

# Hawgsmoke 2014



## Arnold ten Pas

A-10C 78-0605/KC from the 303rd Fighter Squadron takes off to return home on Saturday 12 July 2014. The 303rd Fighter Squadron, based at Whiteman AFB in Missouri, brought two teams to Hawgsmoke 2014. (Davis-Monthan AFB, Arnold ten Pas)

### Introduction

Since 2000, the USAF organises the biennial “Hawgsmoke” competition, where United States Air Force A-10 units gather to compete with each other in bombing, strafing and tactical planning. As the 357th FS “Dragons” had won the last edition in 2012 at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, they were tasked with organising the 2014 event (again at Davis-Monthan AFB). In the 2014 edition, fourteen teams participated in the exercise that might have been the last of its kind as the A-10 is slated for withdrawal from the US Air Force.

### History

Hawgsmoke grew out of the discontinued “Gunsmoke” Air Force Worldwide Gunnery Competition. Gunsmoke had been the US Air Force’s air-to-ground gunnery and bombing competition involving multiple airframes, first held in 1949 and then biennially (except for 1963–1980) at Nellis AFB from 1954 to 1995.

Colonel Cliff Latta of the 172d FS is credited with initiating the first Hawgsmoke competition at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Michigan. It was hosted by the Michigan Air National Guard’s 172d FS from Battle Creek. A-10 units from around the world each sent four aircraft and associated crew to compete in ground attack and target destruction events. The 118th FS from the Connecticut Air National Guard won

the first event and in turn hosted Hawgsmoke 2002, at Fort Drum, New York.

In 2002 17 teams and 62 aircraft competed. The overall winner was the four-member team from the 47th FS from Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. Hawgsmoke 2002 emphasized target acquisition and focused on accurately dropping practice bombs, firing the AGM-65 Maverick missile, and straf-

ing proficiency with the 30 mm GAU-8 Gatling gun.

Hawgsmoke 2004 was hosted by the 47th FS and held at England Air Park, Louisiana. The competition grew to include 18 teams and more than 70 aircraft. Weather conditions forced the cancellation of the competition events and consequently the event became known as “Hawgwash” 2004.



As there was no winner in 2004, the 355th Fighter Wing was selected to host the 2006 event. It was held 22–25 March at Davis Monthan AFB. Hawgsmoke 2006 coincided with the 30th anniversary of the A-10. Consequently, over 140 aircraft flew in to take part. The 303rd FS from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, emerged as the winner. In turn the 303rd hosted Hawgsmoke 2008 at Salina airport, because of its proximity to the Smoky Hill Range, Kansas. The winner of the 2008-edition was the 190th FS, Idaho ANG. Therefore the 2010 instalment of Hawgsmoke was held at Boise-Gowen Field, Idaho. And the winner was...the 190th FS! As Hawgsmoke rules prevent that two subsequent competitions are organised by the same unit, the runner-up, the 354th FS, was designated to organise Hawgsmoke 2012. This meant that the competition moved to Davis-Monthan AFB. And as mentioned in the opening of the article, the competition stayed at Davis-Monthan due to the 357th FS being the winner in 2012.

### Game On!

Hawgsmoke usually opens with a remembrance ceremony for fallen comrades. Following the reading of the names of all fallen A-10 pilots, a missing-man formation flies overhead. At the conclusion, the participants drink a shot of whiskey and then smash the shot glasses, in honour and remembrance of old friends and colleagues. This year, the ‘Fallen Hawg’ fly-ver was performed on Wednesday 9 July when three A-10s overflew Davis-Monthan AFB late in the afternoon.

Due to lack of funding, not all units brought their own aircraft to Davis-Monthan AFB but were forced to use aircraft from other units (at a ‘rental’ rate of one case of beer per aircraft...-). Units had to arrive at Davis-Monthan AFB carrying the following payload:

1. 1150xPGU-15/B (30mm Target Practice Ammunition)
2. 1xLAU-131 (7 tube rocket launcher)
3. 1xTGM-65 (EO) (Maverick)
4. 1xTGM-65 (IR) (Maverick)
5. 1xATP (Sniper Advanced Targeting Pod)

“Usually Hawgsmoke itself takes place over two days and includes team and individual scoring of strafing, high-altitude dive bombing, 30-degree dive bombing, Maverick missile precision, and team tactics,” said Maj. Kyle Lanto, a 355th Training Squadron pilot instructor. “But this year’s competition focused more on forward firing.”

