

## 919 SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

919 Troop Carrier Group, Assault established and activated, 15 Jan 1963  
Organized in the Reserve, 11 Feb 1963  
Discontinued, and inactivated, 15 Dec 1965  
Redesignated 919 Tactical Airlift Group, 17 Jun 1971  
Activated in the Reserve, 30 Jul 1971  
Redesignated 919 Special Operations Group, 1 Jul 1975  
Redesignated 919 Special Operations Wing, 1 Aug 1992

### STATIONS

Memphis Muni Aprt, TN, 11 Feb 1963-15 Dec 1965  
Eglin AF Aux Field #3 (Duke Field), FL, 30 Jul 1971

### ASSIGNMENTS

445 Troop Carrier (later, 445 Air Transport) Wing, 11 Feb 1963-15 Dec 1965  
459 Tactical Airlift Wing, 30 Jul 1971  
Eastern Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Dec 1974  
Tenth Air Force, 8 Oct 1976  
Fourth Air Force, 1 Mar 1983  
Tenth Air Force, 1 Jul 1994

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-123, 1963-1965

C-130, 1971  
AC-130, 1975-1995  
HH-3, 1990-1993  
HC-130N/P (later, MC-130P), 1995  
MC-130E, 1995  
MQ-1, 2009  
U-28/PC-12, 2009

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Arthur T. Ousley, Feb 1963-15 Dec 1965  
Col Donald E. Haugen, 30 Jul 1971  
Maj Roy E. Ayers Jr. (acting), 2 Apr 1974  
Col Amos R. Dreessen, 17 Jun 1974  
Col Billie H. Parker, 23 Oct 1978  
Col Terry G. Whitnell, 13 Oct 1985  
Lt Col Lee T. Weiland Jr., 14 Nov 1987  
Col Warren D. Snyder, 17 Jan 1988  
Col Ernest R. Webster, 28 Apr 1991  
Col Jack W. Blair Jr., 2 Mar 1994  
Col Thomas M. Stogsdill, 5 Jun 1998  
Col Mark A. Kyle  
Col Steven Chapman, Aug 2006  
Col Jon A. Weeks, Apr 2009  
Col Anthony J. Comtois, Dec 2010  
Col Kevin J. Merrill

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Southwest Asia  
Defense of Saudi Arabia  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device  
1 Feb 2001-31 Jan 2003

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
30 Jul 1971-31 Mar 1973  
1 Jul 1975-31 Jan 1977  
1 Oct 1983-1 Jun 1985

1 Jun 1987-31 May 1989  
8 Dec 1989-7 Jan 1990  
1 Jun 1990-31 May 1992  
1 Jun 1992-31 May 1994  
1 Jun 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-31 Dec 2007  
1 Oct 2008-30 Jul 2010

**EMBLEM**





Azure, a moon Or surmounted by a spectre-like female figure winged, all Gray garnished Sable, grasping in her sinister hand a flame Gules and issuing from the dexter sleeve a ray of light to sinister base of the second, all within a diminished bordure of the like. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "919TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING" in Blue 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 spectre-like female figure represents the liberty the unit is prepared to defend. The flowing robes represent the ghost-like image of an aircraft in flight, and the general function of the unit as a flying operation. The ball of fire in the figure's left hand represents the unit's ability to defend the country against aggression. The stream of light symbolizes the continuing vigilance and readiness of the Air Force Reserve. The emblem further symbolizes heritage of the 919th's AC-130A "Spectre" and MC-130E/P special operations aircraft, with the fire symbolic of the weapons mounted on the left side of the "Spectre" gunships and the stream of light paying tribute to the night reconnaissance abilities of the unit. Azure, a moon Or surmounted by a spectre-like female figure winged, all Gray garnished Sable, grasping in her sinister hand a flame Gules and issuing from the dexter sleeve a ray of light to sinister base of the second, all within a diminished bordure of the like.

Emblazoned on the Air Force Shield piped in Air Force Yellow, against an Air Force Blue field, a spectre-like female figure clad in flowing grey robes and outlined in black, facing dexter. In the figure's left hand, a red ball of fire. A stream of light in Air Force Yellow flows sinister from the figure's right sleeve. Behind the figure, a portion of a disc in Air Force Yellow, outlined in black. Against a white scroll piped in Air Force Yellow and Blue, the motto "Semper Paratus Pugnare" "Always Ready to Fight. **SIGNIFICANCE**" The design is based on the distinctive history of the 919th Special Operations Group as the Air Force Reserve's only special operations group and the general function of the unit as a special operations organization. The Air Force Blue field represents the night sky; the Air Force Yellow disc represents the moon. Both are symbolic of night operations which are the hallmark of special operations units.

The spectre-like female figure represents the liberty the unit is prepared to defend. It also represents the AC-130A Spectre special operations aircraft. The grey flowing robes represent

the ghost-like image of the aircraft in flight the general function of the unit as a flying operation. The red ball of fire in the figure's left hand represents the unit's ability to defend the country against aggression and is also symbolic of the weapons mounted on the left side of the AC-130A. The Air Force Yellow stream of light represents the night reconnaissance abilities of the unit and symbolizes the continuing vigilance and readiness of the Air Force Reserve. The design is two photographs of rough draft. (Approved, 21 Aug 1980; newest rendition approved, 27 Nov 2007)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Trained for troop carrier duties, 1963-1965. Performed airlift of personnel and cargo, in addition to airdropping U.S. Army paratroopers during exercises, 1971-1974. In late 1974 began training for gunship operations, with close air support as a primary duty, but included ability to perform armed interdiction, reconnaissance, and escort, forward air control and combat search and rescue in conventional or unconventional warfare setting. Took part in MAJCOM (Major Command), joint, sister service, and international exercises. Provided range clearing support for missile launches at the Eastern Test Range, 1979-1989 and for NASA space shuttle launches at Cape Canaveral, 1981-1988. The 711 Special Operations Squadron (SOS) hit key facilities and provided cover for U.S. Army troops during the invasion of Panama, Dec 1989-Jan 1990. On 1 Apr 1990, gained 71 SOS located at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. Both squadrons participated in the conflict in Southwest Asia: the 71 SOS, flying HH-3s deployed 12 Jan-16 Mar 1991 and the 711 SOS, flying AC-130s, deployed 7 Feb-12 Mar 1991. In addition, the 711 SOS used their C-130s to fly cargo and passengers. Lost the 71 SOS on 1 Oct 1993 but, in late 1994, gained the 5 SOS. The 5 SOS began to receive their MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft in Apr 1995 and trained for special operations, inflight refueling of special operations helicopters, and resupply missions. The 711 SOS transitioned from AC-130 gunships to M-130E Combat Talon I aircraft beginning in Oct 1995 and trained for a primary mission of infiltration, exfiltration and resupply of special operations forces. Periodically deployed personnel and aircraft to support special operations forces in contingency operations worldwide, in addition to numerous humanitarian deployments. The 919 Operations Group and 711 SOS provided the flight portion of MC-130E Combat Talon I training for both AFSOC and AFRC, 1 Oct 1997-. Over five hundred 919 Special Operations Wing (SOW) personnel were called to active duty for one year after terrorist attacked the United States on 11 Sep 2001; most of the personnel were extended on active duty for a second year. Supported Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Willing Spirit, 2002

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Periodically the wing deployed personnel and aircraft to support special operations forces in contingency operations worldwide, in addition to numerous humanitarian deployments. The 919th Operations Group flight training in MC-130E Combat Talon I for both Air Force Special Operations and Air Force Reserve Commands, 1 Oct 1997-.

The 919th Special Operations Wing was originally activated as a troop carrier group on Feb. 11, 1963, at Memphis, Tenn. Municipal Airport, and was deactivated in 1965. On July 30, 1971, the 919th was re-designated a tactical airlift group and reactivated at Duke Field, where it remains. Duke Field is an auxiliary field of Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The 919th Tactical Airlift Group received the first of six authorized C-130A aircraft on Oct. 17, 1971. By September 1972, five RC-130A reconnaissance aircraft were in place at Duke Field. By October 1972, members of the 919th TAG began flying airlift-configured C-130s on tactical training missions, including low-level formation flights, heavy equipment drops and container and personnel airdrops.

