

603 AIR CONTROL SQUADRON



MISSION

The 603 Air Control Squadron is given the responsibility of exercising decentralized command and control of air resources in the event of periods of hostility accompanied by loss of communications. The specified mission of the 603 ACS is to operate a mobile unit capable of providing radar control and surveillance within a designated area, to collect, display, and disseminate information of aerial activity and to provide radar coverage for the control of air forces. The squadron is further tasked to provide radar control for friendly aircraft in an offensive role against ground targets, and in a defensive mission against airborne threats, as directed.

LINEAGE

603 Tactical Control Squadron constituted, 3 Dec 1945
Activated, 31 Dec 1945
Inactivated, 25 Sep 1947
Activated, 25 May 1948
Redesignated 603 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, 1 Dec 1948
Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Jun 1965
Redesignated 603 Tactical Control Squadron, 29 Jun 1973
Activated, 1 Jul 1973
Inactivated, 29 Sep 1986
Activated, 1 Jul 1991
Redesignated 603 Air Control Squadron, 31 Mar 1992
Inactivated, 3 Sep 2013

STATIONS

Neustadt/Aisch, Germany, 31 Dec 1945

Bad Kissingen AB, Germany, 5 Jul-25 Sep 1947
Hof, Germany, 25 May 1948
Giebelstad AB, Germany, 21 Aug 1950
Langerkopf (later, Langerkopf AB; Langerkopf ACW Sta; Langerkopf Radar Site), Germany, 15 Jan 1954-25 Jun 1965
Gruenstadt Annex, Germany, 1 Jul 1973
Sembach AB, Germany, 5 Oct 1973
Mehlingen Comm Annex/Site, Germany, 31 Jul 1978
Sembach AB, Germany, 1 Apr 1979-29 Sep 1986
Sembach AB, Germany, 1 Jul 1991
Aviano AB, Italy, 1 Jan 1994-3 Sep 2013

ASSIGNMENTS

501 Tactical Control Group, 31 Dec 1945-25 Sep 1947
United States Air Forces in Europe, 25 May 1948
7400 Air Force Communications Wing, 1 Jul 1948
United States Air Forces in Europe, 7 Feb 1949
501 Aircraft Control and Warning Group (later, 501 Tactical Control Group; 501 Tactical Control Wing), 10 Jun 1949
86 Air Division (Defense), 18 Nov 1960- 25 Jun 1965
601 Tactical Control Group, 1 Jul 1973
601 Tactical Control Wing, 1 Jun 1985-29 Sep 1986
601 Tactical Control Wing, 1 Jul 1991
601 Operations Group, 31 Mar 1992
86 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1993
31 Operations Group, 1 Jan 1994-3 Sep 2013

ATTACHMENTS

United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 Jul-21 Dec 1948
7402 Aircraft Control and Warning Group, 21 Dec 1948-10 Jun 1949
Tactical Control Wing, Provisional, 1 Jul 1955-17 Nov 1957

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Otto B. McIver
Maj Donald H. Brown

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Kosovo: Kosovo Air. Armed Forces Expeditionary

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1964-25 Jun 1965

1 Apr 1977-25 Sep 1978

1 May 1979-30 Apr 1981

1 May 1981-30 Apr 1983

[Jul] 1991-31 May 1993

1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2002

2 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

1 Jun 2009-31 May 2011

EMBLEM



603 Air Control Squadron emblem:

603 Air Control Squadron emblem: On a disc Azure, a stylized compass rose throughout bearing a scorpion bendwise sinister Argent (Silver Gray) garnished Sable above the scorpion's tail are two lightning bolts bendwise Or ending in two flight symbols fesswise of the second, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "OMNIA VIDEMUS" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "603D AIR CONTROL SQ" in Black 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 lightning bolts represent the command and control function of the Squadron. The scorpion is merciless and a fierce creature that in Greek mythology was summoned by the gods to punish wrongdoers and act as guardian and protector. Scorpions are known for their impenetrable defenses and for their ability to lure opponents into underestimating their resilience and determination. The flight symbols are for the flying units with which the Squadron executes its air control mission. (Approved, 13 Apr 1995)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Scorpions

OPERATIONS

The 603rd ACS was officially activated on Dec. 31, 1945 under the Army Air Corps. The original name of the squadron back then was the "logrollers". The unit was under the operational control of the 501st Tactical Control Group. On May 25, 1948 the unit was realigned to report to the 7400th Air Force Communications Wing and on Dec. 1, 1948 it was re-designated the 603rd Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, under direct control of the 7402nd Aircraft Control and Warning Group. Its mission was to provide early warning radar and direction-finding network to support tactical air operations to USAFE and to provide navigational aids to friendly aircraft.

