

2 COMMUNICATIONS GROUP



MISSION

The mission of the 2 Communications Group was to install, operate and maintain all communications facilities and services required. The Group installed cables required for the permanent air bases and maintained a constant check on all telephone, teletype and radio communications. During maneuvers, the Group maintained connections between command posts and the distant outposts.

LINEAGE

2 Communications Group

STATIONS

Landsberg, Germany

Landstuhl (Ramstein, Germany), 10 Apr 1953-1 Jul 1962

ASSIGNMENTS

Twelfth Air Force

United States Air Forces in Europe, 15 Dec 1957

Seventeenth Air Force, Nov 1959

COMMANDERS

Col William H. Lyle

Col Glenn R. Kraus

Col Joseph C. Dillow, Aug 1955

Col William T. Judkins, 30 Jul 1959

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

USAFE General Order Number 79 activated the 2d Communications Group. People for the group come from resources available to Headquarters, Twelfth Air Force, and the group headquarters was established at Landsberg Air Base, Germany.

To perform its mission, the 2d Communications Group was initially assigned four subordinate units: The 1st Radio Relay, 4th Communications, 13th and 19th Communications Construction Squadrons. They were units with a reputation; units steeped in communications know-how, for they had supported combat teams and even armies during World War II.

The 2d Communications Group began participation in some of its first directed field exercises. An early exercise of significance was Counter Thrust II in April 1954. Called upon to install a carrier-loaded spiral-four cable system between Kaiserslautern, Germany and the maneuver area, more spiral-four cable was used than in any previous exercise. Eleven-hundred reels of spiral-four cable were used. Conservative estimates indicated that if group participation in

Counter Thrust II had not been limited, fourteen-hundred fifty reels might have been used. Also, for the first time under actual field conditions, the Siemens UHF/PPM (UHF/Pulse Position Modulation) radio relay equipment was used. Installation of one link between Siegelbach, Germany and the maneuver area proved the equipment practical and satisfactory.

The construction of a 2d Communications Group Technical Training School was begun in 1954. A 20x80-foot prefabricated building, it was to house classes in military ground training, microwave fundamentals, and teletype procedures.

Through June 1955, the group participated in Operations Beeline, Sky-High, Sting Ray, Servex I, Vapor Trail II, and Exercise Carte Blanche. Carte Blanche, a field maneuver, saw the group operate under field conditions in many areas, adding teletype and speech circuits to existing facilities; installing systems between other air bases and deployment areas; and maintaining round-the-clock operation of the Kindsbach Communications Center.

A fire warning system was completed at the Chize Ammunition Depot, France, where 1,068 poles with anchors and guys were installed, over 30 miles of open wire and 26,000 feet of cable were strung and laid, and 38 terminals, 196 telephone jacks and protectors installed.

Further expansion was accomplished by the 2d Communications Group and its units at Hahn Air Base, where a complete facility survey was done; at Birkenfeld, where 50,000 feet of 40-pair cable and 80,000 feet of 26-pair cable was rehabilitated; at Metz, France, where new 75-foot poles were set in solid rock; and at Dreux Air Base, France, where new switchboard facilities were installed.

Expansion of communications facilities continued during 1955 of Twelfth Air Force bases in France - where telephone facilities for 150 trailer units were provided and outside telephone plants were started; at Sembach, where keying and communications lines were installed from tower to GCA units; at Ramstein, where telephone facilities were provided for 3 new billets. In addition, an AN/TRC circuit was installed between Kindsbach and Loan Air Base, and the microwave system in being was re-engineered.

During the last 6 months of 1956, the 2d Communications Group and its units were faced with rehabilitation and expansion problems throughout Germany and France. By direction of Twelfth Air Force, many communications projects were accomplished from Ramstein itself to Fort Jeanne D'Arc in Metz, France, and in locations such as Kindsbach, Marktheidenfeld, Würzburg, Giebelstadt, Rothwesten, Bambergerhof, Zweibrücken and Spangdahlem, Germany. Community work was continued at Mackenbach, Germany, where 10 truckloads of fill dirt were taken to level off the village soccer field, and at Bonn, Germany, where 1,000 feet of trench was dug to facilitate burying of water and sewage pipes and school play areas were leveled.

During early 1957, the 2d Communications Group participated in two major command post exercises. The first of these, Exercise Lion Noir, involved the majority of all NATO forces. Communications support was furnished the 7th Army field units of Bad Kreuznach, Germany.

To test its own alert notification and convoy formation procedures, the 2d Communications Group conducted an exercise of its own on 2 May 1957. Called a mobility exercise, it pinpointed lack of fast dispersal procedures for vehicles and inadequate staging areas for convoy formations. As a result, three special convoy formation areas were tentatively selected to handle fast, purposeful dispersal and formation of communications vehicles.

On 10 October 1957, the 2d Communications Group Technical Control Facility was formed. Its purpose was to consolidate technical control functions previously done by several units.

The group's expansion, particularly during the last six months of 1957 was tremendous, both from personnel-strength and area-of-responsibility standpoints. As a result, group planners formulated and sent to higher headquarters a proposed reorganization of the group into a wing structure. Approved by Headquarters, USAFE, the plan was forwarded to USAF for possible final approval.

