

8711th AIR BASE GROUP

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Aerospace Audiovisual Service of the Air Force

Second, I mean all types of photography: still pictures or moving pictures; taken on film, video, tape, or digital disks; darkroom developed or darkroomless if electronic.

Third, a big operation at Norton is archival—the storage of millions of feet of film and tape and the retrieval of segments for the Air Force itself, for commercial moving pictures and for television.

Finally, this is a world headquarters. Much of the daily photography is directed from here, not actually done here. But the case of Desert Storm and Desert Shield is another story.

In the 60's the Air Force decided to consolidate and centralize all photographic services. They were scattered from Orlando FL to Hollywood, CA.

Norton was chosen as the HQ site because a suitable building became available. This was the concrete blockhouse which had been the SAGE and control center for the defense of Southern California.

Superficially, it appeared to be ideal for making moving pictures, there are no windows, light can be controlled. Concrete walls, you might suppose, would shut out the sound of jet aircraft engines. But it was necessary to build a building within a building to make the studio really quiet.

The headquarters building was opened in July 1969 and fully occupied in November 1970. Under one roof were housed a motion picture laboratory, a still photo lab, a movie sound stage, a TV production center, the Air Force film library and other professional operations.

Since Redlands provided a convenient location for making segments of films, a crew would show up here from time to time. One day they took over City Hall. On another day I found them in the Keystone Drug Store on State Street.

Drug store? Yes, it was a training film for aircraft pilots that was in production. The point was: "Beware of over-the-counter drugs. They may affect your eyesight, slow your reaction time, or have other bad effects." Instead, the pilot should go to his flight surgeon for any medicines.

At that time the Air Force was making its own training films. The producer hired professional actors from Hollywood.

The unions in Hollywood successfully put pressure on the Air Force to abandon its own films in favor of having them made under commercial contract.

If consolidation of Air Force audiovisual organizations in the 1960s was an improvement, why not go a step further? Consolidate the whole bunch—Air Force, Army and Navy.

That's what happened as the 1980's opened. At that juncture I attended a dinner at Norton. The speaker was the general under whose jurisdiction the Defense Audiovisual Agency fell.

Politically, the plan had been easy to sell, the proponents claimed that within the armed services there were 12 different training films telling a person who to brush his or her teeth. (probably an exaggeration but...)

Perhaps the fundamental flaw in the scheme was that all the services had bucked it. They felt that each one had unique audiovisual needs. Also the mandate of the DAVA was not clear.

On good Friday 1985, the forthcoming dissolution of the defense audiovisual agency was announced. One result was that the huge moving picture and video library stayed here but the still picture archives were moved to Washington.