

604 COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON, OPERATIONS



MISSION

LINEAGE

1374 Signal Company, Wing constituted, 14 Jul 1944

Activated, 24 Jul 1944

Redesignated 4 Communications Squadron, Wing, 30 Jun 1946

Inactivated, 21 Jun 1948

Redesignated 4 Communications Squadron, Operations, 15 Dec 1952

Redesignated 604 Communications Squadron, Operations, 15 Nov 1954

STATIONS

Camp Pinedale, CA, 24 Jul 1944-28 May 1945

Fort Lawton, WA, 30 May 1945

Seattle Port of Embarkation, WA, 4 Jun 1945

At Sea 4 Jun 1945-24 Jun 1945

Iwo Jima, Ryukyu Island, 24 Jul 1945

Kadena Field, Okinawa Island, Ryukyu Island, 28 Jul 1945-21 Jun 1948

Landsberg AB, West Germany, 1 Feb 1953

Ramstein AB, West Germany, 10 Apr 1953-1 Jul 1962

ASSIGNMENTS

Fourth Air Force, 14 Jul 1944

Twentieth Air Force, Jun 1945

Eighth Air Force, 31 Jan 1946

1 Air Division, 7 Jun 1946-21 Jun 1948

Air Defense Command, 23 Nov 1948

Continental Air Command, 1 Dec 1948-4 Jan 1949

Twelfth Air Force, 1 Feb 1953

2 Communications Group), 1 Aug 1953

COMMANDERS

Capt Goman O. Evans, 24 Jul 1944

Capt Joseph H. Johnson, 2 Jun 1946

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 604th, according to its mission assignment, furnishes fixed tactical communications support for the Seventeenth Air Force Combat Operations Center, mobile communications for the Air Support Operations Center of the Seventeenth, and communications support for other organizations as directed by Headquarters, 2nd Communications Gp; it also operates the USAFE Command High-Frequency/Single-Side-Band voice net terminals on Ramstein Air Base.

The squadron's average strength is 10 officers and 355 airmen serving in eight career fields: Photomapping, Education and Training, Personnel, Administration, Supply, Wire Maintenance, Radio-Radar, and Communications Operations. This latter field has the lion's share of the Unit Manning Document with about 70 percent of the assigned personnel, with Wire Maintenance and Radio-Radar taking second and third place, respectively.

The squadron is divided into seven major operating sections: Command Section; Personnel and Administrative; Seventeenth Air Force COC - which carries the major portion of the squadron mission; Central Maintenance; the Radio Section - operating "A" and "B" HF Radio Sites as well as the "Twilight" radio net operations; and last but not least - Supply, a section no organization can operate without. In addition to the COC, incidentally, the squadron mans the 86th Air Division's Command Post Operations Center.

14 July 1944, the forerunner of our squadron was constituted as the 1374th Signal Company. It was assigned to the Fourth Air Force as a reserve unit but, within 10 days, received active military status at the Camp Pinedale, Calif., Western Signal Aviation Unit' Training Center. Soon after activation, the

company was assigned to the Twentieth Air Force, then to the Eighth, and later to the 1st Air Division.

Between July 1945 and June 1948, the unit served on Iwo Jima and Okinawa and, while in the Pacific Theater, it was redesignated the 4th Communications Sq. The squadron retained this name until its inactivation in June 1948. Reactivation of the 4th (Comm Sq) came four and a half years later, on 15 Dec 1952, and half-way around the globe, when the squadron took up new headquarters at Landsberg AB, Germany, as a member of USAFE. On the same day, the squadron's Detachment No 1 was activated at Kaiserslautern to help the 4th fulfill its mission.

The squadron's present location was established in April 1953 when the unit moved to Ramstein AB, Germany, as a member of the Twelfth Air Force. On 15 Nov 1954, a little more than 10 years from its original activation date, the squadron was redesignated the 604th Communications Sq. (Operations). The unit is now a part of the Seventeenth Air Force.

High on a hill overlooking Ramstein Air Base is the Radio Telephone (RT) net control center known as "Twilight Radio". Its mission is to provide instantaneous voice communications with points half-way around the world. Actually there are seven different stations with which "Twilight Radio" maintains contact through the use of its 4 single sideband (SSB) Transmitter/Receiver facilities.

Capt Arthur H. Goodwin, OIC of the site, reported that his activity handles approximately 75 phone conversations a day which necessitates personnel being on a 24-hour duty schedule. Capt Goodwin went on to describe a typical message request. "The caller dials," he said, "one of four telephone numbers which connects him with the radio operator at the site. The operator in turn fakes the called party's telephone number and contacts, lets say, Blank Air Base, by means of the SSB radio. The operator of the SSB radio at Blank Air Base receives the transmission and in turn dials the telephone number given him. When the called party is contacted he commences to converse just as in any ordinary telephone call. It is possible to do this by means of a "patch" system which connects the radio transmitter receivers and telephones involved to form a complete circuit for official US Government business calls only. The facility is not and cannot be used for personal calls."

When asked the advantage of R/T over ordinary telephone land lines TSgt Richard D. Beck, NCOIC, stated that the principal advantage was the elimination of the necessity of land lines, in addition to the convenience of a radio capability associated with any telephone on the base. He went on to add that the range of SSB equipment is much greater than ordinary High Frequency Radio equipment. "Twilight Radio" could readily establish contact with stations in the ZI. Because of the transoceanic telephone cables, R/T is not used except in case of a cable breakdown. R/T could maintain contact and carry the load until the trouble was eliminated.

Perhaps the most rewarding task recently assigned to "Twilight Radio" was being the primary air ground air communications support facility for President Eisenhower's recent good will tour known as "Operation Monsoon". "Twilight Radio" first established contact with the president's plane, when it reached landfall over the European continent of the beginning of the tour and "stayed with it" until it departed the African coast on its return to the ZI.

Sunday, Dec 4th, winds of 65 mph, with gusts some 30 mph more, practically erased the communications building at the 603rd ACW Sq's location at Langerkopf. "This all important link in the free world's radar net would have stayed out of operation for quite some time," says Lt Col Frank A. Koszarek, Sector Operations Commander, "had it not been for the immediate action of the 604th's mobile communications people." "At the height of the storm," the Col says, an emergency call for assistance was placed to the 2nd Comm Group and within a period of four hours, five mobile communications vans were on the scene and operating."

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

