

# 125th special tactics squadron

**125th special tactics squadron** is a distinguished unit within the United States Air National Guard, renowned for its elite capabilities and critical role in special operations missions. This squadron is a vital component of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), specializing in combat control, pararescue, and tactical air control party operations. The 125th special tactics squadron members are highly trained to operate in hostile environments, providing essential air-to-ground coordination, medical aid, and direct action support. Their expertise enables effective joint force operations, making them indispensable in modern warfare scenarios. This article delves into the history, mission, training, and operational significance of the 125th special tactics squadron. The detailed overview will explore the squadron's organizational structure, notable deployments, and the unique skill sets that define its personnel.

- History and Background of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron
- Mission and Core Functions
- Training and Selection Process
- Equipment and Technology Utilized
- Notable Operations and Deployments
- Organizational Structure and Command
- Impact and Future Developments

## History and Background of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron

The 125th special tactics squadron traces its origins to the evolving needs of the United States Air National Guard to support special operations forces. Established to enhance rapid response capabilities, the squadron has undergone multiple reorganizations and expansions to meet modern tactical demands. Over the decades, the unit has cultivated a reputation for excellence in joint mission environments, often collaborating closely with other branches of the military. The historical development of the squadron reflects the broader strategic shift towards versatile, multi-domain special operations units capable of executing complex assignments worldwide.

## **Formation and Early Years**

The squadron was officially formed to integrate highly skilled airmen trained in combat control, pararescue, and tactical air control party roles. During its early years, the 125th special tactics squadron focused on building core competencies in airfield seizure, personnel recovery, and coordination of close air support. Its personnel were selected from the Air National Guard for their exceptional physical and mental aptitude, setting high standards for operational readiness.

## **Evolving Role Through Conflicts**

Throughout various military conflicts, including operations in the Middle East and global counterterrorism efforts, the 125th special tactics squadron adapted its tactics and equipment to meet emerging threats. Its members have been deployed to support combat search and rescue missions, direct action raids, and humanitarian assistance, underscoring the squadron's versatility and critical importance.

## **Mission and Core Functions**

The primary mission of the 125th special tactics squadron is to provide specialized air-to-ground control and combat support to joint and coalition forces. This involves precision coordination of air strikes, establishing landing zones, and ensuring rapid personnel recovery in hostile or denied environments. The squadron's capabilities are integral to the success of special operations missions, enhancing situational awareness and operational effectiveness on the battlefield.

## **Combat Control Operations**

Combat controllers within the squadron are experts in establishing air traffic control in austere environments, facilitating the safe arrival and departure of aircraft in combat zones. They are trained to call in and direct close air support, ensuring that air power is employed accurately and effectively in support of ground forces.

## **Pararescue and Personnel Recovery**

Pararescuemen, or PJs, are specialized medics trained to perform rescue and recovery missions under fire. Their skills include advanced trauma care, survival, evasion, resistance, and escape techniques. The 125th special tactics squadron's pararescue operators play a crucial role in recovering wounded personnel and providing immediate life-saving medical treatment in hostile conditions.

## **Tactical Air Control Party (TACP)**

The TACP members serve as the vital link between air assets and ground commanders. They provide close air support coordination and ensure that air strikes are synchronized with ground maneuvers. Their expertise in communication and battlefield coordination significantly enhances mission success.

## **Training and Selection Process**

The 125th special tactics squadron maintains rigorous selection and training standards to ensure only the most capable airmen join its ranks. The process combines physical endurance, mental resilience, and advanced combat skills development. Candidates undergo extensive evaluation to confirm their suitability for the demanding roles within the squadron.

## **Selection Criteria**

Applicants must meet stringent physical fitness benchmarks, demonstrate exceptional decision-making under pressure, and possess a strong commitment to team-oriented operations. The selection process includes physical fitness tests, psychological evaluations, and technical skills assessments.

## **Specialized Training Programs**

Upon selection, candidates attend specialized courses such as Combat Control School, Pararescue Indoctrination, and Tactical Air Control Party training. These programs focus on parachuting, scuba diving, survival skills, weapons proficiency, and advanced medical training. Continuous education and joint exercises ensure that squadron members remain at the forefront of tactical innovation.

## **Equipment and Technology Utilized**

The 125th special tactics squadron employs cutting-edge equipment to execute its complex missions effectively. Their gear is tailored to support mobility, communication, medical intervention, and precision targeting in diverse operational environments. The integration of advanced technology enhances the squadron's capability to operate seamlessly with other military assets.

## **Communication Systems**

Secure and reliable communication devices are essential for coordinating air strikes and ground operations. The squadron utilizes encrypted radios,

satellite communication tools, and data-link systems to maintain real-time connectivity with command centers and aircraft.

## **Medical and Rescue Equipment**

Pararescue operators carry compact, high-tech medical kits designed for immediate trauma care in the field. This includes portable ventilators, emergency surgical tools, and advanced wound management supplies. Additionally, specialized extraction gear supports rapid personnel recovery under adverse conditions.

## **Navigation and Targeting Technology**

Advanced GPS, night vision devices, and laser designators enable precise navigation and target acquisition. These tools are critical for conducting operations during day or night and in adverse weather, ensuring mission accuracy and safety.

## **Notable Operations and Deployments**

The 125th special tactics squadron has participated in numerous significant military operations worldwide. Their contributions have often been pivotal in achieving mission objectives, demonstrating exceptional skill and bravery under challenging circumstances.

## **Middle East Deployments**

During operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the squadron provided critical air-to-ground coordination, personnel recovery, and direct action support. Their efforts facilitated successful combat missions, improved casualty evacuation rates, and enabled effective integration of air power with ground forces.

## **Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Missions**

The squadron has also been deployed in response to natural disasters, offering rapid air traffic control setup, medical aid, and logistical support. Their ability to operate in austere environments makes them invaluable during emergency relief efforts.

## **Joint and Coalition Exercises**

Regular participation in multinational training exercises strengthens

interoperability with allied forces. These operations enhance tactical proficiency and ensure readiness for combined special operations missions.

## **Organizational Structure and Command**

The 125th special tactics squadron is structured to optimize operational efficiency and command control. It operates under the Air National Guard and aligns with the broader objectives of the Air Force Special Operations Command. The squadron's leadership comprises experienced officers and non-commissioned officers dedicated to maintaining the highest standards.

## **Unit Composition**

The squadron consists of combat controllers, pararescuemen, tactical air control party specialists, and support personnel. Each subgroup has specific roles but works cohesively to accomplish complex missions.

## **Chain of Command**

The command structure emphasizes clear communication, rapid decision-making, and adaptability. Squadron leaders coordinate closely with higher command echelons and joint task forces to ensure mission alignment and resource allocation.

## **Impact and Future Developments**

The 125th special tactics squadron continues to evolve in response to emerging threats and technological advancements. Its impact on special operations and joint force effectiveness remains profound, contributing significantly to national security objectives. Future developments focus on enhancing capabilities through advanced training, upgraded equipment, and expanded mission sets.

## **Technological Innovation**

Incorporation of unmanned systems, augmented reality, and enhanced communication platforms is underway to increase operational reach and precision. These innovations aim to reduce risk and improve mission success rates.

## **Expanding Mission Scope**

The squadron is preparing to address new domains such as cyber warfare and space operations, integrating traditional special tactics expertise with emerging strategic requirements. This expansion ensures the unit remains a critical asset in multi-domain operations.

- Elite combat control and pararescue capabilities
- Advanced air-to-ground coordination
- Rigorous selection and training processes
- Deployment in combat and humanitarian missions
- Integration of cutting-edge technology

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the primary mission of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron?**

The primary mission of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron is to conduct special operations missions including direct action, special reconnaissance, and combat search and rescue in support of U.S. Air Force and joint force objectives.

### **Where is the 125th Special Tactics Squadron based?**

The 125th Special Tactics Squadron is based at Portland Air National Guard Base in Oregon.

### **What kind of training do members of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron undergo?**

Members of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron undergo rigorous training including airborne operations, combat diving, survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE), and advanced tactical skills to operate in diverse and hostile environments.

### **How does the 125th Special Tactics Squadron support**

## joint military operations?

The 125th Special Tactics Squadron provides highly trained operators who coordinate air-to-ground integration, call in close air support, conduct reconnaissance, and perform personnel recovery to enhance the effectiveness of joint military operations.

## What distinguishes the 125th Special Tactics Squadron within the Air National Guard?

The 125th Special Tactics Squadron is distinguished as one of the few Air National Guard units trained and equipped to perform special operations missions, making it a critical component of both state and national defense capabilities.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *Shadow Warriors: The Untold Story of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*

This book delves into the covert operations and missions of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, highlighting their strategic importance in modern warfare. Through firsthand accounts and detailed analysis, readers gain insight into the squadron's rigorous training, tactical innovations, and the challenges faced in high-stakes environments. It paints a vivid picture of the men and women who operate in the shadows to protect national security.

### 2. *Elite Guardians: Inside the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*

An in-depth exploration of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron's formation, training, and deployment. This book provides a comprehensive look at the leadership, teamwork, and technology that define the unit. It also covers significant missions that shaped their reputation as an elite force within the Air Force Special Operations Command.

