603rd TACTICAL CONTROL SQUADRON

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<tr>
<th>STATION</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>COMMANDER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREISING</td>
<td>604th TAC CONTROL SQ.</td>
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<td>NEUSTADT (ERLANGEN)</td>
<td>603rd TAC CONTROL SQ.</td>
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<td>SIMMERINGEN (KASSEL)</td>
<td>601st TAC CONTROL SQ.</td>
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<td>NEUSTADT (BAD KISSINGEN)</td>
<td>438th SIG CONTR. SQ.</td>
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<td>DARMSTADT</td>
<td>602nd TAC CONTROL SQ.</td>
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601st, 602d, 603d, and 604th Tactical Control Squadrons. On 1 December USAFE redesignated these units as aircraft control and warning squadrons. The squadrons had been assigned to the 7400th Communications Wing on 1 July and attached to USAFE from 1 July-20 December. On 21 December they were attached to the 7402d Aircraft Control and Warning Group. (The 7402d was organized as a tactical control group at Wiesbaden on 1 July and assigned to the 7400th Communications Wing. Headquarters USAFE redesignated the 7402d as an aircraft control and warning group on 16 December.) 1948

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers
Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Roots of the modern day TAGS network go back to the World War II era and the Army's 555th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion. This "triple nickel" unit, formed in 1942 from a group of specialists who worked at the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, stormed ashore in Normandy or, D-Day and progressed across Europe gathering six battle streamers. Throughout the war the 555th provided badly needed aircraft control and surveillance services. On 31 December 1945, the four companies of the 555th became the 601st TCS, 602nd TCS, 603rd TCS, and 604th TCS. The 601st TCS, still active under the 601st TCW today, was activated at Simmershausen, Germany. These newly formed units were assigned to the 501st Tactical Control Group and, from these fundamental and rudimentary beginnings, the TAGS system has become what is today.

5 October 1973 The 603rd TCS relocated from Gruenstadt to Sembach Air Base.

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. Only two wing units still used the TPS-44 (the 626th and 636th TCFs),

31 July 1978 The 601st TACC Squadron and the 603rd TCS swapped technical site locations. The former moved to Sembach AB while the 603rd TCS relocated to Site 1 in Mehlingen.

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.
23 Feb 1982 The 601st TCW was officially notified that the 601st TASS, 601st ASOC, and 603rd TCS were selected to receive the "Air Force Outstanding Unit Award"

In addition to those changes mentioned above, still others were underfoot regarding a general TACS drawdown in the Central Region. Specifically, in order to meet the Fiscal Year (FY) 1985 and 1986 Department of Defense budget restrictions, the Air Staff directed the reduction of the mobile TACS by two CRPs and four FACPs in two phases. Phase I resulted in the 1 June 1985 inactivation of the 619th TCF located at Grafenwoehr and the 1 August 1985 inactivation of the 602nd TCS at Turkheim and the 632nd TCF located at Schwellentrup. The second phase of this drawdown resulted in the 1 October 1986 inactivation of the 603rd TCS at Mehlingen, the 636th TCF and the 621st TCF at Wanna and Wiesbaden, respectively. In another area of the TACS drawdown interest, was the newly designated Operating Location C, 601st TCW. The 601st TCW, OL-C was designated and organized at Sembach AB on 1 February 1986, to provide ongoing communications support to both the ATOC and 601st TCW of which would otherwise end as a result of Phase II of the TAGS drawdown. The OL-C consists of four components; an ATOC support element, a stand-alone MFC, radio relay-elements, and a Combat Logistics Repair Team (CLRT). This team, in peacetime, is made up of the Chief of Maintenance and a small maintenance staff function for the OL-C. However, in event of war, these people would be augmented by wing staff personnel and become the CLRT. Another significant event at the start of 1986 involved the end of Elf One commitment at Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia on 12 February 1986. This date marked the end of over five years (activated 9 October 1980) 601st TCW FACPs support for Elf One operations at various locations in Saudi Arabia.

