

Whiteman AFB, Missouri, was hosting 'Hawgs' recently as 'Hawgsmoke 2018' rolled into town from October 17 to 20 for a gathering of A-10s that comes around every two years.

Report and photos:

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HAWGSMOKE IS ALL about bringing the A-10 community together to talk close air support (CAS) and breathe in the ethos of this proud band of aviators. The event is essentially an aerial gunnery competition between active-duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command A-10 squadrons. It has been held every two years since 2000, with 'Warthog' units dispatching teams of four aircraft, four pilots and associated maintainers to compete against each other.

The exercise has its roots in the wider USAF 'Gunsmoke' competitions that were held at Nellis AFB, Nevada, until 1995. Pretty much every element of

'Hawgsmoke' is competed, whether it be on-time arrivals, professionalism over the radio, or the actual scoring of the range events. It enables the squadrons to hone skills, exchange strategies and experiences in a demonstrable show of solidarity and mutual support.

The Fallen Hawg ceremony comes on day one, recalling members of the A-10 force who have lost their lives while operating the aircraft. Names are called out and a missing man formation flies overhead. The ceremony ends with all pilots drinking a shot of whiskey and smashing the empty glass into a fire pit.

The gunnery and bombing competition consists of a number of profiles determined by the host unit, this year the 303rd Fighter Squadron 'KC Hawgs' from Whiteman. The teams of four aircraft fly only once on day two to complete the events (the third day is a weather back-up). They have one chance to do it right. There is no feedback on



Maintainers prepare a 47th FS 'Dogpatchers' A-10C for the day's flying.



WARTHOG WARS



**'Hawgsmoke' 2019 teams**

Unit	Home base	Notes
430th FS 'Semi-Invincible' 'Dogpunchers'	Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona	
74th FS 'Flying Tigers'	Moody AFB, Georgia	Flaw 75th FS aircraft
75th FS 'Tiger Sharks'	Moody AFB, Georgia	
76th FS 'Vanguards'	Moody AFB, Georgia	Flaw 302nd FS aircraft
308th FS 'Fighting Order'	Wetfield Air National Guard Base, Maryland	
302nd FS 'Red Devils'	Selkridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan	
303rd FS 'Blackknives'	Fort Wayne, Indiana	
306th FS 'Skullbangers'	Boise Airport-Gowen Field, Idaho	
307th FS 'KC Hawks'	Whiteman AFB, Missouri	
354th FS 'Bulldozers'	Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona	
317th FS 'Dragons'	Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona	Flaw 354th FS aircraft
358th FS 'Lobos'	Whiteman AFB, Missouri	

**'Hawgsmoke' results**

30° low-angle, low-drag	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maj Aaron Broomhaar/Bolin 2. Lt Col Paul Hark/Bowen 3. Lt Col Brent Shank/Ward
30° low-angle, low-drag	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maj Ryan 'Sings' Youngling 2. Lt Col Paul Hark/Bowen 3. Maj Tyler Mully/Shepman
15° low-angle, high-drag, prep-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lt Col Brent Shank/Ward 2. Lt Col Greg 'Mines' Skadd 3. Maj Tyler Mully/Shepman
Steals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capt Sky Comet/Lash 2. Lt Col Brent Shank/Ward 3. Maj Tyler Mully/Shepman
Top overall team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 74th FS 'Flying Tigers' 2. 354th FS 'Bulldozers' 3. 358th FS 'Lobos'

the rankings, and no footage of weapons impact scoring system (WISS) nor audio of the improved remote strafe scoring system (IRSS) is released — it was just a case of who came first, second and third.

The big exercise

While 'Hawgsmoke' is typically hosted by the previous winning team, two consecutive victories for the 47th Fighter Squadron 'Dogpunchers' meant the 2018 event saw the 'KC Hawks' stepping in. The gunnery and bombing contest was flown on October 18, with 12 competing teams taking to the air.

The teams each received details of a truck convoy, which they had to locate and target with a simulated AGM-65 Maverick missile attack. The aircraft then continued towards the Cannon Range, Missouri, for four more events: three included the dropping of 25lb BDU-33 practice bombs, finishing with strafing runs using the 30mm GAU-8/A Avenger gun. Each A-10 pilot was given 100 rounds to hit the target, each aircraft making at least two gun runs.

The top overall team, the 74th FS 'Flying Tigers', was handed the Al'Mud' Moore Trophy. One of the team pilots, Capt Randall Ort, said, 'Hawgsmoke' presented opportunities to get creative with our weapons delivery, but the judges did all they could to throw us curveballs in our weapons events. For example, our low-altitude bombing attack was a delivery that only one person in the flight had ever actually executed, so we had to adjust and really think through how we would execute. Victory by the 'Flying Tigers' means Moody AFB will host 'Hawgsmoke 2020'. 🐉

Above: A 190th FS 'Skullbangers' 'Hawg' low over the Cannon Range dealing out 30mm rounds — brrrr!

Above left: A-10 pilots typically now wear the Thales Scorpion helmet-mounted sighting system.

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