

6 SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

The 6 Special Operations Squadron is a combat aviation advisory unit. Its mission is to assess, train, advise and assist foreign aviation forces in airpower employment, sustainment and force integration. Squadron advisors help friendly and allied forces employ and sustain their own airpower resources and, when necessary, integrate those resources into joint and combined (multi-national) operations. The squadron was reactivated in 1994 to serve the combatant commanders' advisory needs throughout the range of military operations--from small military-to military contact events and contingency operations to major regional conflict.

Squadron advisors possess specialized capabilities for foreign internal defense (helping friends and allies apply airpower while countering the internal threats of subversion, lawlessness and insurgency), unconventional warfare (providing battlefield flexibility through non-standard air platforms supporting special operations surface forces) and coalition support (integrating foreign airpower into the theater-campaign, promoting safety and interoperability, facilitating airspace deconfliction, and upgrading host-nation aviation capabilities).

A principal mission objective in all operating arenas is facilitating the availability, reliability, safety and interoperability of participating foreign aviation resources supporting joint and combined operations. Mission execution is approached primarily through hands-on, adaptive training and advisory support geared to practical airpower applications. The squadron can also function in a direct-execution role. These airpower training and advisory capabilities are extremely relevant in the Global War on Terror, particularly in cases when US forces have to fight as coalition partners or when allied forces have to carry the tactical initiative with US training and advisory assistance.

The squadron executes its mission through theater-oriented Operational Aviation Detachments

"A" and "B" (OAD-A/OAD-B). The OAD-A functions as the tactical training/advisory team. The OAD-B provides command, control, and communications (C3), logistics, administrative and medical support to multiple OAD-A teams deployed in the field. Deploying teams are tailored in both size and capability to meet specific mission requirements. Personnel assigned to the 6 SOS are all required to complete a demanding training and education curriculum intended to produce foreign language proficient, regionally-oriented, politically astute and culturally aware aviation advisory experts. The curriculum provides extensive indoctrination in advanced fieldcraft skills (including force protection and personal survival), instructional skills, risk management, and safety. Squadron advisors, representing 32 separate Air Force Specialty Codes, speak a variety of languages, including Russian, Polish, German, Korean, Arabic, Spanish, French and Thai.

Squadron training and advisory capabilities in the employment arena include airpower applications, tactical employment and mission planning. Tactical flying activities include fixed and rotary-wing operations for combat search and rescue, close air support and airlift/aerial delivery (infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, and air drop). Assistance in the sustainment arena includes aviation maintenance, supply, munitions, ground safety, life support, personal survival, air base defense, C3 and other sustainment functions supporting combat air operations. Squadron advisory teams also assist theater combatant commanders and subordinate commands in operational-level planning and joint, combined force integration in fixed and rotary-wing operations. Assistance to the theater combatant commands includes assessments of foreign aviation capabilities, liaison with foreign aviation forces and assistance in theater air campaign planning for combined operations. The squadron also performs safety and interoperability assessments of foreign aviation capabilities prior to initiating joint, combined operations and exercises. Once the foreign aviation unit has achieved satisfactory levels of proficiency and safety, the 6 SOS, in its coalition support role, can serve as a force multiplier by fielding advisory teams to draw foreign units into joint and combined operations.

LINEAGE

6 Fighter Squadron, Commando constituted, 22 Sep 1944
Activated, 30 Sep 1944
Inactivated, 3 Nov 1945
Disbanded, 8 Oct 1948
Reconstituted and activated, 18 Apr 1962
Organized, 27 Apr 1962
Redesignated 6 Air Commando Squadron, Fighter, 15 Jun 1966
Redesignated 6 Special Operations Squadron, 15 Jul 1968
Inactivated, 15 Nov 1969
Activated, 8 Jan 1970
Redesignated 6 Special Operations Training Squadron, 31 Aug 1972
Inactivated, 15 Sep 1974
Redesignated 6 Special Operations Flight, 25 Mar 1994
Activated, 1 Apr 1994
Redesignated 6 Special Operations Squadron, 1 Oct 1994

