

251st COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP



LINEAGE

Hq 251st Communications Group constituted, 5 Oct 1952
Redesignated 251st Communications Group (Mobile), 1 Oct 1960
Redesignated 251st Mobile Communications Group, 16 Mar 1968
Redesignated 251st Combat Communications Group
Redesignated 251st Combat Information Systems Group, 1 Jul 1985
Redesignated 251st Combat Communications Group

STATIONS

Springfield, OH

ASSIGNMENTS

4418th Communications Group, 5 Apr 1955
12th Communications Group, 1956
8th Communications Group, Oct 1957
Midwest Communication Region, 2 Oct 1961
Central Communications Group, 16 Mar 1968

COMMANDERS

Col Charles R. Stahl, 5 Oct 1952
Col Pasquale A. Gicale, 26 May 1968
Col Richard Bennett, 2 Oct 1982
Col David F. Howard, 5 Dec 1982
Col Henry S. Youd 1989-1992
Col William R. Reilly 1992-1996
Col Robert A. Meyer 1996-2003
Col Norman Poklar, 2003

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

30 Nov 1971-31 Dec 1972

1973

1975

1982

1987

1993

1999

2002

2005

2007

EMBLEM

Azure, in front of a demi-sphere in base of the field, edged and gridlined Celeste, a sword erect Proper hilted Or, surmounted above the hand guard by a winged mullet Argent, charged with a torteau, wings displayed of the third, detailed and shaded Gold Brown, between the wings, four lightning bolts embowed in chevron reverse Gules, garnished Yellow, two to dexter chief and two to sinister chief, all within a diminished bordure Yellow. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "251ST COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP" in Blue letters.

The emblem denotes glues, saltirewise a lightning flash argent and the figure of Mercury courant proper, garbed with a helmet and tights azure garnished or/and shoes of the last speed lines of the like helmet and shoes winged of the second, all within a diminished border of gold.

The emblem was designed by Mrs. Joan Rizer, Civilian Secretary of the Group Headquarters in November, 1957 and approved by Headquarters USAF on 3 February 1958.

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The globe signifies the scope of the unit's mission. The wings and star are symbolic of the group's ties to USAF Europe. The broadsword and four lightning flashes stand for command, control, communications and computers--the historic mission of the unit.

The 251st Mobile Communications Group emblem symbolizes the primary mission of communications. The lightning bolt surmounted by the figure of Mercury carrying a scroll indicates we transmit messages with the speed of sound and light. The ultramarine blue and golden yellow colors worn by Mercury indicate an Air Force unit.

MOTTO

Speed of Sound and Light

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The mission of the group is to command, organize, equip, train and administer assigned forces to ensure readiness of those forces upon mobilization. To provide command and control communications and terminal Air Traffic Control services for Tactical Air Forces and to support emergency United States Air Force requirements for Air Traffic Control and Communications requirements. The 251CCG has an authorized strength of over nine hundred personnel and provides an essential part of the Air Force capability in combat communications and engineering and installation. The Group Headquarters Staff provides coordinated training for its assigned units during drill weekends, and has conducted consolidated schools for Mobility, International Morse Code, Team Leadership, System Engineering, and other subjects supporting both guard and active duty unit training needs. The Headquarters Staff is also fully engaged in developing the combat readiness capability of assigned units, providing guidance and assistance on acquiring essential training, equipment, and supplies to enhance unit capabilities. In addition to the opportunities afforded by JCS and overseas deployments, the group also provides an annual opportunity for units to exercise specific equipment and personnel packages, to teach and test wartime skills.

Headquarters, 251st Combat Communications Group (CCG) was constituted at Springfield, Ohio, on October 5, 1952. Commanded by Major Charles R. Stahl, the Headquarters had an initial strength of five people. Of the existing ANG communications groups and five active duty groups, the 251CCG is the oldest, and it is also the parent unit of two other ANG combat communications groups: The 226CCG in Alabama and the 254CCG in Texas.

At its inception, the group had twelve subordinate units in Ohio, North Carolina, Missouri, Illinois, Texas, Alabama, and Arkansas. The mission of the 251st initially was a composite of the missions of today's Engineering - Installation Squadrons and Combat Communications Squadrons. While the organization was charged with providing, installing, operating, and maintaining communications equipment for deployed flying units, it did so from "scratch", with a greater variety of small components than today's relatively complete tactical capabilities.

Beginning in 1953, the headquarters planned and directed Group-Wide Exercises at locations across the country, beginning with Annual Training at Stewart AFB, New York, in August of that year. In 1954, the organization was authorized with its first full-time officer Air Technician: Capt (later Lt Col) Herbert E. Moore. In that year, the headquarters strength increased to nine officers and nine enlisted personnel.

In 1962, authorization to expand existing facilities at the Springfield Municipal Airport was received. The expansion included operational areas, classroom and radio rooms. An administration building was constructed for the Headquarters and occupancy was completed on 16 March 1971.

