

SPECIAL TACTICS TRAINING SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

DEPLOYED STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

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EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

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OPERATIONS

6/6/2008 - HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. -- The squadron charged with training Air Force Special Operations Command's special tactics operators unfurled its flag and welcomed its first commander today during a ceremony at the Crate Advanced Skills Training Center.

Maj. Christopher Larkin assumed command of the Special Tactics Training Squadron, which was activated June 1.

The squadron was formerly the Advanced Skills Training Flight and fell under the 720th Operations Support Squadron. Now, it becomes the seventh squadron operating directly for the 720th Special Tactics Group.

The STTS houses the final phase of training for combat controllers and special tactics officers before they depart for operational special tactics squadrons. It's at the STTS that "practical combat skills are honed to a fine edge," Col. Marc Stratton, 720th STG commander, said.

"The (720th STG) Chief and I meet with each incoming class their first week, and for the past two years, I've been able to continually give them a promise - that each of them, upon graduation would be deployed in harms way in the service of this nation within eight to 12 months of their graduation," Colonel Stratton said.

The unit has grown substantially since its inception as a training program within the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron here in 2001. It was then-Capt. Christopher Larkin, a special tactics officer with the 23rd STS, who served as the unit's first flight commander.

It grew from a flight with a handful of instructors and virtually no equipment or funding into a flight under the 720th OSS, occupying portable buildings. Last year, the flight moved into the Crate Advanced Skills Training Center, a state-of-the-art building complete with an aquatic training center for pre-scuba training.

But even from its "humble beginnings," the "focus has always been training," said Colonel Stratton.

Today's ceremony marked the unit's newest chapter as a squadron, and now Major Larkin, a prior-enlisted combat controller, is back at the helm. But instead of a handful of people and equipment, the commander has a staff of 56 military members, civil service service employees, and contractors teaching and supporting 83 students in three different phases of special tactics advanced skills training and one security forces course.

"I promise that I will care for, cherish, provide for and ensure the future of (special tactics)," Major Larkin told Colonel Stratton during the ceremony. "Next to the war, I believe the biggest special tactics issue is manpower, and this squadron has a big role in that."

The STTS mission of training Battlefield Airmen will also be expanding, said Colonel Stratton. The unit will train more special operations weather Airmen as that career field begins to grow. Also, it will expand training for AFSOC's Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element and integrate Tactical Air Control Party Airmen into the third phase of the special tactics advanced skills training curriculum.

However, the most significant event in store for the new squadron is its transition from under the 720th STG umbrella to the new Air Force Special Operations Training Center, which will stand up

in October.

Air Force Order of Battle

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