

521st AIR EXPEDITIONARY ADVISOR SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

521st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a disc Azure, a tiger affronté Tenné, detailed Sable, langued and break Gules, teeth, claws, belly and whisker pads Argent, eyes Or, in his dexter paw a lightning bolt of the last, emitting from his sinister paw and transversing to dexter three stylized air flight symbols of the fifth, all

within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "BORN IN COMBAT" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "521ST AIR EXP ADVISORY SQ" in Yellow 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 tiger signifies strength and the Squadron call sign, "Nimmer," Arabic for tiger. The lightning bolt in the tiger's left paw symbolizes swiftness of action and accuracy. The three air flight symbols contrailing from the tiger's right paw represent attack operations and the primary field of surveillance.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

KIRKUK, Iraq — The 521st Air Expeditionary Advisor Squadron is part of the Multi-National Security Transition Command — Iraq Coalition Air Force Training Team, and is based at Kirkuk Air Base. The 521st is an integral part of building and maintaining the Iraqi Air Force, and to bolster the effectiveness of the Iraqi ministry of defense. The squadron is made up of maintenance, air traffic control, and weapons loading. They also advise the Iraqi Air Force in day-to-day operations. The squadron operates C-208B Caravan aircraft conducting flight training for members of the Iraqi Air Force. Their mission is to train, educate and advise professional Iraqi Airmen in order to build the institutional capacity to conduct credible fixed flight training for the Iraqi Air Force.

The AEAS consists of 30 operations and maintenance advisors that work together with Iraqi Squadron 3 that consist of 30 pilots and 60 maintainers. The Iraqi Air Force performs intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions in the RC-208B Caravan. "The ISR system is very powerful and it can provide images in full color and the infrared spectrum which gives it the capability for day and night missions," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. James Bloom, Electrical Operations and Inferred Systems. "The Iraqi crews are picking up the ISR missions really quick, and they are doing really well."

"A year ago the advisors were teaching the Iraqis how to fly the planes, and now they giving advice on how to improve the some small things so they can do better," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Bob Schreffler, director of operations, 521st Air Expeditionary Advisor Squadron. "They are doing well and the customer is getting what they need to perform their missions." Providing equipment for emergency situations is a key element for a successful air force, and CAFTT is training Iraqi maintainers in the operation of air crew systems from the ground up to help them develop their skills. "We provide training on the survival aspects of the aircraft," U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Larose, Air Crew Flight Equipment, 321 AEAS said. "The Iraqis are taking on the mask and goggles for the air craft. Training on the other survival equipment is beginning as new test equipment arrives," he added. "When we move to more complex systems, this will be a foundation for the Iraqi maintainers to build on. Knowing how to operate and maintain the survivability systems is a critical element for an air force," Larose said.

KIRKUK - The 521st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron officially completed its mission to advise the Iraqi Air Force's 3rd Squadron during a ceremony held at Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Jan. 11, 2010. The ceremony signified the autonomy of the Iraqi squadron, recognized the members of the IqAF's 1st Sqdn. for achieving foundational capabilities, and marked the inactivation of the 521st AEAS after completing its advisory mission. For two years, U.S. advisors from the 521st and the 870th AEAS have been collaborating with these two IqAF squadrons to help them achieve the independence they have been working toward. The role of the 521st was two-fold. The U.S. advisors trained the maintenance personnel, pilots, instructor pilots and evaluators at the IqAF's 1st Sqdn.

They also advised the IqAF's 3rd Sqdn. to fly intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. During the ceremony, Staff Col. Mustafa Salhaldeen, IqAF 3rd Sqdn. commander, thanked the 521st for working with his squadron. "I thank everyone with all my heart for their hard work and especially the work and great support from all the commanders and squadron advisors who worked from the beginning until today with our squadron," the colonel said. "I want them to know this achievement and success is theirs also because we worked as one team, one fight."

Although the 521st AEAS has inactivated and the members of 3rd Sqdn. are now self-sufficient, a few of the U.S. advisors will remain to aid the Iraqi members of 1st Sqdn. After the ceremony, Capt. Shanea Wilson, U.S. advisor for the 521st AEAS, spoke about the major milestone. "The Iraqi Air Force has worked very hard to become autonomous," she said. "In November, they [3rd Squadron] had the Hellfire shoot, which they were very successful at, and for the Iraqi Squadron 1, they've produced their instructor pilots and evaluators."

The Hellfire shoot, the first conducted by Iraqis here, Nov. 4, was another step toward achieving the ability to protect their nation. "The 521st will have a small footprint here as a MITT [Military Transition Team] and will be a detachment under the 321st Air Expeditionary Advisory Group," Wilson said. "I'm sure they [1st Sqdn.] are going to take the training they received and build on it and produce pilots and instructor pilots and continue what we started here."

The captain also praised the Iraqis for all the work they put in to achieve their goals. "I have learned so much this year in Iraq," she said. "I've learned so much about the Iraqi culture, their work ethic. Their future is bright. I'm amazed at their accomplishments. They're doing it quickly and well." The ceremony demonstrated the positive partnership between the U.S. and Iraqi forces. The mission of the 521st is complete so now the Iraqi Air Force will take it from here," Wilson said.

2/26/2010 - LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- The former 47th Flying Training Wing inspector general and an instructor pilot here, returned from a deployment to Iraq four months early. Lt. Col. Chris Spigelmire, the 521st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron commander, returned to Laughlin Air Force Base when the squadron deactivated four months ahead of schedule because their mission was complete. In Iraq, Colonel Spigelmire's mission was to train Iraqis on how to launch Hellfire missiles from a Cessna Caravan. When Colonel Spigelmire arrived, the nation's air force hadn't fired a missile in years, nor trained pilots.

By the time he left, they had fired a missile and had stood up a brand new pilot training squadron. "Closing the U.S. training squadron down was bittersweet," Colonel Spigelmire said. "But it was also very satisfying that we were able to do that because it meant the Iraqis were

doing very well. I poured my heart and soul into this assignment and it's tough to just walk away. "After months of training the Iraqi forces, Colonel Spigelmire's 50-person squadron equipped the air force to successfully launch the Hellfire from a Cessna Caravan; a historical day in Iraq's history that Colonel Spigelmire said he'd never forget.

"The Iraqis were very nervous beforehand," Colonel Spigelmire said. "To see the pride in their faces was something I'll never forget. When we landed, the Iraqi generals were there to greet them and they had a big celebration." Although Colonel Spigelmire flew along as an adviser, he said the entire final event was an Iraqi-run operation. "The Iraqis got the missile out of storage, put it on the plane, flew the mission and hit the target. It was entirely their operation," he said. The U.S. Airmen relinquished more and more of the mission as the Iraqis proved they had the know-how and infrastructure to accomplish it on their own.

"We got them from the point where they didn't know anything about the missile to the point where they were able to fire the missiles," he said. After accomplishing the first mission, the colonel and his team of advisers transitioned to another mission, helping stand up the nation's flying training mission to develop the country's future instructor pilots. "Our philosophy changed from one of pilot production to train the trainer," he said. In the four-month time span they worked to produce instructors, the flying training unit went from four instructors to 29.

Colonel Spigelmire said his experience as a T-38 Talon instructor help prepare him to train members of the Iraqi air force. "Some of my experiences at Laughlin (AFB) really helped me out," he said. "Setting up a syllabus, running the syllabus and timeline and advising the pilot training squadron was pretty much what I did here." Colonel Spigelmire said there was a difference in training U.S. and Iraqi pilots. "At Laughlin (AFB), our students are already accomplished in flying the T-6 before I begin training them in the T-38," he said. "Over there, many of the students had never driven a car."