The 251CCG deployed its Ohio personnel to serve the community in support of clean-up operations during the time of need after a tornado struck the City of Xenia, Ohio, in 1974. The 251st COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, located at The Springfield Municipal Airport, activated over 450 AIR NATIONAL GUARD personnel and equipment to assist the Xenia authorities in the aftermath of the disaster. The OANG members were actively involved in the assistance in the following areas: Security of property from looting Search and rescue for survivors Clean up operations. Communications, equipment and personnel. Two OANG GUARDSMEN lost their

lives in this operation. SSgt Walter A. Radewonuk and SSgt Terry L. Regula died due to an accident involving a building fire. The Xenia Disaster was a typical National Guard reaction to a civil disaster where immediate organized help is needed. The OANG Units have tremendous assets of material and equipment. THE OHIO AIR NATIONAL GUARD is primarily allotted for the Federal Mission of ready air power in reserve for use in case of National Emergencies. The Air National Guard is equally appropriate for State Missions and Disasters. Most Air Guard Units have sufficiently trained personnel, material and equipment on hand for initial emergency response. The following letter, from The Mayor of The City of Xenia, is an example of a request from a civil authority to initiate the activation of a guard unit. The Governor, who is the Commander In Chief of The Ohio National Guard, usually activates a National Guard Unit or Units only after all other methods of resolving a State problem has been exhausted. The Tornado that struck Xenia on 3 April 1974 left the city in such a devastated condition that a vast amount of skilled help was needed immediately. It was thus The OHIO AIR NATIONAL GUARD UNITS located at the Springfield Municipal Airport near Xenia were activated to assist the local authorities.

To train for its wartime mission, the 251CCG has been deploying to Exercises since 1976, with its first overseas exercise involvement occurring in 1978. Since its first deployment to these Joint Command System (JCS) and overseas exercises, the 251CCG has deployed personnel and equipment to Korea, the European Theater, the US Southern Command, and to South West Asia. During Operation DESERT SHIELD and Operation DESERT STORM, the 251st provided over 1,500 workdays in voluntary direct support, both in the Area Of Responsibility (AOR) and in back-fill roles stateside.

In 1991 the 251st was tasked to support a Red Horse Civil Engineering Squadron deployed to a remote Honduras, Central America location during the nation-building JCS exercise, Fuertes Caminos 91. The 251st provided a high frequency radio link back to the Continental United States (CONUS) for command and control, as well as for morale and welfare telephone calls for service members. Additionally, in-country HF capability was established for site-to-site communications. Total support involved over 12,000 work-days and nearly 10,000 phone patches from Honduras to the United States.

The ability of the 251st to provide dependable high quality service prompted Joint Task Force 105 to specifically request the 251st again to provide communications support during JCS exercise Fuertes Caminos 92. The 251st stepped forward to provide theater-level support, including engineering and managing a large deployment of three mobile satellite terminals, switchboards, message, and technical control facilities, and Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems capabilities. The scope of this exercise was so large that nearly 900 communications personnel contributed approximately 16,000 workdays to tactical communications and air traffic control services. From Ohio, the 269th Combat Communications Squadron and the Group Headquarters provided nearly 2,000 work-days. The final redeployment of assets and personnel occurred in mid-July 92, after a total of nearly eight months of 24-hour continuous operations, with an achieved reliability of over 99 percent.

In September 1994, the 251st was alerted to a possible tasking to support the pending invasion of Haiti. The Headquarters responded by coordinating the readiness of equipment and personnel from all of the units in the group.

Upon notification of the tasking the group provided two satellite terminals and associated support equipment into Port Au Prince, Haiti, with the initial invasion force. As succeeding events dictated, the deployment turned out to be “non-aggressive”, but most certainly dangerous nevertheless. The 251st managed the continuing rotations of personnel into and out of Haiti until the end of April 1995. In all, over 2,630 man days were expended, to include personnel from 25 units in 18 states. In 1995 and 1996, the 251st was the lead ANG communications unit for European and Middle Eastern exercises, heavily involved with deployments to France (Operation DENY FLIGHT), Morocco (Exercise African Eagle), Thailand (Exercise Cobra Gold), Jordan (Exercise Eager Tiger), Columbia (Operation STEADY STATE DRUG ENFORCEMENT), Southwest Asia, and Italy (Exercise Dynamic Mix), as well as, numerous stateside exercises including a major effort in Exercise Global Yankee ‘95 and ‘96 at Ft. Drum, New York.