In August 1973, the 919th converted to C-130B aircraft and achieved combat ready status within seven months. As a result of this significant effort, the 919th received the Air Force Outstanding Unit award. Personnel of the 919th TAG flew missions throughout the United States, Europe and Central America. Its aircrews airlifted 14 percent of all cargo and 10 percent of all passengers flown by Air Force Reserve units in 1974.

In May 1974, Air Force officials announced a new mission for the 919th that was to last 20 years. The unit converted to a special operations mission and began flying the AC-130A Spectre gunship. On June 14, 1975, the first of ten authorized gunships arrived at Duke Field. On July 1, 1975, the unit was re-designated the 919th Special Operations Group.

Dedicated training enabled the reservists to quickly attain proficiency on the AC-130A Spectre gunships, and their efforts were recognized when the group received its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

During the 20 years that the unit flew AC-130 gunships, the 919th went on to earn four more Air Force Outstanding Unit awards. As the only special operations unit in the Air Force Reserve, the 919th deployed in numerous contingencies throughout the world. The unit supported Operation JUST CAUSE in December 1989 in Panama, and flew more than 30 sorties supporting the contingency. The objectives of JUST CAUSE were to restore democracy, protect Americans and American interests under the Panama Canal Treaty, and to oust Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega.

In 1991 the unit deployed to Operation DESERT STORM, the multinational coalition to free Kuwait. Five AC-130A gunships deployed to Southwest Asia on Jan. 17, 1991, and more than 300 reservists were called to active duty for deployment in support of the operation. The 919th SOW gunships flew more than 125 combat hours for Operation DESERT STORM.

On June 1, 1992, the unit was re-designated the 919th Special Operations Wing. Reservists from the 919th SOW again deployed on Sept. 15, 1994 in support of Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti. The 919th SOW gunships served as the "eyes in the sky" for the multinational forces landing at the airport during the initial contingency operation. While serving primarily in a reconnaissance role, the aircraft always maintained their vigilance, ready for action if necessary. More than 100 unit members deployed throughout the nearly four-month period. The aircraft flew 101 sorties.

In 1994, a new mission was once again announced for the 919th Special Operations Wing. The unit would gain a second flying squadron and transition to two new special operations aircraft - The MC-130P Combat Shadow and the MC-130E Combat Talon.

The 919th began retiring its AC-130A gunships while still supporting Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. The last of these venerable aircraft retired in September 1995. This included the "First Lady", the first production model C-130, now on permanent display at the Air Armament Museum, Eglin Air Force Base.

In Jan. 1995, The 5th Special Operations Squadron was reactivated and joined the 711th Special Operations squadron as the 919th's second flying squadron. The 5th SOS was assigned the mission of flying the Combat Shadow aircraft. In October 1995, the 711th SOS, the former gunship squadron, took delivery of its first Combat Talon I.

In 1998, the unit again changed the way it does business. The 919th was divided into two associate units at two locations - Duke Field and Eglin AFB. The 5th SOS was grafted into the active duty's 9th Special Operations Squadron at Eglin AFB as an associate unit supporting the 16th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field.

Following that transition, all MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft were placed in the Air Force Reserve at Duke Field. As a result, the 711th SOS became the only active associate unit in the

Air Force. In February 2000, the active duty 8th Special Operations and the 716th Maintenance Squadron moved from Hurlburt Field to Duke Field to share the Combat Talon mission with the 919th SOW.

The 919th SOW received its 10th Outstanding Unit Award as a result of the successful transition to active associate units.

In 2001, shortly after 9-11, the 919th SOW activated more than 600 of its more than 1,200 reservists to support Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and the war on terrorism. Approximately 550 reservists were extended for a second year and participated in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The wing tallied more than 1,800 combat sorties and 5,500 combat hours.

The 919th SOW recently received its 11th Outstanding Unit Award, this time with valor, for their contributions to the war on terror.

Changes Air Force Reserve Command's 919th Special Operations Wing will reorganize, change missions and move in the next few years. Wing Reservists currently fly MC-130 special operations aircraft. In the future, they will form reserve associate units in which they will fly and maintain new aircraft with Airmen in Air Force Special Operations Command. The 919th SOW will become a fully integrated partner in more special operations missions as a result of planned Total Force Integration initiatives," said Col. George Williams, senior individual mobilization augmentee to the AFSOC director of plans, programs, requirements and assessments.

