

3rd AIR SUPPORT OPERATIONS SQUADRON



LINEAGE

3rd Direct Air Support Flight constituted and activated, 17 Sep 1964
Organized, 8 Oct 1964
Inactivated, 15 Sep 1968
Redesignated 3rd Air Support Operations Center Flight, 16 May 1980
Activated, 1 Jun 1980
Redesignated 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron, 6 Jan 1989

STATIONS

Kadena AB, Japan, 8 Oct 1964-15 Sep 1968
Ft Richardson Army Installation, AK, 1 Jun 1980
Ft Wainwright, AK, 1 Jul 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

18th Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Oct 1964-15 Sep 1968
Alaskan Air Command, 1 Jun 1980
11th Tactical Control Group (later, Wing), 1 Jul 1981
343rd Operations Group, 27 Jan 1992
354th Operations Group, 20 Aug 1993
611th Air Operations Group, 1 Jul 1994
354th Operations Group, 14 Feb 2003

COMMANDERS

LTC Russell Smith

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

8 Oct 1964-5 Jun 1965

6 Jun 1965-31 Dec 1966

1 Jul 1982-30 Jun 1984

1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1987

1 Jul 1990-30 Jun 1992

1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1996

1 Oct 1999-30 Sep 2001

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Apr 1966-15 Sep 1968

EMBLEM

On a blue disc edged with a narrow yellow border issuing from base three green mountains capped white surmounting a yellow lightning bolt issuing between the two sinister peaks and terminating below two black flight symbols in horizontal flight above the constellation Ursa Major and the North Star in yellow. Attached below the disc a blank white scroll edged yellow. Approved, 28 Oct 1981. The emblem is symbolic of the 3d Air Support Operations Squadron and its mission. The constellation Ursa Major refers to Alaska where the unit was activated in 1980. The three mountains represent the three majestic mountain ranges in Alaska (the Brooks, Alaska, and Aleutian Ranges) the number three is symbolic of the unit designator. The North Star Polaris alludes to the unit mission of providing guidance. The stylized aircraft indicate the direct support provided to support this unit's mission. The lightning bolt indicates the effective and efficient command and control communications rendered by this unit to support its and other organization's mission supporting the Alaskan Tactical Air Control System.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Arctic Grizzlies

OPERATIONS

The 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron trains, equips, and maintains mission-ready Air Liaison, Terminal Attack Control, and Weather Observation/Forecasting elements to support the commanders of US Army Alaska (USARAK), the 172d Stryker Brigade Combat Team (172 SBCT), with three subordinate Infantry Battalions and one Cavalry Squadron, the 1-501 Airborne Task Force, and the 4/123d Theater Aviation Battalion, deployed or in garrison at Fort Wainwright Army Installation, Alaska.

Numerous 3rd ASOS enlisted terminal attack controllers (ETACs) and weather personnel deployed, many in direct ground combat roles, in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan, where military operations continue to this day.

The 3rd ASOS primary missions now include tactical air command and control (TACC), terminal attack control (TAC) of close air support assets, theater airlift, weather support, and reconnaissance, fully supporting combatant commanders' needs.

The 3rd ASOS is home to the US Air Force's only deep snow, arctic-capable Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) and Combat Weather Team (CWT), with several members who are airborne qualified. The squadron also trains several Battalion Air Liaison Officers from the 355th Fighter Squadron, Eielson AFB, Alaska who deploy, train and operate with assigned ground forces.

Mission: 1967, To develop and maintain Direct Support Center and Tactical Air Control Party personnel at a high level of combat readiness, immediately available to be deployed for incorporation as operating elements of a Tactical Air Control System.

8/16/2005 The first Air Force Stryker unit marked its first deployment with the high-tech Army vehicle when it departed here Aug. 14 for Iraq. About 20 Airmen from the 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron deployed with the Army's 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, both stationed at nearby Fort Wainwright. "Our guys are ready and they're focused," said Lt. Col. Russell Smith, 3rd ASOS commander. "We're deploying with the Stryker brigade and I'd say this is a great partnership. We're truly a part of one team." The 3rd ASOS serves as the primary air liaison between the Army and Air Force during ground operations. The squadron became the first Air Force unit to receive the Stryker in May at the Army's Joint Training Center at Fort Polk, La., where training continued in preparation for the Iraq deployment. "Having the Strykers will help us by improving our capability and survivability during fast-paced ground operations," Col Smith said of the 3rd ASOS transition from Humvees to the same Stryker vehicle used by its Army partners. Not only will the 3rd ASOS be able to complete the mission more effectively, Colonel Smith said, but they will benchmark techniques and procedures for future operations. "They are setting the standard on how to do business for years to come," said Col. Paul Johnson, commander of the 354th Operations Group here to which the 3rd ASOS is assigned. "Stryker vehicles have proven themselves throughout Iraq, and our joint terminal attack controllers will benefit from the same level of protection and firepower as their brethren Soldiers. "Special communications and sensor equipment, essential to their unit, have been installed on their vehicles," Colonel Johnson said. "With these new state-of-the-art vehicles, our 3rd ASOS personnel will not only fight today's fight, they will develop the tactics, techniques and procedures our Stryker-equipped Airmen will be using in the future. "We're the first Air Force unit to have Strykers and we're excited to use them in combat," Colonel Johnson said of the five customized tactical air control party Strykers 3rd ASOS Airmen will use to perform their mission. The squadron provides a bird's-eye view of the battle for the battle commander by serving as the liaison between air and ground forces. They play a critical role in the 172nd SECT mission, Colonel Smith said. Having specially modified TACP armored Stryker vehicles offers more top cover for Army ground troops. "We are the Air Force experts at the ground commander's right hand," Colonel Smith said. "Without airpower expertise on the battlefield, we leave the great American Soldier on the ground exposed. The Army

has transformed into an agile and light fighting force, but in doing so, it has become far more reliant upon air power."

August 14, 2005 – Members of the 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron, along with 3,000 Army personnel assigned to the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team (172 SBCT) participated in a deployment ceremony held at Fort Wainwright. On August 14, twenty 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron personnel, along with their Stryker vehicles, deployed along side the Army in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The Air Force members were expected to deploy in two separate rotations for six months at a time.



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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.