

134 AIR CONTROL SQUADRON



MISSION

Tasked to provide a world-wide deployable battle space management platform providing tactical level support of air operations planning and execution. The squadron operates the Modular Control Equipment Radar and Link-16 Data link Gateway to provide surveillance and airspace control. Their wide range of communication skills and capabilities are critical to net centric warfare, as well as to the Kansas Air National Guard's Defense Support to Civilian Authorities mission.

LINEAGE

134 Tactical Control Flight, 15 Sep 1982

Redesignated 134 Tactical Control Squadron, 19 October 1988

Redesignated 134 Air Control Squadron, 16 Jun 1992

STATIONS

McConnell AFB, KS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Stephen D. Gray, 1 May 1982

Maj James F. Thomasson Jr., 10 Jun 1985

LTC Patrick A. Ayres, 11 Jul 1992

Maj Charles D. Jacobs, 7 Aug 1995

LTC James A. Patterson, 6 Dec 1997

LTC Shirley N. Brown, 3 Feb 2001

LTC Curtis O. Coin, 17 Nov 2003

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On 15 September 1982, the 134th Tactical Control Flight, officially became the newest organization to the Kansas Air National Guard, with Major Stephen D. Gray as commander to provide much needed tactical radar control.

In peacetime, the 134th TCF will provide radar control intercept training for the 184 TFG F-4 pilots and the Weapons Systems Officer students to meet the F-4 pilot and syllabi requirements. In addition, the 134th TCF provides radar control for continuation training flown by the 184 TFG instructor aircrews.

In combat, the 134th TCF will provide an extended eye, searching deep behind enemy lines, to detect any incoming threat. Air Weapons Controllers and Weapons Technicians stand ready to take control of aircraft on Combat Air Patrol, and direct them in to destroy the enemy threat. Maintenance personnel are constantly monitoring their equipment to insure that no 'red' time occurs. 'Red' time in the Tactical Air Control business is disastrous and even a few minutes off the air can have devastating consequences.

The unit's taskings continued to grow through the next year as they stood up the Replacement Training Unit for Air Battle Managers training Air Force and Air National Guard officers. On 1

August of 1986 the unit had its first Change of Command as Maj James Thomasson took over the reins. The next day the unit deployed to Smoky Hill Weapons Range for its first Operational Readiness Evaluation. On 3 October 1986 the unit launched "Operation Sentry Viking 1-87" its first Operational Readiness Inspection, and received a hard won overall "Satisfactory" for its efforts. The unit capped off the year with a Unit Effectiveness Inspection in December receiving the "Best Tactical Control Unit" award.

The ever increasing tempo of the "School House" limited deployments in 1987 to annual field training "Operation Cajun 87" during March in New Orleans LA.

In April 1988, a 157th Air Control Group Standardization Evaluation Inspection resulted in an overall rating of "Excellent". The unit then launched "Operation Sentry Crawfish" on 7 September with a convoy to Gulfport Mississippi for annual field training. On 19 October 1988, the 134th Tactical Control Flight was redesignated the 134th Tactical Control Squadron.

"Operation Angie IV" began on 3 June 1989, with an airlift deployment to the island of St. Croix which started the unit's involvement in the "War on Drugs". On 15 July "Operation Rigid Flex III" began with a convoy to Volk Field Wisconsin, for the unit's annual field training. This was followed by "Operation Amalgum Chief 90-1" on 22 September with an airlift to Shemya AFB Alaska. In November 1989, the unit received a Satellite Communications Terminal and began conversion to TRI-TAC communications equipment. The 134th Transportation Section rounded off the year with the "Best Special Transportation Activity" Award.

The 134th began "Operation Hard Driving" on 2 June 1990, with a convoy to Ft Riley KS. On 2 August, the unit received a UEI earning another overall "Excellent" rating.

The year 1991 proved to be demanding for the 134th continuing its support of the "War on Drugs" with two six week deployments to the British West Indies Turks and Caicos Island of Providenciales. On 20 July 1991 the unit received another ORI earning an overall "Excellent" rating.

