

400th AERO SQUADRON

LINEAGE

Constituted the 22d Weather Squadron on 28 June 1943

Activated 13 July 1943.

Inactivated at Natal on 5 February 1946.

Activated on 4 September 1948

Inactivated on 23 June 1951

STATIONS

Natal, Brazil

Los Angeles, California, 4 September 1948

March AFB, on 26 September 1949

ASSIGNMENTS

South Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command

Army Air Forces Weather Wing, 6 December 1943

COMMANDERS

LTC James B. Baker, 1 Jul 1943

LTC Arthur A. McCartan, 11 Oct 1944

LTC John H. Eberly, 23 Apr 1945

Maj Harvey W. Smith, 13 Oct 1945

Unknown, 4 Sep 1948

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Service Streamer, American Theater, World War II, 7 Dec 1941—2 Mar 1946

LINEAGE

Constituted as 22 Weather Squadron on 28 Jun 1943. Activated on 13 Jul 1943. Inactivated on 5 Feb 1946. Activated in the Reserve on 4 Sep 1948. Inactivated on 23 Jun 1951. Redesignated 22

Expeditionary Weather Squadron, and converted to provisional status, on 12 Feb 2009.

STATIONS

Natal, Brazil, 13 Jul 1943-5 Feb 1946. Los Angeles, CA, 4 Sep 1948; March AFB, CA, 26 Sep 1949-23 Jun 1951.

ASSIGNMENTS

South Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command, 13 Jul 1943; Army Air Forces Weather Wing, 6 Dec 1943; Army Air Forces Weather Service, 2 Jul 1945-5 Feb 1946. 2101 Air Weather Group, 4 Sep 1948; Fourth Air Force, 3 Jun 1949; Air Weather Service, 26 Sep 1949-23 Jun 1951. Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time on or after 12 Feb 2009.

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers. World War II American Theater.

Campaign Streamers. None.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers. None.

Decorations. None.

EMBLEM

None on file. Squadron may design and request approval of an emblem in accordance with AFI 84-105, Chapter 3.

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

A pilot sits in his UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on the airfield at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, and calls in for a preflight weather check. The staff weather officer (SWO) tells him a dust storm is en route and there will be zero visibility at Camp Taji. Flying there is not recommended. The pilot heeds the SWO's warning and goes into a holding area until the weather clears, possibly saving his own life and the lives of his crew and passengers.

Several Airmen from the California Air National Guard are deployed to Iraq to support the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and other air and ground assets in the country with just that type of information.

“The Army needs to know what’s going on with the weather throughout its area of operations,” said Master Sgt. Hilario Flores of the 22nd Expeditionary Weather Squadron (EWXS) out of March Air Reserve Base, Calif., which is currently deployed to Camp Taji and Joint Base Balad. “If something pops up, we have to let them know immediately so they can adjust fire accordingly and go from there.”

The weather plays a big factor in all military operations, in the air and on the ground. From when a mission starts to when it is finished, the weather may change two or more times. A change in the weather can make a smooth operation grind to a screeching halt in a matter of seconds.

“The weather here in Iraq can change drastically in an instant,” said Flores.

“We always have to stay vigilant when we’re at our post and we’re always on our toes looking to ensure our forecasts stay accurate.”

The 22nd EWXS uses a vast array of techniques to gather information.

“We use satellite imagery and live feeds; we have automated sensors out at different locations that gather information; we send people up to the roof every hour to physically look at and feel the weather; plus, we use intel that we get from Soldiers out in the field,” said Maj. Jeffery Johnson, staff weather officer in charge for the 22nd EWXS. “We by no means have a lack of intel to forecast the weather accurately up to four to seven days in advance.”

The 22nd EWXS also makes sure the troops benefit from their forecasts. “We brief the pilots before takeoff, during takeoff, when they’re en route and before they land on the most current, up-to-date weather conditions,” said Master Sgt. Carlos Coronado, staff weather noncommissioned officer in charge for the 22nd. “We also brief the command on what is going on and what’s about to happen so they can disseminate it to the troops.”