Going into 1977, the 609th TCS and its two subordinate flights were declared operationally ready on 1 February. Also, yet another TAGS milestone was reached on 22 March 1977, when the 603rd TCS received the first two "E" model TPS-43 radars. After initial checkout at the 603rd TCS, one of the TPS-43Es was sent to the 601st TCS on 22 April 1977. Four days later a TPS-43E radar was used for the first time in an exercise as the 601st TCW participated in Certain Fighter. Eventually, all wing mobile radar units would receive the TPS-43E radar set.

On 4 October 1977, the 603rd TCS started an extensive four week training program for the final 13 newly arrived TPS-43E radars. Each unit in the wing practiced setting up their own radar at the 603rd's technical site in Mehlingen. This period proved to be a busy time for the 603rd TCS which, along with the 615th and 616th AC&WS', participated in an E-3A AWACS demonstration in November and December 1977. The purpose of this demonstration, which proved to be very impressive to NATO officials who observed the activity, was to advertise the advanced capabilities of the E-3A to provide improved air surveillance for the European theater and its ability to down-link data through the ground environment system. The 603rd TCS deployed to Gruenstadt from 9 November through 15 December to support this demonstration. In several other TAGS related events during the year, on 14 November 1977, the 626th and 636th TCFs moved off Carl Shurz Kaserne to a location on top of the Bremerhaven City Dump at Muellplatz Grauer Wall, just down the road from their previous site. They would operate here, literally surrounded by garbage, for the next three years. Also, on 1 December 1977, the 636th TCF
controlled its first mission, a sortie of two F-111s out of RAF Lakenheath, England. However, like the other two newly activated units, they would not be fully operational for several months.

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Tactical Control Squadron
Note: 25 May 1948, Detachment A of 602nd Tactical Control Squadron, became the 603rd Tactical Control Squadron at Hof, Germany.
Redesignated: 23 November 1948, as 603rd Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron.
Sembach, Germany
Mehlingen, Germany
Subordinate to: 501st TCG
Redesignated & reactivated: 603rd TCS June 29, 1973; Subordinate to: the 601st TCG
July, 1964 – 18 June, 1965
Equipment: TPS-43 (27 June 1969)
Notes: (1) 31 December 1945, A Company of the 555th SAW Bn. became the 603rd TCS. (2) Originally Det 8/28 601st TCS

Information for 603 TCS Mehlingen, DE
Call Sign(s): Maroon

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<th>Perm ID</th>
<th>Sage ID</th>
<th>JSS ID</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<th>Final Equip.</th>
<th>Oper. Date</th>
<th>Inact. Date</th>
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<td>31-Jul-78</td>
<td>01-Oct-86</td>
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Roots of the modern day TAGS network go back to the World War II era and the Army's 555th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion. This "triple nickel" unit, formed in 1942 from a group of specialists who worked at the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, stormed ashore in Normandy on D-Day and progressed across Europe gathering six battle streamers. Throughout the war the 555th provided badly needed aircraft control and surveillance services. On 31 December 1945, the four companies of the 555th became the 601st TCS, 602nd TCS, 603rd TCS, and 604th TCS. The 601st TCS, still active under the 601st TCW today, was activated at Simmershausen,
Germany. These newly formed units were assigned to the 501st Tactical Control Group and, from these fundamental and rudimentary beginnings, the TAGS system has become what is today.

After undergoing a series of relocations, changes of assignment, and inactivations/activations, the four squadrons were assigned to USAFE (United States Air Forces in Europe) by 1 July 1948; just in time to take part in the Berlin airlift. These radar units helped guide air transports along air routes to Berlin and were awarded the Medal for Humane Action for their efforts. On 1 December 1948, each of the four tactical control squadrons was designated an Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron (AC&WS). Seven months later, on 10 June 1949, the AC&WS elements were once again assigned to the 501st TCG. For the next four years, things remained relatively stable with the exception of the addition of several detachments to the squadrons.

On 1 July 1955, the 501st and 526th TCGs merged to form the Tactical Control Wing, Provisional. In all, this consolidation process brought a number of elements together to form Twelfth Air Force's tactical control system. These included two tactical control squadrons (the 897th TCS and 619th TCS), six aircraft control and warning squadrons (the 601st AC&WS, 602nd AC&WS, 603rd AC&WS, 604th AC&WS, 615th AC&WS, and 616th AC&WS), and three Shoran Beacon Squadrons (the 3rd, 6th, and 7th Shoran Beacons). The Tactical Control Wing, Provisional, was created as a tentative measure designed to improve the effectiveness of the radar and aircraft control organizations within Twelfth Air Force. After operating as a provisional wing for two years, the unit had ample opportunity to determine the most suitable type of organization for the effective accomplishment of the USAFE tactical control mission. Accordingly, on 18 December 1957, this tentative status was dropped and the unit was designated the 501st Tactical Control Wing. Finally, on 18 November 1960, the 501st TCW merged with the 86th Fighter Interceptor Wing to form the 86th Air Division (Defense). For the next five years the various TACS elements under the 86th Air Division went through a series of relocations, activations, inactivations and redesignations.

Going into 1977, the 609th TCS and its two subordinate flights were declared operationally ready on 1 February. Also, yet another TACS milestone was reached on 22 March 1977, when the 603rd TCS received the first two "E" model TPS-43 radars. After initial checkout at the 603rd TCS, one of the TPS-43Es was sent to the 601st TCS on 22 April 1977. Four days later a TPS-43E radar was used for the first time in an exercise as the 601st TCS participated in Certain Fighter. Eventually, all wing mobile radar units would receive the TPS-43E radar set. Indeed, on 4 October 1977, the 603rd TCS started an extensive four week training program for the final 13 newly arrived TPS-43E radars. Each unit in the wing practiced setting up their own radar at the 603rd's technical site in Mehlingen. This period proved to be a busy time for the 603rd TCS which, along with the 615th and 616th AC&WS, participated in an E-3A AWACS demonstration in November and December 1977. The purpose of this demonstration, which proved to be very impressive to NATO officials who observed the activity, was to advertise the advanced capabilities of the E-3A to provide improved air surveillance for the European theater and its ability to down-link data through the ground environment system. The 603rd TCS deployed to Gruenstadt from 9 November through 15 December to support this demonstration. In several other TAGS related events during the year, on 14 November 1977, the 626th and 636th TCFs moved off Carl Shurz Kaserne to a location on top of the Bremerhaven City Dump at Muellplatz Grauer Wall, just down the road from their previous site. They would operate here, literally surrounded by garbage, for the next three years. Also, on 1
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TPS-43E activity dominated the early months of 1978. On 20 January, the 606th TCS became the last CRP to receive the new radar set and several months later, on 31 March 1978, the remaining eight TPS-43Es stored at the 603rd TCS were released to the gaining FACPs. At this time, only two wing units still operated the TPS-44—the 626th and 636th TCFs. However, on 8 May 1978, TPS-43E radar sets became operational at the last two FACPs. This activity, was to advertise the advanced capabilities of the E-3A to provide improved air surveillance for the European theater and its ability to down-link data through the ground environment system. The 603rd TCS deployed to Gruenstadt from 9 November through 15 December to support this demonstration. In several other TAGS related events during the year, on 14 November 1977, the 626th and 636th TCFs moved off Carl Shurz Kaserne to a location on top of the Bremerhaven City Dump at Muellplatz Grauer Wall, just down the road from their previous site. They would operate here, literally surrounded by garbage, for the next three years. Also, on 1 December 1977, the 636th TCP controlled its first mission, a sortie of two F-llls out of RAF Lakenheath, England. However, like the other two newly activated units, they would not be fully operational for several months.

