

12th RADIO SQUADRON, MOBILE



MISSION

Squadron strength was four officers and 16 airmen in Dec 1950.

LINEAGE

12th Radio Squadron, Mobile constituted, 2 Nov 1950

Activated, 16 Nov 1950

Inactivated, 8 May 1955

Disbanded, 15 Jun 1983

STATIONS

Brooks AFB, TX, 16 Nov 1950-19 Mar 1951

Landsberg, Germany, 5 Apr 1951-8 May 1955

ASSIGNMENTS

United States Air Force Security Service, 16 Nov 1950

6910th Security Group, 25 Apr 1952-8 May 1955

COMMANDERS

LTC Edgar H. Heald

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

USAFSS operations commenced at Landsberg in March 1951 when the 2nd Radio Squadron Mobile dispatched a new detachment—Detachment 25—to the base. Det 25 was a holding unit for "Earmarked Personnel" to be assigned to the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile that was being assigned to Landsberg. Detachment 25 was discontinued on 7 April 1951, with its assigned officers and airmen being reassigned to the 12 RSM

USAFSS activated the 12th RSM at Brooks AFB, Texas, in the fall of 1950. On 31 December 1950, Lt. Col. Edgar H. Heald commanded the squadron, and its strength was four officers and 16 airmen.

One problem was obtaining qualified personnel for the unit. Like most all the other squadrons of the Command during the early stages of organization, personnel were obtained from other organizations by means of discussions, volunteers, and assignment through the Headquarters Classification Section.

Landsberg Air Base was to be the headquarters location of the squadron. Capt. Charles S. Willis was assigned to the 2nd Radio Squadron Mobile, Darmstadt, Ger., on 10 Jan 1951 for the purpose of preparing for initial operating positions and drawing necessary equipment. Preparations were made, and an installation team was soon dispatched from Headquarters USAFSS to install the equipment and antenna farm.

Recently promoted, Lt. Col. Heald and MSgt. Herbert P. Geilert departed Brooks AFB in February 1951, assigned to the 2nd RSM, Darmstadt, for the purpose of making ready quarters and mess facilities for the oncoming unit. On 19 March 1951, they departed San Antonio, Texas, by rail to Fort Dix, New Jersey. On 26 March, they continued to the New York Port of Embarkation and boarded the USNS Alexander M. Patch. The ship sailed the following day and arrived in Bremerhaven, Germany, on 5 April 1951.

Col. Heald and 1st Sgt. Geilert met the squadron at the port in Bremerhaven. After debarking, they moved by rail to Landsberg, arriving on 6 April 1951. Much to their surprise, they were welcomed by members of Detachment "25" of the 2nd Radio Squadron Mobile, who all later became members of the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile. The unit was attached to Headquarters, 7030th Support Group, for logistical support.

A total of six officers and 92 airmen who had previously been assigned to 2nd Radio Squadron Mobile, earmarked for the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile, had been assigned to Landsberg as

Detachment 25 since 20 March 1951. The Det 25 men had made ready quarters for the arrival of the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile.

With the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile absorbing the men of Detachment 25 on 7 April 1951, squadron strength stood at eight officers and 118 airmen. The 2nd RSM deactivated Detachment 25, 2 RSM the same date.

Prior to the arrival of the 12th RSM, Capt. Charles S. Willis, CO of Det 25, had arranged for the USAFSS Installations Team to construct an antenna farm. The team (two officers and ten airmen) used 66 poles and 75,000 feet of wire on the antenna farm project. The antenna farm -was completed on Mar 23, 1951, with all lead-ins to the operations area completed by 5 June 1951.

Capt. Willis assumed duties as the 12th RSM operations officer when the unit arrived at Landsberg. Capt. George V. Carroll, who had accompanied Capt. Willis and Det 25 to the base, was the unit's control officer.

A series of meetings were held by the operations officer and the traffic analysis officer to brief and instruct the trick chiefs and control chiefs in the use of mission assignment cards and other data pertaining to operations and traffic analysis. These meetings were decisive in clearing up errors that were occurring as a result of the insufficient knowledge held by the trick chiefs and control chiefs using the information.

With the establishment of the Traffic Analysis Section in the 12th RSM, the speed and accuracy of [traffic] identification increased very noticeably. There had been quite some trouble encountered in using the teletype link because of excessive line outage and the delay encountered in receiving identifications after they had been sent in.

In June 1951, the Control Section moved into new, permanent space in the attic of building # 6 where the section employed and trained airmen arriving in the squadron without special access security clearance.

These airmen were placed on duty in the Control Section -with the control chiefs. These airmen helped edit traffic, maintained the control logs, and became familiar with the handling of [traffic] identification from the Control viewpoint. Thus, when the airmen did move into their section after receiving their clearances, they took with them an overall picture of how things worked between the two sections. The T/A officer reports that the experience these airmen received greatly aided them in their jobs.

First Lt. Gordon G. Bandow and 27 airmen from Det 25, 2nd RSM activated the Intercept Section on 21 March 1951 in interim positions—temporarily using "flat top antennas" that produced much interference to their intercept mission.

Traffic identification was moved to the Traffic Analysis Section on 5 June. In addition, the Intercept Section moved to its permanent location in the attic of Building # 23 after receiving additional equipment on 5 June 1951.

An intensive training program was conducted, especially for supervisory personnel after selection. During this training period six of the most well-trained supervisors were transferred to the Control Section and one to the DF Section as NCOIC along with nine operators.

At the close of 30 June 1951, the Intercept Section had 81 airmen assigned against an authorized strength of one officer and 168 airmen.

Formed on 9 May 1951, the Traffic Analysis Section consisted of six airmen. With no officer available to manage the section, the operations officer supervised work in the analysis section. The section was then located in an area offering minimum acceptable physical security and to adequately safeguard this information it required four to six airmen posted on rotating shifts as armed guards.