Over the next five years, the 919th at Duke Field, Fla., will integrate with AFSOC's 1st SOW at Hurlburt Field, Fla., in several phases, said Col. Steven Chapman, 919th SOW commander. "The result is realizing the efficiency of standing up a true associate special operations unit using the highly dedicated and experienced citizen commandos of the 919th SOW," Colonel Chapman said. "In this day and age of decreased assets, it's truly a force multiplier." The wing's 5th Special Operations Squadron flies the MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft. The Combat Shadow supports special ops helicopters on low visibility, low-level air refueling missions. It can also air-drop small special operations teams and their equipment.

The wing's 711th SOS flies the MC-130E Combat Talon I. This aircraft delivers people and equipment, day or night, in all kinds of weather in support of U.S. and allied special operations forces globally. The wing will begin getting out of the Combat Shadow mission in the next year or two and will retire the Combat Talon I in 2011 or 2012. One immediate change for Duke Field's Reservists involves the sharing of flight training duties. AFSOC is developing an Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, where Reservists from the 919th SOW will augment training units in a variety of missions.

These missions include the single-engine U-28 Pilatus light transport aircraft, the AC-130U gunship and aviation foreign internal defense. AFID involves advising, training and assisting foreign aviation forces in the application of airpower in internal defense and development. Another possible emerging mission for the 919th SOW is an associate unit to augment the 3rd SOS at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. The squadron flies and maintains the MQ-1 Predator

unmanned aerial vehicle. "We can look forward to positions opening up to help support and maintain MQ-1 Predator, PC-12/U-28A Pilatus and AC-130U gunship aircraft," Colonel Chapman said. "Everyone here has the opportunity to bring a wealth of knowledge to the wing's future mission."

According to Col. Max Maxwell, Reserve adviser to the AFSOC commander, the proposed associate concept will help relieve stress on AFSOC-gained Reservists in a variety of ways. "AFSOC relies on 919th aircraft and personnel to fill deployment rotations," Colonel Maxwell said. "The 919th has always stepped up to the plate and performed magnificently. However, numerous deployments take their toll on Reservists as well as their employers. "The proposed way ahead for the 919th should be much more Reserve friendly while at the same time adding great value to AFSOC." 2008

The Air Force's last four MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft, belonging to the Air Force Reserve's 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Fla., were retired April 25 during a ceremony at the base. April 25 is a significant day in the history of the Combat Talon I. On that day in 1980, several of the aircraft at Duke Field took part in an ill-fated mission to free American hostages being held in Iran. After the ceremony, the aircraft were flown to the Air Force "boneyard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. "This is an emotional and historic day for the Airmen of the 919th Special Operations Wing," said Col. Andy Comtois, 919th SOW commander, during the retirement ceremony.

"Since our inception, the 919th SOW has primarily been a C-130 wing and, for almost 20 years, a Combat Talon wing. We will miss these great warbirds." The aircraft flew their final mission April 15. Flying in two two-ship formations, the Combat Talons carried more than 40 of the wing's Airmen who had a long association with the aircraft and wanted to be a part of the historic final flight. "I was glad we were allowed to be a part of it," said Tech. Sgt. Lora Huett of the 919th Force Support Squadron.

"The best part was when they opened up the ramp and took people back to sit on it. It was a beautiful view." Chief Master Sgt. Tom Mason, the wing's new command chief, flew his last mission as a loadmaster on aircraft No. 54-551. The chief transitioned to the loadmaster career field when the Talons arrived at Duke in 1995. "I've had many great missions over the years, both at home and in war," Mason said. "I don't know that I could have planned a more honorable way to end my career as an enlisted aviator than with the last flight of the mighty Combat Talons."

