

5 SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

5 Combat Cargo Squadron constituted, 25 Apr 1944

Activated, 1 May 1944

Inactivated, 15 Jan 1946

Disbanded, 8 Oct 1948

5 Air Commando Squadron (Psychological Operation) constituted and activated, 2 Aug 1965

Organized, 8 Aug 1965

Redesignated 5 Special Operations Squadron, 1 Aug 1968

Inactivated, 15 Oct 1969

5 Combat Cargo Squadron reconstituted, and consolidated with the 5 Special Operations Squadron, 19 Sep 1985. Consolidated squadron retains 5 Special Operations Squadron designation.

Activated in the Reserve, 1 Dec 1994

STATIONS

Syracuse AAB, NY, 1 May 1944

Baer Field, IN, 9-27 Oct 1944

Biak Island, Netherlands East Indies, Nov 1944

Dulag, Leyte, 15 May 1945

Okinawa, 16 Aug 1945

Yokota, Japan, Sep 1945-15 Jan 1946

Nha Trang AB, South Vietnam, 8 Aug 1965

Tuy Hoa AB, South Vietnam, 5 Sep-15 Oct 1969

Eglin AF Aux Field #3 (Duke Field), FL, 1 Dec 1994
Eglin AFB, FL, 1 Oct 1999
Hurlburt AFB, FL

ASSIGNMENTS

2 Combat Cargo Group, 1 May 1944-15 Jan 1946
2 Air Division, 8 Aug 1965
14 Air Commando (later, 14 Special Operations) Wing, 8 Mar 1966-15 Oct 1969
919 Operations Group, 1 Dec 1994

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-46A, 1944-1945
C-47, 1944-1945
AC-47, 1965-1969
U-10, 1965-1969
HC-130N/P (later, MC-130P), 1995

COMMANDERS

Cpt Early R. Dowling, 1 May 1944
Maj Diar E. Clark, by Oct 1944
Maj Robert L. Arnold, Jun 1945-unkn
Unkn, 8 Aug-8 Nov 1965
Lt Col Clyde Anglely, 9 Nov 1965
Lt Col Joseph F. Baier, 7 Jul 1966
Lt Col John L. Mansfield, 10 Oct 1966
Lt Col Trusty M. Whitehead, 5 Dec 1966
Lt Col Robert A. Barraclough, 7 Jul 1967
Lt Col Charles M. Read, 11 Oct 1967
Lt Col William W. Perry, 10 Jul 1968
Lt Col Kenneth D. Hill, 20 Sep 1968
Lt Col Robert S. Wardner, c. May-15 Oct 1969
Lt Col Clay T. McCutchan, 1 Dec 1994
Lt Col Elliott W. Allen, Jr., 1 Feb 1997
Lt Col James D. Smith, 23 Aug 1998
Lt Col Michael J. Wercinski, 4 Aug 2002
Maj Lynn Townsend
Lt Col Reid Henley

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
New Guinea

Leyte
Luzon
Southern Philippines
Western Pacific
Air Offensive, Japan
Ruykyus

Vietnam
Vietnam Defensive
Vietnam Air
Vietnam Air Offensive
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
Tet 69/ Counter-offensive
Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citations (Southeast Asia)

8 Mar 1966-7 Mar 1967

21 Jun 1968-30 Jun 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

16 Jun 1967-20 Jun 1968

1 Feb 2001-31 Jan 2003

Gallant Unit Citation

19 Oct 2001-1 Jul 2003

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

[1 Dec] 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

Army Meritorious Unit Commendation

1 Jan-31 Dec 1968

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm

1 Apr 1966-15 Oct 1969

1 Jan-30 Aug 1968

EMBLEM



5 Air Commando Squadron emblem On a disc per pale red and blue a white pale between in chief three gold arrows, two in saltire and one palewise, and a gold compass rose highlighted white, bearing in base five light blue billets one, two and two and overall a flight symbol ascending throughout, black, wing tips counterchanged white, charged in pale with a gold lightning bolt; all within a narrow gold border. Emblem between two white scrolls bordered gold, lower scroll inscribed in blue capital letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the squadron. Against the red background which denotes courage the three arrows symbolize the Department of Defense and its Branches of Service. The blue background depicts the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations, with the compass rose indicating the squadron's world-wide capabilities. The flight symbol represents the unit's air mission, its colors signify clandestine operations and the ability to work in darkness as well as daylight. The lightning bolt symbolizes speed in accomplishment of the squadron mission. The billets heraldic symbol for letters refer to psychological warfare, while their number five is the squadron's numerical designation. The emblem bears the National colors and the Air Force colors, gold and ultramarine blue. (Approved, 5 Aug 1966)



5 Special Operations Squadron emblem: On a disc Gules and Azure, on a pale Argent five billets abased in chevron Celeste, debruised throughout by a flight symbol palewise point to chief counterchanged Sable and White and charged with a lightning bolt of one bevel palewise Or, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "5TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQ" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "TRUTH SHALL MAKE THEM FREE" in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and 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 delta signifies the air mission colored to show day and night operations. The lightning flash symbolizes speed. The billets describe communications leaflets, a reference to psychological warfare, while their number alludes to the unit's numerical designation.