### 3. *Beyond the Call: Heroism in the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*

Focusing on the personal stories of bravery and sacrifice, this book presents narratives of individual members of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. It emphasizes the human element behind the tactical expertise and showcases the courage that drives these operators during critical missions. The book also discusses the psychological and physical demands faced by squadron members.

### 4. *Precision and Power: The Tactical Evolution of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*

This volume examines the technological advancements and tactical methodologies adopted by the 125th Special Tactics Squadron over the years. It highlights how innovation in equipment, communication, and strategy has enhanced their operational effectiveness. The book also contextualizes the squadron's role within broader military developments.

### 5. *Into the Breach: Combat Operations of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*

Covering various combat deployments, this book provides a detailed account of

the 125th Special Tactics Squadron's engagements in conflict zones. It explores mission planning, execution, and after-action assessments, offering readers an immersive experience of frontline special operations. The narrative underscores the squadron's adaptability and resilience under pressure.

6. *Silent Thunder: The Covert Missions of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*  
A gripping look at the clandestine operations carried out by the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. The book reveals how stealth, intelligence gathering, and precision strikes define their approach to modern warfare. It includes declassified stories that highlight the risks and successes of operating behind enemy lines.

7. *Forged in Training: The Making of a 125th Special Tactics Operator*  
This book focuses on the rigorous selection and training process that prepares individuals to join the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. It details physical conditioning, skill development, and mental toughness required to meet the unit's high standards. Readers gain appreciation for the discipline and dedication that shape these elite operators.

8. *Brothers in Arms: The Camaraderie of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron*  
Emphasizing the bond between squadron members, this book explores the importance of trust, loyalty, and teamwork in special tactics operations. Through interviews and personal anecdotes, it reveals how relationships forged in adversity contribute to mission success. The narrative highlights the unique culture within the 125th Special Tactics Squadron.

9. *Guardians of the Night: The 125th Special Tactics Squadron in Modern Warfare*  
This book provides a contemporary perspective on the evolving role of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron in global security. It discusses their integration with joint forces, adaptation to emerging threats, and future challenges. The book serves as both a tribute and a forward-looking analysis of this pivotal special operations unit.

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**125th special tactics squadron: U.S. Air Force Special Tactics** Combat Control School Heritage Foundation, 2022-11-08 The CCT - The Eye of the Storm-series chronicles the exploits of Air Force Special Warfare, Combat Control Teams (CCT). It is told in the form of short stories; many etched by a cocktail of blood, sweat and tears. The Combat Control story began in the de facto Volume I with the appearance of the first CCTs; i.e., command and control teams cobbled together

by the WWII U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) for Operation Varsity. The CCT story continued in Volume II, detailing the 21st Century fight in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Included are two humanitarian missions; operations of epic proportion in Haiti and Japan. In this third volume subtitled - Medal of Honor (MOH) - the CCT story is expanded, incorporating the two previously self-published volumes and adding hundreds of new stories from around the globe. But, with a concentration on operations in southwest Asia; including Afghanistan; now America's longest war. This volume is an all-inclusive compilation presented as a single, premium publication. The diversity of feature stories, subjects and styles present a well-rounded, unbiased look at the CCT's view at "the eye of the storm." Each published PA reporter and volunteer contributor has a by-line in the book. Thanks to all for their remarkable journalistic work. The book is expected to engage a wider-ranging audience of American and allied military elements, families, historians and enthusiasts. More importantly, Medal of Honor celebrates the first-ever award of the Air Force Medal of Honor to a Combat Control patriot and hero. On April 20, 2018 after more than fifteen years technical review and Air Staff deliberation the Medal of Honor for TSgt John Chapman was approved by President Donald Trump. The MOH award ceremonies and associated events are covered in detail near the end of this book. In preparing CCT - The Eye of the Storm - Medal of Honor, the goal was to collect stories from hundreds of sources, written by an even larger band of vetted professionals selected to observe, record and report truths about military units in action. In my mind the U.S. Government Public Affairs Offices were the perfect choice. For that reason, you will find hundreds of PA-generated stories used herein. Through our collective efforts we have published a fair and accurate chronical of USAF Combat Control Team's stories; exploiting the public domain and declassified accounts. This is a documentary of Air Force Combat Control Teams operating at The Eye of the Storm. Subtitled Medal of Honor; it is the most in-depth CCT history ever published.

**125th special tactics squadron: CCT-The Eye of the Storm** Gene Adcock, 2012 Volume II is 438 pages in length and contains interviews, anecdotes and descriptions of missions by Air Force Combat Controllers. GWOT stands for Global War on Terrorism.

