

'Flying Tigers' of 74th FS Win !



Hawgsmoke 2018

The Michigan Air National Guard also brought their special color bird to the competition (Photo: Stefan Goossens)

While the very expensive B-2 Spirit normally steals the show in and around Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, it was all about the A-10s in mid-October 2018, the base being temporary home for numerous Warthogs participating in *Hawgsmoke 2018*. From 17 to 20 October 2018, 303d Fighter Squadron hosted the exercise *Hawgsmoke 2018* at Whiteman. Since the rules state that the same unit cannot host the event twice in a row and with the *Dogpatchers* of 47th FS winning the exercise in 2014 and 2016, it was up to another unit to take care of this year's edition. So *KC Hawgs* stepped in.

Hawgsmoke is an aerial gunnery competition between active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve A-10 squadrons. Since 2000, this exercise is organised after every two years. This year, A-10 Thunderbolt II squadrons participated with teams of four aircraft, pilots and ground crew to compete against each other. Besides a competition, *Hawgsmoke* can also be considered as a gathering of A-10 pilots with opportunities to exchange notes, show and hone skills, discuss strategies and experiences. It started with the arrival of the teams at Whiteman AFB on 17 October 2018. Same day, ACC A-10 demonstration team gave a stunning demo and under the watchful eye of many colleagues, the pilot made sure that it was impressive. The demo was followed by the *Lost Hawg* ceremony.

The actual gunnery and bombing competition was flown on Thursday 18 October. Twelve participating teams took part, in the following order:

- 303d FS, Whiteman AFB, Missouri
- 358th FS, Whiteman AFB, Missouri
- 75th FS, Moody AFB, Georgia
- 354th FS, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona
- 107th FS, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan
- 47th FS, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona
- 190th FS, Gowen Field ANG Base, Idaho
- 104th FS, Warfield ANG Base, Maryland

- 163d FS, Fort Wayne ANG Station, Indiana
- 357th FS (using 354th FS jets), Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona
- 76th FS (using 303d FS jets), Moody AFB, Georgia
- 74th FS (using 75th FS jets), Moody AFB, Georgia

The last three teams didn't bring their own aircraft, but borrowed than from fellow competitors.

Hawgsmoke 2018 project officer, Maj *Fodog* Glen, had drafted five tasks to be completed during the competition. After take-off, teams received the coordinates of a convoy of trucks. Each team had to locate and identify these targets and perform an attack with inert Mavericks. The teams then continued towards the Cannon Range, Missouri for four more events, three including dropping of GBU-33 practice bombs and finishing with strafing runs. For that, the awesome GAU-8/A Avenger Gun was employed. Each A-10 was equipped with 100 rounds to hit the target. With each aircraft making at least two strafing runs (the first to qualify, followed by one or two longer runs), the cannon range visitors enjoyed over 100 *BRRRTs* during the day.

The 74th Fighter Squadron (*Flying Tigers*) of Moody AFB, Georgia, top team of *Hawgsmoke 2018* was bestowed with *Al Mud Moore Trophy* during the Awards Banquet on 19 October. Capt *Pinch* Vincent, Capt *Otter* Ott, Capt *2Sock* Razack and Lt *Hack* Goodman were honoured with Top Tactical and Top Conventional Team awards. "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," said Ott. "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." With 74th FS winning, Moody AFB will host *Hawgsmoke 2020*.

We would like to thank Lt Col. Walter, TSgt Jennings and SrA Kleyh for the hospitality and cooperation! 🦋

Stefan Goossens / 4Aviation and Michel van de Mheen



A-10s of the winning team at the platform of Whiteman AFB after the competition. (Photo: Stefan Goossens)



For each Hawgsmoke exercise a new patch is designed. The patch is worn by all participants during the exercise (Photo: Stefan Goossens)



The location for Hawgsmoke 2018 was Whiteman AFB, also home of the B-2 Spirit fleet of the USA (Photo: Stefan Goossens)



The cannon range saw 48 A-10 aircraft attacking on 18 October 2018. Impressive sights and sounds throughout the day (Photo: Michel van de Mheen)



Famous for its GAU-8/A Avenger gun, the A-10 is an asset well respected by the military (Photo: Stefan Goossens)



Ground crew make sure that all aircraft are ready for action all the time (Photo: Michel van de Mheen)



Teamwork was key during Hawgsmoke (Photo: Stefan Goossens)



"Rock on", this A-10 prepares for action! (Photo: Michel van de Mheen)