

1st AIRBORNE COMMAND AND CONTROL SQUADRON



LINEAGE

Company A, 2nd Balloon Squadron organized, 25 Sep 1917

Redesignated 1st Balloon Company, 19 Jun 1918

Inactivated, 25 Jul 1922

Redesignated 1st Airship Company, 24 Mar 1923

1st Balloon Company constituted 18 Oct 1927

Activated, 17 May 1929

1st Airship Company and 1st Balloon Company consolidated, 31 Jul 1929

Redesignated 1st Balloon Squadron, 1 Oct 1933

Disbanded, 6 Feb 1942

1st Air Corps Ferrying Squadron constituted, 18 Feb 1942

Activated, 15 Apr 1942

Redesignated 1st Ferrying Squadron, 12 May 1943

Disbanded, 1 Apr 1944

1st Airborne Command and Control Squadron constituted, 9 May 1969

Activated, 1 Jul 1969

1st Balloon Squadron reconstituted, 19 Sep 1985

1st Ferrying Squadron, 1st Balloon Squadron, and 1st Airborne Command and Control Squadron consolidated, 19 Sep 1985. Consolidated squadron retains the 1st Airborne Command and

Control Squadron designation

STATIONS

Ft Omaha, NE, 25 Sep 1917
Garden City, NY, 30 Nov–7 Dec 1917
Camp de Souge, Gironde, France, 3 Jan 1918
Brouville (near Baccarat), France, 15 Apr 1918
Les Ecoliers (near Montreuil-aux-Lions), France, 19 Jul 1918
Epoux-Bezu, France, 22 Jul 1918
Epieds, France, 25 Jul 1918
Artois Ferme near Courpoil), France, 28 Jul 1918
Mareuil-en-Dole, France, 5 Aug 1918
Courcelles-sur-Vesle, France, 13 Aug 1918
Tremblecourt, France, 23 Aug 1918
La Queue de Theinard (near Domevre-en-Haye), France, 29 Aug 1918
Bois de Brule (near Neuville-en-Argonne), France, 27 Sep 1918
Varenes-en-Argonne, France, 2 Oct 1918
Chatel-Chehery, France, 11 Oct 1918
Auzeville-en-Argonne, France, 17 Oct 1918
Mercy-le-Bas, France, 21 Nov 1918
Euren, Germany, 8 Dec 1918
Niederberg (near Coblenz), Germany, 19 Dec 1918
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 17 Apr 1919
St Nazaire, France, 5 May 1919–unkn
Camp Lee, VA, 6 Jun 1919
Ross Field, CA, Jul 1919–25 Jul 1922
Scott Field, IL, 17 May 1929
Post Field, OK, 24 Jun 1929–6 Feb 1942
Long Beach, CA, 15 Apr 1942–1 Apr 1944
Andrews AFB, MD, 1 Jul 1969
Offutt AFB, NE, 1 Jul 1977

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 25 Sep 1917–1918
Balloon Wing, I Army Corps, Jul 1918
Balloon Group, I Army Corps, 8 Oct 1918
Balloon Group, III Army Corps, 20 Nov 1918–16 Apr 1919
Balloon School, Ross Field, CA (later, Air Service Balloon Observers School), Jul 1919
Ninth Corps Area, 30 Jun–25 Jul 1922
Sixth Corps Area, 17 May 1929
Field Artillery School, Jun 1929
26th Balloon Group
21st Balloon Group, 1 Jun 1937–1 Jun 1939
III Air Support Command (attached to Field Artillery School), 1 Sep 1941–6 Feb 1942
6th Ferrying Group, 15 Apr 1942–1 Apr 1944
1st Composite Wing, 1 Jul 1969

55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Nov 1975
55th Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Type R Observation Balloon, 1918–1919, 1919–1922 A–
6 and A–7 Spherical Balloon, 1929–1942
C–3 Observation Balloon, 1929–1939
C–6 Observation Balloon, 1937, 1938–1942 D–
2 Barrage Balloon, 1939
D–3
D–4
D–5
D–6 Barrage Balloon, 1940–1942 EC–
135J, 1969–1975
E–4A, 1974
E-4B

