

# 407<sup>th</sup> EXPEDITIONARY SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON

## MISSION

## LINEAGE

407<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron

## STATIONS

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## NICKNAME

## OPERATIONS

11/17/2005 - ALI BASE, Iraq But a group of enlisted Airmen here are using their wings to do a job both kinds of pilots do provide base security through air superiority. The half-dozen Airmen 407<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron troops pilot tiny unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles that provide low-cost, low-risk video of any terrain over which they fly. The tiny planes transmit real-time data day or night to a ground based operator (the pilot) for analysis and risk assessment. The second operator (the copilot) does the prelaunch checks and provides launch assistance. A portable computer controls the UAVs flight controls and flight paths until the pilot spots trouble and switches to "U-drive," and takes control from the computer. Team members are hand-picked for the job at their home stations and attend specialized training to operate

the UAVs before deploying. The teams can cover a lot of ground with their UAVs. Plus using them costs less and is less risky than using manned ground patrols. "This is a really great system," team member Senior Airman JoAnn Bonzi said. "It allows us to cover a lot of territory that would be hard, if not impossible, to keep an eye on properly any other way." After a team parks their vehicle at pre-assigned locations, they launch the UAV for the mission. How long the UAV is in the air depends on the assigned flight path and environmental conditions. The UAV is almost silent as it goes about its business. And like a U-2 flying many thousands of feet higher, this mini-UAV's imagery allows a trained operator to spot any kind of potentially aggressive situations, setups or enemy. "Every [Airman] here plays a part in base defense — especially security forces. This (UAV operations) is just one part of it. But it's a great part to be involved in," said Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Eric Vaughn, another team member. The UAV operators are called pilots and copilots in part because of shared responsibilities they have with traditional flyers. Just like a manned flight, UAV pilots and copilots have to notify the air control tower about their location, get clearance to launch and check the flying weather forecast before a mission. Staff Sgt. Chenoa Abbott is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the FPASS team.

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.