

21st SPACE OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

21st Space Operations Squadron is responsible for planning and conducting launch and on-orbit operations for a wide spectrum of vital DoD, allied and commercial space systems.

The squadron plans for and conducts launch, on-orbit and specialized communications operations for several DoD, allied, civil and commercial space missions, including Inertial Upper Stage (IUS) for NASA and DoD space assets, NATO Satellite Communications Systems and DSCS. In addition to satellite programs, the squadron provides tracking and telemetry support on every Space Shuttle mission and to several commercial launches.

It schedules, allocates, and configures Air Force Satellite Control Network common user resources; resolves resource allocation conflicts; monitors, maintains and updates the status of AFSCN resources and provides status, configurations, and readiness of controlled resources to multiple users and command centers.

The 21st SOPS maintains the facilities necessary to support a full deployment by 1st and 3rd SOPS, in the event of an emergency or routine relocation. Additionally, 21st SOPS maintains a backup scheduling facility for the 22nd SOPS facility at Schriever AFB. It also manages communications systems for network operations and maintains and operates base communications.

The squadron provides access to the worldwide Air Force Satellite Control Network and specialized support to the international space community by providing network communications,

inter-range operations, and on-orbit test, checkout and troubleshooting services. The unit is also responsible for maintaining Onizuka's two 60-foot DSCS antennas. The 21st SOPS acts as the back-up for scheduling tracking station usage for satellite operators.

As host unit for Onizuka Air Force Station, 21st SOPS provides resources to operate and maintain the OAFS facility and to provide limited administrative and support services to base units and agencies, including security, civil engineering and safety. Further, the squadron provides some base support to units on Moffett Federal Airfield. The 21st Space Operations Squadron commander is designated the installation commander for Onizuka Air Force Station.

LINEAGE¹

21st Space Operations Squadron constituted, 10 Jul 1991

Activated, 1 Oct 1991

Changed status from a unit of United States Air Force to a unit of United States Space Force, 21 Oct 2020

STATIONS

Onizuka AFB (later, AS, AFS), CA, 1 Oct 1991

Vandenberg AFB (later SFB), CA, 29 Jul 2010

ASSIGNMENTS

2d Satellite Tracking (later, 750th Space) Group, 1 Oct 1991

50th Operations Group, 7 Jun 1999

50th Network Operations Group (later, Space Delta 6), 10 Mar 2004

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Samuel L. McNeil

HONORS

Service Streamers

Global War on Terrorism-Service (GWOT-S)

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Sep 1993-31 Aug 1995

1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000

¹ Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2001
2 Oct 2002-2 Oct 2003
1 Oct 2007-30 Sep 2009
1 Jan 2015-31 Dec 2016

EMBLEM



On a disc Sable, a Mercator projection Azure gridlined Argent, land masses of the field, between in chief a lightning flash enarched fesswise Gules, and in sinister base a mullet bendwise of the second, charged with torteau and leaving a contrail of the fourth arcing to a mullet located in the Northwest region of the United States Or, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Black scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed with the motto, "GATEWAY TO THE STARS," in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Black scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "21ST SPACE OPERATIONS SQ" in Yellow letters. **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 disc is black, symbolizing space, the area of mission operations for the Squadron. The map of the world denotes the unit's worldwide support of the Air Force Satellite Control Network. The stars represent an orbiting satellite and its earth station linked by a communication band. The lightning bolt stands for the speed of the unit's communication links. (Approved, 18 Jul 1995)



MOTTO

GATEWAY TO THE STARS

OPERATIONS

After the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Committee directed realignment of Onizuka AFS, 21st SOPS absorbed the roles of the 750th Space Group and all subordinate units and the 5th Space Operations Squadron and quality control services.

Space Shuttle Discovery (STS-92), on a mission to deliver equipment and supplies to the International Space Station, suffered a Ku-band antenna failure. 21st Space Operations Squadron operators used the Air Force Satellite Control Network to receive data from the shuttle and relay it to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration mission controllers, conducting 201 support events for the mission.

November 4, 2005 The 21st Space Operations Squadron put Satellite Operations Center 52 in "cold" status. The SOC had been the primary Air Force center supporting U.S. space shuttle activities until 2004.

July 29, 2010, Air Force Space Command ordered the inactivation of Operating Location A (OL- A) of the 21st Space Operations Squadron and the activation of Detachment 4, 21st Space

Operations Squadron as a result of the squadron's move to Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

Construction is now complete of the new Ellison Onizuka Satellite Operations Facility at Vandenberg AFB, Calif. The \$40 million facility will house the 21st Space Operations Squadron. The squadron manages the Air Force satellite control network. Vandenberg officials held the facility's dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 30. Prior to relocating to Vandenberg, the 21st SOS operated at Onizuka AFS, Calif., which was officially closed on July 28. Vandy's new facility is named after Col. Ellison Onizuka, an Air Force astronaut who died aboard Space Shuttle Challenger on Jan. 28, 1986. Onizuka's widow, Lorna, spoke at the dedication ceremony. Monday August 09, 2010

September 30, 2011, Detachment 4, 21st Space Operations Squadron inactivated. The detachment was activated to oversee Onizuka closure activity following the relocation of the 21st Space Operations Squadron to Vandenberg AFB.