The main force of the unit's capabilities were witnessed during the 1948-49 Berlin Airlift.

Equipment used in 1951, AN/MPS-5, AN/CPS-4

22 March 1977 The 603rd TCS received the first two "E" model TPS-43 radars. After initial checkout at the 603rd, one of the TPS-43Es was sent to the 601st TCS on 22 April 1977. Eventually, all wing mobile radar units would receive the TPS-43E radar sets.

4 October 1977 The 603rd TCS started an extensive four week training program on the final 13 newly arrived TPS-43E radars. Each unit in the wing practiced setting up their own radar at Mehlingen.

31 Mar 1978 By the close of March 1978, the remaining eight TPS-43ES at the 603rd TCS were released to their gaining units.

4 February 1980 The 603rd TCS moved its radar head to Fischbach for optimum radar coverage. A GSQ-120 RDTs was used to relay information between Fischbach and the technical site at Mehlingen.

The unit was then activated again in 1991 and moved to Aviano Air Base, Italy. The 603rd ACS has played a major role in the Balkans by supporting Operations Deny Flight, Deliberate Force and Allied Force. In 2004, the unit deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom where direct mortar fire killed Airman 1st Class Antoine Holt and injured many others. In 2005, the unit then deployed to Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, for eight months and returned to Afghanistan in 2006-2007 for another eight-month deployment.

Airmen of the 603rd Air Control Squadron Scorpions who just returned to their home base at Aviano AB, Italy, from months supporting Southwest Asia combat operations, left their forward location with an enhanced command and control system, replacing an old and costly-to-maintain computer-based information system, the AN/TYQ-23, with a state-of-the-art Battlespace Command and Control Center. The BC3 will enable more expeditionary air control operators to manage the combat air space and control radar operations in multiple theaters at the same time. 71st Expeditionary Air Control Squadron operators track an average of 1,000 different aircraft a day.

In January 2008, the unit deployed to Ghana and Tanzania to provide aerial surveillance in support of President George W. Bush's historical five-day visit to Africa. The unit also directly supported two other Presidential trips to Slovenia and Romania in the spring of 2008, and provided long-haul communications to the 510th and 555th Fighter Squadrons' two weapons training deployments in Slovenia and Bulgaria. Most recently, the 603rd ACS deployed as "Pyramid Control" for an eight-month deployment to Southwest Asia, providing air surveillance and early warning for six countries in the Arabian Gulf region. During this rotation, "Pyramid" brought online a next-generation air control weapon system, allowing the unit to provide air battle management simultaneously to two separate theaters.

The Air Force will inactivate the 603rd Air Control Squadron at Aviano AB, Italy, announced Pentagon officials on Thursday. These moves are part of the broader changes to the US military posture in Europe that will reduce the US footprint there from about 80,000 troops today to some 70,000 in 2017. 2012

Members of the 603rd Air Control Squadron at Aviano AB, Italy, in January will conclude the unit's final deployment before the squadron's planned inactivation in the spring. These airmen have been serving since July as part of the 71st Expeditionary Air Control Squadron at an undisclosed air base in the Persian Gulf and at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, according to a Dec. 30 release. "Currently I have a majority of my squadron either deployed here [at the undisclosed location] or in Kandahar," said Lt. Col. Stephen Carocci, 603rd ACS commander. "On a daily basis, [they] provide battle management and command and control over the skies of Afghanistan and support for the Gulf region," he added. Carocci has also been in charge of the 71st EACS during the latest deployment. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Aviano unit's airmen have supported operations

in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Horn of Africa, states the release. "The air control community is small, so many of us will run into each other again in the future and remember what we accomplished while in the 603rd ACS," said Carocci. 2013

1/22/2013 - AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy (AFNS) -- Airmen assigned to the 603rd Air Control Squadron here were greeted by hundreds of family members and friends Jan. 19 as they returned home from their final deployment in Southwest Asia before the squadron is inactivated later this year. The 603rd ACS, one of two Air Force theater air control systems in Europe, is being inactivated as part of a larger effort to help meet Budget Control Act resource levels. The squadron has a rich history with roots reaching back to the very beginnings of the Air Force. It was officially activated as the 603rd ACS on Dec. 31, 1945 under the Army Air Corps. The squadron's early years provided air control for major air operations, including support of the Berlin Airlift.

