

240th COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

Redesignated 240th Combat Communications Squadron

Redesignated 240th Combat Information Systems Squadron, 1 Jul 1985

STATIONS

McEntire ANGB, Eastover, SC

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Edward R. Armstrong

LTC Wes Davis, #1986

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

240th Airways and Air Communications Service Operations Flight organized April 18, 1952. The flight, with 36 men and two officers, was assigned the mission of providing communications and navigational aids support for the S.C. Air Guard. under the command of 1st Lt. William Gunter. He had seven assigned personnel: TSgt. R.A. Smith, The First Sergeant; SSgt. M.C. Boykin, SSgt. Eddie Harbort, SSgt. Sloan, A1C Virgil Amick, A2C A.R. Plowden, and A3C J.T. Hamiter. The mission was communications and navigational aid support for the South Carolina Air National Guard. With two jeeps, two weapons carriers, two 2 1/2 ton trucks, an HF BC610 transmitter and a receiver and one AN/GRC-26 communications van, the unit spent summer camp at Congaree Air Base.

The flight was changed on October 1, 1953, to the 240th Air and Airways Communications Flight Mobile and grew to two officers and 30 enlisted personnel. This was the beginning of mobility training for the communicators. Thirteen more jeeps and fourteen weapon carriers were added. Summer camp was spent operating Shaw's "MARS" station and augmenting their tower and motor pool.

Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia, and training with the 1926-4 AACS Detachment was the site for summer camp for 1954 with one officer and 24 men attending. Since Hunter was primarily a SAC base, airmen were required to obtain security clearances (Secret).

Summer camp for 1955 found the 240th personnel back at Shaw AFB training with the 2020th AACS Squadron. The two officers and 26 airmen worked with active duty personnel in the Air Traffic control tower, radio maintenance, radio operations, administrative services, supply, and motor vehicle maintenance.

Facilities at Congaree Air Base provided training for 1956.

Transported by train, three officers and 37 airmen went to Gulfport Air Field, Mississippi, for

summer camp in 1957. OJT was provided by the 3rd Mobil AACS Detachment for Air Traffic Controllers, Radio Operators, Power Unit Maintenance and Administrative Services personnel while Radio Maintenance men worked with the 1919-1 AACS Detachment at Gulfport. Returning to Congaree, the unit received more good news: another reorganization increased the 240th AACS Service Flight Mobile to a manning of four officers and 69 airmen.

In 1958 a new radar arrived at Congaree Air Base; and along with the radar we received 10 positions for GCA operators and one full-time radar maintenance technician. Sgt. Dewey Gardner was hired as our radar maintenance technician. Again the unit was at Shaw Field for summer camp.

Major Edward R. Armstrong assumed command on January 12, 1959. Major Armstrong had been a member of the 240th since he was assigned as armament systems officer in 1955. Also in 1959, the one full-time technician was replaced by AIC James W. Connelly as a radar maintenance technician. Project Four Wheels brought the new communication and navigational aid equipment to the unit. Mobil vans including a Control Tower, Direction Finder, Communications Center, Cryptographic Center, Weather Intercept, HF Radio receivers and transmitters and a Radio Beacon brought the unit up to a fully equipped mobil unit. Congaree Air Base received its first fixed navigational aid. It also became the 240th's responsibility to maintain a Wilcox 482 Terminal Visual Omni Range. This year the 240th deployed its new equipment on base for the 1959 summer camp. (Mixed feelings go with us as we lose our first piece of assigned equipment. The AN/MPN-1 GCA is replaced with a new AN/TPN-12.)

A large growth in the technician force came with 1960. A radio technician position was added in February and SSgt. J.W. Connelly transferred to radio maintenance. MSgt. Jim Wheat was hired as radar technician. TSgt. Charles Blount became the first administrative technician. The unit began looking for a supply technician and found him working as a clown at Sears (Tom Raymond). With 2 1/2 ton trucks borrowed from the Army Guard, the 240th mobilized in one of its first convoys to Shaw. A first for most was loading a flying boxcar from the North Carolina Air Guard on the ramp of Shaw with one of the Project Four Wheels vans.

In 1961, summer camp was at McEntire. The technician force got its first officer position in July of 1961. MSgt. Charles L. Blount was commissioned to 2nd Lt. To fill the now vacant administrative position, TSgt. Worth Allen was transferred from the 169th and became First Sergeant.

The summer of 1962 found the 240th at Phelps Collins FTS, Alpena, Michigan, where training experience included night flying as well as long range HF teletype circuits. New equipment and more training requirements came with the acquisition of four AN/MRC-41 vans, which were wideband radio relay.

Another convoy and more mobility training took the unit to Edisto Island for summer camp for 1963, where vans and tents were set up on the beach. "This is hard duty but we learned a

lot about putting up antennas in sand and coping with the elements," one member wrote. An additional radio maintenance position was filled by SSgt. John Durham. Also on board was the first power production technician, SSgt. James F. Williams.

Another Radio Maintenance technician position was added in 1964, and SSgt. Charles D. Barlow came on board. A1C Thomas J. Blessinger left the Air Force and came to the 240th MCF as training technician.

Summer camp, 1964 was again in Alpena, Michigan. This was the year of the famous GRITS SPECIAL. The Army left a disabled tank in the woods at Phelps Collins and some folks from Illinois and South Carolina Air Guard repaired the tank, and with a parade of Bag Pipes playing, they toured the base and parked it on the lawn of the dining hall.

Airlift out of McEntire in a C-121 delivered 74 members of the 240th MCF to Phelps Collins FTS in Michigan for summer camp 1965. A small detachment of 240th MCF was located at Battle Creek, Michigan, to provide communications for the 11 Oth Tactical Reconnaissance Group Michigan ANG flying the B-47 jet aircraft out of Phelps Collins. The supply technician, Ben Jenkins, left and was replaced by Harold Gillian from the 169th. The training technician was replaced by TSgt. Donald Eleazer.

In April 1966, we divided into two separate flights, the 240th Mobile Communications Flight and the 240th Flight Facilities Flight. Under this reorganization, the 240th MCF was authorized three officers and 77 airmen commanded by Major Edward R. Armstrong. The 240th FFF was authorized three officers and 45 enlisted, commanded by Major Eugene Brantly. Harold Gillian was replaced by David Lever as supply technician. The COMM squadrons moved out of a building in the pecan grove and into a new building on South Carolina Road. (Major Armstrong retired in 1966 and was replaced by Capt. Donald L. Eargle.)

As the flight grew into its mission and the Air Guard expanded, the need arose in the mid-Sixties to split the organization into the two flights. The 240th Mobile Communications Flight in 1971 included 80 Guardsmen who provided communications support for SCANG, while the 44-man Flight Facilities Flight provided navigational aids support. These units maintained their proficiency by deploying to remote sites with their sophisticated equipment, and performing their respective missions.

The 240th communications flights also traveled widely on field training missions in the Sixties and early Seventies, airlifting their men and equipment to sites in Michigan, Rhode Island, Mississippi. But just as often, the men of the 240th found themselves at North Field, an isolated bare strip training site about 30 miles south of Columbia. Moving out in a caravan from McEntire, the 240th contingent would set up tents for eating, sleeping and working and, usually by nightfall of the first day, become fully capable of providing navigational aids for aircraft and an operational communications lineup.

In 1967, A1C Clyde W. Hanson, the first teletype maintenance technician, joined the force.

Summer camp was conducted at McEntire.

Manning increases in 1968 authorized the 240th FFF 50 spaces and the MCF 102 spaces. TSgt. Tom Blessinger returned to the 240th. A combined exercise at North Field was used to train both flights.

Originally scheduled to participate in exercise EASTACS and deploy to North Field to operate in a bare base environment, the units were forced to change their plans and train at McEntire in July and August 1969. After the transfer of Major Brantley to the SCANG Legal Office, the 240th FFF came under the command of Captain Jordan.

With the 240th MCF now under the command of Major Wesley H. Davis, both flights participated in summer camp 1970 at Charlestown, R.I.

With the departure of Captain William Jordan, the command of both flights was assumed by Major Davis. The training technician was replaced by TSgt. Richard Epting. Another reorganization in 1971, and the flights became a part of the 226th Communications Group, Martin ANG. Gadsden, Alabama. MSgt. John Durham was replaced as a radio maintenance technician by A1C Gary R. Duggar and a second material control technician was added. Sgt. Gene Raymond. Both flights deployed to North Field for summer camp.

After the completion of summer camp, command of the 240th FFF was assumed by Captain Robert P. Smart.

The year 1972 brought a new 240th officer technician. Lt. William S. Teer, hired as communications detachment commander.

There was personnel only deployment to Myrtle Beach Air Force Base for summer camp.

For both flights, reorganization orders were received on October 17, 1972. The 240th MCF increased its manning from three officers and 99 enlisted to five officers and 118 enlisted. The 240th FFF grew to four officers and 55 enlisted. We also grew in the technician force as A1C Richard H. Myers joined radio maintenance.

Our longest military convoy to date was completed for summer camp 1973. The 240th MCF travelled to Jacksonville NAS, Florida, for Sentry Southtacs from 11 August through 25 August. Flight Facilities trained at Myrtle Beach.

The 240th FFF trained in 1974 at McEntire operating the CPN-4 GCA and the base control tower. Mobile Comm was at Parris Island. In October the 240th FFF had its name changed to the 240th Air Traffic Control Flight.

Brave Shield 75 found the 240th MCF on a long convoy to Hurlburt Field and Duke Field, both a part of Eglin AFB, Florida.

Name changed again in 1976 for the MCF: to the 240th Combat Communications Flight. An additional administrative technician, SSgt. Doug Horton, joined the force. The ATCF returned to Phelps Collins FTS for ATC, TACAN and AN MPN-13 training on equipment owned by the 3rd Combat Communications Group. For the 240th CMBTCF, training was at Myrtle Beach AFB.

Phelps Collins again welcomed the 240th ATCF in 1977 to operate the tower and install the AN/TRN-26 TACAN. GCA controllers operated the active Air Force AN/MPN-13 while radar maintenance provided the maintenance support.

The 240th CMBTCF was in Solid Shield 77 and on the road again, to Pope AFB and to Seymour Johnson in North Carolina.

Gulfstrike III sent the 240th CMBTCF to Gulfport FTS, Mississippi, in August 1978. After a long and successful convoy, personnel installed, operated, and maintained radio relay vans, communication center, tech control, and the ANTRC-97 vans. Members of the 240th ATCF were at Phelps Collins, Michigan.

Display Determination 78 provided training and travel for members of the CMBTCF to Giola Del Colle AB, Italy, for SSgt. Diana Chiapetta and Barbara Swain; to Mantijo AB. Lisbon, for SMS Blessinger. Torrejons' Col. Garry Sip-pie, mission commander at Mantijo, summed up the efforts of the Guardsmen by stating: "These Guard troops are pros. They knew their jobs and they did them. They work rightly, I'm proud to have associated with them."

Another honor for the CMBTCF in 1978 was MSgt. Peter Palmer's selection as the SCANG Guardsman of the Year. Palmer had been a SCANG member since 1946 and a member of the 240th since 1969. MSgt. Palmer retired in 1980 and was replaced by TSgt. William B. Easterlin. The first exercise for the 240th CMBTCF in 1980 was CORONET POWER, with 34 of members enjoying the tent city of Murted, Turkey. This was the first overseas airlift for unit equipment. This exercise was part of a NATO exercise called DISPLAY DETERMINATION. Other members of the 240th ATCF and CMBTCF trained at McEntire and linked Santee State Park, Poinsett State Park to McEntire for teletype and voice communications.

The 240th Flights were the first to be assigned to the Rapid Deployment Mission. There are guard units assigned to RDF from four states, two on the West Coast and two on the East Coast.

In late 1980 the rapid deployment exercise, BRIGHT STAR 81, was begun and 21 of the 240th members were off to Cairo, Egypt. The unit got its first satellite communication with an active mobile communications group. Worldwide teletype and voice communications were established from Cairo through Europe. ATC personnel worked in the fixed tower with Egyptian controllers and personnel also assisted the Egyptians in maintenance of the on base TACAN.

The 240th ATCF was at Phelps Collins for 1981, operating and maintaining their deployed HFSSB radios, the fixed tower and a MOB supplied GCA radar. New personnel included an additional radar technician, TSgt. Ross Burgess, and the first AGR positions, SSgt. Melvin Harp as a material control technician, and SSgt. David Thomas as a motor vehicle repairman; also another technician in Power Production, TSgt. Preston Cook.

For 54 of the 240th CMBTCF there was another Display Determination from September to October 1981 at Andravida Air Base, Greece. More satellite communication training.

The 240th ATCF gained more proficiency training at Phelps Collins FTS, Michigan, in the maintenance and operation of the GCA and control tower.

In April and May of 1982, the 240th CMBTCF answered exercise Distant Drum. We deployed 57 officers and enlisted to Eskisehir, Turkey, and Nea Makri, Greece. Later, members supported Crested Cap at Leek, West Germany.

Reorganization again came to the two units in October 1982, with reorganization into one unit, the 240th Combat Communications Squadron. Commander was Major Wesley H. Davis,

The first Air National Guard to be inspected under activated ORI criteria came in 1983. With a long convoy to Camp Rudder (Field Six) on Eglin AFB, Florida, personnel deployed and established UHF radio links, microwave radio links and HFISB radio contact with other members of the 226th Group, while ATC and Mobility was graded at McEntire.

The 240th CMBTCS received a rating of Excellent, with much praise for active duty inspectors.

Another first came in 1984: the unit participated in a 12th Air Force exercise, Ocean Venture. 87 members spent a delightful time at Borinquen Air Base, the old Ramey Air Force Base on the western side of Puerto Rico. Training on a new type tactical switchboard was accomplished on this exercise.

Training at Gulfport for others of the unit was accomplished in August 1984. During redeployment, MSgt. Audy Oswalt was killed in a car accident.

It was back to Europe in 1985. We have sent 40 men and women to Karup, Denmark, to participate in OKSBOEL 85, the unit's first wideband deployment overseas.

Another first for 85: the 240th deployed its AN/MPN-14 to Alpena and provided the radar for the entire summer at Phelps Collins. The first ATC air technician, MSgt. Mark Morrell, joined from the 232nd CMBTCS.

In late February 2002, the 240th CCBS deployed a 50-member team to Central Asia in support of President Bush's war on terrorism. The 240th members returned in August after six months

in theater.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.