SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SPECIALIZED AIRPOWER MISSIONS
• AFSOC is the Air Force component of Special Operations.

• AFSOC is America’s “Specialized Airpower.”

• AFSOC operates worldwide in all theaters.
A Component of USSOCOM
In personnel, AFSOC is the smallest Command, including 11,000 active duty and 15,000 total. About 8,000 of these are based at Hurlburt Field, FL. Cannon AFB is becoming a “mirror image” in the West, utilizing Cannon’s remote location and range.
AFSOC Bases

Location: Harrisburg, PA
Weapon System: EC-130J
Unit: 193SOW

Location: Hurlburt Field, FL
Units: USAFSOS, 23 AF, 1SOW, 720 STG

Location: Kadena AB, JA
Weapon Systems: MC-130H/P, Special Tactics
Unit: 353SOG

Location: RAF Mildenhall, UK
Weapon Systems: MC-130H/P, Special Tactics
Unit: 352SOG

Location: Cannon AFB/Melrose Range, NM
Weapon Systems: MC-130W, U-28
Unit: 27SOW

Location: Duke Field, FL
Weapon System: MC-130E
Unit: 919SOW
In WWII the 1st Air Commando Group was one of the first truly composite Air Force units: They flew fighters, bombers, gliders and even the Sikorsky R-4 helicopters, & performed the first helicopter combat search and rescue mission.

In the Pacific, they parachuted into remote regions to hack airstrips out of the jungle.

In Europe, the “Carpetbaggers” conducted nighttime clandestine infiltration in France. Using modified B-24s, they dropped leaflets as a diversion while dropping supplies and agents to help the French resistance.
• In Korea, Special Ops were masked under the name “Air Resupply and Communications squadrons.” They flew B-29s, SA-16 amphibians and H-19 Chickasaw helicopters. Top left, Maj. Don Nichols was 3 times a target for assassination by the North Koreans. Bottom right: a female agent was infiltrated into North Korea.
In the mid-1950s, the unconventional warfare mission was assumed by the Air National Guard, providing continuity in Special Operations through the early 1970s.

Four aircraft figured prominently in Special Operations then: The C-119 Flying Boxcar (below) and, left from the top, the SA-16 Albatross amphibian, the C-46 Commando and the U-10 light plane.
Air Commando Heritage: The Gunship

Vietnam

- The gunship was developed. It quickly demonstrated its capabilities, first with the AC-47, then the AC-130A.

- The gunship combined the entire kill chain into one platform: finding, engaging and assessing.

- The AC-130A flew 8 percent of the sorties against the Ho Chi Minh trail and accounted for more than 40 percent of the destroyed trucks.
Air Commando Heritage

• In Vietnam, the Air Commandos greatly expanded with 19 squadrons operating in Southeast Asia.

• In addition to gunships and other aircraft, they flew the A-37 (right), nicknamed the “Dragonfly,” for close air support.

• The C-123 (lower left) was used for search and rescue, resupply and defoliation.

• The U-10 (upper left) could land on unpaved surfaces of less than 500 feet, & was used for covert operations, supply drops, & psychological warfare, such as leaflet drops and broadcasts.
Desert One

- Special Operations capability is important and will always be needed.

- No one can clearly predict when and where there will be a demand for Special Operations Forces.

- The U.S. must have a viable, prepared force ready to undertake these missions.
AFSOC Aircraft
Inventory in black; Average age in yellow

- **MC-130E** 10
  - 44
  - New

- **MC-130P** 19
  - 40

- **AC-130H** 8
  - 39

- **MC-130W** 4
  - 20

- **MC-130H** 17
  - 20

- **U-28A**
  - 9
  - New

- **CV-22**
  - 4
  - Awaiting IOC

- **AC-130U** 17
  - 17

- **E/C-130J** 7
  - 10

- **MH-53M** 12
  - 39
  - Retiring FY09

- **MQ-1**
  - 28
  - New

- **AC-XX**
  - Conceptual
- The Air Force funds a C-130, then SOCOM funds its conversion to a “Spectre” gunship. The Special Operations capabilities and equipment costs more than the initial aircraft.
Although the smallest AF Command, AFSOC is the second-largest component force in USSOCOM.
• AFSOC at just 1% of the Air Force budget, is one-quarter of the USSOCOM budget.
## SOCOM Core Tasks

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*Global War on Terrorism*
AFA Recommends

• Maintain a strong AFSOC.

• Modernize aging aircraft and manage the AFSOC fleet.

• Equip, train and man AFSOC to fulfill the mission.

• Develop and keep professionals.

• Provide necessary resources for communications technology and mobility.