STATIONS

Asansol, India, 30 Sep 1944 (detachments operated from Cox's Bazar, India, 15–21 Oct 1944, 2–8 Nov 1944; and 11–18 Jan 1945, and from Fenny, India, 1–24 Dec 1944)
Hay, India, 7 Feb 1945
Asansol, India, 9 May 1945
Kalaikunda, India, 23 May 1945
Asansol, India, 22 Jun–6 Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 1–3 Nov 1945
Eglin Air Force Auxiliary Airfield No. 9 (Hurlburt Field), FL, 27 Apr 1962
England AFB, LA, 15 Jan 1966–17 Feb 1968
Pleiku AB, South Vietnam, 29 Feb 1968–15 Nov 1969 (detachment operated from Da Nang AB, South Vietnam, 1 Apr 1968–1 Sep 1969)
England AFB, LA, 8 Jan 1970–15 Sep 1974
Hurlburt Fld, FL, 1 Apr 1994

ASSIGNMENTS

1 Air Commando Group, 30 Sep 1944–3 Nov 1945
Tactical Air Command, 18 Apr 1962
1 Air Commando Group (later, 1st Air Commando Wing), 27 Apr 1962
14 Air Commando Wing, 29 Feb 1968
633 Special Operations Wing, 15 Jul 1968–15 Nov 1969
4410 Combat Crew Training Wing (later, 4410th Special Operations Training Group), 8 Jan 1970
1 Special Operations Wing, 31 Jul 1973
23 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jan–15 Sep 1974
16 Operations (later, 1st Special Operations) Group, 1 Apr 1994

ATTACHMENTS

First Provisional Fighter Group, 7 Feb–c. 8 May 1945
2 Air Commando Group, 23 May–20 Jun 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47, 1944–1945
P-51, 1945
B/RB-26
L-28 (later, U-10), 1962–1963
T-28, 1962–1967
A-1, 1963, 1966; 1967–1969
A-37, 1970–1974
UH-1N, 1996
CASA-212, 1998

COMMANDERS

Cpt Olin B. Carter, 30 Sep 1944
Maj Younger A. Pitts Jr., Nov 1944
Cpt William J. Hemphill, 19 Feb-Sep 1945
Unkn, Sep-3 Nov 1945
Unkn, 27 Apr 1962
Maj William W. McDaniel, 30 Apr 1962
Maj Robert W. Allison Jr., Feb 1963
Lt Col Owen P. Farmer Jr., 12 Apr 1963
Maj Siegel M. Dickman, Jun 1964
Maj Leroy W. Svendsen Jr., Jul 1964
Lt Col Eugene H. Mueller Jr., Oct 1964
Maj Robert A. McCauley, 7 Jun 1965
Lt Col Benjamin M. Washburn, 28 Jun 1965
Col Domenico A. Curto, Nov 1965
Maj George G. Duke, Jan 1966
Lt Col Wallace A. Ford, 3 May 1966
Maj Joseph C. Holden, Jul 1966
Lt Col Wallace A. Ford, 22 Oct 1966
Lt Col Norman F. Repp, 1 Mar 1968
Lt Col James N. Swain Jr., 22 May 1968
Lt Col Alexander E. Corey, 17 Jul 1968
Lt Col Harold D. Hadden, 1 May-15 Nov 1969
Lt Col Donald L. Lanoue, 8 Jan 1970
Maj Wayne K. Beckwith, 31 Aug 1970
Maj Robert L. Martin, 15 Sep 1970
Lt Col Fred T. Coleman, Jul 1972-15 Sep 1974
Unkn, 1 Apr 1994
Lt Col Stephen S. Whitson, 1 Oct 1994
Lt Col Monty D. Sexton, 13 Dec 1996
Lt Col Marvin S. Pugmire, 23 Jan 1998
Lt Col Norman J. Brozenick Jr., 30 Jun 1999
Lt Col Eric C. Huppert, 18 Jan 2001
Lt Col James Sikes, 16 Jan 2003

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

India-Burma

Central Burma

Vietnam

Vietnam Air Offensive Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive Phase III
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive Phase IV
TET 69/Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969
Vietnam Winter-Spring 1970

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation
Vietnam, 1 Jun–15 Nov 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with the Combat "V" Device
1 Feb–20 Jun 1968
15 Jul 1968–31 May 1969
1 Jun 1997–31 May 1999
1 Jul 2003–30 Jun 2005

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
Jul 1963–Jun 1965
15 Sep 1970–31 Dec 1971
1 Jun 1995–31 May 1997
1 Jul 1999–30 Jun 2001
1 Jul 2001–30 Jun 2003
1 Sep 2004–31 Aug 2006