The final flight and retirement of the Talons are large steps in the wing's ongoing transition to the new aviation foreign internal defense mission for Air Force Special Operations Command. The wing currently has 10 new C-145A aircraft to perform that mission. "As our future mission emerges, we must say goodbye to the past," Comtois said. "The sun has set on the Talon mission. The 919th looks forward to a new aircraft and a new mission. Our citizen air commandos are more than ready and capable to take on this new challenge." The MC-130E made its first Air Force flight in 1966 and took part in every major U.S. conflict since. The Talon's primary mission was to provide infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of special operations forces and equipment in hostile or denied territory. Secondary missions included psychological operations and helicopter and vertical lift air refueling. 2013

Col. Steven Chapman, 919th Special Operations Wing commander, prepares for Master Sgt. Daniel Dombrowski (back left), 5th Special Operations Squadron first sergeant, and Lt. Col. Reid Henley, 5th 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.

The 5th SOS's history dates back to World War II, flying C-46 and C-47 combat missions in the Pacific theater. The squadron was disbanded shortly after the war ended. It returned to service from 1965 to 1969 to conduct psychological operations, humanitarian programs and other special operations forces activities in South Vietnam. In 1995, the 5th 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 5th SOS is an associate unit assigned to the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Initially, the 5th will provide aircrew training for the U-28 utility aircraft (the Air Force variant of the Pilatus PC-12) and train students in AFSOC's aviation foreign internal defense mission. The plan is for the 5th 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. 2008

Air Force Reserve Command's 919th Special Operations Wing recently received its first C-146 Wolfhound, replacing the C-145 Skytruck at Duke Field, Fla., officials announced. The unit divested the majority of its C-145s last year as part of its shift from the Aviation Foreign Internal Defense building partner competencies mission, to forward support of special operations forces with the larger Wolfhound. Maintenance personnel will use the first Wolfhound for maintenance training and procedure development, taking over from the civilian contractors who previously supported the type at Cannon AFB, N.M. "We are incorporating all of the contractor's maintenance materials along with the factory specifications and creating not just the Air Force's C-146 maintenance procedure, but also how to train airmen to do it," said SMSgt. Jimmy Sands of the 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. Aircrew already have been training at Cannon and the wing plans to stand-up a new training squadron to complement the C-146 operational mission at Duke. The first airframe arrived on Jan. 5. 2016

In September 2001, up to 600 wing reservists were activated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, in the war against terrorism. By October 2002, close to 550 reservists were extended for a second year of activation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the two-year period following Sept. 11, 2001, the wing tallied approximately 1,800 combat sorties, 5,000 combat hours, and more than 700 reservists activated. By Sept. 29, 2003, most wing members were deactivated; however, activation taskings continue for smaller numbers of wing members. From 2003 through today, the 919th SOW has supported Operation Willing Spirit and continued deployment rotations to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom while supporting numerous operational contingencies worldwide.

It has received multiple unit awards, including a Gallant Unit Citation for providing critical special operations support with distinction and proficiency. The wing established a classic reserve association with an active duty unit and helped to form the first Reserve remotely piloted aircraft squadron – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Operations Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nev. The 919th SOW stood up a new mission as a Formal Training Unit at Hurlburt Field and consistently provides a cadre of Reserve instructor pilots capable of training active duty and Reserve pilots to fly the new U-28 airframe (Air Force Special Operations Command asset).

It is currently standing up an Air Operations Center at Hurlburt Field and, when fully operational, will augment an active duty AOC. The 919th SOW's motto, "Citizen Commandos – Always Ready," describes the wing's reservists and their readiness and ability to serve without delay.

On 11 February 1963, the 919th Troop Carrier Group, Assault, was activated at Memphis Municipal Airport (MAP), Tennessee. The 919th, under the command of Colonel Arthur T. Ousley, was equipped with C-123s and assigned to the 445th Troop Carrier Wing, Assault, Dobbins AFB, Georgia. The unit was activated as part of the Continental Air Command (CONAC) reorganization of its fifteen troop carrier wings. Because of difficulties encountered during the Berlin mobilization of 1961, the Tactical Air Command sought through the reorganization to have greater flexibility in recalling units. Individual flying units could now be recalled without having to involve other units from the group or wing. Under each wing were self-supported groups, each which had its own troop carrier squadron, combat support squadron, materiel squadron, tactical dispensary, and aerial port flight. In the case of the 919th, the group's subordinate flying squadron, the 701st Troop Carrier Squadron, Assault, was collocated at Memphis MAP.