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

Spherical Bln
35-13

A-7 SpBln
S-35-13

E-4B
73-1676
73-1677

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

1LT Walter J. Reed
1Lt T. D. Jordan, Apr 1918
1LT Walter J. Reed, May 1918
1LT Dache M. Reeves, Jan 1920
Cpt Joseph W. Benson, 28 Mar 1921
Cpt William E. Kepner, 25 Apr 1921
Cpt Warner B. Gates, 4 May 1921
Cpt Roland W. Wittman, 25 Jul 1921
Cpt Henry C. White, 12 Dec 1921-25 Jul 1922
Inactive, 25 Jul 1922-17 May 1929
Cpt Neal Creighton, 17 May 1929
Cpt Raymond E. O'Neill, 31 May 1934
Maj Ira R. Koenig, 9 Jun 1934-6 Feb 1942

Unkn, 15 Apr 1942-1 Apr 1944
LTC Earl L. Bryant, 1 Jul 1969
Col Homer H. Speer Jr., 1 Sep 1973
LTC Paul J. Orr, 1 Jul 1977
LTC William J. Lytle Jr., 1 Jan 1980
LTC Barry A. Walrath, 1 May 1980
LTC John B. Sams Jr., 22 Sep 1982
LTC Donald K. Eye, 15 Jun 1984
LTC Michael Leydorf, 9 Dec 1986
LTC Rodney P. Bosserdet, 21 Dec 1988
LTC Lionel G. Smith, 27 Apr 1990
LTC Michael P. Shannon, 27 Apr 1992
LTC Arvil V. Taylor Jr., 13 May 1994
LTC Frank W. Meyer, 7 Nov 1994
LTC Stephen D. Graf, 24 Jun 1997
LTC Louis LaPorte, 17 Jun 2005
LTC Russell Mammoser, by Mar 2007

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War I

Lorraine

Aisne-Marne

Champagne

St Mihiel

Meuse-Argonne

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

[1 Jul] 1969–31 Dec 1970

1 Jan 1971–31 Dec 1972

1 Jan 1974–31 Oct 1975

1 Nov 1975–30 Jun 1976

1 Jul 1976–30 Jun 1978

1 Jul 1978–30 Jun 1980

1 Jul 1987–30 Jun 1989

1 Jul 1989–30 Jun 1991

1 Jul 1992–30 Jun 1994

1 Jul 1994–31 Jul 1995

1 Jun 1997–31 May 1999

1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001

EMBLEM

A disc divided per fess Blue at the top and Yellow in base within a White band edged with a diminished Red border, issuing from base a White demisphere bendwise rimmed and grid lined Red overall in bend a White stylized eagle outlined Gray; around the circumference of the inner disc seven stars, five Yellow on the Blue portion and two Blue on the Yellow portion. (Approved, 8 Aug 1969; replaced emblem approved for 1st Ferrying Squadron)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The company moved from barracks to tents to muster on 31 Oct 1917. The company trained at Fort Omaha until 27 Nov 1917, when they started for overseas. The company broke camp, leaving behind its transportation and balloon equipment which was to be shipped to Newport News, VA.

The company entrained at 0900, 27 Nov on day coaches and had our first taste of real cold for the heating pipes were frozen but this was remedied and in the early morning we were on our way for parts unknown. Our personnel manning was reduced to 86 enlisted men here as five men were unfit for overseas duty. Three enlisted men of the medical corps were attached bringing the total at leaving up to 89 enlisted men.

The personnel boarded a train and headed east passing through Chicago, Detroit and passed through parts of Canada then subsequently crossed back into America and entered Jersey City, NJ. The company detrained and marched to barracks at the Long Island Concentration Camp No. 2.

