

124 AIR SUPPORT OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

The 124 Air Support Operations Squadron's mission is to provide forward air controllers in support of front line Army maneuver units to coordinate and control close air support missions of the Air Force and joint forces in support of the ground battle. Air Liaison Officers provide coordination between Army command posts at all levels and Air Force and joint force command centers. They also support the needs of the community by providing people and resources for ongoing and emergency services, including disaster relief, and search and rescue.

LINEAGE

124 Air Support Operations Squadron

STATIONS

Boise, ID

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

LTC Michael A. Nolan, Jun 2000 - Aug 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a disc parted per chevron Azure and Vert, the partition line edged with two lightning bolts in chevron Gules, throughout a winged sword palewise point to base, wings elevated Argent, detailed Sable, overall a pole star of eight points Or, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "FORTITUDO VENERATIO SANCTIMONIA" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "124 ASOS" in Black 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 winged sword symbolizes the combat readiness of the U.S. Air Force. The lightning bolts represent communications and the technical expertise that enables the Squadron to accomplish its mission. The eight-pointed star refers to the omni-directional, worldwide mobility capability of the Squadron. The blue and green backgrounds of the field signify the unit's support of both air and ground forces.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Members of the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron participated in intense, rugged outdoor training during exercise Mountain Fury II throughout the Idaho Sawtooth National Forest, June 19-27, to prepare for potential future deployments. Idaho has ideal training environments that simulate those found in Afghanistan, with wide open desert and plant filled mountainous terrain, as well as ample air space for military aircraft, said 2nd Lt. Randall Schmidt, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller and Air Liaison Officer.

Thanks to careful planning with the U.S. Forest Service and the Federal Aviation Administration in Salt Lake City the 124th ASOS was able to save money by training close to home. While ASOS spent most of the Mountain Fury II exercise down on the ground, they used several air assets to train to their fullest potential. With the support of the 190th Fighter Squadron and their A-10 Thunderbolt II's, along with the Idaho Army Guard's 1-183rd Aviation Battalion AH-64 Apache helicopters, the 726th Air Control Squadron from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, and B Co., 1-214th General Support Aviation Battalion's CH-47 Chinook Helicopters from Fort Lewis, Wash., the Mountain Fury II was a successful deployment preparation.

Lieutenant Schmidt led this year's annual training event. "We've got the mountains here with nice high elevation and low flats in the desert. In 30 minutes you can be high in the mountain tops or down in desert. We've got the best of both worlds in Idaho," Lieutenant Schmidt said. On the hillside, Radio Operations Maintainer and Drivers, as well as Joint Terminal Attack Controllers from the 124th ASOS, observed a simulated enemy in a valley below.

They carefully watched the activity through Monocular Night Vision Goggles, laser range finders and other equipment to gather intelligence on the simulated enemy. The ROMADs and JTACs send this information to A-10s and AH-64s hovering overhead as they call in close

air support on the enemy. ASOS and the close air support aircraft worked from day into the dark of the night to perform these tactics and practice night reconnaissance. Chinook helicopters transported ASOS members to various locations to perform this intense training. This type of joint service training gives a realistic sample of what it will be like when they deploy in support of military operations, especially those in Afghanistan. Chief Warrant Officer 4, Bryan Campbell, a pilot from Fort Lewis, Wash., spent many hours flying over Idaho's landscape during Mountain Fury II this week transporting ASOS members.

"The training we've been conducting with the Air Guard in Idaho has been incredibly valuable to us. In addition to helping ASOS and other members involved, our aircrews get to maintain combat proficiency as well. It provides us with a unique opportunity to conduct joint operations, giving us insight on how the Air Guard trains and prepares for future deployments and future joint operations," Campbell said.

As a CH-47 Chinook lands, Airmen with the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS) exit out the ramp, guns ready, and secure the area. The helicopter pulls away after the last Airman leaves and the group circles together, watching for possible enemy as they plan how to navigate to their objective. While this is a training scenario, it has many real life elements that have been planned into the 124th ASOS annual training in July. Participants include opposing forces (OpFor) played by members of the 726th Air Control Squadron stationed at Mountain Home Air Force Base and Chinook helicopters from the Oregon Army National Guard.

"We truly want to thank all the agencies that helped us execute this busy week of training here on the back side of Soldier Mountain," said Lt. Col. Tom Shuler, 124 ASOS director of operations. The ASOS annual training this year is especially valuable as the squadron plans for deploying again in the near future. Some ASOS members have recently returned from service in Afghanistan and have incorporated their lessons learned in the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP). With help and support from the Forest Service they are given access to the unique training environment of central Idaho that is very comparable to Afghanistan.

"The valleys and ridges here provide line-of-sight challenges to our radio communication similar to what we face in Afghanistan" said Shuler. After infiltrating by helicopter, they move tactically down a ridge line. With a heavy load of equipment and protective gear the TACP's facilitators reinforce the principle of maintaining excellent physical standard with demanding hikes up and down uneven terrain, watchful of enemy ambushes. The OpFor unleash an ambush on the TACP's as they walk down the ridge line. Utilizing Airsoft rifles that replicate M4's, the OpFor open fire on the approaching Airmen.

The call of "Contact Right" rings out and is repeated by other flight members. As they return fire and engage the OpFor with their own Airsoft M4's, simulated mortars begin to rain down upon their position causing confusion and giving a realistic environment of a combat situation. After they finish the first scenario, the TACP facilitator gathers everyone together for a quick review of what went well and more importantly what could be improved on. ASOS leadership planned multiple combat situations for their annual training which includes small unit tactics, mounted patrols with HMWVV's, and their essential Close Air Support (CAS) mission.

Providing communications with aircraft as they deliver munitions is the unique ability of a TACP and Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Airman. This type of training, with help from

A-10 of the 190th Fighter Squadron, gives the Airmen of the 124th ASOS vital training, especially those preparing to deploy for ongoing operations overseas. “Giving the younger Airmen time on the radio is something really unique about [the 124th ASOS], we really try and prepare them to go to JTAC school with realistic training,” said Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Dorosh.

USAF Unit Histories

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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.