5 Special Operations Squadron emblem: On a disc tierced in pale Argent, bearing the center portion of a flight symbol Sable charged with a lightning flash Or and in base five billets chevronwise one, two, and two Celeste, the dexter side Gules bearing the dexter tip of the

flight symbol of the first and the sinister side Azure bearing the sinister tip of the flight symbol of the first, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "COMBAT SHADOW" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "5 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 delta signifies the air mission, showing both day and night operations. The lightning flash symbolizes speed. The billets describe communications leaflets, a reference to psychological warfare, while their number alludes to the unit's numerical designation. (Approved, 5 Nov 2001)

MOTTO

TRUTH SHALL MAKE THEM FREE

OPERATIONS

Transported men and supplies to and evacuated casualties from forward areas in Southwest and Western Pacific, Dec 1944-Sep 1945. Conducted psychological operations and humanitarian programs during Vietnam conflict, 1965-1969. Trained for special operations, inflight refueling of special operations helicopters, and resupply missions, using modified C-130s, 1995. Periodically deployed to support special operations contingency operations worldwide.

After 46 years, the longest-running naval exercise in the Americas welcomed its first "non-navy" participant. And the organization invited to join this annual training on the high seas is a member of the Air Force Reserve. In November, the 5 Special Operations Squadron from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., sent one aircraft and 23 people to Punta del Este, Uruguay, to participate in Unitas 04. Unitas, which means unity, brought together ships, aircraft and submarines, as well as more than 2,000 people, from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Spain and the United States. For the 5 SOS, Unitas provided a chance to both gain some valuable training experience with naval forces and get its foot in the door for future training opportunities involving other countries. For individual Reservists, Unitas gave them a chance to do some of the things they did prior to 9/11. The unit was activated two weeks after the terrorist attacks and remained activated for two years as part of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. "It was a great opportunity for the 5 to stretch its deployment legs in a different direction other than Southwest Asia," said Maj. Jeff Berry, 5 SOS pilot and mission commander for Unitas 04. "This tour was instrumental in improving working relationships between U.S. and South American naval and marine forces as well as obtaining excellent training for our people in a different working environment. I feel like we're paving new roads coming down here. It's great training, and it lays the groundwork for future operations in the region." Although bad weather and some mechanical problems limited the number of missions the Reservists were able to fly in their MC-130P aircraft, Maj. Len Summers, an exercise planner at U.S. South Air Force, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., said the squadron's participation was still a success. "We were able to accomplish several objectives," Major Summers said. "We were able to show the admiral (Rear