After a short rest in New Jersey, the company set out again this time the company's route lay through New London and Hartford CT, Boston, MA, Portland ME and across the border at Vanceboro into New Brunswick, Canada at 0800 on 10 Dec arriving in St Johns, Canada at 1200. The company boarded the English ship Tunisian on 10 Dec 1917. At noon on 15 Dec, the company weighed anchor and steamed out of the harbor and at 1500 joined the convoy and started on the voyage. On the sea voyage the company was treated with English meals and the never to be forgotten tea.

On Christmas night, while anchored in Liverpool Harbor, we ate our first good meal when the boys located the storeroom. Early morning of 26 Dec 1917, we disembarked at Liverpool and entrained for Southampton, passing through Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Oxford and Birmingham, arriving at our destination at 6.20 p. m. Here we derailed and marched with full packs through the snow to Rest Camp No. 2.

After remaining in camp overnight, we marched to the transport dock and boarded the steamship Archangel for our Channel trip to France. The Channel trip was uneventful except for the heavy

sea and many of the boys wished for home and mother during the trip. Early morning of the 28th we anchored in the harbor of Le Havre and by noon had marched to a city of tents known as Rest Camp No. 2. The four days of our stay here shall never be forgotten as we received our first freedom overseas and a formal introduction to the Vin Sisters, "Rouge" and "Blanc."

Breaking camp at Le Havre on 1 Jan 1918, we marched with full packs to the railway depot and entrained on the famous 40 Hommes, 8 Chevaux Special. We rode in this manner until reaching Tours where we were transferred into coaches to resume our journey. Arriving at Bordeaux on 3 Jan 1918, we were given the usual amount of switching and found ourselves in St. Medard.

Trucks were waiting for us here and we were soon on our way to Camp de Souge. It was here that we again met our old friends "Squads East" and "Squads West," and it also fell to us to build a balloon bed and maneuvering road about one kilometer outside of camp. Throughout our stay at Camp de Souge, the company enjoyed good billets in a good camp. A certain percentage of the men were allowed passes to Bordeaux on each Saturday and Sunday and had it not been that we were here to see active service, we might have felt the loss of our camp life more than we did.

From 4 Jan to 11 Jan, the company was engaged in putting their equipment in order and drilling. On 10 Jan the company received two Latil winches.

On 11 Jan 1918 Lt W. J. Reed and the NCOs together with LT Berard of the French Army inspected locations for a balloon bed. The bed was located and on 12 Jan it was staked off and work commenced on it. Our balloon and equipment arrived on this date.

From 14 Jan to the 23rd the company was at work preparing the bed and making a maneuvering road. On 18 Jan two one and one half ton Fiat trucks were received.

On 23 Jan 1918, we inflated our first balloon overseas. The company started at 1030 and completing at 1345. Three trial flights were made in the afternoon and marked the first flight to be made in France by an American balloon. Our Commanding Officer, LT Walter J. Reed, with LT Sidney I. Howell held the honors for the first flight.

From 23 Jan 1918 to 9 Mar 1918, the company continued to fly the balloon and prepare for the work on the Front.

On 9 March 1918 the inflated balloon and balloon equipment was turned over to Company B, 3d Balloon Squadron. From this date until our departure, the 1st Balloon Co furnished details of 15 to 20 men to the two companies B and C of the 3rd Squadron to assist them in flying their balloons. That part of the company not at work in this way perfected their close order drill.

On 10 Apr 1918, the company received orders to go by rail to Baccarat in the Lorraine Sector, where we were at last to see active service. Leaving Camp de Souge, Bordeaux, 12 Apr 1918, we entrained and were under way by 0830, passing through Tours, Nevers, and Issur-Tille.

We drew our gas masks and steel helmets on 12 Apr, 1918 at Camp Williams, Dijon, and given one-half hour mask drill. We arrived at Baccarat on 15 Apr 1918, at 1400 and made camp

southeast of Brouville at 1600 being attached to the 67th Field Artillery Brigade of the 42nd Division. This camp was known as Camp Mud and all the credit in the world can be given to the man who named this place. The next few days found us working on the balloon beds, roads, and two ascensions points.