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operational "firsts" also highlighted 1978. The 629th TCF assisted the 636th TCF in its first practice deployment from 4 through 7 January 1978 and the 606th TCS controlled its first practice intercept several weeks later on 2 February. The intercept involved F-15 aircraft from Bitburg AFB. On 22 March 1978, the 606th TCS, 626th TCF, and 636th TCF officially came on line as operational units and were declared fully operationally ready. Their sister radar units in 2 ATAF had previously achieved the same status on 1 February 1977. Also, in another key development, a change of command ceremony was held on 31 December 1978 which passed control and ownership of the Wasserkuppe 412L fixed radar site from the wing to the German Air Force. This concluded the transfer of various 4 ATAF 412L sites to the Germans that had been planned since 1959. On the next day, the 616th AC&WS was officially inactivated. Since the 606th AC&WS was previously inactivated and the Doebraberg site turned over to the GAF on 1 July 1974, only the 615th AC&WS fixed 412L radar site at Boerfink remained assigned to the wing. The remaining five fixed radar sites were now owned and operated by the German Air Force.

Next, a number of changes in terms of unit designations and their locations were identified and became effective 1 June 1985. First, the USAF Clinic was relieved from assignment to the 601st TCW and further assigned to the 66th ECW. Secondly, both the 601st TCW and the 52nd TFW at Spangdahlem were relieved from assignment to Seventeenth Air Force and further assigned to the 65th Air Division. Other units assigned to the 65th Air Division included headquarters 601st Air Support Operations Group (ASOG) at Frankfurt, and headquarters 602nd ASOG at Mohringen, which were relieved from assignment to the 601st TCW. Up until 1 May 1985 both the 601st ASOG and the 602nd ASOG were designated headquarters 601st and 602nd ASOCGs respectively. Next, the 7201st Comptroller Squadron at Sembach AB was relieved from assignment to the 601st TCW and further assigned to the 66th ECW. Moving along, the 601st TCS at Preum, the 603rd TCS at Sembach, 615th AC&WS at Neubruecke, the 600th TCG at Basdahl, and the 609th TCS at Hessisch-Qldendorf, were all relieved from assignment to the 601st TCG and further assigned to the 601st TCW. As one could readily see, the switchover was entirely on paper as the old units just received new designations. Also, later in the month, it was learned that, effective 15 May 1985, the 601st TASS commander's staff would be dissolved. Those responsibilities normally performed by the TASS commander's staff were transferred to other squadrons assigned to the 601st TCW. For instance all matters dealing with helicopter operations were transferred to the 601st TASS commander. Other matters that dealt with helicopter maintenance or jet engine maintenance would be referred to the 601st CAMS effective this date. Effective 8 April 1985, the 601st TASS deputy commander for operations and all its subordinate staff agencies were absorbed into other areas under the 601st TCW.

In addition to those changes mentioned above, still others were underfoot regarding a general TAGS drawdown in the Central Region. Specifically, in order to meet the Fiscal Year (FY) 1985 and 1986 Department of Defense budget restrictions, the Air Staff directed the reduction of the mobile TAGS by two CRPs and four FACPs in two phases. Phase I resulted in the 1 June 1985 inactivation of the 619th TCF located at Grafenwoehr and the 1 August 1985 inactivation of the 602nd TCS at Turkheim and the 632nd TCF located at Schwelentrup. The second phase of this draw down resulted in the 1 October 1986 inactivation of the 603rd TCS at Mehlingen, the 636th TCF and the 621st TCF at Wanna and Wiesbaden, respectively. In another area of the TAGS drawdown interest, was the newly designated Operating Location C, 601st TCW. The 601st TCW, OL-C was designated and organized at Sembach AB on 1 February 1986, to provide
603rd AC&WS / 603rd TCS

603rd Tactical Control Squadron, Dec 1945 - Dec 1948
603rd Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron, Dec 1948 - June 1965
603rd Tactical Control Squadron, June 1973 - Sep 1986
603rd ACWRON Command Histories

603rd AC & W Squadron

1945
(Source: 31st Fighter Wing PAO)
The 603rd Air Control Squadron was officially activated on Dec. 31, 1945 as the 603rd Tactical Control Squadron. The unit was under the operation control of the 501st Tactical Control Group.