During March 1992, a 157th Air Control Group Stan/Eval Inspection earned the unit the first overall "Outstanding" rating ever received by an ANG unit. On 1 June 1992, the 134th continued to grow again with its re- designation as the 134th Air Control Squadron (ACS). In August, a change of command to Lt Col Patrick Ayers was followed by an OCONUS deployment to Vorpour, Denmark for "Operation Tactical Fighter Weaponry 92". The year was topped off on 26 October with the award of the Air Force Outstanding Unit for the period 1 Jan 90-31 Dec 91.

The year 1993 was again a high tempo year with two OCONUS deployments in support of the "War on Drugs" to Swan Island, Honduras. The 134th Transportation Section earned the "Special Transportation modules. In September, the unit stood up a school house for Electronic Protection Technicians used by both Active Duty and Guard units while standing down the RTU for Air Battle Managers.

Finally, on 17 November, the 134th received the TPS-75 radar.

The 134th used "Operation First Look" on 4 June 1994 for its annual field training and the first full deployment of TRI-TAC communications and TYQ-23 operations Battle Managers spread across the country in the Air Traffic Control Facilities of Kansas City, Minneapolis, and Houston. In addition, the unit augmented the military control center at Tyndall AFB, Florida. The 24 hour a day operations in garrison continued thru 5 November until the unit was tasked to deploy to Whiteman AFB, Missouri. As the unit settled into day-to-day operations at Whiteman, no one realized it would be a long winter in Missouri before the unit would see Kansas again. Radar operations continued around the clock at Whiteman until the 15th of March 2002. After 5 months of continuous operations, the 134th was finally ordered to cease operations and return back home to McConnell. While the majority of the unit was able to remain in garrison for the next 4 months, operations personnel were tasked many times. Operators were deployed to various air traffic control facilities as well as the CONUS NORAD Region (CONR) at Tyndall AFB Florida. In July, the entire unit was tasked to provide radar protection services for Kennebunkport Maine. During the Maine deployment, unit personnel were able to get some time off to do some local sightseeing. After 3 weeks in Maine, the unit returned to McConnell where they spent the next 6 months awaiting further taskings. The year closed on a high point as MSgt Joe Vajgrt was named the "1st Sgt of the Year" for the State of Kansas.

As 1995 came along the unit started with a 45 day OCONUS deployment to Jacojenente, Italy in support of "Operation Deny Flight". On 1 May, the 134th was authorized more personnel and expanded into building 49. During June the unit convoyed to Smoky Hill Weapons Range for Annual Training. On 1 August Maj Charles Jacobs assumed command of the unit. Also, SSgt Gary Berger received the Airman's Medal while the unit received their first Joint Meritorious Unit Award. The year of 1996 was relatively quiet with one OCONUS deployment to Vorpour Denmark in support of "Tactical Fighter Weaponry 96" from 10 August thru 6 September. The school house for Electronic Protection Technicians was shut down and it remained quiet until 6 December 1997 when Lt Col James Patterson assumed command.

In November 1998, the unit was called to State Active Duty when heavy rains flooded much of Arkansas City, Kansas. Soon after, a tornado struck the city of Haysville and again the unit was required for State Active Duty. The year was completed by an 8th Air Force Standardization Evaluation on 2 December with another overall "Excellent" rating.

The 2001 year began with Lt Col Shirley Brown assumed command of the unit on 3 February. Immediately following, the Air Force Concept of Operations for Air Battle Management changed drastically. The unit split into separate, simultaneous deployment packages for its Operations Crews and the rest of the unit, now referred to as "Deployed Radar" (DR). The DR started "Operation Under the Gun" as the Operations Crews began "Operation Southern Comfort". The DR convoyed to Cannon Range Missouri while the operations section departed for Gulfport, Mississippi. The attacks on September 11 brought a flurry of warning orders and pre-deployment orders. The unit was activated on 21 September 2001 to perform operations in garrison. The unit started 24/7 radar operations in support of "Operation Noble Eagle" doing what nobody ever

thought we would be doing; securing the skies over our own country. As the days progressed more taskings came along. By the end of September the unit had "Air Activity of the Year" award in December and that was followed by another Air Force Outstanding Unit Award on 31 December.