The 1st Company took station near Baccarat on 15 Apr and worked with the 22nd Division. The company was under the control of the Balloon Group, 1st Corps, with headquarters at Toul. The Company was attached to the 67th Field Artillery Brigade. We commenced work on our first balloon bed at the front on the 16th Telephone lines were put in and the company became established in its camp.

The balloon was inflated and bedded on 18 Apr. The next day a trial flight was made, but owing to the inclement weather there were no more ascensions until 25 Apr 1918. During these days of bad weather the company was busy on the roads, machine gun posts and the cleaning of equipment.

From April 25 to July 16, 1918, the balloon was in the air whenever the weather permitted.

On 1 May the balloon made three flights. On 2 May we regulated fire for three batteries and on the third 23 shots were regulated for Battery B. From the third on up to 17 May the balloon flew whenever weather conditions would permit. On 17 May 50 shots were regulated for Battery A.

59 enlisted men were assigned to the company on 26 Apr and reported on 30 Apr. 22 enlisted men were assigned to the company on 14 May and reported on 18 May.

On 9 Jun 1918, 1Lt F.S. Adams and Lt D'Argent (France) jumped, balloon not burned.

Our night flights, I am sure, will be long remembered, for we worked fourteen and twenty-two hour shifts. On 16 Jul 1918, the company received orders to proceed from Baccarat to the La Ferte-sous-Jouarre (Marne) with their own transportation and to report upon arrival there to the Commanding General, First Army Corps, for duty. 16 Jul our balloon was deflated and our equipment was loaded on to the trucks. Breaking camp at 2116 we traveled until 0430 the next day and made camp at Balloon Wing Headquarters in Toul.

Sixteen enlisted men were attached to the company from 9 to 16 Jul for instruction in sky watch work.

Leaving Toul at 1415 the same day, we traveled about 100 kilometers and made camp in the aviation field at St. Dizier. Here is where the men of the company came nearest to realizing the dreams of someday being aviators for we all slept in the empty hangars.

Breaking camp at the hour of 0430 we again traveled about one kilometer and camped on the road between La Ferte and Montneurail at 1730

0730 on 19 Jul found us up and on the move once more. At 1130 we arrived into our new camp at Lese-Ecaliers (Montueil) and proceeded to clean up the billets which were in an unsightly

condition.

Cylinders were delivered by the French and the balloon bed put in condition by the company. After having inflated the balloon in the evening we were given our initiation in the Marne offensive when a German bomber ran us to the tall timbers. It was here that we had to salvage our barracks bags and retain one complete uniform as our worldly possessions. The balloon was in the air on the 20th but was forced to descend on account of high winds.

On 21 we broke camp, the inflated balloon was maneuvered forward and we camped for the night at the enemy's front trenches. On 22 Jul we took our position in the woods near Epaux. After a day's observation from here the company moved on account of enemy shell fire.

The next day we broke camp and maneuvered the balloon forward to the enemy's old front line trenches where we made camp for the night. On the 22d we again maneuvered forward to a position in the woods near Epaux-Bezu. After a day's observation here, the company was forced to move on account of enemy shell fire. The company observed large concentration of enemy troops massing for counter attack. This was considered of great importance by the commander of the French 168th Division.

On 25 Jul 1918 after another move forward, we had our first balloon burned. During an air battle between five allied and seven enemy planes, our balloon was attacked and burned, forcing LT R. W. Thompson to jump. Balloon 1572.

28 Jul we moved to a new position at Artois, about one kilometer from Courpoil. Very little was done for the remainder of the month on account of inclement weather.

The 1st Balloon Company took active part in the operations north of Chateau—Thierry during the latter part of Jul 1918, while serving with the 1st Army Corps. The company kept up with the advance at all times.