Adm. Vinson E. Smith, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command) the capabilities of the MC-130P and fly him in it. We also conducted photo ops in support of the fleet and successfully completed an ESM (electronic support measures) mission with the U.S. Navy. "It's an important stepping stone to having more Air Force support for the traditional naval Unitas exercise. We were able to assist our sister service. They (the U.S. Navy) had a P-3 Orion that fell out of the exercise, and we helped avoid not having any air resource equivalent for the benefit of the exercise. I was happy to have the participation of the 5 SOS and get what we got accomplished. Now we have a benchmark set." Not only did the admiral get a chance to fly with the MC-130P crew and see the capabilities of the aircraft, he also got a chance to view the exercise fleet from the open aircraft cargo door. "First I would like to say thank you to the 5 SOS," Admiral Smith said. "Having the opportunity to fly with the crew of the MC-130P was not only an honor but also an exciting adventure. Strapping into that harness and taking a look from the ramp of one of these birds offered a unique perspective of the five nation Unitas fleet. This 'birds-eye view' reminded me of how much progress we have made in the execution of these exercises. We have transformed the exercise from a multinational surface navy event into a multinational joint exercise." The Reservists enjoyed the chance to showcase the MC-130P for the admiral. "It was great. The admiral explained to us how the ships were operating out there and the type of ships involved," said Maj. Lynn Townsend, 5 SOS aircraft commander. "It was interesting to get an observation from a different perspective than ours. He said he was really pleased. We invited him to come over to Eglin and fly with us anytime. I told him we'd fly him on a (night-vision-goggle) helicopter refueling mission to see what we do on a day-to-day basis." Major Townsend explained the Reservists' role as "trying to determine how some of the Navy's systems work against us and how our systems work against them. It went really well. The Navy was very pleased when the exercise ended." While the 5 SOS was able to impress the admiral with its performance, for a while it appeared the Reservists would not have an opportunity to show their skills due to bad weather. "The weather did create some challenges and unexpected opportunities," Admiral Smith said. "Having the U.S. Air Force presence helped drive home the importance of joint warfare operations to our partner nations. "Regardless of the weather conditions, this MC-130 was able to conduct MPA (maritime patrol aircraft) and SSSC (surface, subsurface search surveillance coordination) missions. It's my hope that we will see the continued support of the U.S. Air Force in future exercises. The 5 SOS has opened the door to what I hope will lead to more robust joint participation. Joint is how we operate in the real world, so it should be the way we train." The admiral noted the MC-130's presence above the fleet was a statement about today's training environment. "The Air Force MC-130 overhead was seen as evidence that Unitas is transforming into a combined, multinational, joint exercise that provides relevant and realistic training to all participants as well as supports the combatant commander's interoperability security cooperation initiatives." The Uruguayan navy fleet commander and exercise host also noted the importance of the Air Force's participation in Unitas. "The Air Force will participate in maritime operations, and this participation is very important," said Rear Adm. Oscar Debali. "More than a combined operation, it is a joint operation, and joint operations are the operations of the future. The more we work with these types of exercises, the better the results will be. This is a good challenge to have in the exercise because our country is involved in many international operations involving the United Nations." "It's a very important opportunity for us to operate with another force, a big professional

force,” said Cmdr. Juan Retamoso, Uruguayan commander at the base where the 5 SOS was operating. “I really enjoyed learning about their operation. I was proud for us to have a U.S. Air Force airplane here at our base.” Maybe equally important as the training opportunity was the chance to form relationships that will provide benefits to the Reserve and the Air Force down the road. “I think we gained new friendships and understanding between participants and the people we met in the community,” Major Berry said. “The Uruguayan navy invited us to a farewell barbecue that gave us an opportunity to shake hands, tell stories, and exchange pictures, plaques and coins. Even with the slight language barrier, common interests served as the interpreter.” For the 5 SOS, having the opportunity to travel and train somewhere other than the desert was an invaluable opportunity. “Our unit’s focus has been in a certain area of the world,” said Maj. Dave Condit, 5 SOS navigator and one of the planners for the Unitas mission. “Now that we’ve been deactivated and have had time to regroup, it’s time we go back to some of those places that we haven’t been to in a while. International exercises such as Unitas require U.S. presence to maintain relationships, and with the active duty maintaining a strong presence in the desert with real-world operations, it’s nice to have Reservists participate.” With tattered buildings and battered beaches, the Florida and Alabama coasts had the appearance of a war-torn country the morning of Sept. 16. For members of the 5 Special Operations Squadron, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., the sight of such devastation had become all too familiar in their two years of being deployed as part of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. But this time the massive damage wasn’t thousands of miles away but rather in their own back yards, not the result of war but a natural disaster named Hurricane Ivan. But much like the unit rallied together only days after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when they were called to active duty to help defend the nation, once again the 5 SOS came together. This time they rallied to help members of their squadron clean up and repair their homes that were ravaged by the storm. “We got everybody together at the squadron to determine who had the most damage,” said Tech. Sgt. Chris Maradik, 5 SOS loadmaster. “They wanted an assessment from each section, and then we determined who needed the most help.” One of the worst hit by the storm was Maj. Jeff Berry, 5 SOS pilot and mission commander for Unitas 2004. Like thousands of others living in the area, he evacuated to a safe location before the hurricane hit. “It was pretty scary going back home,” Major Berry said, “because when we drove up, all the roads were under water. My house looked like it was on an island.” After wading through knee-deep water, Major Berry discovered significant damage to his home. Part of his roof was ripped off, siding was off, and there was water in his house. “It could have been catastrophic,” Major Berry said. “Forty miles down the road there were houses that were gone. It could have happened to us. At least the house was still standing, and I was happy to see it.” However, reality quickly set in as the major faced the massive task of cleaning up the debris and repairing the damage. “About 10 unit members came to the house and worked for four hours,” Major Berry said. “My shed was in my neighbor’s pool, and other people’s docks were in my yard. It was overwhelming to know the squadron was going to do something like that. It wasn’t expected. I thought it would be me and my wife doing all the work. It was touching.” Although almost every member of the unit suffered some damage to their property, Major Berry said, about five people had major damage. “Thanks to the leadership of the Reserve, it went great,” said Master Sgt. Eric Downing, 5 SOS life support. “They allowed us to go out and help. That meant a lot to everyone to be able to help. We went to one neighborhood and ended up