The host squadron, 357th FS, selected 2014 Hawgsmoke flight evolutions that included the following:

- 30 and 45 Degree High Angle Strafe Runs (approximately 1 mile from target)
- Low Level Long and Short Range Strafe (approximately 1 mile / 3,000 yards (respectively) from target)
- Combat Search and Rescue – Locating a simulated down pilot
- Navigation

An additional challenge for the units was that the gun (GAU-8/A Avenger 30mm) could only be used in manual mode. The mass-briefings for all the participating units were held on Tuesday 8 July and Wednesday 9 July, prior to the actual competition on Thursday 10 July. The exercise started on Thursday 10 July, 06.40 AM sharp when the first team took off. With intervals of exactly 20 minutes the teams took off and subsequently headed to the Barry M. Goldwater range near Gila Bend, Arizona. On this range, formerly known as Luke Air Force range, the teams had to perform the mentioned tasks, unfortunately not using the Mavericks and the rocket launchers. Besides that, teams could gain points for tactical planning and execution, including transit from Davis-Monthan AFB to the range. At the end of the day, the team with the most points won the competition, this being the 47th FS "Dogpatchers", again from Davis-Monthan AFB. Hopefully things will change for the good and we will once again see a Hawgsmoke exercise in 2016!

### Participating aircraft

The following aircraft could be identified as participating in the exercise. Besides that, local units flew missions as well (not included in this overview) resulting in no less than 78 different A-10s that flew during the days surrounding Hawgsmoke 2014 (making keeping track of the teams quite a challenge). The following serials are presented in order of take-off. As mentioned, not all units flew in their own aircraft. Tailcodes mentioned in the overview per aircraft are the markings as noted on the aircraft.

#### 354th FS "Bulldogs"

81-0981/DM	A-10C	354th FS	
91-0960/DM	A-10C	354th FS	
80-0275/SP	A-10C	354th FS	81st FS mks
81-0966/DM	A-10C	354th FS	

#### 190th FS ID ANG

78-0643/ID	A-10C	190th FS	
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78-0619/ID	A-10C	190th FS	
81-0955/ID	A-10C	190th FS	blue tail mks
78-0703/ID	A-10C	190th FS	

#### 303rd FS AFRC team1

79-0091/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
80-0237/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
79-0090/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
79-0164/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	

#### 74th FS "Flying Tigers"

78-0600/FT	A-10C	74th FS	
78-0674/FT	A-10C	74th FS	'74 FS' mks
79-0129/FT	A-10C	74th FS	
79-0216/-	A-10C	74th FS	

#### 104th FS MD ANG

79-0088/MD	A-10C	104th FS	
79-0086/MD	A-10C	104th FS	
78-0717/MD	A-10C	104th FS	
79-0704/MD	A-10C	104th FS	

#### 163rd FS "Blacksnakes" IN ANG

82-0661/-	A-10C	163rd FS	
80-0267/IN	A-10C	163rd FS	
78-0626/-	A-10C	163rd FS	
80-0244/IN	A-10C	163rd FS	

#### 47th FS "Dogpatchers"

79-0153/DP	A-10C	47th FS	'924 FG' mks
79-0210/DM	A-10C	47th FS	357th FS mks
80-0232/-	A-10C	47th FS	
79-0145/-	A-10C	47th FS	

#### 358th FS

80-0159/DM	A-10C	358th FS	
80-0279/DM	A-10C	358th FS	
81-0958/DM	A-10C	358th FS	
78-0684/-	A-10C	358th FS	

#### 357th FS "Dragons"

80-0273/DM	A-10C	357th FS	
81-0969/DM	A-10C	357th FS	
80-0181/DM	A-10C	357th FS	
79-0167/DM	A-10C	357th FS	

#### 303rd FS AFRC team 2

78-0605/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
79-0109/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
79-0113/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	
79-0121/KC	A-10C	303rd FS	



A very late arrival at Davis-Monthan AFB for these two A-10Cs. During the days around Hawgsmoke operations would go on way beyond 6PM. Seen here are 81-0939/DM from the 357th FS and the 355th FW Wing Commander 80-0278/DM sporting a white tailband, as do all the commander aircraft at Davis-Monthan AFB (11 July 2014, Arnold ten Pas)