The 919th carried out a full schedule of training and flying operations while stationed at Memphis MAP. In May 1965, in response to civil disorder in the Dominican Republic, President Lyndon B. Johnson dispatched American armed forces to quell the conflict and protect American lives. Due to the active force's heavy worldwide airlift commitment, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units participated heavily in the operation. During May and June, the 701st flew during Operation Power Pack, 137 sorties for 638 hours, airlifted 273 passengers, and carried 68.71 tons of cargo. Additionally, the 919th won a Tactical Air Command flying safety award for accident-free flying during the period 1 January through 30 June 1964.

In 1965, because the parent 445th Troop Carrier Wing's C-123 inventory was being transferred to active duty units, the 919th and 920th Troop Carrier Groups were inactivated on 15 December 1965. As a result of these actions and the 918th Troop Carrier Group's concurrent conversion at Dobbins AFB, Georgia from C-123s to C-124s, CONAC no longer had any C-123 equipped units. The 919th Troop Carrier Group remained inactive until 30 July 1971 when the unit was redesignated as a tactical airlift group and activated at Eglin AFB, Auxiliary Field 3, Florida.

One of the most unique organizations in the Air Force Reserve, the 919th Special Operations Group is located at Eglin AFB, Fla., where it flies the Lockheed AC-130A "Spectre" gunship. The

919th, which converted to gunships in July 1975, is responsible for training almost 1,000 Reservists and establishing an operationally ready force capable of providing close air support, armed reconnaissance, armed interdiction and escort, forward air control and search and rescue operations in the AC-130A.

The unit is the only AFRES organization flying gunships, and the only AFRES special operations group. Because of this unique mission, the 919th is assigned directly to Tenth Air Force (Reserve) at Bergstrom AFB, Tex. The Air Force's Tactical Air Command is the unit's gaining command, and the 919th's advisory unit is the 1st Special Operations Wing, the only active duty unit equipped with AC-130 gunships. The 919th Special Operations Group is organized into five squadrons and two flights. The unit also has the Air Force's only C-130A simulators, and provides initial and refresher training to all branches of the U.S. military, as well as foreign aircrews.

Originally a C-130 tactical airlift group, the 919th was activated July 30, 1971 at Duke Field (Eglin Auxiliary Field 3). The group received the first of six authorized Lockheed C-130A "Hercules" aircraft October 17, 1971, and by September 1972 had five aircraft on hand. However, all aircraft were RC-130As reconnaissance aircraft with only limited cargo and passenger capability. None were capable of either equipment or personnel airdrops.

The first two combat configured C-130As arrived the following month (October 1972). With these aircraft, the 919th's flying squadron, the 711th Tactical Airlift Squadron, began tactical training, including low level formation flights, heavy equipment and container airdrops and personnel airdrops. By July 1973 the unit had four combat configured C-130As. The following month, however, the 919th began converting to the C-130B model Hercules, a newer version of the tactical cargo aircraft.

Within seven months the 919th had received all of its new aircraft and was fully combat ready. With the C-130Bs, the 919th flew missions throughout the United States, Europe and Central America. During 1974, 919th aircrews airlifted 14 per cent of all the cargo and 10 per cent of all passengers flown by the Air Force Reserve that year. As a result of its significant contributions, the 919th received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period April 1, 1971 to March 31, 1973.

The conversion to gunships was announced in May 1974. Because of the conversion, the unit's authorized strength increased from 464 Reservists to 973 Reservists. As part of that increase, the full-time civilian and Air Reserve Technician strength increased from 159 to 324 persons. The first of the unit's 10 authorized gunships arrived June 14, 1975 from Robins AFB, Ga. Prior to the arrival of the first gunships, 919th crews trained with the 1st Special Operations Wing. On July 1, 1975 the 919th began its own aircrew training program.

The 919th achieved combat readiness with its gunships in July 1976, and the following month became the first Air Force gunship unit, active duty or Reserve, to complete an Operational Readiness Inspection. In February 1978 Air Force announced that the 919th, for its efforts in

converting to the gunship, had been selected to receive its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Today the 919th continues to participate in numerous Air Force readiness exercises, with Reserve aircrews, maintenance and support personnel operating with active duty forces under the Total Force concept.