On 1 Aug 1918, our balloon was attacked by two enemy planes, forcing LT W. D. M. Shuman to jump. Owing to the good work of our machine gunners the planes were driven off, leaving only two holes in the balloon. One of the planes was forced to land inside of our lines and our machine gunners were officially credited with its downfall. The enemy plane was seen to waver in its flight and we were later notified that it had come down inside our lines with the observer killed and pilot wounded.

On 6 Aug 1918, at 1140 our balloon was attacked and burned, causing LT Anderson to jump. Balloon #76.

13 Aug 1918, our inflated balloon was turned over to the 48th French Balloon Company and we left this station for Courcelles. About 1100 and at a point some seven kilometers west of Anglars, the tender went out with a broken connecting rod. The train stopped for lunch about 5 kilometers east of Anglar and chauffeurs Woods and Billings went back to the disabled tender to get equipment. Chauffeur Woods Delahaye burned a bearing and as a consequence Woods, Gage and Richardson were left behind with the disabled cars. The train proceeded and camped at the

roadside one kilometer west of Bas-sur-Aube for the night. Chauffeur Goodsell was left with his Fiat at Bas-sur-Aube. It also went out with a burned bearing. We arrived there at 1830 the same day and remained there until 20 Aug 1918. During our stay here the company had close order drill and a certain per cent of the men received passes to La Ferte. The company moved into barracks our first since Baccarat. Visibility was very good initially but deteriorated and the balloon did nothing more than test the visibility.

Leaving Bar-sur-Aube at 0845 we again traveled the entire day until 1145 making camp about one kilometer south of Chaudeney-sur-Moselle. After camping here for the night we changed our station to the village of Chaudeney-sur-Moselle and awaited darkness so that we could continue our journey. During our wait here the entire company went swimming in a nearby canal. Leaving here at dusk we reached our new station one-half kilometer east of Tremblecourt to await the opening of the St. Mihiel drive. 29 Aug we relieved the Sixth Company, taking over their barracks and balloon. A trial flight was made in the afternoon. The company also moved into barracks—our first since Baccarat. Visibility was very good the next day and the balloon was in the air the whole day. The next four days were cloudy and rainy, and the balloon did nothing more than test the visibility.

3 Sep 1918, the balloon ascended with LT Anderson in the basket and the balloon was attacked and burned, forcing LT Anderson to jump. Our machine gunners fired 3,000 rounds of ammunition during the attack and the plane was seen to be smoking badly when it made for home. Balloon 1401.

From 4 Sep to the 11th there were no ascensions made, due to poor visibility; but the company was busy at our advanced bed, and on telephone lines.

On 12 Sep, the company was in readiness to move at 0200, but could not do so on account of traffic and road conditions. We moved forward at 0645, 13 Sep, and camped for the night at a point four kilometers east of Limey, on the Limey— Metz road. The balloon ascended at 0655 on 15 Sep, with LT Frank R. Barton in the basket. At 1222 the balloon 137 was attacked and burned by an enemy plane. The observer jumped, and landed safely. The plane was seen to land out of control inside our lines. Credit for this plane was claimed by our machine gunners. A new balloon was received in the afternoon, and was fully inflated by 2150 the balloon was in ascension from 0630 on 16 Sep to 1827. The three following days were rainy and cloudy, and the company kept in out of the weather.

The next few days the visibility was very bad and the men were put to work on an advanced balloon bed. We worked during these rainy days on the balloon bed and also built two large dugouts. We had learned that dugouts were handy during the Chateau-Thierry offensive. The drive started on 12 Sep 1918, and we were ready to move at 0230. Owing to the heavy rain we could not get out of camp so we unrolled packs and stayed for the night. Early morning of the 13th found us up and moving to an advanced position. The Germans proved to be good runners for we never stopped at our advanced bed after all our hard work in the rain.

We maneuvered the balloon to a point four kilometers east of Limey on the Limey-Metz road, finding a natural balloon bed down in the hollow below the road. On 15 Sep 1918, the balloon

was attacked and burned by an enemy avion, forcing LT Frank R. Barton to jump to safety. The attacking plane was seen to land out of control inside our lines and our machine gunners claimed another victim.