**125th special tactics squadron: US Special Operation Forces Handbook Volume 3 US Army Special Operation Forces: Strategic Information and Materials** IBP USA,

**125th special tactics squadron: Air National Guard at sixty: A History**, The Air National Guard's role within the Air Force has matured and changed enormously since its establishment as a separate reserve component September 18, 1947. Air National Guard members have served around the world and their military experience and civilian skills have proven invaluable as our nation prosecuted conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. They also served during several major contingencies including the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and 1962. In addition, Air Guard members made major contributions in a host of other operations in Panama, the Balkans, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, and the Iraq no-fly zones instituted after Operation Desert Storm. In the United States, the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts brought into sharp focus the Air Guard's well-established role as America's hometown Air Force. The Air National Guard flew over 3,000 sorties, moved over 30,000 passengers, and hauled over 11,000 tons of desperately needed supplies into Gulf Coast airfields, some of which Guard personnel opened and operated. Air National Guard members rescued 1,443 people--heroically saving people stranded by the flood. At eight sites along the Gulf Coast, Air National Guard medical units treated more than 15,000 patients, combining expert medical care with compassion.

**125th special tactics squadron: Camp Rilea** Andrea Larson Perez, 2014-12-01 Camp Rilea, originally named Camp Clatsop, was founded in 1927 and soon became the Oregon National Guards preferred training site a claim that still holds true today. Located on the picturesque Oregon coast in the town of Warrenton, near Astoria, Camp Rilea covers 1,800 acres and includes three miles of Pacific coast beachfront. The historical photographs in this book tell a fascinating story of the important role Camp Rilea has played over time to all who have passed its gates for generations. Since the early days, Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center sealed its reputation as the premier

regional location offering maneuver areas, facilities, and ranges supporting myriad military units, law enforcement agencies, and public safety and utility-related organizations. A valued community partner, Camp Rilea also hosts many civic and social events, including sports camps, track and field competitions, and Boy Scout gatherings. Come see what really happens behind the dune at Camp Rilea.

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**125th special tactics squadron: The Oregon Air National Guard** Terrence G. Popravak Jr., Terrence G. Popravak, Sean M. Popravak, 2012 As the storm clouds of a world war gathered in the spring of 1941, Maj. G. Robert Dodson said, We've got people, we've got a place, and we're ready! Oregonians responded to the call to arms as the United States prepared for the coming conflict. In April 1941, the Oregon National Guard's 123rd Observation Squadron became the state's first aviation unit and pioneered Oregon military aviation into the postwar Oregon Air National Guard (ORANG). In the 70 years since its start, the citizen airmen of the ORANG have served their community, state, and nation from locations in Oregon, throughout the United States, and worldwide. They stand ready today to answer the call of duty, no matter when it comes.

**125th special tactics squadron: *Falling Hard*** Kaylea Cross, 2022-03-29 Danger is closing in. Kerrigan Whitaker has spent the past two years reinventing herself into the strong, independent woman she's always wanted to be, and running her first ultra marathon is the chance to prove to herself and everyone else how far she's come. Her failed marriage made her wary of relationships, so she's not ready to get involved with anyone else. Not even the man she secretly fantasizes about—who also happens to be her brother's best friend. But when people she works closely with are murdered, she goes to the only place she feels safe—Crimson Point, and the man who tempts her like no other. And the killer is closer than they realize. Air National Guard Pararescueman Travis Masterson loves his career and has dedicated his life to saving and protecting others. There's only one thing missing. Kerrigan—but she's determined to keep walls up between them. He understands why she's gun shy, but he can't let her go. Not when every instinct is screaming that she's it for him. After a shocking attack leaves her in the crosshairs of a cold-blooded killer, Travis is the only one who can save her. With her life in his hands, he'll risk it all to stop the killer and protect the woman he can't live without. For fans of: alpha male heroes, military heroes, athletes, small town romance, Crimson Point Series, friends to lovers, best friend's sister romance

**125th special tactics squadron: *El Tigre*** News , 2008

**125th special tactics squadron: *Crimson Point Protectors Series: Box Set Volume I*** Kaylea Cross, 2024-07-30 BOOKS 1-3 OF THE CRIMSON POINT PROTECTORS SERIES: FALLING HARD Danger is closing in. And the killer is closer than they realize. CORNERED She wants answers—and justice. Their search for the truth could get them killed. SUDDEN IMPACT She won't let him in. He can't let her go.

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**125th special tactics squadron: Relevance Through Innovation** David P. Anderson, 2015 This book is about how Air National Guard-Air Force Reserve Command Test Center (AATC) was created and how it helped the Air Reserve Components (ARC) become a relevant combat force through innovative approaches to modernizing the combat capability of its fighters. It tells how innovative airmen in the ARC, or on active duty, the Department of Airforce (DAF) civilian work force, and civilian contractors worked together to create a crucial function for the Air Force. Lastly, it traces the organizational changes that made the ARC invaluable to the readiness and relevance of the Total Force despite minimal manning and a shoe-string budget.

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