Gallant Unit Citation
6 Oct 2001–30 May 2003

EMBLEM





6 Special Operations Squadron emblem: On a disc Gules, an annulet Argent debruised by a pale Azure fimbriated Or bearing a dagger palewise, point to base Gray winged at the grip, displayed to chief Yellow between in chief a mullet of six White shaded of the fourth and in base two lightning bolts pilewise of the like, all within a diminished border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "6 SPECIAL OPS SQ" in Yellow letters Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "COMMANDO" 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 design is based on the unit's predecessor insignia. The disc bearing an annulet alludes to a globe and reflects the unit's round-the-clock, worldwide mission capabilities. The six-pointed star denotes the Squadron's numerical designation and honors the memory of all previous "Commandos." The lightning bolts reflect two World War II campaign credits. The winged dagger symbolizes the Special Operations mission of the unit and the dedication and skills of Squadron personnel. (Approved, 22 March 1966)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in CBI, 17 Oct 1944–8 May 1945.

The unit was reconstituted at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on 27 April 1962, and assigned to the 1st Air Commando Group, flying the B/RB-26, U-10, T-28, and by early 1963, the A-1E. The unit's mission was to train in counterinsurgency (COIN) and unconventional warfare, and demonstrate those tactics both within the US and abroad. Squadron personnel served as advisors to Vietnamese Air Force personnel at Bien Hoa. During the same period, at Howard Air Force Base, Panama, they trained Central and South American airmen in COIN tactics, techniques, and procedures.

All aircraft were reassigned in July 1963, except the T-28, and many personnel were transferred to form the cadres for new special operations units. By March 1964, the squadron increased manning sufficiently to deploy to Udorn Air Base, Thailand, to train air and ground crews in COIN operations.

The unit moved with the 1st Air Commando Wing to England Air Force Base, Louisiana, in January 1966, and continued the same type of operations as previously performed at Hurlburt Field (to include the return of the A-1E aircraft). By December 1967, the last of the T-28s were transferred, and the unit started receiving A-1G, H, and J aircraft. The unit deployed to Pleiku Air Base, Vietnam, in February 1968, and was reassigned to the 14th Air Commando Wing. The unit was reassigned to the 633d Special Operations Wing on July 15, 1968, and redesignated the 6 Special Operations Squadron. The unit flew combat missions, including air support for ground forces, air cover for transports, day and night interdiction, combat search and rescue support, armed reconnaissance, and forward air control.

Combat in Southeast Asia, 1 Mar 1968–15 Nov 1969. The 6 SOS was manned with around 25 pilots and 135 airmen. Their A-1 inventory numbered approximately 20 aircraft. They used the call sign SPAD and tail code ET. Wallace A Ford was a commander of the 6. He was lost 24 May 1968 while on a mission over SVN and listed KIA. There were eight, including Ford, KIA's and four MIA's who were later changed to deceased.

In October 1969 the unit was being broken up and the pilots were transferred to NKP. They were assigned to either the 1st SOS, 22nd SOS, or the 602nd SOS (Fighter). There was a small group that manned a detachment at Pleiku but were there for only a short period of time. During this time period the 56 SOW Operating Location Alpha Alpha was established at DaNang commanded by Jim Wold. Jim had been at Pleiku with the 6 SOS. The personnel manning the OLAA were assigned to the 56 and on TDY at DaNang. This arrangement gave them certain privileges such as stateside leave. Even while all the kinks were being ironed out missions were flown daily.

The unit was activated again on Jan. 6, 1970 at England Air Force Base, Louisiana, with the mission of replacement training of US Air Force pilots in A-37B aircraft. The unit was redesignated as the 6 Special Operations Training Squadron on Aug. 31 1972. The unit was assigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on July 31, 1973 and reassigned to the 23d Tactical Fighter Wing on Jan. 1, 1974. Squadron's mission was replacement training for US and allied pilots in A-37s.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, which created the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), identified foreign internal defense (FID) as one of the principal activities of special operations forces. Subsequently, in 1990, the Commander, USSOCOM validated and strongly supported the establishment of a dedicated Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) aviation-FID organization. In the spring of 1991, a FID office was created in the Plans, Programs, and Acquisition Management Directorate of Headquarters AFSOC, and an aviation-