On May 25, 1948 the unit was realigned to report to the 7400th Air Force Communications Wing.

On Dec. 1, 1948 it was redesignated 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 of 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. On June 10, 1949 the 603rd realigned under the 501st Aircraft Control and Warning Group and on Nov. 18, 1960 it was again realigned under the 86th Air Division where it remained until it was once again inactivated on June 25, 1965.

Redesignated 603rd Tactical Control Squadron on June 29, 1973, the unit was again officially reactivated, this time subordinate to the 601st Tactical Control Group. During the next 10 years the 603rd distinguished itself by providing high quality radar coverage and command and control functions both in-garrison and during NATO exercises.

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(Source: PLANTER, 603rd Tactical Control Squadron, 1947)
603rd Tactical Control Squadron

The 603rd TCS was activated on 31 December 1946 at Neustadt an der Aisch, a small German town northwest of Bad Windsheim in Bavaria. The squadron was formed from Company "A," 555th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion which had served (along with the rest of the 555th) in the ETO as part of the IX Tactical Air Command in support of First US Army.

603rd TCS Yearbook, 1947
During WWII, Signal Air Warning Battalions operated the Ground Radar and Forward Director posts that controlled Fighter Bomber Groups. Each Tactical Air Command (TAC) operated a Fighter Control Center (FCC) and a number of Fighter Groups. The Forward Director Posts of the SAW Battalions reported into their own FCC and the FCC’s were interconnected and had overlapped coverage. The TAC’s were under the command of the Ninth Air Force. The SAW battalions were under the command of their respective TAC’s. The FDP's vectored the fighters to the target and guided them back to their home base or emergency landing field.

The 603rd TCS was one of several tactical control units under the 501st Tactical Control Group.

In Jan 1947, a detachment of the 850th Avn Engr Bn arrived to excavate and to build permanent buildings to house operations, radar and the V.H.F.

In June 1947, the Squadron deactivates - personnel are sent to join the 601st, 602nd and 604th TCS’ - a detachment remains in Neustadt to continue operations and is designated, Planter Detachment, 604th TCS.

In July 1947, the Planter detachment is disbanded.

On May 25, 1948 the unit is reactivated at Hof, Germany and assigned to the 7400th Air Force Communications Wing.

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Its mission was to provide early warning radar and direction-finding network to support tactical air operations of USAFE and to provide navigational aids to friendly aircraft.

On June 10, 1949 the 603rd is realigned under the 501st Aircraft Control and Warning Group.

In April 1950, the 603rd is relocated to Giebelstadt, Germany.

In November 1952, a detachment of the 603rd is assigned to Hof.

In July 1956, the 603rd AC&W Sqdn is moved again, this time taking up shop at Langerkopf, Germany, near Pirmasens.

Det 1, 603rd AC&WS is at Hof (?)
Det 2, 603rd AC&WS is at Giebelstadt (?)
Det 3, 603rd AC&WS is at Bann (near Kindsbach) (?)

On Nov. 18, 1960 the squadron is again realigned, this time under the 86th Air Division where it
remains until it is inactivated on June 25, 1965.

Redesignated 603rd Tactical Control Squadron on June 29, 1973, the unit is again officially reactivated, this time subordinate to the 601st Tactical Control Group.

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1963
(Source: Email from Gary Merkel, 12th RRS Yahoo Group)
Noticed you have Det 2, 603rd AC&WS being located at Giebelstadt, they may have been there for awhile . . . they were a mobile unit and their headquarters was at Pforzheim AS, they were there while the 12th RRS was there and into some of the time that the 2060th RRS was active. (The 12th RRS was replaced by the 2060th RRS in 1962.) They left shortly before I arrived in Pforzheim in late 1963.

Air Force Order of Battle
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Updated:

Sources