helping everyone there.” Just getting to the neighborhood, located in Pensacola, Fla., proved to be a difficult experience. “It was like driving through a war zone,” said Tech. Sgt. Bill Bethke, 5 SOS radio operator. “There was old lumber and wood stacked six to eight feet high along the highway. We saw places that were so much worse off than ours.” The storm struck the Gulf Coast about a month and a half before the 5 SOS was supposed to participate in Unitas 2004, a major exercise in Uruguay. In fact, as the storm made its way toward the coast, Maj. Dave Condit, 5 SOS navigator and one of the planners for Unitas, was in Uruguay getting ready for the exercise. “Just prior to the hurricane, I was down there for a planning conference,” Major Condit said. “My wife was calling and keeping me posted and encouraging me to get home on time. And the other issue was if the hurricane wipes us out, would we be able to fulfill our plan for participation in the exercise?” Major Condit made it home in time to evacuate his family and avoid the storm. He called a fellow Reservist and asked him to check on the Condit’s house. “He told me everyone’s house in the neighborhood looked fine except for mine,” Major Condit said. “My house had a giant tree that crashed through the roof. When I returned home, I went to the squadron and offered to help others who were hit worse, but they told me to take care of my family first and the squadron would take care of everyone else.” Because Majors Condit and Berry were two of the primary planners for the Uruguay trip, they had to balance their time between doing their jobs and fixing their homes. Both of them took time off to work on their houses. “It was a week we needed to be planning, but our families came first,” Major Condit said. “What that meant was in the following weeks, we had to put in some long hours because a lot of prep work still had to be done. It made it more difficult to get all the details secured. Had we had that extra week, there were some additional things that could have been done to make things go smoother.” Some members of the 5 SOS were forced to cancel their participation in the exercise in order to take care of their property, while others left with their homes still in need of repair. “I pretty much left my house with a part of it exposed with blue tarp on it,” said Major Berry. While he was in Uruguay, the major said it rained twice back home and got the family’s clothes wet. He said his wife can run the house without him, but “it’s rough on her.” For Major Condit, getting a chance to represent the 5 SOS as the first Air Force unit to participate in Unitas was a driving force in his decision to go. “My house is smashed, and I would probably have preferred to be at home,” Major Condit said. 2005

Col. Steven Chapman, 919th Special Operations Wing commander, prepares for Master Sgt. Daniel Dombrowsk, 5 Special Operations Squadron first sergeant, and Lt. Col. Reid Henley, 5 SOS commander, to present their squadron flag during a squadron transition ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla., May 23. The ceremony marked the squadron’s mission change from flying the MC-130P Combat Shadow at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., to supporting the new Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt. In 1995, the 5 SOS was reactivated at Duke Field, Fla., as an Air Force Reserve unit under the 919th Special Operations Wing, where it was assigned the MC-130P Combat Shadow mission. In 1999, the squadron moved to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., to form a classic associate unit with Air Force Special Operations Command’s 9th SOS, becoming the first associate unit gained by AFSOC. Today, the 5 SOS is an associate unit assigned to the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Initially, the 5 will provide aircrew training for the U-28 and train students in AFSOC’s aviation foreign internal

defense mission. The plan is for the 5 to add AC-130U aircrew training by 2012 and participate in all of the AFSOC emerging missions requiring aircrew training in new weapon systems. 2008

