

311 SPECIAL OPERATIONS INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

311 Special Operations Intelligence Squadron

STATIONS

Hurlburt AFB, FL

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Magdalena Sunderhaus,

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



On a disc Azure, in saltire a key ward to dexter chief Or and a dagger blade Argent trimmed Sable, guard and handle of the last fimbriated of the third grip lines Gris, overall and tail entwined to bow of key a shark Proper. Attached above the disc, a Black scroll edged with a narrow Gray border and inscribed "LEADING THE HUNT" in Gray letters. Attached below the disc, a Black scroll edged with a narrow Gray border and inscribed "311TH SPECIAL OPS INTEL SQ" in Gray 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 gray shark with sharp teeth speaks to how the Squadron tracks and enables lethal results to its targets. As hunters, sharks use their sense of smell, taste and sight to stalk their prey in the same way the unit employs multiple intelligence disciplines to complete their objectives. The key signifies the unit's primary function as an intelligence unit. The key is used to open what is locked just as the mission is to unlock information from the battle space. The dagger is a hallmark of the Air Force Special Operations Command. It characterizes our involvement in direct and kinetic action. (Approved, 21 Mar 2022)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Red lights strewn across the tile ceiling of the office building flashed continuously to alert the intelligence analysts of a visitor in the facility as specialists paused to reflect on their unique mission amidst the glow of several illuminated computer screens. Confiscated phones sat in a secure room at the entrance so nothing with wireless capabilities could somehow compromise progress made in working toward the day's objective. Most employees couldn't be identified in an article without it posing a threat to national security. "This is the introduction and integration of a new enterprise into the Air Force Reserve Command," said Chief Master Sgt. Marvin Pritchett, superintendent of the new 311th Special Operations Intelligence Squadron here. "We

are breaking ground in a new world.” This cutting edge work involves extracting intelligence value from multiple platforms and distributing it to special operations commanders so they can make battlefield decisions.

Although the official activation of the 311th SOIS took place Nov. 3, 2019, the unit has been hard at work for months hiring members while serving as an unblinking eye for special operations forces. “We provide aerial information about what’s happening on the field to our own ground forces,” said Lt. Col. Magdalena Sunderhaus, commander of the 311th SOIS. “We have a bird’s eye view on the entire situation.” The technology the squadron is using isn’t brand new, but the mission is. There’s only one other squadron in the Air Force that’s performing this mission, said Sunderhaus. The 311th SOIS is also the only squadron doing anything like this in the Reserve component.

“We started standing up the squadron in January of 2019, and have already won three [Major Command level] awards, logged over 7,000 flying hours, supported over 900 missions, generated over 700 products, and haven’t even been activated yet,” said Sunderhaus. “The decision to activate the unit came from [United States] Special Operations Command requirements for full motion video processing,” said Sunderhaus. “Air Force Special Operations Command then worked with their counterparts to create an augmentation force. This work saves lives – it prosecutes and eliminates terrorism.” The mission set extends into humanitarian efforts as well.

“We’re bringing long-term continuity to this program and mission,” said Sunderhaus. “We’re going to be here for a while and so we care about making it so that Airmen want to stay.” “We’ve been hand selecting dedicated Airmen that we think can handle this job,” said Sunderhaus. “The rigorous training, 12 hour shifts, and human cost of the mission can take its toll.” With the hiring process comes the need to have programs which provide for Airmen and their families. “With the active-duty Air Force, there are systems in place to make sure you get paid, get you your uniform and are provided medical care,” said Pritchett. “In the Reserve, when you’re setting up a squadron, you have to build these systems from scratch. Standing up a squadron while also performing the mission comes with additional stressors.”

USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.