

266th RANGE SQUADRON



MISSION

The 266 RANS is responsible for providing quality electronic simulations of ground-based air defense threats on Mountain Home Range Complex consisting of: Saylor Creek AF Range, Juniper Butte AF Range and Grasmere Electronic Combat Site. 266th RS equipment and tactics closely parallel the integrated air defense systems of potential adversaries.

The mission of the 266th Range Squadron is to provide tactical aircrews from both the active duty Air Force - from the 366th Air Expeditionary Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho - and the Idaho Air National Guard - from the 124th Wing, Gowen Field, with the most realistic electronic combat training threat environment available. The 266th RANS is tasked to develop, maintain, and operate a simulated hostile electronic threat environment for aircrews to train.

The squadron's mission also makes it unique within the Air National Guard. Unit members, working at Mountain Home Air Force Base and at three remote sites, operate and maintain electronic threat emitters, used to provide tactical pilots and aircrews with more than 100 realistic electronic threat scenarios and to test airborne electronic warfare systems.

LINEAGE

266th Range Squadron

STATIONS

Mountain Home AFB, ID

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a disc Azure, a mullet throughout Gules, in dexter chief two deltas bend sinister wise Silver Gray, garnished Argent, emitting contrails joining from a single issue in an "S" curve from base of the third. Overall a lightning flash in bend sinister Or, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "FIRE TEMPERS STEEL" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "266TH RANGE SQUADRON" 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 star is a heritage symbol of the "aggressor" nature of the unit. The lightning bolt symbolizes power, whether it is emitter, electrical, mobile, communication, or information power. The two soaring stylized aircraft perform evasive maneuvers from threats generated by the Squadron. The motto, "Fire Tempers Steel," represents how the unit provides the fire that tempers the steel which the combat aircrews may wield on the enemy.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

7/20/2012 - MIAMI, Fla. -- Eight members of the 266 Range Squadron traveled to Avon Park and Miami, Fla., to provide threat emitter and surface-to-air missile visual cueing support for an urban exercise there recently. The exercise was in support of the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and other special operations agencies. The main focus of the exercise was a night extraction of a high value target from the abandoned Grand Bay Hotel. RANS threat operators set up in a parking lot across from City Hall and launched Smokey SAMs as the helicopters were positioning for fast rope operations onto the hotel. "The Smokey SAMs added a great touch to the whole operation," said Maj. Tim Pearson, who was the main coordinator for the exercise. The Smokey SAM launch in the middle of an urban environment was also a great experience for RANS operators, as the SAMs are normally restricted to range use only. "It was a unique opportunity for everyone involved," said Idaho Air Guard Master Sgt. Jim Schmidt, the detachment commander for the 266 RANS. Miami Police and numerous other local and federal agencies oversaw the exercise but did not send out the news release to the public until the night prior to the exercise for security reasons.

RANS radar technicians also had two threat emitters in place at the Avon Park Range near Melbourne, Fla., about 170 miles north of Miami. The threat emitters were used to enhance the scenario and add training for the helicopter crews and carrier-based close air support aircraft that were participating in the exercise. This is the second long-range support exercise the RANS has provided for the 160th SOAR and the joint support continues to grow. A threat emitter team traveled to Fort Campbell, Ky., in March to provide threat recognition to new crews on the Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters. Range squadron operators also supported U.S. Navy electronic warfare training in Washington in February, and Apache Block III testing at Fort Irwin in California in March.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Updated:

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.