AFSOC recently began a unique association between the command's Special Operations Training Center and the Reserve's 5 Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Under the new arrangement, the 5 SOS is an associate unit assigned operationally to the training center. Administratively, it still falls under the Reserve's 919th Special Operations Wing, located at Duke Field, Fla. The seasoned professionals from the 5 serve as AFSOTC instructors, bringing a wealth of invaluable real world experience to the training center's classrooms and cockpits. In May, Reservists from the 5 flew the squadron's final MC-130P Combat Shadow mission, carrying the unit's flag on the short flight from the 5's previous home at Eglin AFB, Fla., to its new home at Hurlburt. "I get the distinct honor of being the first to welcome the 5 SOS to Hurlburt," said Col. Marshall Webb, commander of the active-duty 1st Special Operations Wing at the welcoming ceremony. One of the distinct features of the association between the 5 and the training center is the fact that the 5 remains an operational squadron while taking on its new training mission. Its members will still deploy periodically and continue to fly missions in combat. That way, they will be able to share the most up-to-date information and conditions from the theaters of operation with their AFSOC students. "The 5 is a combat squadron that does training, not vice versa," said Lt. Col. Randy Nicholson, 5 SOS U-28 section supervisor. "That said, we're extremely excited about taking on this new role and sharing our experience with students at the training center." "The strength that we bring to this new mission is indeed experience," said Lt. Col. Reid Henley, 5 SOS commander. "Most of our members have extensive combat time and have deployed multiple times. The great thing about our new mission with the training center is that we get to pass on our combat experience gained from our 20-plus years service in AFSOC, experience that we'll be renewing at regular intervals. "I've served in special operations for more than 18 years, but I'm not unique in the 5 SOS. Many of our aircrews have even more experience than I do, and now we're going to focus on bringing that experience and all of our hard-won associate lessons learned to our new mission with AFSOTC." Initially, the 5 will provide aircrew training for the U-28 and train students in AFSOC's aviation foreign internal defense mission. "We hope to add AC-130U Gunship aircrew training by 2012 and participate in all of the AFSOC emerging missions requiring aircrew training in new weapon systems," Colonel Henley said. As the training center matures, the 5 SOS may be asked to expand its instructor role to include more commando air frames, support and tactics. "The 5 is definitely one of the key components of the AFSOTC," said Col. Paul Harmon, AFSOTC commander. "There's no way I could do this job without them." Before taking on his new assignment, Colonel Harmon served as commandant of the smaller Air Force Special Operations School at Hurlburt. The association between the 5 SOS and the AFSOTC is the latest in a long line of TFI success stories within AFSOC. "This is graduate-level TFI," Colonel Henley said. "We're taking eight years flying as an associate special operations squadron and bringing those lessons to the training center." "We've had awesome results with associate units dating back to the mid-1990s," added Lt. Col. Joe Arthur, 5 SOS chief pilot. In the years that followed, the 5 entered into a traditional associate unit relationship with AFSOC's 9th SOS at Eglin AFB, Fla. The 9th assumed ownership of the 5's Combat Shadow aircraft, while crews and maintainers from the 5 worked with the 9th to meet mission requirements. "We've shown that Reserve associate

units work well in the special operations world, and I'm sure that the 5's association with the AFSOTC will continue that tradition," Colonel Arthur said. "This is really a good fit for us." 5 SOS officials hope that serving in the Reserve as an instructor at the AFSOTC will appeal to air commandos considering leaving active duty. "We're definitely hiring right now," Colonel Nicholson said. "We're hoping to attract people coming off active duty so we can capture that special ops experience and pass it on at the training center. But, we are also looking for instructor pilots from other airframes who would be interested in this exciting new mission." 2008

Air Force Reservists of the 5 Special Operations Squadron are now helping to train Active Duty airmen at Hurlburt Field, Fla., in operating the AC-130U gunship. They began their instructor roles in September in support of the 19th SOS, the Active Duty formal training unit. "The Reservists bring continuity and depth of experience to the training environment," said Maj. David McGourin, one of the Reservists who teaches pilots and copilots. "They also have a large amount of operational, combat, and instructional experience that allows them to adapt to the needs of the student and be flexible in their approach with the students," he added. The goal is to have three full Reserve crews for the training, which would make Reservists approximately 40 percent of the AC-130U instructor force. "I enjoy passing on what I've learned to the students," said Maj. Francis Poindexter, a Reservist who teaches the gunship's fire control officer course. 2014

Reserve pilots and loadmasters from Duke Field, Fla., are cross training to the Dornier C-146 Wolfhound light airlifter and preparing for the stand up a new squadron to operate it. A total of six pilots and four loadmasters from Air Force Reserve Command's 5 Special Operations Squadron have thus far completed Wolfhound training at Cannon AFB, N.M. AFRC and Air Force Special Operations Command plan to activate the 49th SOS as a new associate unit to provide aircrew training with the aircraft at Duke. "This is a continuation of what the 5 has been doing for the past seven years" partnering with AFSOC, said Maj. Austin White, 5 SOS Det. 1 commander. Duke has already received a C-145/C-146 cockpit trainer. AFSOC is replacing the smaller Skytruck in the forward special operations support role, and expanding the Wolfhound fleet from 16 to 23 aircraft as part of its overall fleet recap, according to officials at AFA's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando, Fla. 2015

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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