FID concept of operations study was published. In July 1992, the organization conducted a "proof-of-concept" deployment to Ecuador with the US Army 7th Special Forces Group. The success of the deployment led to a Commander, USSOCOM request for an early unit stand-up. In August 1993, the organization became Detachment 7, Special Operations Combat Operations Staff. In March 1994, the first major aviation-FID deployment was conducted in Ecuador, and in April 1994, the 6 Special Operations Flight was activated and realigned under the 16 Operations Group of the 16 Special Operations Wing. The unit was upgraded to squadron status in October 1994 to reflect its growth in mission and personnel. The squadron received its first two aircraft, UH-1Ns, on Oct. 11, 1996, and marked its first flight in 27 years on Dec. 20, 1996. Advisors are tactically qualified in a variety of aircraft, including the Russian An-2, An-26, and An-32 transport aircraft, the Russian Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters, the Spanish CASA 212 transport, the Chinese Y-12 transport, the French AS-332 Super Puma, the Canadian DHC-6 Twin Otter, the Basler BT-67, all models of the US Huey helicopter and several USAF C-130 variants.

Air Force Special Operations Command's foreign internal defense mission is expected to move across town from Hurlburt Field, Fla., to Duke Field, where Reservists assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing will partner with their active duty counterparts in the 6 Special Operations Squadron. This will be the first time that Reservists will participate in the command's foreign internal defense mission, he said in an interview. FID outreach and training helps teach US partners to apply airpower in countering internal threats. Fiel said having Reservists in the FID mission is a "win-win" because Reservists typically stay at one duty assignment throughout their careers. "You get continuity both in language training and in cultural training," he said. Previously, the 6 SOS operated an assortment of aircraft common to other countries. In a change of approach, AFSOC now plans to purchase 16 light, fixed-wing aircraft of one type that are easy to maintain and easy to fly for the FID training. 2012

Air Force Special Operations Command officials held a ceremony to mark the move of the 6 Special Operations Squadron from Hurlburt Field, Fla., to nearby Duke Field. The shift is part of the squadron's transition from under the 1st Special Operations Wing to the oversight of the Air Force Special Operations Training Center. Along with the transfer, the squadron is relinquishing its fleet of helicopters and turboprop airplanes for a force of new C-145As. Col. William Andersen, AFSOTC commander, said the 6 SOS' activities at Duke "will become the centerpiece of a far larger irregular warfare effort for AFSOC than previously seen." 2012

The final flight of a UH-1N Huey assigned to the 6 Special Operations Squadron occurred last month along the coast of the Florida panhandle and southern Alabama, announced officials at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Col. Jim Slife, commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing, the squadron's parent organization, piloted the Huey during the Sept. 19 flight, accompanied by members of the squadron, according to an Oct. 1 Hurlburt release. Hueys were long a fixture of the squadron, which conducts combat aviation advising for Air Force Special Operations Command. The squadron is relocating to nearby Duke Field where it will solely operate the C-145A platform. 2012

The last two C-145As assigned to the 318th Special Operations Squadron at Cannon AFB, N.M., flew to their new home with the 6 SOS at Duke Field, Fla.. The special operations transports left Cannon for good on March 28. "A handful of C-145 personnel have already relocated to Duke Field after being selected to join the 6 SOS," said Capt. Scott Whitmore, 318th SOS executive officer. He added, "Our crew members are sad to see these planes go, but with that comes an eagerness to see what new opportunities will be available." The 318th SOS will continue operating PC-12 special-mission aircraft. The unit deployed with the C-145 for the first time in March 2011-to Afghanistan-and later supported US special operations forces in Africa, states the release. 2013

Air Force Special Operations Command solicited information from industry to modify and lease two Cessna 208EX Caravan aircraft for training international partner aircrew. AFSOC is moving to contractor-supplied aircraft for the Aviation Foreign Internal Defense training mission in order to more closely match the individual needs of specific partner air forces. AFSOC's 6 Special Operations Squadron at Duke Field, Fla., is retiring the bulk of its current C-145 Skytruck AvFID fleet, retaining only a few aircraft to maintain air advisor's flight currency. The request for information stipulated that potential airframes must be able to be equipped with night-vision compatible cockpits, air-drop capability, and electro-optical ISR sensors. The RFI would be for a one-year probationary contract with the potential for a four-year extension, with responses due by July 28. The Afghan Air Force currently operates the Cessna 208, supported by Air Force air advisors in theater. 2015

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 19 Nov 2010

Updated: 10 Jan 2024

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.