First Lt.'s Leonard C. Hess and Edgar M. Greene arrived from the 2nd RSM on temporary duty on 15 May 1951 to help establish operating procedures for the T/A Section. Lt.'s Hess and Green were permanently reassigned to the 12th RSM on 2 June 1951 as the traffic analysis officer and assistant T/A officer, respectively.

On 19 May 1951, the T/I [traffic identification] branch of this section was organized using the analysts who had been previously assigned as guards. From 3 to 15 June, traffic which the T/I branch could not ID was sent to the 2nd RSM for verification. They were considered fully qualified on 15 June and request for ID to the 2nd RSM was discontinued.

With the Traffic Analysis Section in place, the 12th RSM no longer had to depend on the 2nd RSM for operations support. One airman was assigned primary duties in "spot analysis of traffic" on 25 May 1951, and HQ USAFSS authorized the squadron to issue "item wires" to headquarters in lieu of daily reports required by current directives. By 28 June 1951, the T/A Section had achieved its authorized strength of 23 airmen.

Lt. Ernest L. Taylor, who arrived on 8 May 1951, had the task of setting up the unit's Direction Finding Section. He activated the 12th RSM's DF station on the southeast side of Landsberg AB. Using an SCR-291 DF system, the squadron's DF Section began operations on 25 June 1951; none of the operators had any DF experience. The DF Control Office was located in the attic of Building # 6. At the end of June 1951, ten airmen were assigned versus an authorized seventeen operators. Nonetheless, they were satisfying requirements "with great success."

The 12th Radio Squadron Mobile's Supply Section experienced typical start-up problems. Receiving 72 boxcar loads of equipment in the first 23 days, the section's officer and five assigned airmen were overwhelmed, and available storage space was inadequate. Squadron airmen augmented the supply specialists, and some equipment was stored in tents, under guard at night

to prevent pilferage. In addition, the squadron had to borrow some equipment from the Army Security Agency, Europe, until it received requisitioned items through normal supply channels.

Lt, Fambro L. Kendrick and seven airmen activated the Transportation Section on 7 April. They received the first shipment of 33 two-and-a-half-ton trucks and fourteen one-ton trailers on 20 April before space had been allocated to the squadron for a motor pool. With regulations stating that each base would have only one motor pool and with the 12th RSM being a mobile unit that had its own personnel and transportation section, Col. Heald had to work out a plan with the air base support group. The group allocated space for an auxiliary motor pool for the squadron.

Having no Air Police Section for the first three months, the operations officer had the responsibility of providing temporary guards to secure all areas where signals intelligence work was accomplished. Upon his arrival on 8 June 1951, TSgt. Cecil O. Gilleland became NCOIC of the Air Police Section, with the task of forming a guard force. By the end of June, Sgt. Gilleland had created guard posts, the section was fully staffed, and all personnel with special access clearances had been issued permanent-type badges. He continued to report to the operations officer.

The Squadron Armory was also neglected until Sgt. Gilleland's arrival on 8 June. Assigned additional duties as NCOIC of the armory, he established the armory in the basement of building # 23. Requests to establish the squadron's own mess hall were disapproved. Col. Heald assigned the 12th RSM cooks on special duty with the base consolidated dining hall.

The men of the 12U RSM had access to numerous on-base recreational facilities—gym, swimming pool, tennis courts, ball diamonds, Airmens Club, theater, bowling alley and service club. A 12th Radio Squadron Mobile softball team immediately became base champs. A branch of the University of Maryland offered courses that airmen could take to further their education.

Total personnel assigned to the 12th RSM at the end of September 1951 were nineteen officers, 402 airmen and 25 civilians, some of whom were German nationals. The large staff build-up included newly trained specialists earmarked for other USAFSS squadrons that were being deployed in Europe.

The arrival of the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile at Landsberg Air Base brought about a re-subordination of Detachment 21 (Linz, Austria) and Detachment 22 (Schleissheim, Germany). On 1 August 1951, per HQ USAFSS direction, the 12th RSM published a general order redesignating Det 21 as Detachment 121 with an authorized strength of one officer and 40 airmen. Det 21 personnel were reassigned from the 2nd RSM to the 12th RSM and continued their assignments at Linz.

On 17 August 1951, the 12th RSM published another general order redesignating Det 22 as Detachment 122, 12th RSM, with an authorized strength of one officer and 40 airmen. Unlike the switchover involving Det 21, only three of the airmen on detached duty at Schleissheim remained with Det 122.³⁵ The 2nd RSM issued orders on 9 August 1951 ordering seventeen airmen currently on detached duty with Detachment 22 at Schleissheim to return to Darmstadt for duty

with the 2nd RSM. Departures from Schleissheim for the seventeen men were to occur incrementally between 15 and 25 August

At the direction of the Commander in Chief, USAFE, the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile conducted a field exercise between 3 and 6 September 1951 at Oberpfaffenhofen Air Strip, a 35-minute trip from Landsberg Air Base. Col. Maury from HQ USAFSS inspected the squadron in the field at Oberpfaffenhofen on the final day of the exercise. Lt. Col. Heald served the USAFSS visitors lunch at the squadron's mess in the field. Results for the field exercise and inspection were not included in the unit history.

From March 1951 forward, HQ USAFSS had been shipping large numbers of uncleared men to the 12th Radio Squadron Mobile, posing problems for the squadron in the utilization of airmen without crypto clearances. As of 30 September 1951, 56 airmen had arrived who were earmarked for the 34th Radio Squadron Mobile. The 12th RSM employed those with appropriate clearances in their operational job areas; those pending clearance action performed in less challenging jobs outside the operations compound.

Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 28 Nov 2011
Updated:

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