On December 7 1995, and within 72 hours of notification, the 251st deployed an air traffic control radar, tactical air navigation equipment, and 45 personnel to Taszar, Hungary, to establish airfield operations at a former Soviet MIG-21 airbase. Approximately three weeks later, the Group deployed one heavy satellite earth terminal, various base communications equipment, and 38 personnel, including tech controllers, ground radio operators, switch technicians, and power production personnel to provide ground radio and satellite communications, as well as implementing a local area network. Additionally, four heavy satellite earth terminals and associated communications equipment were deployed to Germany, Hungary, and Croatia to support various United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) organizations. As the Lead Unit, the Group managed over 25,000 work-days, with numerous airlift missions and support requirements. The year 1996 saw the 251st sending people and equipment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to support the USAF’s move from Riyadh to Eskan Village attributable to the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing. This operation was called DESERT FOCUS, and lasted nearly four months.

In 1998, the group successfully navigated through another Operational Readiness Inspection, with people and units deploying to Shaw AFB, South Carolina, Volk Field, Wisconsin, and Dugway Proving Ground, Utah. 2001-2002 saw 29 individuals deployed to Ramstein AB, Germany, Mildenhall, United Kingdom, and NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. During this time frame the 251st also had one of its members named as the NGB/SC Director at Crystal City, Virginia, another member named as NGB/SC Crisis Action Team Director at Andrews AFB, Maryland. Additionally, 10 personnel volunteered Home Station support for Operation NOBLE EAGLE.

The year 2003 was another busy year for the 251st as 27 individuals deployed to Ramstein AB, Germany, Prince Sultan AFB, Saudi Arabia, and Incirlik, Turkey in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Members were deployed from January until September and managed over 6,500 work-days.

In 2005, the 251CCG deployed 12 members to support Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts at Camp Shelby, Mississippi and Stennis International Airport, Mississippi. The 251st also had 11 members at Homestation supporting the state of Ohio Joint Expeditionary Operations Center and the NGB/A6 Joint Operations Center. 2005 was also the first year that the 251st participated in Joint Forces Command Joint Users Interoperability Communications Exercise at Fort Monmouth,

New Jersey. This joint exercise among the four Armed Services branches has been so successful that the 251st served as the J6 and Joint Network Control Center Staff in 2006, 2007, and 2008 with many 251st members participating in this exercise.

In 2006, the 3AF/A6 requested the 251st to participate in USAFE exercise Austere Challenge. This multiservice exercise saw the 251st working hand in hand with the active duty Air Force in a simulated humanitarian relief operation covering the European theater. Austere Challenge 2006 was so successful that the 251st was asked to participate again in 2008 and 2009 with many group and squadron members contributing. The support that the 251st has given to USAFE in Austere Challenge led to the 251st being asked to support Flexible Leader 2007 with USAFE, 21 members of the 251st participated in this exercise.

In 2008, 6 members of the 251CCG deployed to North Smithfield, Rhode Island and Smyrna, Delaware to serve in Joint Communications Control Center billets on the NGB/J6 Joint Operations Center Staff. While there, the 251CCG was responsible for managing all of the National Guard communications assets deployed in support of the Hurricane Ike and Gustav relief efforts.

The 251st supported Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from 2007 to 2008 by deploying 16 individuals to Khandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, and Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Continued support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from 2008 to 2009 is ongoing with 18 individuals deploying to Ramstein Air Base, Germany and Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana supporting AF Cyber Communications and Operations.

Exercises:

1987

Healthy Star 87

Sentry Vigilance

Combat Challenge 87

- PATRIOT, 98, 99, 00, 04, 05, 06, - Austere Challenge 06, 08, 09

- AEF: 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

- Hurricane Katrina/Rita 2005, Hurricane Ike/Gustav 2008

- JUICE 06, 07, & 08 Ft Monmouth NJ, JUICE 05, Knoxville, TN

- Flexible Leader 2007

- OIF: Ramstein – Jan 03 – Jul 03

- OEF/ONE: Ramstein Oct 01 – Aug

- FORCE, - Kosovo Call Up 1999

- GLOBAL APACHE, Utah, NY, 1997

- DYNAMIC MIX, Italy, 1996

- JOINT ENDEAVOR/Guard, Bosnia/Hungary, 1995-1998

- GLOBAL YANKEE, New York, 1995-1996

- UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, Haiti, 1994-1995

- AFRICAN EAGLE, Morocco, 1994

- SUPPORT JUSTICE IV Columbia SA 1992-1998

- Joint Patriot Roving Sands 2001, Kirtland NM & Dugway UT

- COMBINED ENDEAVOR 2001

- NEW HORIZONS, Honduras, Bolivia, 1999

IV, Columbia, S.A., - EAGER TIGER, Jordan, 1993
- LUCASVILLE PRISON RIOT, OH, 1993



Colonel Norman A. Poklar

Commander of the 9th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron (EACS), Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait,
commander of the 606th EACS, a blended unit consisting of active-duty and guard personnel, in
direct support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM for a 6-month activation to Kirkuk AB, Iraq.

February 1999-December 2003 123rd Air Control Squadron

January 2004-December 2009, 251st Combat Communications Group

January 2010-Present Commander, 251st Cyber Engineering Installation Wing(P)

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

