

Totally revamped, this year's Gunsmoke competition still required teamwork and cooperation for a crew to come out on top.

# The New Gunsmoke

**T**he Air Force has seen its share of changes. This year, so did Gunsmoke, USAF's premier air-to-ground competition. Gunsmoke '95 was entirely redesigned to emphasize team effort and featured a wide range of aircraft. Teams departed from their home bases or forward-deployed bases on October 26, flying at least a four-and-one-half-hour mission profile before dropping bombs on ranges at Nellis AFB, Nev. They had one only chance to strike the defended target. They then landed at Nellis, and after a mass debriefing and awards ceremony on October 28, they returned home.

USAF photo by SSgt. Joe Springfield



At right, a crew chief marshals a B-1B into its parking place on the Nellis AFB ramp. Above, F-15s from Missouri ANG's 131st Fighter Wing, Lambert-Saint Louis Airport, Mo., and the 33d FW, Eglin AFB, Fla., share ramp space. This year, members of more than thirty individual squadrons were divided into six integrated, composite-force teams, representing four major commands, ANG, and AFRES. For the first time in this air-to-ground exercise, the teams included air-superiority fighters, such as the F-15s above. By cutting the meet's size and eliminating much of the traditional weapons-load and maintenance segments of the competition, the usual ten-day TDY was reduced to a three-day affair, saving about \$500,000.



USAF photo by SrA. Kim Price





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The first-place winner, Pacific Air Forces, scored 61.4 percent of the 6,850 total possible points, with the second-place AFRES team only a few points behind. Each team of nineteen aircraft had a different set of AWACS controllers so that fewer people would be familiar with the tactical scenario.

Above, an F-16 pilot dismounts, as (right) dedicated ground crew wait for their charges to arrive at Nellis. Below, a crew chief looks over his A-10's TF34 turbofan, and a B-52 roars down the Nellis runway.



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At right, F-15E Weapon System Officer Capt. Wes Kremer from the 492d Fighter Squadron at RAF Lakenheath, UK, fills out post-strike paperwork before attending the USAFE team's debrief. For Gunsmoke '95, overseas commands deployed to operating bases a predetermined distance from the target ranges at Nellis. Combat-length sorties made aircraft reliability and crew fatigue factors in the competition. Also new was a scoring system that, for only the second Gunsmoke, scored every bomb dropped—not just the best of the team's sortie.



USAF photo by SSgt. Jim Green

### 1 Pacific Air Forces

19th Fighter Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, four F-15Cs

13th and 14th Fighter Squadrons, Misawa AB, Japan, four F-16Cs

18th Fighter Squadron, Eielson AFB, Alaska, four F-16Cs

355th Fighter Squadron, Eielson AFB, Alaska, four A-10As

23d and 72d Bomb Squadrons, Minot AFB, N. D., two B-52Hs

9th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### 2 Air Force Reserve

302d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Ariz., four F-16Cs

457th Fighter Squadron, Carswell Field, Tex., four F-16Cs

522d and 523d Fighter Squadrons, Cannon AFB, N. M., four F-111Fs

47th Fighter Squadron, Barksdale AFB, La., four A-10As

93d Bomb Squadron, Barksdale AFB, La., two B-52Hs

8th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### 3 US Air Forces in Europe

493d Fighter Squadron, RAF Lakenheath, UK, four F-15Cs

23d Fighter Squadron, Spangdahlem AB, Germany, four F-16Cs

492d and 494th Fighter Squadrons, RAF Lakenheath, UK, four F-15Es

70th Fighter Squadron, Moody AFB, Ga., four A-10As

9th Bomb Squadron, Dyess AFB, Tex., two B-1Bs

9th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### 4 Air Combat Command

59th Fighter Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla., four F-15Cs

34th and 421st Fighter Squadrons, Hill AFB, Utah, four F-16Cs

336th Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, N. C., four F-15Es

354th, 357th, and 358th Fighter Squadrons, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., four A-10As

37th Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, S. D., two B-1Bs

7th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### 5 Air Education and Training Command

1st, 2d, and 95th Fighter Squadrons, Tyndall AFB, Fla., four F-15Cs

152d Fighter Squadron, Tucson IAP, Ariz., four F-16Cs

310th Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Ariz., four F-16Cs

309th Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Ariz., four F-16Cs

34th Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, S. D., two B-1Bs

8th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### 6 Air National Guard

110th Fighter Squadron, Lambert-Saint Louis Airport, Mo., four F-15Cs

157th Fighter Squadron, McEntire ANGB, S. C., four F-16Cs

188th Fighter Squadron, Kirtland AFB, N. M., four F-16Cs

104th Fighter Squadron, Baltimore, Md., four A-10s

127th Bomb Squadron, McConnell AFB, Kan., two B-1Bs

7th Fighter Squadron, Holloman AFB, N. M., one F-117

### Gunsmoke Results

The twenty-seven pilots and aircrew members of the nineteen-aircraft PACAF team were the overall winners after scoring 61.4 percent of the total possible 6,850 points. The order and composition of the six participating teams is listed at left.



USAF photo by S/A. Kim Price





The 49th Fighter Wing at Holloman AFB, N. M. (above) "gave" each team an F-117. In coordination with the rest of the team, the stealth fighter dropped one laser-guided bomb ten minutes before the bombing window for the rest of the strike package. Gunsmoke '95 was the first time precision weapons or the F-117 were used at the meet. At left, SSgt. William Kaufman, from the 70th Fighter Squadron, Moody AFB, Ga., takes care of an A-10's canopy. The 70th FS aircraft were assigned to the USAFE team. Some units outside of a team's major command were assigned units to balance the capability of each composite team.

The tightened schedule and defended target made Gunsmoke '95 even more like an actual combat deployment, less of a test of individual vs. individual. With planners striving to make such competitions increasingly demanding and realistic, more changes lie ahead for Gunsmoke exercises. Planners have said that future meets may include space assets, post-strike reconnaissance, and possibly the B-2 Stealth bomber—reflections of a leaner force working together effectively. ■

