

177 INFORMATION WARFARE AGGRESSOR SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

177 Tactical Fighter Training Squadron constituted and allotted to the National Guard, Feb 1984

Activated and extended federal recognition, 8 Feb 1984

Redesignated 177 Fighter Squadron, 16 Mar 1992

Inactivated, 1 Aug 1994

Redesignated 177 Information Warfare Aggressor Squadron and activated, 30 Aug 2006

STATIONS

McCConnell AFB, KS, 1 Feb 1984 – 1 Aug 1994

McCConnell AFB, KS, 1 Aug 2002

ASSIGNMENTS

184 Tactical Fighter Group (later 184 Fighter Group), 1 Feb 1984 – 1 Aug 1994

184 Regional Support Group, 30 Aug 2006

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-4, 1984

F-16, 1990

COMMANDERS

Maj Charles A. Rose, 27 Jun 1984

LTC Charles J. Small, 10 Mar 1985

Maj Jeffrey M. Dirks, 2 May 1988

LTC Aloysius P. Dickman, 7 Aug 1989

LTC Gary A. Read, 7 Dec 1992

LTC Gary V. Wells, 1 Oct 2002
LTC Brian T. Dravis, 20 May 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Apr 1987 – 1 Apr 1989

1 Jan 1992 – 1 Aug 1993

EMBLEM

On a disc Azure, between two lightning bolts in chevron reversed Or, a stylized hawk wings elevated and body feathers Brown, tail and wing tips Gold Brown, head Gules, detailed Black, eyed, beaked and legged Yellow, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Red scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "JAYHAWKERS" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Red scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "177 IWS" 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 lightning bolts represent the aggressor mission and high state of combat readiness. The Jayhawk represents the combat posture and high standards maintained by the unit. The motto associates the ferocious competitiveness and dedication to mission accomplishment of unit personnel with the fictitious bird of prey displayed in the unit emblem.

MOTTO

Jayhawkers

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Mission: Train U.S. Air Force, Joint and Allied personnel by replicating current and emerging threats as a professional Information Operations Opposition Force. Provided Intelligence Operations threat and countermeasures training to more than 30,000 Air Force personnel worldwide.

The IAS integrates with Air and Space Aggressor forces to present realistic combat training to the war fighter. The IAS conducts full-spectrum Multi-Disciplinary Vulnerability Assessments (MDVA) in support of MAJCOM requirements, identifying Total Force critical systems

vulnerabilities. The IAS can also independently assess Total Force information networks and systems through Network Vulnerability Assessments (NVA).

The IAS concept centers upon the development of IW certified aggressors who integrate advanced training, tactics, technologies and tools to replicate full-spectrum threat capabilities at Total Force exercises worldwide. The squadron can conduct vulnerability assessments and provide insightful mentoring within the scope of the Information Operations (IO) environment, either singularly or synergistically.

The 177 IAS plays a vital role in ensuring the security of U.S. aerospace forces. This is accomplished by replicating realistic adversarial tactics and using these tactics against Department of Defense (DoD) installations and information systems to identify possible vulnerabilities. Methods and recommendations are then developed to eliminate vulnerabilities. The IAS mission is to execute full spectrum aggressor IW operations "through the EYES of the ADVERSARY" The IAS is on the cutting edge of technology, helping DoD installations prepare for and defend against possible methods of attack, including terrorist or cyber attack.

Over the course of mission stand-up, the IAS faced and overcame numerous challenges. From the rigors of self-help construction and facility moves to high-level battles waged to "officially recognize" the Squadron; the men and women of the 177th have continuously charged forward. While some events have proven comical, such as the many incarnations of the Squadron name (IWAS, IWS, IWAS again and now IAS), others have been more demanding. Whether it has been personal challenges associated with training or the ever evolving nature of the Squadron, the members of the 177th continued to persevere. As 2004 draws to a close the men and women of the 177th IAS find themselves stronger than ever. Having conducted numerous successful missions and exercises the world over, the 177th has validated the capability of the Squadron. Looking back, the Squadron has made tremendous strides over the course of the past two years. From a humble beginning of nothing more than an empty bay and a tent to quickly becoming the leaders in a burgeoning IO community, the 177th Information Aggressor Squadron will continue to lead the charge.

The 177th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron received Federal recognition February 8, 1984 and was attached to and part of the 184 TFG. The 177th provided formal course training to Guard, Reserve, and Active aircrew replacements for F-4C and F-4D. They also provided refamiliarization training to former F-4 aircrews.

A second flying squadron, the 177th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, was established on 8 February 1984, with responsibility for all conversion and upgrade training in the F-16. To meet F-4D training requirements, the 184th TFG achieved a 9600 sortie annual flying program, flying 45 sorties per day. In August 1985, the unit reached its first 1000 sortie month.

In January 1988 the 177th Tactical Fighter Squadron successfully deployed nine F 4Ds to Tyndall AFB Florida to participate in Operation Eagle Roast flying against F-15s from the 325th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Fifty-nine personnel participated in four Intelligence Operations Roadshows worldwide.

Fifty-seven personnel participated in 11 exercises worldwide.

Participated in four command-level conferences advising senior Air Force leadership on vulnerabilities to Air Force networks.

Air Force leaders want to cut reliance on the Guard for many flying missions, but they increasingly turn to the Guard to meet the ‘accelerating’ cyber threat. For the cyber-minded, this just might be the coolest job in the national Guard: Using ordinary computers and extraordinary knowledge of information systems, members of the 177th information Warfare Aggressor Squadron gleefully break into computer networks. But not just any networks, U.S. military networks. “my guys are trained hackers, basically,” says Lt. col. Jason Knobbe, the commander of the Kansas Air national Guard squadron. “our job is to be the bad guy for the department of defense.” So, like “a script kiddie in his mom’s basement” or an agent of a foreign government, the 177th cyberwarriors hack. Starting “in the dot-com world,” the 125 airmen worm their way into the dot-mil realm by exploiting network vulnerabilities. They search out open back doors and missing software patches, manipulate gullible operators, break in, and, if possible, take over the network, Knobbe says. But breaking and entering isn’t the ultimate goal. Uncovering security gaps and teaching network operators how to plug them to keep more malevolent hackers at bay is. “We help the blue defenders learn situational awareness and countermeasures,” Knobbe says. “if we find vulnerability, we try to patch it.” In an age of shrinking budgets and dwindling forces, cyber is one of the few growth areas for the Guard. 2012

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.