In February of 2003, the unit again received a tasking for radar services. This time the location was Jackson Hole Wyoming. The weather proved to be a challenge at the radar site as several feet of snow fell during the 4 week deployment. Off duty the snow was a source of entertainment as unit members enjoyed a myriad winter of sports in the beautiful Grand Teton Mountains. After returning home from Wyoming, the unit resumed normal daily operations from McConnell until September; when the order was received to deactivate. However, for some personnel, the war in Afghanistan required their specialties. The 134th sent 15 members to support "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Kandahar. The year ended with a change of command that saw Lt Col Curtis "Kubla" Coln assuming command.

The personnel deployed to Afghanistan returned in April 2004, after performing 6 additional months of active duty. During this time, the remainder of unit personnel had been busy preparing for the June annual training which would again test the "separated" concept of operations. On 5 June, the unit deployed with the operations personnel going to Volk Field Wisconsin and the DR going to Fort Riley. Significant events ended for the year in November when the unit received another "Excellent" rating from the 8th Air Force during a formal Stan/Eval inspection.

The new year of 2005 brought notification by the Air Combat Command Inspector General (ACC/IG) of a Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI) to be accomplished in July. For several months the 134th prepared people, equipment, and paperwork in an effort to prove our compliance with Air Force standards. Annual training was accomplished in garrison as well, giving personnel more time to better prepare for the impending inspection. The preparedness paid off as the 134th received the best rating of a Ground Theater Air Control System (GTACS) unit in the past several years. The ACC/IG Team Chief stated in the out-brief, "The 134th is the best seen to date." This is a fitting note to conclude the story thus far.

2005 4 Sep Forty-four personnel from the 134th Air Control Squadron, Kansas ANG, deployed in SAD to Louisiana. Thirty-two members went to Alexandria and twelve went to Hammond, Louisiana.

6 Sep The 134th Air Control Squadron, Kansas ANG, deployed forty-one personnel to Louisiana to provide microwave voice and data communications for Joint Task Force-Pelican.

2012 Approximately 80 Airmen from the 134th Air Control Squadron returned to Wichita, Nov. 17, 2011, after having been deployed to Southwest Asia for five months. The 134th ACS arrived at Hangar 41 at McConnell Air Force Base, where family members waited to welcome them home with open arms. "It wasn't anything like I thought it would be. It was pretty calm, but fast paced at the same time," shared Airman 1st Class Boston Ford, a deployed member of the 134th ACS, about his first deployment. Lt. Col. Christopher Mills, commander of the 134th ACS, was very

pleased with the mission's success. "We had a lot of young deployers and everyone was focused on the mission. We took care of a lot of maintenance projects and left the place better than when we got there." Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, joined Col. John Hernandez, commander of the 184th Intelligence Wing, to welcome the Airmen home. "I know the efforts that you made in support of the combatant commander there certainly made a difference and we couldn't be more proud of you," said Tafanelli.

2012 As approximately 80 Airmen from the 134th Air Control Squadron prepared for their deployment to Southwest Asia in June 2011, Lt. Col. Christopher Mills, commander of the 134th ACS, evaluated his team with some small concerns. "The tall order was that we had a lot of new people," said Mills. "We literally had people get back from technical school, get checked back into the unit and go with us on the deployment a week or two later."

Now, four months after returning from their five-month deployment, Mills says he couldn't be happier with the results. "We had enough people, we deployed, we did the mission well and we brought everyone home. There isn't much else you can ask for as a commander," said Mills. The deployment tempo was actually a benefit for training new Airmen.

Capt. Brett Cleveland, chief of training for the squadron said, "Once you get over there, it is probably the most dynamic scenario you could possibly have for training young troops. It is kind of like baptism by fire. They get spun up really quickly and we debrief after every mission, or after every session they have on scope, so there is a lot of learning going on daily." This deployment presented a great challenge for the new and seasoned Airmen.

"We might have one or two people out of 33 that went in a position that they were experienced in," said Cleveland. But for Senior Airman Kyle Rittel, technical controller from Salina, Kan., this deployment, his first, gave him a better understanding of his overall mission. "Here at home, you do your job, but you don't understand how you fit into the big picture," said Rittel. "But when you go over there, you are forced to discover what your job is."

Rittel and other new personnel were a vital part of the success of the mission, as were the experienced noncommissioned officers and senior noncommissioned officers who mentored them. Senior Master Sgt. David Perez, radar noncommissioned officer in charge, used every opportunity to include his Airmen in maintenance troubleshooting. "We had some unique opportunities for training out there, something that we are not going to have during annual training or times on the weekend," he said.

"We tried to get the young guys involved in the decision making maintenance because that way, when they go up in rank, they can share their expertise and experience with the people that they will be training." While deployed, the Airmen of the 134th ACS were also able to get some joint training. Many times during their deployment, members coordinated not only with the Air Force active duty component, but also with Navy and Army.

The 134th worked heavily with the Navy on a daily basis to ensure that they were providing an accurate air picture for the joint forces air control command. This joint environment had some stumbling blocks along the way, but nothing that was detrimental to the mission. "We had the Guard and the active cultures working side by side, but we also had the Army. Just like anything, it was just talking and after a month or so we worked everything out," said Mills. In addition, the joint environment allowed the Airmen to see how other branches worked. "We participated in simulation exercises with the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines," said Cleveland. The 134th ACS

faced a number of challenges before and during their deployment, even from the environment. When getting to the duty station, the radar tech found the arid climate was not friendly to electronic equipment. "There was a lot of heat and a lot of dust, two things that electronics don't like," explained Mills.

"So pulling the hat trick to keep it running wasn't just luck, it wasn't just good maintenance, it was smart and savvy maintenance." This maintenance wasn't easy, but it was a job that Senior Master Sgt. David Perez didn't shy away from. "The radars that we took over, I don't know how many millions of dollars we spent to get them up in operational condition. When we left, I think that the operational rate was almost 100 percent," said Perez.

Equipment breakdown was something that the 134th was trained for and able to address, but what wasn't expected was the need to troubleshoot unfamiliar equipment. Staff Sgt. Kyle Armbrister, 134th ACS maintainer, was tasked with fixing a generator model that he hadn't seen or worked on before. "It was like a self-taught type of thing and I picked it up pretty quickly.

The 134th ACS returned home Nov. 17, 2011, to a crowd of family and friends. While deployed, they controlled 30,000 aircraft and completed a successful mission. Mills was happy with the training and experience gained by his young squadron. "I think that the older generation has a lot to be hopeful for. These young guys are very smart and are very capable of responsibility," said Mills.

134th Air Control Squadron Supported Exercise Chain Lightning, a joint training collaborative effort between the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center and the Improvised Explosive Device Network Defeat team at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Provided weapons control, airspace and safety-of-flight coordination, and oversaw Tactical Data Link activity. Coordinated with Airborne Warning and Control System, Combined Air Operations Center-Nellis, Rivet Joint and Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System weapons systems and created a detailed command and control Tactical Data Link architecture plan and communications template. Controlled 178 missions, accomplished 273 Tactical Data Link events and accumulated more than 838 positional hours.

Tactical Control Flight (Light)

Established: 15 September, 1982 –

Located: McConnell AFB, Kansas

Mission: to provide an operationally ready Forward Air Control Post (FACP) for the Tactical Control System using radar and communications equipment

Redesignated: TCS 19 October, 1988

USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.