The 919th Special Operations Wing (Air Force Reserve) was activated at Duke Field, Fla., June 1, 1992. It replaced the 919th Special Operations Group which was deactivated the same date. The 919th SOW is the only AFRES special operations wing in the United States Air Force.

During peacetime, the mission of the 919th SOW is to train and maintain the proficiency of Air Force reservists in HC-130N/P Combat Shadow and MC-130E Combat Talon I operations, maintenance and support functions. The primary wartime mission for the Combat Shadow is to fly clandestine missions to provide air refueling for special operations aircraft. The Combat Shadow's secondary mission is to airdrop special operations teams and equipment and perform other special operations tactics. The Combat Talon I's mission in wartime is to provide global, day and night, adverse weather capability to airdrop and airland personnel and equipment in support of U.S. and allied special operations forces. The Combat Talon I also has a deep penetrating helicopter refueling role. The 919th reports to the Air Force Reserve's Tenth Air Force at Bergstrom AFB, Texas. When mobilized, the 919th SOWs gaining major command becomes the Air Force Special Operations Command headquartered at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The 919th has five Combat Shadow aircraft and will eventually have eight Combat Talon I aircraft. As of this date, three Talon I's are on-station. Three C-130 cargo/passenger-carrying aircraft also support the unit's training exercises and missions. The 919th SOW employs more than 1,400 reserve and full-time civilian employees. All reservists attend monthly unit training assemblies (one weekend each month) and perform 15 days active-duty-for-training periods each year.

Three groups, nine squadrons and one flight are organized under the Headquarters 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Eglin AFB Field 3, Fla. The 919th Operations Group is composed of the 919th Operations Support Squadron, the 711th Special Operations Squadron, and the 5th Special Operations Squadron. The 919th Logistics Group has two squadrons: the 919th Maintenance Squadron and the 919<sup>th</sup> Logistics Support Squadron. The 919th Support Group consists of the 919th Civil Engineering Squadron, 919th Mission Support Squadron, the 919th Security Police Squadron, and the 919th Communications Flight. The 919th Medical Squadron reports directly to the 919th SOW commander.

The 919th was originally activated as a troop carrier group on Feb. 11, 1963 at Memphis (Tenn.) Municipal Airport. It was redesignated a tactical airlift group and relocated to Duke Field (Eglin AFB Field 3), Fla. on July 30, 1971. The 919th TAG received the first of its six authorized C-130A aircraft Oct. 17, 1971. By September 1972, five RC-130A reconnaissance aircraft were in place at Duke Field. Members of the 919th TAGS 711th Tactical Airlift Squadron, flying the first of the unit's airlift configured C-130 aircraft, began tactical training (low-level formation flights, heavy equipment drops and container, plus personnel airdrops) in October 1972.

The 919th began converting to C-130B aircraft in August 1973 and achieved combat-ready status within seven months. As a result of this significant effort, the 919th received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period April 1, 1971 to March 31, 1973. Personnel of the 919th TAG began flying missions throughout the continental United States, in Europe and Central America. Its aircrews airlifted 14 percent of all cargo and 10 percent of all passengers flown by Air Force Reserve units during 1974. In May 1974, Air Force officials announced that the 919th would be converted to AC-130A gunships for a new mission—special operations.

Aircrew members began immediate training for the new mission, working with personnel and aircraft of the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field (Eglin AFB). On June 14, 1975, the first of the 919th's 10 authorized gunships arrived at Duke Field. The 919th was redesignated the 919th Special Operations Group on July 1, 1975. The 919th SOG achieved combat readiness with its gunships in July 1976.

Dedicated training enabled the reservists to quickly attain a high level of proficiency in the AC-130A Spectre gunships. The group received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) for meritorious service from July 1, 1975 to Jan. 31, 1977. The men and women of the 919th SOG earned a third AFOUA for its peacetime training mission providing support "... above and beyond that required ..." to various Air Force, Army, and Marine units while operating under severe adverse conditions from Oct. 1, 1983 to June 1, 1985. Members of the 919th SOG continued to compile a distinctive training and performance record during the period June 1, 1987 to May 1989 and were recognized for their effort when they received their fourth AFOUA. Combat readiness was achieved and is maintained by 919th SOW personnel through continuous training and participation in numerous deployments and exercises annually. Reserve aircrews, maintenance and support personnel of the 919th SOW are fully trained to operate with active duty forces under the U.S. Air Force total force policy in support of national defense objectives. This training paid dividends during a training deployment to Panama in December 1989.

