

183D WING NEWS



183D Wing, Illinois Air National Guard, 3101 J. David Jones Parkway, Springfield, IL, 62707

183d Wing Performs Critical Role in Fight Against ISIS: C2 Airmen Plan Major Strikes

by Lt. Col. Laura Fogerty

183d Air Component Operations Squadron
Public Affairs Officer

The 183d Wing, at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, recently marked the return of Airmen deployed to the Middle East for six months. In a ceremony held Mar. 4, 2017, these Airmen were recognized for their performance in Operation Inherent Resolve.

Charged with performing a complex and challenging mission known as Command and Control (C2), the Airmen played a critical role in planning one of the largest airstrikes against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2016.

The contributions of the 183d Wing were acknowledged at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. What follows is a description of command and control as it relates to air operations and the account of those airstrikes.

Command and Control

Airmen performing the C2 mission direct the air, space, and cyberspace domains of a battle. A Component Commander controls the military capabilities within these domains and shifts them, individually or in concert, towards objectives that achieve strategic advantage.

At the heart of this effort is the Air and Space Operations Center (AOC). The center includes officer and enlisted specialties in flying and maintenance, logistics, medical, and legal. Nearly every type of aircraft is represented: fighter, airlift, bomber, and refueling. A cadre of intelligence analysts and communications experts round out the team. There are liaison elements for Navy and Marine aviation and an Army Battlefield Coordination Detachment is permanently assigned to the AOC. Coalition AOCs will include representatives from participating nations.

It's difficult to imagine the tempo and intensity of the center, but at all times, C2 Airmen are situationally aware of the enemy and friendly military capabilities within each of

the battlespace domains. Large projection screens tower over the operations floor displaying radar and terrain in real time. C2 personnel monitor current situations and direct ongoing operations; they react, if necessary, to changes in the battlespace. In rooms surrounding the operations floor, planning for future operations is taking place.

Planners are intimately familiar with the combatant commander's strategic objectives. They turn strategy into operations. They build both offensive and defensive missions that support military objectives. Planning may take days, weeks, or possibly months. It can also happen in hours. Before execution, an order is created that identifies every element of the air component that will be moving on military objectives. This order, known as the Air Tasking Order (ATO), defines unit, aircraft, ordinance, and time and place of execution.



Members of the 183d Wing at Capital Airport, Springfield, Ill., are honored in a ceremony Mar. 4, 2017, at the Illinois Air National Guard base. The members were recognized for their contributions to Operation Inherent Resolve and additional operations in the Middle East. (Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Morgan Grigiski).

The AOC is supported by an Air Force Forces (AFFOR) staff. The AFFOR staff can tap a broad range of resources to underwrite both planned and dynamic battlespace situations, providing a combatant commander with options and reach. And the AFFOR staff is trained to think "sustainment" at every turn. As an example, if the AOC plans an operation dominated by a particular type of aircraft and ordinance, the AFFOR staff ensures the resupply of that ordinance is planned. If necessary, the staff can design

183D WING NEWS



183D Wing, Illinois Air National Guard, 3101 J. David Jones Parkway, Springfield, IL, 62707

policies for flying units inside the theater of operations that would further support the operational tempo. Almost every Air Force specialty is represented on the AFFOR staff.

Together, the AOC and the AFFOR staff make up the 183d Air Operations Group (AOG) under the 183d Wing. The AOG is federally aligned with 12th Air Force and Air Forces Southern (AFSOUTH) at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. This numbered Air Force supports operations in United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). The AOC and AFFOR staffs are trained to support combatant commands requiring Airmen who can direct an air war. That's exactly what the members of this unit did in Operation Inherent Resolve – they planned and executed an air war.

Operation Inherent Resolve: the 183d Wing's first C2 Combat Mission

In 2014, a new terrorist group arose out of the chaos of the Syrian Civil War, ISIS. This group attacked across the Syrian-Iraqi borders and seized large swaths of Iraqi territory in the Euphrates River Valley and Northern Iraq. The attacks were, and still are, barbaric.

Operation Inherent Resolve is a coalition of military forces and many nations working to defeat ISIS and stabilize the region. The operation is concentrated in Iraq and Syria. The most important forces in this operation are the indigenous ground forces fighting ISIS in these two countries. The coalition of air, land and sea forces are integrated and synchronized to support these ground forces.

The coalition supporting Operation Inherent Resolve is composed of approximately 40 nations. There are 12 nations specifically involved in air operations. Those operations are conducted from the Coalition Air and Space Operations Center (CAOC), at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

In July 2016, approximately 80 members of the 183d Wing deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. The majority of those members were command and control Airmen assigned to the CAOC.

The coalition is conducting the most precise air campaign in history. It includes close air support, escort, and interdiction missions, as well as precise engagement of ISIS targets. The focus is on fighting vehicles and positions, staging areas, weapons manufacturing sites and oil infrastructure.

Airmen from the 183AOG took part in the planning and execution of many coalition operations over the course of their six month tour of duty. December, 2016, stands out. The coalition launched its largest strike of the year, wiping out 188 ISIS oil tankers and depriving the organization of more than \$2 million in illicit oil sales in this single strike. A major source of ISIS funding is black-market oil sales. During an additional mid-month strike, the Coalition struck ISIS-seized military hardware to include tanks and artillery systems.

These strikes dealt significant blows to the war-fighting capability of ISIS by degrading their sources of funding. Airmen from the 183AOG contributed to the overall success of these operations.

With their first combat rotation completed and rest and relaxation time nearly over, these C2 Airmen are gearing up for exercise Blue Flag 2017. The exercise is designed to test AOC and AFFOR staff skills in planning, executing and controlling air wars.



Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, provides command and control of air power throughout. The CAOC is comprised of a joint and coalition team that executes day-to-day combined air and space operations and provides rapid reaction, positive control, coordination, and de-confliction of weapon systems. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Strang)