Almost two dozen C-130J aircraft and a full complement of air crew and maintenance personnel from the California Air National Guard’s 146th Airlift Wing and the Rhode Island Air National Guard’s 143rd Airlift Wing have arrived at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. They replaced C-130H model Guard units from Alaska and New York and filled the ranks of the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron.

“Our mission is airlift and airdrop to all the forward operating bases within country,” said Lt. Col. Bill Willson, the 774th EAS commander and a C-130J pilot from the 146th Airlift Wing. “The primary way the forward operating bases get supplies is by airlift or airdrop. We are their lifeline of sustainment.”

The Guard units previously assigned to that mission consistently performed at a high level, Willson said, but the newly arrived Airmen are ready to tackle the challenge and set the bar even higher since the C-130J is the most advanced model.

In its first month alone, the 774th EAS flew more than 900 sorties with a 99.9 percent sortie effectiveness

rate, completing approximately 40 airdrops and delivering more than 3,100 tons of cargo. The C-130J incorporates state-of-the-art technology to reduce manpower requirements as well as operating and support costs. The aircraft's improved engines enable the J-model plane to climb faster and higher, fly farther at a higher cruise speed, and take off and land in a shorter distance. It also has 15 extra feet in the fuselage, increasing useable space in the cargo compartment.

"These airplanes are considerably more capable than the H-model," Willson said. "It's the equivalent of adding an additional engine and two pallet positions. It can carry approximately 40 percent more load, giving us a much higher fully mission capable rate. We can actually do the same job with 10 [J-models] that it takes 15 [H-models] to do."

One of the more significant aircraft improvements is the ability to more accurately airdrop from high altitudes, which makes missions safer for the air crews, Willson said. The C-130J is equipped with a sonde — a device attached to a parachute that takes wind readings every 500 feet and transmits the information back to the aircraft. The plane's computers then determine the optimal release point, which is accurate to within one meter.

The automated systems make the job smoother for 774th EAS loadmasters like Master Sgt. Jessica Barry of Rhode Island.

"The J makes my job much easier," she said. "We have a computer

that controls our load plan.

We also have electric locks as opposed to ratchet locks. It's a very efficient 'push button' system."

As a loadmaster, Barry is responsible for configuring and overseeing the loading of people and cargo on the aircraft. However, even though the J-model makes the job easier, there are unique challenges in Afghanistan.

Ordinarily the cargo and airdrop bundles are planned well in advance, and a computer determines how the items should be loaded onto the aircraft. "In this deployed environment, we get a lot of last-minute requests to add cargo," Barry said. "So we have to manually figure out how to accommodate the additional weight.

"We don't mind though," she said. "It's very rewarding knowing we're getting the troops on the ground what they need."

While the 774th EAS is composed of National Guard Airmen from different units and varying walks of life, they have deployed together since 2004 and consider themselves one big family. The continuity that comes with working with the same people for so long is something the loadmasters tout as a reason they operate like a well-oiled machine.

"There is a great chemistry here," Barry said. "These guys are great to work with."

Master Sgt. Jason Sturtevant, a C-130J maintainer and crew chief from Rhode Island, echoed Barry's sentiment.

"We maintainers mesh very well," he said. "They are very easy to

work with. I noticed as soon as we got here, everybody just wanted to work together.”

Maintainers service the aircraft and perform preflight, postflight and through-flight inspections.

“We do everything from servicing hydraulic fluid to liquid oxygen,” Sturtevant said. “Basically, we look at the entire aircraft and its systems.”

The 20-year veteran said he finds the job highly rewarding.

“I love watching these planes fly, knowing I’m helping the guys on the ground,” he said. “I feel like I’m directly contributing to the fight. I also take pride in keeping my air crews safe.”

Willson also noted the sense of pride and dedication among the Airmen of his unit.

“We all recognize the importance of coming here to do this mission.”

Willson said. “We have a tremendous sense of patriotism. Most of these people have very well-paying jobs on the outside, yet they still come here. They do this because they want to. The love of wearing the uniform and doing the job outweighs everything else

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources