

AIR FORCE BASE



THE STEADFAST LINE



27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING FACT SHEET

ABOUT THE BASE



Cannon Air Force Base, home of the 27th Special Operations Wing, lies in the high plains of eastern New Mexico, near the Texas Panhandle. The base is eight miles west of Clovis, NM on 3,789 acres of land at 4,295 feet above sea level. Specialized aircraft assigned to CAFB include the AC-130J Ghost rider, MC-130J Commando II, CV-22B Osprey, U-28A Draco and the MQ-9 Reaper.

The Melrose Air Force Range training area, west of the base, is approximately 70,000 acres. Operations on Melrose Range also cover an area of 2,500 square miles of airspace. Melrose is used for training such as aircraft air to ground engagement, small arms shooting ranges, electronic warfare, and specific tactics exercises. Currently, approximately 6,500 military and civilian personnel make up the workforce at Cannon and Melrose.

MISSION

Unconventional air power... any
place, any time, anywhere

VISION

Empowered Air Commandos
holding the Steadfast Line

PRIORITIES

Execute the Mission

Develop our Team

Transform to Win

HISTORY OF CANNON AIR FORCE BASE

Cannon began in the late 1920s, as a civilian passenger facility, Portair Field, a terminal for early commercial transcontinental flights. In the 1930s, Portair was renamed Clovis Municipal Airport.

In August 1942, Clovis Municipal Airport was selected as one of three sites for a "super-aerodrome"; Salina, Kansas and Ephrata, Washington were the others. Construction for Clovis Army Air Base began on 3 September 1942, and would eventually train B-24, B-17, and later B-29 air crews in support of WWII efforts. In December 1944, the base was renamed Clovis Army Air Field. Following the war by May 28, 1947, Clovis Army Air Field (AAF) was officially inactivated.

Strategic Air Command (SAC) took control of Clovis AAF on 1 August 1947 and its' name changed to Clovis AFB on 13 January 1948. Then on 1 April 1950, Air Training Command (ATC) assumed control until 23 July 1951, when the Tactical Air Command assumed ownership, reopening Cannon as the 140th Fighter-Bomber Wing, an Air National Guard unit called to active duty for the Korean War.

By June 8, 1957, it was officially named Cannon Air Force Base after late Gen. John K. Cannon, a former commander of the Tactical Air Command. On Feb. 18, 1959, Cannon AFB entered into a relationship with the 27th Fighter Wing under Air Combat Command.

When it comes to executing the mission with precision and lethality, we will hold the line.

When it comes to taking care of our Airmen and families and strengthening relationships with our partners, we will hold the line.

When it comes to being ready for today, and pathfinding for tomorrow, we will hold the line.

And when it comes to defending our Nation and winning its wars--if required, WE WILL HOLD THE LINE.

Colonel Robert L. Johnston
Commander, 27th Special Operations Wing



HISTORY OF THE 27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

Since 1940, the 27th designation has been assigned to a myriad of locations. The unit was initially activated on 1 February 1940, as the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) at Barksdale Field, Louisiana.

It was later transferred to Hunter Field, Georgia in October 1940 and by November 1941, was transferred to Fort McKinley, Philippines. Following the Japanese attack on the Philippines on 9 December 1941, the unit would take part in limited operations in the early stages of the war in the Pacific, and later in 1942, it was redesignated as the 27th Fighter-Bomber Group and be transferred to North Africa to participate in operations in the European Theater of Operations as a fighter wing until the end of the war.

It would finish the war receiving five Distinguished Unit Citations and a Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, among the most decorated units in Europe.

On 7 November 1945, the 27th Fighter Group was inactivated. In August of 1946, the unit was reactivated at Fritzlar Air Base (AB), Germany and remained there until being transferred to Andrews Field, Maryland in June 1947.

In June 1947, the 27th Fighter Wing would be equipped with the F-82 Twin Mustang at Kearney Airfield, Nebraska. Then in March 1949, the unit was assigned to Bergstrom AFB, Texas and given its first jet aircraft, the F-84 Thunderjet.

Throughout the remaining 20th Century, the 27th Fighter Wing would be assigned a variety of different fighter aircraft (F-84E, F-100, F-111, and F-16) and in 2007, was given a new mission of special operations equipped with the AC-130W, MC-130J, U-28, CV-22, and MQ-9.

The 27 SOW continues to execute the legacy of excellence that the organization has been known for over the past 70 years.



COLONEL ROBERT L. JOHNSTON

27th Special Operations Wing Commander



Col Robert Johnston is the Commander, 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. The 27 SOW plans, postures and executes precision strike, specialized mobility, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions with special operations forces. The wing is organized into four groups and 24 squadrons equipped with specialized aircraft that includes the AC-130J, CV-22, MC-130J, MQ-9, PC-12 and U-28.

Raised in Copperas Cove, TX; Col Johnston earned his commission from the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) in 2001. Col Johnston is a Command Pilot with over 4,300 flight hours in the C-130, MC-130H, and MC-130J.

He has flown combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, humanitarian and contingency operations in support of special operations, and commanded at the squadron level. Prior to his current position, Col Johnston served as Commander at the Air Commando Development Center. The ACDC is the AFSOC focal point for SOF operational and institutional development, as well as certification, validation, verification (CV2) for all AFSOC units of action. Col Johnston is married to the former Margaret Venable of Killeen, TX. They have two daughters, AnneMarie and Alessandra.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT THOMAS J. GUNNELL

27th Special Operations Wing Command Chief



CMSgt Thomas J. Gunnell serves as Command Chief, 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon AFB, New Mexico. He serves as the principal advisor to the commander on all matters regarding the morale, welfare, professional development, and combat readiness of over 6,700 Air Commandos and their families. His wing provides special airpower and agile combat support capabilities to operational commanders conducting special operations missions around the world, including direct action, unconventional warfare, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, personnel recovery, psychological operations, and information operations.

CMSgt Gunnell grew up in Columbus, Ohio and enlisted in the Air Force in March 2004. He is a Tactical Air Control Party Superintendent with more than 300 combat missions as a Special Operations JTAC Instructor and Evaluator. His assignments include bases in Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, Florida, and Washington D.C. Chief Gunnell has 12 deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom Sentinel, and Operation Inherent Resolve.



27TH SOW ORGANIZATIONS

HYPERLINKS NAVIGATE TO MORE INFO

27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING OPERATIONS

- [27th Special Operations Support Squadron](#)
- 27th Special Operations Theater Air Operations Squadron
- [3rd Special Operations Squadron](#) (MQ-9 Reaper)
- [6th Special Operations Squadron](#) (MC-130J Commando II)
- [9th Special Operations Squadron](#) (MC-130J Commando II)
- [12th Special Operations Squadron](#) (MQ-9 Reaper)
- [16th Special Operations Squadron](#) (AC-130J Ghost Rider)
- [20th Special Operations Squadron](#) (CV-22 Osprey)
- [33rd Special Operations Squadron](#) (MQ-9 Reaper)
- [56th Special Operations Intelligence Squadron](#)
- 310th Special Operations Squadron (U-28A Draco)
- [318th Special Operations Squadron](#) (U-28A Draco)

27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS MISSION SUPPORT GROUP

- [27th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron](#)
- [27th Special Operations Communications Squadron](#)
- [27th Special Operations Contracting Squadron](#)
- [27th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron](#)
- [27th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron](#)
- [27th Special Operations Force Support Squadron](#)

27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS MEDICAL GROUP

- 27th Special Operations Health Care Operations Squadron
- 27th Special Operations Medical Readiness Squadron

27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING SUSTAINMENT

- 27th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- 727th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- 27th Special Operations Maintenance Squadron
- 27th Special Operations Munitions Squadron
- 20th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- 16th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- 9th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

27TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING STAFF AGENCIES

- [27th Special Operations Comptroller Squadron](#) provides financial management and budgetary support
- Air Staff Directorates
- Various other wing agencies: Public Affairs, Staff Judge Advocate, Equal Opportunity, Inspector General, etc.

TENANT UNITS

- [26th Special Tactics Squadron](#)
- [43rd Intelligence Squadron](#)
- [Detachment 17, 373rd Training Squadron](#)
- [AFOSI Detachment 120](#)

OPERATIONS

The 27th Special Operations Group, located at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, is one of four groups assigned to the 27th Special Operations Wing. The group accomplishes global special operations taskings as an Air Force component member of the United States Special Operations Command.

It conducts infiltration/exfiltration, combat support, tilt-rotor operations, helicopter aerial refueling, close air support, unmanned aerial vehicle operations, non-standard aviation, and other special missions. It directs the deployment, employment, training, and planning for squadrons that operate the AC-130J Ghost Rider, MC-130J Commando II, CV-22B Osprey, U-28A Draco and the MQ-9 Reaper.



MISSION SUPPORT

The primary mission of the 27th Special Operations Mission Support Group is to provide combat support and base sustainment services to ensure the mission readiness of the 27th Special Operations Wing. These support services and activities include providing housing, facilities/infrastructure, fire protection, environmental management, explosive ordnance disposal, disaster preparedness, food service, law enforcement and security, communications, personnel support and other base services as well as recreational activities for a base populace of more than 7,800 military personnel, civilian employees, their families and 4,000 retirees for all units and associate organizations on Cannon Air Force Base.



MEDICAL

The mission of the 27th Special Operations Medical Group is: "People First, Medical Excellence Always." In doing so, the unit supports commanders in ensuring a healthy, fit and deployable active-duty force, as well as safeguarding families and "keeping the promise" to retirees.

As an ambulatory care facility, the 27 SOMDC provides a wide range of services to include: family practice, pediatrics, women's health, optometry, flight medicine, human performance training, dental, public health, allergy/immunizations, mental health, family advocacy, bioenvironmental engineering, laboratory services, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy and health and wellness.



SUSTAINMENT

The 27th Special Operations Maintenance Group executes global special operations taskings as an Air Force component member of United States Special Operations Command.

Responsible for all flight line and back shop maintenance in support of assigned AC-130J, MC-130J, CV-22B, MQ-9 and U-28A aircraft, the group provides contract oversight of civilian maintenance on three Non-Standard Aviation program aircraft types. Additionally, it manages over 90 facilities and an annual budget in excess of \$30 million.

The 27 SOMXG enforces quality maintenance across three squadrons and among seven defense contractors, while it organizes, trains and equips 1,400 personnel in support of special operations forces and COCOMs.



AIRCRAFT

MQ-9 Reaper [more info](#)

The MQ-9 Reaper is an armed, multi-mission, medium-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft that is employed primarily against dynamic execution targets and secondarily as an intelligence collection asset. Given its significant loiter time, wide-range sensors, multi-mode communications suite, and precision weapons -- it provides a unique capability to perform strike, coordination, and reconnaissance against high-value, fleeting, and time-sensitive targets.



CV-22 Osprey [more info](#)

The CV-22 Osprey is a tiltrotor aircraft that combines the vertical takeoff, hover and vertical landing qualities of a helicopter with the long-range, fuel efficiency and speed characteristics of a turboprop aircraft. Its mission is to conduct long-range infiltration, exfiltration and resupply missions for special operations forces.



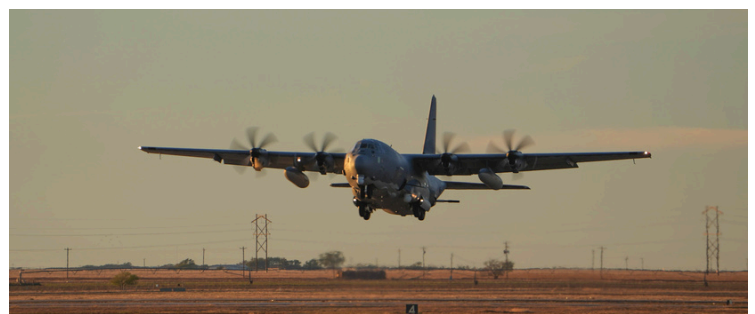
MC-130J Commando II [more info](#)

The Commando II flies clandestine, or low visibility, single or multiship, low-level air refueling missions for special operations helicopters and tiltrotor aircraft, and infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of special operations forces (SOF) by airdrop or airland intruding politically sensitive or hostile territories. The MC-130J primarily flies missions at night to reduce probability of visual acquisition and intercept by airborne threats. Its secondary mission includes the airdrop of leaflets.



AC-130J Ghost rider [more info](#)

The AC-130J Ghost rider's primary missions are close air support, air interdiction and armed reconnaissance. Close air support missions include troops in contact, convoy escort and point air defense. Air interdiction missions are conducted against preplanned targets or targets of opportunity and include strike coordination and reconnaissance and overwatch mission sets. The AC-130J provides ground forces an expeditionary, direct-fire platform that is persistent, ideally suited for urban operations delivering precision low-yield munitions against ground targets.



U-28A Draco [more info](#)

The U-28A is a modified, single-engine Pilatus PC-12 aircraft and is part of the Air Force Special Operations Command manned, airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance fleet. Operational squadrons include the 319th, 34th and 318th Special Operations Squadrons, and the 5th and 19th SOS conduct the airframe's formal training. The U-28A provides manned fixed-wing tactical airborne ISR support to humanitarian operations, search and rescue and conventional and special operation missions.



Media Inquiries

27th Special Operations Public Affairs
511 Chindit Blvd, Building 300, Room 125
Cannon Air Force Base, NM 88103

PA Main Line: (575) 784-4131
PA Org Email Box: 27sowpa.publicaffairs@us.af.mil

DVIDS: <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/27sowpa>

