

SMOKEY HILL WEAPONS RANGE



LINEAGE

Smoky Hill Weapons Range - 15 Oct 73

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Major Richard V Gorman, 15 Oct 1973

LTC Robert E Eveleigh, 5 Oct 1975

LTC Jerry W Nelson, 9 Aug 1981

LTC Joe T Short, 22 Aug 1984

Maj Lyle E Allen, 1 Aug 1986

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The Smoky Hill Weapons Range is a 50-square-mile facility located 11 miles southwest of Salina, Kansas. It is the largest ANG air-to-ground bombing and gunnery range, providing a target impact area for tactical fighter aircrews of the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and

Air Force.

The purpose of this facility is to train aircrews for conventional, nuclear and tactical air-to-ground combat missions and to develop the weapons skills of these aircrews to assure proficiency and combat readiness. To obtain the desired levels of expertise requires a realistic and flexible training environment. At Smoky Hill, this equates to a variety of ranges and targets which tests skills on a variety of operational offensive weapons, as well as training in countermeasures and evasion. In the Midwest, tactical weapons ranges are scarce. The importance of the Smoky Hill facility is evidenced by the fact that it serves as the primary range facility for six units in five surrounding states, and also serves as the secondary target range for another six units, with approximately 5,500 sorties flown on the range annually. Aircraft using the range are primarily F-4s, A-7s, A-10s, and F-111s. Within this 50 square mile facility are 33,877 acres of range land. Of this acreage 26,696 acres are made available to the public for agriculture, hay production and grazing on a competitive bid basis by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The remaining area is utilized for the target complex, which includes two conventional ranges, one nuclear range, two non-scorable tactical ranges, and two scorable tactical ranges. The Range also includes 70 miles of roads and firebreaks.

Smoky Hill ANG Range was the largest and busiest Primary Training Range in the Air National Guard. "Smoky Hill is a unique place," "By being the largest weapons range in the ANG, it truly is a national asset." The range (SHANGR) consisted of 34,000 acres of USAF property, approximately 30,500 of which is operated by Det 1 as an Air to Ground weapons delivery range. The remaining 3,500 acres was sub-licensed to the Kansas Army National Guard for military training purposes.

Range personnel provided Electronic Counter-Measures Training to ANG, AFRES, Active Duty and NATO units. Smoky Hill provided this training via the AN/MST-T1a Multiple Threat Emitter System (MUTES), and also had the capability to evaluate aircraft responses to surface threats by utilizing the AN/MSR-T4 Threat Reaction Analysis Indicator System (TRAINS).

The Televised Ordinance Scoring System (TOSS) was utilized to provide impact scores to fighter and bomber aircrews on weapons releases. The TOSS utilized a minimum of two cameras to score a release. Smoky Hill ANG Range had over 120 targets utilizing nine camera sites.

Advances in Information Technology set the pace for new training initiatives at Smoky Hill. Seamless information flow existed between services requiring increased cooperation enhanced exponentially during joint training efforts and exercises. Smoky Hill led the range community in these efforts from the ground up.

Smoky Hill Range was originally acquired in 1942 by the United States Army and reassigned on 12 January 1945 as Camp Phillips Air-tog round Gunnery Range. The land was later transferred from the Army to the Air Force Strategic Air Command.

This command changed the name from Camp Phillips to Smoky Hill Air Force Range. In July 1964, Smoky Hill Air Force Range was transferred from SAC to the Tactical Air Command

(TAC). In July 1972 the 184th Tactical Fighter Training Group, Kansas Air National Guard, McConnell AFB, Kansas, assumed range scheduling functions, and in October 1973, the Kansas Air National Guard assumed all operating and maintenance functions for the range under a license agreement with the Air Force.

Personnel assigned to the range were Title 5 Civil Service personnel until being replaced by Title 32, active duty Guardsmen in 1979. In addition to the personnel changes, Smoky Hill was also redesignated as Smoky Hill Weapons Range. In 1980 the Civil Engineer Flight (part-time) was assigned to Smoky Hill. Currently, 25 full time Air Guard active duty personnel, two Civil Service janitors, and 21 weekend Air Guardsmen make up the team that operate and maintain the range.

The year 1991 started off with the Smoky Hill Air National Guard Range receiving the first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ever given to an ANG range. In February the air war in Iraq began and continued through the month. Although none of the 184th was directly involved in the war the 190th Air Refueling Group at Forbes Field in Topeka was. Several 184th Jayhawks went to Topeka to help the 190th deploy out and to backfill positions.

Lt Col Chuck Youngquist assumed command of the Smoky Hill Gunnery Range from Lt Col Russ Axtell, who then assumed command of the 184 TFG from Col Frank Scoggins. The Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) process was initiated to ensure the unit was ready to receive the new aircraft. The Reduction in Force (RIF) process to match unit personnel with the new positions required to support the B-1B was then completed. Finally, in July 1994 the 184th Fighter Group became the 184th Bomb Group, changing from Air Education and Training Command (AETC), to Air Combat Command (ACC).

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources