relates to the sensitive and complex sensors that are part of the gunship weapons system. The central figure of the new patch is a white kings knight chess piece. The chess piece is in the figure of a horse. Since Virgil's Aeneid and its description of the sack of Troy by Ulysses using the Trojan Horse, the horse figure has represented special types of military operations. Therefore, a horse symbol is very appropriate for a special operations squadron. Also, in the game of chess, the white side moves first to press his initiative by trying to occupy or control the central squares from which pieces exert their maximum force. The knight is also most active on the board early in the game and if placed in the center of the chess board, the sum total of his possible moves would equal a circle. Again, this geometric circle refers to the gunship geometry as the intellectual game of chess refers to the intellectual powers needed to operate the gunship weapon system. The colors of the patch are in accordance with AFR 900-3. The lightning bolt and scrolls are in Air Force golden yellow. The background of the patch is in Air Force ultramarine blue. The king's knight and dice are in pure white signifying the virtue of our mission in the cause of defense by the traditional American citizen soldier. The dots on the dice are black and the patch and figures are trimmed in black for aesthetic effect. In regard to our motto, we want it to be distinct and descriptive so as to project our mission in a straightforward, no-nonsense manner. Drawing on the plural form of a 1960's television western style serial, we have chosen, Have Guns Will Travel which describes our professional attitude toward our unique Reserve mission. The major character of the television western was a gun-fighter named Paladin. The words defined as a knightly or heroic champion, and the character himself was a cool, noble gentleman who displayed extreme grace under pressure. This is the image that we wish our squadron to display.





On a disc Azure, a lightning flash emitting from sinister chief bendwise sinister striking to dexter Or, surmounted by a knight chess piece between two dice in bend Argent detailed Sable, angled in perspective to show the number eleven in dexter chief and seven in sinister base, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "711TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQ" in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The lightning flash signifies the speed of response to the unit's mission. The knight chess piece reflects the careful decision process, with the dice describing the consideration of risk, while representing the numerical designation of the unit. (Approved, 19 Nov 2001)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 24 Dec 1943-21 Apr 1945. Airlift of personnel and cargo, as well as airdropping U.S. Army paratroops during exercises and training, 1971-1974. In late 1974 began training for special operations missions using AC-130 gunships. Provided missile range support, 1979-1989, and NASA space shuttle support, 1981-1988. Flew pre-strike reconnaissance, fire support, escort, and airbase defense sorties during U.S. invasion of Panama, 8 Dec 1989-7 Jan 1990. Combat in Southwest Asia, 9 Feb-Mar 1991. Primary mission changed in late 1995 to providing long-range clandestine delivery of special operations forces and equipment. Periodically deployed personnel and aircraft to support special operations contingency operations worldwide, as well as numerous humanitarian missions. Beginning 1 Oct 1997, provided flight portion of MC-130E Combat Talon I training for both AFSOC and AFRC.

Discounting the A-37 units' earlier interlude, the Air Force Reserve became engaged in special operations in April 1974 when the 302d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron converted from HH-34 rescue operations to CH-3Es at Luke AFB, Arizona. The squadron's new special operations mission required it to become proficient in helicopter day/night infiltration, exfiltration, reinforcement, and resupply operations.²² A second special operations unit was

created when the 919th Tactical Airlift Group and its 711th Squadron converted from C-130Bs to AC-130As at Duke Field, Eglin AFB, on July 1, 1975. The AC-130A was a close support version of the C-130A and had more powerful engines. It was armed with 7.62-mm miniguns and 20-, 40-, and 105-mm cannon and equipped with searchlight and sensors, including infrared target acquisition and direct-view intensification sights.

The 711th SOS has 8 of the Air Force's inventory of 14 MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft assigned to it. It transitioned to that aircraft from the AC-130A Spectre gunship beginning in September 1995. The mission called on the squadron to perform specialized day or night low-level delivery of troops or cargo into denied or hostile areas.

The surviving AC-130As are flown today by the 711th SOS, 919th SOG of the Air Force Reserve which is based at Duke Field, Eglin AFB, Florida. The AC-130Hs are operated by the 16th SOS, 1st SOW at Hurlbert AFB, Florida. Many of the AC-130As are older than the men who fly them today, however they continue to fill a vital role in our nation's defense. The AC-130Hs took part in Operation 'Eagle Claw' and Grenada. They now train for the next chapter in tomorrow's history.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.