On 15 Sep all the companies of the Wing were in ascension, giving lengthy reports on general observations, covering enemy movements, hostile and friendly fire. At noon of this day the balloons of the 1st Company was attacked and burned by an enemy plane. The observers jumped and landed normally.

On the evening of 20 Sep 1918, we deflated our balloon and prepared to change sectors. This work was done during many anxious moments for it was moonlight and the bombers were very busy. After traveling all night, on the next day we made camp at the edge of the Argonne Woods, about three kilometers northwest of Clermont.

Here we were kept on edge until the drive started, as the shells were landing all around us. 24 Sep 1918, our trucks and chauffeurs were requested to haul ammunition. The boys all had many interesting stories to tell when they came back.

25 Sep 1918, the balloon was inflated and the next day the drive started. 27 Sep 1918, we maneuvered our balloon to a new position about two kilometers northwest of Neuville. Most of the company found comfortable quarters from the rain in Chateau Abancourt which was one-half kilometer from the balloon bed.

On 28 Sep 1918, the balloon was attacked and burned by 7 Fokkers, forcing LT Sidney Howell to jump. LT Howell showed extreme coolness, saving the maps and instruments before he jumped. One of the enemy aircraft was seen to land after the attack. In the evening, during a heavy rain, we inflated a new balloon and at midnight the company was called out to hold the bag down on account of a terrific storm.

On 2 Oct 1918, we broke camp and moved to a position about one-half kilometer southwest of Varennes. During this move, on 8 Oct our balloon was attacked by two enemy planes, but our machine gun fire soon drove them away. Observing here until Oct, we again moved forward to a position about two kilometers northeast of Chatele Chehery.

On 13 Oct 1918, we had our first casualty when Pvt. Everette J. Cooper was struck in the groin by a fragment of high explosive shell. Pvt Cooper later died of his wound.

17 Oct 1918, we were relieved by the Fifth Balloon Company never to fly a balloon again in France. The evening of the 17th found us in our new camp, one kilometer northeast of Auzeville. After two weeks of living in a broken down stable, where no self-respecting Missouri mule could exist, we moved into barracks about one-fourth kilometer northeast of our original camp. During our stay here we had the usual amount of fatigue and drilling while the bombers paid us regular visits.

Between H hour on 26 Sep 1918 and 11:00 am on 11 Nov 1918, American balloons in the Meuse offensive made an aggregate advance of 45 kilometers. This estimate is computed by

measurement in a direct line from original position to ultimate position. The actual road miles practically doubles the mileage. Much of the transport was conducted by hand; the balloon being taken over open field, through country ridden by shell holes and strewn with barbed wire. In several instances, the balloon was transported without a winch for distances of ten kilometers at a time. It is known that the balloons, in a few cases were within 12 hours behind the infantry in crossing No Man's Land.

On 21 Nov 1918, we broke camp and traveled to our new station at Mercy le Bas. After staying here sixteen days we again broke camp and traveled to Euren, Germany, crossing the border at 10.00 a. m., Sunday, 8 Dec 1918.

After nine days in Euren, Germany, we again broke camp for the Rhineland. Our route lay along the banks of the Moselle which was really beautiful. Going through Coblenz and crossing the Rhine on 19 Dec 1918, we made camp in the village of Niederberg. Here we drilled, hiked and stood daily inspection until 19 Jan 1919.

On that day we inflated our balloon and the next day found us flying our first balloon in Germany. This was the first American balloon to fly in Germany and Captain Reis and Lieutenant Carthy made the first flight. Now we are flying our balloon from the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein overlooking the Rhine Valley and the city of Coblenz, in fond hopes of seeing relief, on the road, for the Army of Occupation.

Arrival in France: 28 Dec 1917

Arrival at the front: 15 Apr 1918

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A.: 96

Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.: 163

Total number of hours in air Z.O.A.: 380.38

Artillery adjustments in S.O.S.

Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A.: 24

Enemy shells observed: 5421

Enemy aircraft observed: 1414

Enemy balloons observed: 502

Enemy artillery batteries observed: 24

Enemy traffic on road and railroad observed: 185

Smoke, fires and flares observed: 368

Explosions observed 20

Jumps from basket: 8

Balloons attacked: 7

Balloons burned: 5

Observers killed: 0

Observers captured: 0

Arrived at the port of Newport News, VA, on 5 Jun 1919 on the U.S.S. Ancon as Balloon Company No. 1. Transferred to Camp Lee, VA, and arrived there on 9 June 1919.

On 25 Nov 1929, Free Balloon S-35-262 piloted E. M. Fogelsonger, crashed due to mechanical failure on Mrs. R.A. Hoffman's property 10 mi SE Tuttle, OK. The pilot bailed out and survived.

Ferried aircraft from factories in the Western Procurement District to overseas departure points, Apr 1942–Mar 1944.

The 1st Airborne Command and Control Squadron provides aircraft for National Emergency Airborne Command Post in support of Presidential requirements from 1969 to present. The squadron provides the National Command Authorities with a survivable command center from which they may make accurate decisions and transmit timely directions to United States military forces during all conditions of peace and war.

Effective 1 Nov 1975, headquarters USAF transferred the 1st ACCS from command jurisdiction of Headquarters Command to SAC. The 1st ACCS had three E-4s, outfitted with EC-135 type communications equipment, to serve as the National Emergency Airborne Command Post. A fourth E-4 was at the Boeing plant in Seattle, Washington, where it was being outfitted with advanced type communications equipment.

The E-4As continued to perform their alert duty at Andrews AFB and on 22 May 1980 the E-4B served its first alert tour. The three E-4As eventually underwent modification to the E-4B configuration, the last being completed on 30 Jan 1985.

On 13 May 02, mishap aircraft (MA), an E-4B, S/N 73-1677, suffered a High Frequency (HF) Antenna assembly (wire antenna) failure. The exact time and location of the mishap is unknown. The MC planned and flew a pilot proficiency training sortie that included pattern work followed by air refueling (A/R). During A/R, the KC-135E boom operator noticed the HF antenna had failed and was lashing the upper aft fuselage. Once notified of the antenna failure, the crew returned immediately to Offutt AFB and recovered without further incident. During the post-flight inspection, damage appeared minor and reparable at the unit level. After careful scrutiny, the unit determined the damage exceeded its ability to repair it. 1 ACCS asked the Air Logistics Center, Tinker AFB OK (OC-ALC Tinker) for guidance. They, in turn, contracted Boeing Aerospace to assess the damage, determine the best course of action and the cost of repairs. The assessment was staggering: extensive damage to the tail, crown skin panels and windows required Boeing to remove and replace 7 and repair 11 crown skin panels. The AF will remove and replace 17 windows. Each ding is relatively minor but collectively the final bill for the contracted work is \$5,082,648, making it a Class A Safety mishap. The mishap caused no military injury and no civilian injuries or property damage were reported. The Board interviewed 15 witnesses and researched the history of E-4B HF antenna failures. The crew and maintenance specialist were well trained and did not contribute to the mishap. While the aircraft hit four birds inflight, the crew did not know they hit birds and there was no evidence birds caused the antenna failure. Weather was clear and smooth and the flight was flown within aircraft limitations. The Board determined the HF antenna assembly failed inflight and the chuck assembly, which attaches the antenna to the tail, detached automatically per its design. The failed parts were never recovered. The Board cited one cause and two contributing factors to this mishap. Additionally, there is one supply issue worthy of note. Cause: The mishap was caused by an operationally unsupportable HF antenna design. Annual antenna failure rates average approximately 1.5 failures per year. Wire antennas will fail, therefore, a more reliable design is warranted. Similar

