

Nov 2021

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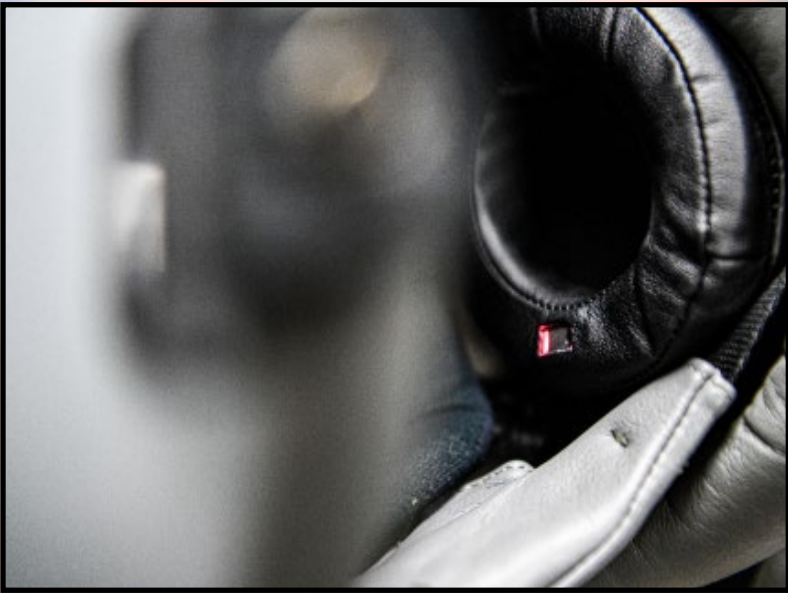
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131st Fighter Squadron first F-15 unit to use SPYDR, enhances tactical capabilities

By Randy Burlingame



Lt. Col. Michael 'Shot' Glass, 131st Fighter Squadron commander, shows where SPYDR was installed in his helmet Oct. 28, 2021, at Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts. The technology is located in the pilot's ear piece and enhances the safety and capabilities of the user. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Randy Burlingame)

The 131st Fighter Squadron became the first F-15C Eagle unit to employ SPYDR by Spotlight Labs Sept. 2021, at Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts.

SPYDR is a system for pilots and aircrew that uses sensor technology to detect and monitor physiological changes, such as hypoxia. If there is an emergency, the helmet insert will warn the pilots in real time, improving the pilot's safety while flying.

"The SPYDR system provides a safety system that is extremely important to operations in an F-15C," said Lt. Col.

Michael 'Shot' Glass, 131st Fighter Squadron commander. "Due to our operational and tactical need to fly at high altitudes, F-15C pilots run a higher risk of falling victim to cabin decompression."

According to the Spotlight Labs website, the only indication of hypoxic incapacitation has been training pilots to recognize their symptoms.

Glass said this can be a difficult task when a pilot is in combat and SPYDR increases their tactical capabilities.

"The most dangerous type of decompression is slow and/or insidious which is difficult to detect by the pilot, especially if he or she is engaged in tactical maneuvering or combat," said Glass. "SPYDR provides us an audible warning of when our oxygen saturation drops below a specific threshold and alerts the pilot that he or she may pass out soon unless a lower altitude is achieved immediately."

Dustin Yee, Defense Innovation Unit project manager, is one of the individuals that helped connect the Department of

Defense with Spotlight Labs, ultimately leading to this lifesaving technology being used by pilots at the 104FW.

"DIU finds commercial solutions for Department of Defense problems," said Yee. "This project was born from the need to prevent unexplained physiological episodes. DIU was able to connect with the commercial world to find vendors who could provide solutions at a rapid speed. In this case, we went from problem curation to a recommendation, to the field in under three years."

Yee said the project expands beyond the 104FW and the Air National Guard. He said the project has been a joint effort to include the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Naval Air Systems Command, and Naval Advanced Medical Development. He went on to say that the system has been used by pilots in multiple airframes.

Being able to help facilitate the success of the project is something Yee said he feels good about.

"It feels extremely rewarding," said Yee. "Even more so that we were able to

have these devices in the hands of those who have been directly affected by unexplained physiological episodes in just a few years."

For Glass, having the technology in hand is something he said will help ensure success in the sky for pilots.

"SPYDR gives us the confidence to execute the high-altitude tactics we need to be effective at air superiority," said Glass. "Knowing there is a system monitoring to help keep us safe gives us a tactical advantage."



104th Operations Support Flight Airmen install SPYDR into a pilot's helmet Sept. 18, 2021, at Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts. The SPYDR system provides an audible warning when a pilot's oxygen saturation drops below a specific threshold, enhancing their safety and tactical capabilities. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Camille Lienau)

The Navajo Code Talkers

Tech. Sgt. Robert Cyr, 104th Fighter Wing equal opportunity specialist



The 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Ronald L. Green, attends a celebration of the National Navajo Code Talkers Day in Window Rock, AZ., Aug 14, 2016. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Melissa Marnell, Office of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps/Released)

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to honor and reflect on Native American contributions to our way of life and our military history.

