

NATIONAL GUARD ACTIVATES TWO NEW AIR GUARD UNITS AT OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE

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The Nebraska Air National Guard's organizational presence at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., got a boost Friday, July 6, when the state activated two new Air Guard units at Offutt AFB.

In a ceremony scheduled held at the Patriot Club's Main Ballroom, Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke, adjutant general for Nebraska, accepted the colors of the newly activated Headquarters, 170th Group, and the 238th Combat Training Squadron from Nebraska Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy as new Air Guard units supporting the active duty 55th Wing. The units joined the 170th Operations Support Squadron currently stationed at Offutt AFB, bringing the total number of Nebraska Air Guard units stationed at Offutt to three.

According to Lempke the reorganization meets two Air Force goals. It aligns Air Guard units directly with the active duty Air Force organizations they operate and train with and it positions Air Guard personnel in units compatible with their federal missions.

"The 55th Wing has welcomed the Nebraska Air Guard as a full mission partner and the relationship we have with them is rock solid and beneficial to some pretty critical Air Force missions," Lempke said.

Lempke said that even though the unit has only been at Offutt for a few short years, it has already contributed substantially to the 55th Wing's mission. He added that the new Air Guard organizations have been tailored to better work with their partner units at Offutt AFB and will build upon the valuable relationship that has already been established between the Air Guard and the 55th Wing.

Taking command of the new 170th Group was Col. Richard J. Evans III, Lincoln, the current commander of the 170th OSS. Evans is originally from Omaha where he graduated from Omaha Northwest High School and the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He has been a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard since 1984.

The new structure will not result in any change to the number of Air Guard personnel assigned to Offutt AFB, according to Evans.

"This change is a realignment of our existing personnel at Offutt Air Force Base along functional lines, not a major shift in the Concept of Operations for what we actually do," said Evans. "Instead of being assigned to only one unit, our billets and people will now be split among three units."

"The overall mission of the units and their members remains the same: to support the 55th Wing's global treaty verification, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance," Evans said.

The 170th Group will provide the command element for and administrative support to the Air Guard units and personnel assigned to Offutt AFB. The 170th Group was formerly assigned to the New Jersey ANG as the 170th Air Refueling Group. The unit was inactivated on Oct. 1, 1993, and is being reactivated tomorrow. The 170th Group will inherit the proud history and lineage of the 170th ARG and its predecessors.

Replacing Col. Evans as commander of the 170th OSS is Lt Col. Mark H White, Bellevue, a native of Indiana. White was previously the director of Operations for the unit and has been a member of the Nebraska Guard since 2002. Prior to joining the Guard, White served on active duty with the Air Force for 14 years. The 170th OSS partners with the active duty 55th OSS to provide a full range of support to 55th Wing flying operations.

Lt. Col. Roland "Rody" T. Janzen, Omaha, became the first commander of the new 238th Combat Training Squadron. Janzen is a California native who's been a member of the Nebraska Air Guard since 2000. Prior to that he served 11 years on active duty with the Air Force. The 238th will organize Guard personnel who provide formal flying training to crew members flying the OC-135, RC-135 and WC-135 aircraft assigned to the 55th Wing.

The establishment of these two new Guard units at Offutt solidifies the 55th Wing as the Air Force's preeminent example of the Total Force in action. The Wing's Total Force Team of active duty,

ANG, Air Force Reserve, civilian contractors and Department of Defense civilians all work together to accomplish the unit's global missions.