damage was discovered on two aircraft in the 98/99 timeframe amounting to over \$3M. These mishaps prompted OC-ALC Tinker to research solutions and make recommendations. They recommended a TCTO designed to baseline parts and procedures. 1 ACCS maintainers found the TCTO inadequate and proposed a redesigned antenna instead. In the end the TCTO was the only option implemented. Following the TCTO, four antenna failures occurred in 29 months but were not reported to Tinker engineers. The fifth antenna failure, the MA, was the first failure known to Tinker. Clearly the TCTO did not solve the problem. Contributing Factor 1: The 98/99 mishaps were not reported to flight Safety and were not investigated despite repair costs in excess of \$3M. Had they been investigated in '99, this mishap may not have occurred. Contributing Factor 2: There was no follow-up plan to assess the success of the TCTO. Tinker made no attempt to determine if there were subsequent failures and 1 ACCS did not report the failures as they occurred. Of note, there were unauthorized parts in the E-4B supply system as late as 1 Jul 02, more than 2.5 years after the TCTO was implemented. Conclusions: The Board concluded wire antennas will fail, Tinker engineers and the unit failed to properly follow-up after the TCTO, the decision to implement the TCTO instead of redesigning the antenna did not apply Operational Risk Management principals; and finally, Safety should have been notified of the 98/99 mishaps discovered at Depot. Had a proper Safety investigation been accomplished this recent mishap may have been avoided. Bottom line: If the antenna is not redesigned, this mishap will occur again.

On 12 May 2010, at approximately 2310 local time, an E-4B, tail number (T/N) 73-1676, struck its tail approximately 1,300 feet past the threshold of runway 30 at Offutt AFB, NE, after completing a National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC) Alert weather avoidance mission. No injuries or lost work were incurred by the Mishap Crew (MC). The mishap aircraft (MA) is based at Offutt AFB, NE, and assigned to the 1st Airborne Command and Control Squadron of the 55th Operations Group, 55th Wing, to provide the President and Secretary of Defense with a survivable command center for directing United States forces during all conditions of peace and war, and for supporting the federal government during military, national, and natural emergencies. The MA was damaged on the underbody of the tail section upon impact, and the mishap caused no damage to the runway. Damage was estimated at \$3.1 million. Two hours and 32 minutes after takeoff, Mishap Pilot 1 (MP1) flew an uneventful, stable, on speed precision approach to short final. Digital flight data recorder (DFDR) information and testimony reveal that on short final, MP1 flew a slightly low glide path with a higher than normal descent rate. MP1 applied a large pitch-up control movement to the yoke at approximately 30 feet above touchdown, culminating in a firm touchdown at a 9-degree pitch angle and a subsequent bounce. During the bounce, MP1 applied back pressure to the yoke, increasing the aircraft pitch angle to 11 degrees as the aircraft settled back to the runway about 800 feet past the first touchdown point, resulting in the tail of the aircraft impacting the runway 2-3 feet right of the centerline, approximately 1,300 feet past the threshold. MP1 and the MC brought the MA to a stop on the runway, ensured the MA was safe for taxiing, and exited the runway uneventfully. The Aircraft Investigation Board (AIB) president found by clear and convincing evidence the cause of the mishap was pilot error by MP1 and Mishap Pilot 2 (MP2). During the bounce, MP1 increased the pitch angle of the MA to more than twice the pitch angle specified by the flight manual for landing, resulting in the tail striking the runway nearly simultaneously to the landing gear. As the Aircraft Commander for the sortie, MP2 did not ensure the safe and effective conduct of the flight, giving no input to MP1 during the landing, bounce, and second touchdown. Additionally,

the AIB president found as contributing factors that the E-4B flight manual and training programs did not state, discuss, or address any risk of tail strikes during landings or bounce recovery and that the manufacturer did not provide the Air Force information concerning risks of tail strikes for 747 aircraft during landing or bounce recovery. Weather, crew rest, fatigue, personal, professional, mission, or flight distracters, navigational aids and lighting systems, maintenance, and the MA were not factors.



1st Ferrying Squadron

Air Force Order of Battle

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