Since 9/11, the squadron's operations have been essential to providing deployed Airmen the control of the skies over Afghanistan and Iraq. The squadron also supported Operation New Dawn and operations in the Horn of Africa, said Lt. Col. Stephen Carocci, who is the commander for both the 71st Expeditionary Air Control Squadron and the 603rd ACS. "I had a majority of my squadron deployed in Southwest Asia, who on a daily basis provide battle management and command and control over the skies of Afghanistan and support for the Gulf region," Carocci said. "While it will be sad knowing this squadron is making its last deployment, I know it's in the best interests of the Air Force as a whole for the squadron to be inactivated."

Since the start of the squadron's deployment in July, the squadron controlled 129,000 miles of airspace, assisted in 50,000 combat missions, controlled 41,000 aircraft and supported three rescue missions. Seeing this direct impact on the war effort makes being a member of the 603rd ACS an extraordinary experience for its Airmen. "Coming from a career field where it isn't a guarantee to be a part of an air control squadron, has made this assignment meaningful," said Senior Master Sgt. Jamie Kitchen, who has been a member of the 603rd ACS since October 2008. "Being able to go on these deployments, getting steel on target and supporting the guys on the ground who need air support is what makes this special."

Unfortunately, the squadron also had to deal with personal tragedy when it came to supporting the war on terrorism. Airman 1st Class Antoine Holt lost his life during a mortar attack and Senior Airman Scott Palomino lost his left leg below the knee during the same attack while they were deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in April 2004. A memorial plaque was dedicated to Holt in 2006. Chief Master Sgt. Virgil Horsley, who's last assignment will be with the 603rd ACS, said he wants to make sure the memorial is properly taken care of and not forgotten after the squadron leaves Aviano AB. "Our squadron owes it to his family to remember his sacrifice," Horsley said. "As for Palomino, he has since gone on to run marathons with a prosthetic leg and by all accounts is one of the most positive people you will ever encounter. While the final chapter of the 603rd ACS is being written, the commander said his Airmen have done an amazing job to leave a lasting mark. "Our squadron's mascot is the scorpion, so we have dedicated this last deployment to be the Scorpion's last strike," Carocci said. "The air control community is small, so many of us will run into each other again in the future and remember what we accomplished while in the 603rd ACS." 603rd members who did not deploy spent the past few months breaking down the equipment to be sent to other units that will take over the squadron's responsibilities.

"Although the 603rd (ACS) is inactivating, I hope at some point the Scorpion strike is seen

again in the future of our Air Force," Carocci said. "This squadron provides a unique opportunity to all those fortunate enough to be a part of it, and we will carry that on with us to our future assignments forever."

Officials at Aviano AB, Italy, inactivated the base's 603rd Air Control Squadron as part of Air Force-wide cost-saving measures. The inactivation took place during an Aug. 29 ceremony, according to Aviano's Sept. 4 release. "It is truly an honor to have commanded this fine group of airmen from this legendary unit," said Lt. Col. Stephen Carocci, the squadron's commander, at the event. He thanked the unit's airmen for their accomplishments. The unit, which traces its history back to December 1945, provided one of two Air Force theater air control systems in Europe in support of NATO ground forces. In mid-January, the unit returned from its final deployment, having spent time in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. 2013

Since the beginning of combat operations in Iraq, forces from the wing have been on regular combat rotations into the region. In late 2003 the 603 ACS became the first unit from the 31 FW deployed to Iraq where they provided provide air control for the country. In an air control squadron first, they relocated their entire operation from Baghdad International Airport to Balad AB. Under combat conditions, the squadron transferred \$73 million in equipment and over 100 personnel via 20 convoys. Significantly, the squadron accomplished the move with no loss of command and control services. Unfortunately, the squadron also sustained a loss during its time in Iraq. On 10 April 2004, insurgents launched a mortar rocket attack on Balad, killing A1C Antoine Holt and injuring two other Scorpions. Airman Holt's death constituted the 31 FW's first combat fatality since the Vietnam War.

In 2000, the wing began its full-fledged participation in the Expeditionary Air Force. From March to September 2000, the 510th and 555th Fighter Squadrons conducted back-to-back deployments to Ahmed Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, in support of Operation Southern WATCH (OSW). While at Al Jaber, the squadrons flew over 400 combat sorties providing precision-guided munitions (PGM) delivery while patrolling the southern NFZ. Then, the "Scorpions" of the 603rd Air Control Squadron (603 ACS) deployed to Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait from February to June 2001. As the core of the 386th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, the 121 personnel of the 603rd served as the primary air control squadron for OSW. Significantly, the deployment marked the first-ever deployment of the 603rd outside of Europe.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.