Reservists from the 919th SOG were training at Howard AFB, Panama Canal Zone, when, on Dec. 20, 1989, Operation Just Cause began. The objectives of Just Cause were to restore democracy, protect Americans and American interests under the Canal Treaty and to oust Panamanian dictator, Gen. Manuel Noriega. Without being mobilized (called to active duty), members of the 919th, with two AC-130A gunships, were on the scene and participating in the operation from its start. By the time they returned to Duke Field, the reservists had flown more than 30 sorties on schedule in support of Just Cause. That action, from Dec. 8, 1989 to Jan. 7, 1990, brought the 919th its fifth AFOUA. Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the multinational coalition to free Kuwait after that nation was overrun by Iraq in August 1990 presented another challenge for the 919th SOG reservists. More than 300 members of the 919th were called to active duty and participated in the Gulf War.

From August 1990 to January 1991, personnel and cargo aircraft of the 919th provided airlift augmentation for the operation. Dubbed the "East Coast Shuttle," 919th aircraft and crews

stopped at bases along the east coast of the United States from Florida to Dover AFB, Del. and back, ferrying personnel and cargo as needed, wherever it was needed. Also during this time, many 919th SOG reservists voluntarily provided back-fill support for active duty units throughout the continental U.S. and in Europe. On Jan. 17, 1991, elements of the 919th SOG were called to active duty. Five AC-130A gunships were flown out of Duke Field January 30 en route to the Mideast. Four days later, on Sunday, Feb. 3, 1991, more than 300919th reservists deployed. During the brief operation known as Desert Storm, 919th gunship aircrews flew more than 125 combat hours.

Thus, twice in two years, 919th SOG reservists proved they were combat ready, willing and able to voluntarily assume the role for which they train, i.e. viable members of the U.S. Air Force total force.

The 919th Special Operations Wing, located about five miles south of Crestview and 20 miles from Eglin main at Duke Field, is the only special operations wing in the Air Force Reserve Command. In wartime or a contingency, the 919th SOW reports to Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Fla., its gaining major command. The 919th SOW flies and maintains the MC-130E Combat Talon I. These aircraft are specially modified for covert operations and aerial refueling of special operations helicopters. The wing's MC-130E (Air Force Reserve Command asset) aircraft are based at Duke Field. The 919th SOW employs about 1,300 reservists. Air reserve technicians, commonly referred to as ARTs, are the nucleus of the wing. They provide management continuity to keep the units combat ready. ARTs carry dual status as full-time civil service employees for the Air Force who, as a condition of employment, must participate as reservists. More than 280 ARTs and 35 civilians support the wing in day-to-day operations.

In September 2001, up to 600 wing reservists were activated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, in the war against terrorism. By October 2002, close to 550 reservists were extended for a second year of activation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the two-year period following Sept. 11, 2001, the wing tallied approximately 1,800 combat sorties, 5,000 combat hours, and more than 700 reservists activated. By Sept. 29, 2003, most wing members were deactivated; however, activation taskings continue for smaller numbers of wing members. From 2003 through today, the 919th SOW has supported Operation Willing Spirit and continued deployment rotations to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom while supporting numerous operational contingencies worldwide. It has received multiple unit awards, including a Gallant Unit Citation for providing critical special operations support with distinction and proficiency. The wing established a classic reserve association with an active duty unit and helped to form the first Reserve remotely piloted aircraft squadron – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Operations Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nev. The 919th SOW stood up a new mission as a Formal Training Unit at Hurlburt Field and consistently provides a cadre of Reserve instructor pilots capable of training active duty and Reserve pilots to fly the new U-28 airframe (Air Force Special Operations Command asset). It is currently standing up an Air Operations Center at Hurlburt Field and, when fully operational, will augment an active duty AOC. The 919th SOW's motto, "Citizen Commandos –Always Ready," describes the wing's reservists and their readiness and ability to serve without delay.

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