Among those contributions, one of the most unique stories is that of the Navajo Code Talkers – a group of over 400 men from the Navajo nation responsible for an unbreakable code that helped the

United States gain a strategic advantage in the Pacific theater during the World War II.

In the earlier part of World War II, US troops found their military codes were being perpetually broken by the enemy. This made it difficult to enact any substantial strategy as any major military move was being forecast with enough

notice to defend against it.

A World War I veteran named Philip Johnston grew up in the Navajo nation as part of a missionary family and suggested that their language was complex, unknown outside of the region, and difficult to decipher, making for an excellent military code.

The project was green-lighted and on May 5, 1942 the first 29 Code Talkers reported for duty. They were assigned with the first division of the U.S Marines and from there developed their code based on the Navajo language.

This code contained different words for the 26 letters of the alphabet and different phrases for commonly used terminology, (for example, the word “Toh-Dineh-ih,” which translates to Sea Force.) The Navajo code was dynamic, evolving over time, and would continually include new phrases and words for phonetic sounds – making it even harder for outside forces to crack. Ultimately, over 400 code talkers were involved throughout the course of the Pacific Theater, participating in every Marine assault from 1942 to 1945.

Despite how successful their program was for the war effort, they received very little recognition for their efforts due to the classified nature of the operation. It wasn’t until 1982 that President Ronald Reagan designated August 14th as Navajo Code Talkers Day to celebrate their contributions. Later, as further recognition, the Code Talkers were awarded with Congressional Gold and Silver medals in 2001.



The 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Ronald L. Green, attends a celebration of the National Navajo Code Talkers Day in Window Rock, AZ., Aug 14, 2016. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Melissa Marnell, Office of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps/Released)

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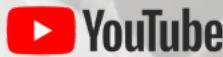
Recruiters

If you want to learn about a career with the 104th Fighter Wing call one of our recruiters to learn more about serving in the Air National Guard, and the benefits you can receive, including 100% tuition and fee waiver.

- Recruiting Office Supervisor, Master Sgt. Glendaennis Schuster (413) 237-0427**
- Retention Office Manager, Tech. Sgt. Bento Fernandes, (413) 636-2291**
- Worcester Area Recruiter, Tech. Sgt. Brian Whitman, (413) 237-4525**
- Western Mass Recruiter, Tech. Sgt. Ernest Smith, (413) 237-0982**
- Western Mass Recruiter, Tech Sgt. Kayla Gallagher, (413) 207-5186**

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Welcomes

- Airman Basic Elizabeth Sarnacki - CPTF
- Airman Basic Patrick Garnder - LRS
- Airman Devon Daniels - LRS
- Airman 1st Class Robert Boulanger - AMXS
- Airman 1st Class Alexander Laine - OSF
- Airman 1st Class Alexander Majewski - MXS
- Senior Airman Nicholas Ottoson - SFS

- Senior Airman Jack Munroe - SFS
- Staff Sgt. Felice Convino - SFS
- Staff Sgt. Nicholas Landi - MXS
- Staff Sgt. Jake Szecskas - SFS
- Staff Sgt. Justin Cwalinski - MXS
- Tech. Sgt. Tanya Sullivan - MOF

Promotions

- Airman 1st Class Brianna Becotte - LRS
- Airman 1st Class Luis Soto Soldevilla - CES
- Senior Airman James Tigs - CF
- Senior Airman Bailey Canedy - SFS
- Senior Airman Dominic Isidro - CES
- Senior Airman Kelsey Robare - AMXS
- Senior Airman Christine Smith - MXS
- Senior Airman Emily Warren - MXS
- Senior Airman Darik Frye - SFS
- Staff Sgt. Shane Mastello - MXS
- Staff Sgt. Sean Nolan - EOD
- Staff Sgt. Robert Maxton - AMXS
- Staff Sgt. Jaime Daigle - MXS
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Allen - OSF

- Staff Sgt. Steven Mejia - MXS
- Staff Sgt. Noel Cintroninserni - AMXS
- Tech. Sgt. Michael Reynolds - MDG
- Tech. Sgt. Dennis Xayasone
- Tech. Sgt. Kyle Doran - EOD
- Tech. Sgt. Jessica Dixon - MDG
- Tech. Sgt. David Avalone - MXS
- Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Duncan - MDG
- Tech. Sgt. Ernest Swain - CPTF
- Tech. Sgt. Jessica Luczynska - CPTF
- Tech. Sgt. Kyle Cote - AMXS
- Master Sgt. Felicia Yager - FSS
- Master Sgt. Rebecca Stanley - MDG
- Major Samuel Bath - SFS

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