

1946 COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

1946 Airways and Air Communications Service Squadron designated and organized, 1 Nov 1954
Redesignated 1946 Communications Squadron, 1 Jul 1961
Redesignated 1946 Information Systems Squadron, 1 Oct 1984
Redesignated 1946 Communications Squadron, 1 Nov 1986

STATIONS

Tempelhof AB (later Tempelhof Central Airport), West Germany

ASSIGNMENTS

1820 Airways and Air Communications Service Group (later, Central European AACS Region;
Central European Communications
Region)
HQ European Communications Area (later, European Communications Division; European
Information Systems Division; European Communications Division), 30 Jun 1972

COMMANDERS

Lt Col John J. Watkins, 6 Apr 1964
Lt Col Robert Mand, 17 Aug 1966
Lt Col Harry B. Brown, Jr., 16 Sep 1967
Lt Col Benjamin F. Guiles, 1969

Lt Col Roy Anderson, 1970
Lt Col Dietrich R. Kop, 17 Aug 1973
Lt Col William E. Dussetschleger, 1975
Maj Kenneth L. Nicola (Interim),
Lt Col William H. Sneider, 15 Sep 1976
Lt Col R. E. Hall,
Lt Col Gene A. Jordan, 15 Jul 1983
Lt Col Richard J. Madden, 7 Aug 1985
Lt Col John W. Droke, 8 Jul 1988

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan 1973-31 Dec 1973

1 Jan 1974-31 Dec 1974

1 Jan 1976-31 Dec 1977

1 Jan 1979-31 Dec 1980

1 Jan 1981-31 Dec 1982

1 Jan 1983-31 Dec 1984

EMBLEM



The 1946 Communications Squadron emblem symbolizes the mission of the unit. The watchful eye of the eagle is insuring flight safety in and out of the Island City of Berlin. Lightning bolts indicate

the communications mission: telephone, telecommunications center, and air-to-ground/ground-to-air communications. The blue background is the three air corridors and Berlin control zone which provide free access into and out of Berlin. It's surrounded by red which indicates hostile airspace controlled by East German/Soviet forces.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

24 June 1948, the Soviets blockaded the land routes to Berlin in an attempt to force the Allies to abandon the city and its 2.5 million Germans residing in the free zones. Lt Gen Lucius D. Clay, the American high commissioner in Germany, remained firm. He telephoned General LeMay, commanding the United States Air Forces in Europe, to ask him if he could fly in 45 tons of emergency supplies. General LeMay managed to round up a handful of C-47 transport aircraft which flew in 80 tons of food and medicines. When it became apparent that the blockade was going to last more than several days, a Combined Airlift Task Force was formed with the British. The French did not participate since they had no available transport aircraft. Aircraft flying supplies to Berlin were loaded at the air bases at Rhein-Main and Wiesbaden in the American Zone and Fassberg and Celle in the British Zone of West Germany. The heavily laden aircraft then flew to Tempelhof in the American Zone and Gatow in the British Zone of Berlin. The 1946th AACS Squadron, a unit of the 1812th AACS Group, handled all air operations in the Berlin area. A third airfield, called Tegel, was built in the French Zone of Berlin and began operations in November 1948. The task for personnel of the 1946th AACS Squadron was no easier. Theirs was the crucial job of providing the airways communications and the air traffic control services, which enabled each aircraft to land safely despite poor weather conditions and difficult approaches. Other factors further complicated AACS's job. The airfields lacked adequate equipment and personnel to handle the volume of traffic precipitated by the airlift.

In 1948, AACS was still experiencing personnel shortages. The 1946th AACS Squadron was staffed by only a dozen officers, 97 enlisted men, and 21 German Nationals who served as clerks and technicians. All but 14 of the enlisted men were scheduled for release or reassignment by January 1949. Furthermore, many of the men were not qualified for the military specialty ratings they held. One evaluation report wryly commented that of 12 "skilled" radio mechanics in the squadron, two were exceptional jeep drivers. Besides implying that none were skilled radio mechanics, it went on to list their morale as "low," their initiative as "nil," and their devotion to duty as "niller."

The crisis of the airlift was to bring out the best qualities of AACS personnel. The ingenuity and dedication that had been the AACS hallmark in the past manifested itself again as the importance of their contribution to the airlift became self-evident. All the personnel in the 1946th AACS Squadron scheduled to leave the service or rotate either reenlisted or extended their tours. In spite of round-the-clock duty and the need to improvise in order to make obsolete equipment do the

job, everything was done and done well until additional help arrived and modern equipment could be brought in to replace the worn, outdated equipment.

Help was badly needed. To meet the need for personnel, reserve officers, civilian technicians, and replacements who had to be trained on the job were rushed to the airlift airports. One Civil Aeronautics Administration reservist was notified on a Saturday that he was activated for 90 days duty on the airlift. The following Friday, he was controlling aircraft from the Tempelhof control tower. In admiration, he stated, "Actually I didn't believe that it was possible for the Air Force to move that fast." By November 1948, the 1946th AACS Squadron's strength had risen to 79 officers, 208 enlisted personnel, and 148 German Nationals. Altogether, 90 AACS officers and 700 enlisted personnel were serving the entire airlift at the peak.

1946 AACS

Tempelhof Air Force Terminal, Berlin, Germany

Berlin Air Lift

Equipment: CPN-4; 2 RBS type radars, type unknown

USAF Unit Histories

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Updated:

Sources

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

Major Command history. A Salute to Air Force Communications Command Leaders and Lineage. Office of Air Force Communications Command History. Scott AFB, IL. 1 Oct 1990.