

169th INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON



LINEAGE

Federal recognition on 27 Apr 1987

Activated 19 Sep 1987

169th Electronic Security Squadron

169th Intelligence Squadron

STATIONS

Salt Lake City, UT

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Lt Col. Michael H. Abel

Lt. Col. William G. Siddoway

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Dark Horse Squadron

OPERATIONS

The 169th's mission is to provide tactical airborne command, control and countermeasures support to the U.S. and allied forces. Unit aircrews ensure that U.S. communications are secure and protected from hostile countermeasures. As a unit of the UTANG, the 169th has both a state and a federal mission. The state mission is to support civil authorities in the protection of life and property and the preservation of peace, order and public safety under competent orders of state authority. The federal mission of the 169th is to provide command, control and communications countermeasures support to United States and allied forces during wartime and contingency operations.

An airborne SIGINT reconnaissance squadron, the 169th ESS conducted its mission in Comfy Levi and Senior Scout S-141 mobile intercept shelters aboard C-130. The 169 Intelligence Squadron continues SIGINT missions today under control of 8th Air Force and the Air Combat Command.

Unit manning is planned to eventually grow to approximately 82 part time Guardsmen and 16 full time AGR members.

Since the 169th will depend largely on active duty ESC field units for providing operations qualification training to unit personnel, manning is scheduled to phase in over a four-year period, so as not to overload training capabilities. Because unit members must be able to perform all monthly training (up to four days per month) and their two-week annual tour at the unit itself, only individuals who live in the Salt Lake City area are accepted into the 169th. This contrasts with the ESC Individual Mobilization Augmentee program, which has members scattered throughout the country performing their monthly training at a "unit of attachment" near their home.

Another key difference is that the IMA program can only recruit previously qualified, prior-service members. While qualified prior-service members are the 169th top recruiting priority, the unit can and does recruit members "off the street" to send them through the training pipeline to become fully qualified airborne operators. Once fully qualified in the field, members will return to Salt Lake City to re-enter civilian life and work as "part-time professionals" with the 169th.

In early 1983, the idea of establishing an ESC-gained Air National Guard (ANG) ESS was born. The large number of language-qualified people and excellent ANG support available in the Salt Lake City, Utah, area made that city a most attractive location for an ESC Reserve airborne unit to support wartime and contingency operations. The idea allowed ESC to fill shortages of airborne crypto linguists and to save Air Force training funds by recruiting individuals already proficient in a language. On 5 February, the organization of the 169 ESS was announced

publicly. A Department of the Air Force letter then officially announced the unit's constitution, effective 9 April. The letter stated the unit would be allotted to the Air National Guard on or about 8 October, with the ESC as the gaining command. 1986

The unit was originally created as a squadron under the U.S. Air Force's Electronic Security Command. In October 1986, the squadron was reassigned to the Air National Guard and shortly thereafter was granted federal recognition with formal activation coming April 27, 1987. The unit eventually became the first ANG unit to be assigned to the Air Force's Air Intelligence Agency. Currently, the 169th IS operates as a component of the Air Force's Air Combat Command, subordinate to the 55th Wing, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Because of its extremely high operations tempo supporting the U.S. Southern Command, the 169th IS grew from about 180 authorizations to over 200. With its varied and active missions, the Dark Horse Squadron should continue the successful retention and recruiting posture it has maintained over the past few years.

The unit just completed its second year of activation in support of Operations Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom, and will demobilize in October. During the past two years, unit personnel participated in Operation Southern Watch, Operations Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, as well as continuous deployments to the USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility (AOR).

Due to the outstanding efforts of 169th members, the Senior Scout has become USSOUTHCOM's premier airborne ISR platform. Additionally, Senior Scout deployed for the first time in support of USCENTCOM. Of this deployment, the Commander, USCENTCOM said "you have simply provided the best airborne support to joint operations in the AOR since 9-11."

The Senior Scout program continues to flourish after several years of funding shortfalls. The program is fully funded through fiscal 2007 and is in a process of continual upgrades to the platform. With its new technologies, the Senior Scout weapons system brings capabilities to the fight on par with other national airborne Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms and will be a viable system for years to come.

Late 2002 saw the first operational use of the unit's Distributed Ground Intercept Facility (DGIF) workstations.

The 169th IS routinely deploys 120 days a year in support of Southern Command missions. Since 9/11 and unit activation, from October 2001 to present, they deploy for an average of 90 days annually supporting Central Command. The squadron, which only has 150 full-time and part-time personnel, still manages to pass all ANG and AF inspections while deploying 210 days a year to two different theaters.

The 169th IS is a growing organization, adding 25 AGR positions in FY 04, and plans for an additional increase in full-time positions in FY 05, possibly including additional support for the Distributed Ground Intercept Facility.

Nationally, the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Combined Analysis and Reporting Center took place in June of 2004, which marks the culmination of nearly a decade of work and dedication by the 169th IS with foreign government agencies and militaries, resulting in the first military to-military intelligence sharing operation in Air National Guard history.

The unit received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the fourth time, three times in the last three years.



Air Force Order of Battle

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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.