On 15 December 1957, the 2d Communications Group reverted from Twelfth Air Force to direct assignment to Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe. In the midst of this reorganization, pursuit of other projects and communications construction continued at a fast pace. In the latter half of 1957, 290,609 feet of cable was installed; 243,830 feet of trench was dug, 63 poles placed; 5 antennas and 7 towers installed. Outside cable plants were completed at Wiesbaden, Giebelstadt, Kitzingen, Fürstenfeldbruck and Kaufhusen, Germany.

Construction continued during the first half of 1958 and consisted of expansion and modernization of outside telephone plants at various USAFE stations. In addition, 'Project Caravan'; the installation of telephone facilities in 8 trailer parks on bases in France, which was started in 1955 was completed.

For Exercise Sabre Hawk and Lion Bleu, the USAFE (ADVON) Combat Operations Center communications were set up by the group at various field locations. Exercise Full Play primarily demanded monitoring activities from the group since Army units supplied all communications at field locations during the exercise.

International tension brought the resources of the 2d Communications Group into full play in July 1958 as the crisis in Lebanon received world-wide attention. Urgent requests for antenna-supporting structures as well as antenna supplies were received by the group. Requests for immediate communications surveys were also received. Rhombic antennas, both receiving and transmitting, were required overnight, and were in place in time to support USAFE communications requirements during the Lebanon crisis.

In October 1958, the group accomplished a survey of communications requirements at Ankara, Turkey, in support of a proposed flight service center. It was determined that AN/TRC-24 radio sets utilizing CF-1 and CF-2 carrier equipment would accomplish the job. Subsequently, on 8-11

December 1958, airmen and 67,441 pounds of Equipment were airlifted in two C-124s from Ramstein to Ankara.

Between July and December 1958, many changes occurred in the microwave and AN/TRC radio relay systems. Increases in channelization were made, AN/TRC-1 was replaced in certain areas with double AN/TRC-24 systems, towers were extended, phase-out of AN/TRC-1 operating locations was made and many circuits rerouted over microwave facilities. These changes, in many instances, doubled the communications capability, and improved flexibility. This resulted in an increase of circuit hours committed to operate from 463,608 to 583,488 and involved coordination and accomplishment of approximately 350 separate circuit actions.

September 1959 brought Exercise Side Step. During this exercise, the 2d Communications Groups Central Control Facility acted as the control agency for all communications services of the group and as an exercise teletype-communications link between the group and subordinate units. Deliberate efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to overload the radio control system in order to simulate wartime conditions.

Also in September 1959, \$19,000 was allocated for improvement of the Base Communications Center. Improvements were to consist of expansion of available floor space and overall modernization of the facility. This communications center is to serve as a command communications hub of the entire USAFE Command Teletype Network.

In February 1960, the group participated in several exercises. Exercise Ski Jump was conducted in cooperation with the US European Command in order to test movement plans.

The 2d Communications Group was directed by Seventeenth Air Force to conduct a communications center survey of all communications facilities on the European continent. Its purpose was to consolidate all communications centers within the group. Two teams were dispatched from the group headquarters and units to conduct this survey. Fifty-three communications centers were scrutinized, and survey teams compiled detailed information for possible consolidation of the centers. This plan was forwarded to Seventeenth Air Force for consideration.

In the summer of 1960, the Congo crisis erupted. 2d Communications Group single-sideband radio teams were deployed to the Congo to support airlift operations. These teams were formed from personnel of the 604th Communications Squadron. In addition to their primary mission, they provided communications to outlying missionaries and 'Ham' operators throughout the Congo. Major sites of operation were Leopoldville, Entebbe, and Kindu.

The 2nd Communications Group Central Control Facility at Ramstein AB, Germany, in its new function as the USAFE Central Control Facility (CCF), has become the nerve center of the entire U.S. Air Force radio relay system in Europe. This development is the result of an order issued by Headquarters United States Air Forces Europe in an effort effectively to consolidate its vast

radio-relay communications system. When the full significance of the USAFE action was realized as added authorities and responsibilities were outlined in the resulting correspondence, the need for internal and external reorganization became evident. To consolidate and centralize control functions further a proposal was approved by USAFE commander to make the area control facilities at Kindsbach, Germany and Vernou, France detachments one and two, respectively, of Headquarters 2nd Communications Group, operational direction to be exercised by USAFE Central Control Facility. In addition, the 3rd Communications Group in the United Kingdom was directed to establish an area control at Hillingdon and necessary sub-controls for controlling the radio relay system in Britain, with overall operational control also vested in USAFE Central Control Facility.

The magnitude of this huge communications complex can best be realized when described in figures: It includes nearly 200 sites and operating locations extending from Italy through West Germany, France and Belgium to the United Kingdom. The centralization of control in USAFE Central Control Facility provides the USAFE commander and the commander of the 2nd Communications Group with an effective medium for obtaining instantaneous information on any of the 1,100 circuits and 125 links in the system. The Central Control Facility also functions as the distribution agency for all permanent, temporary and maneuver, circuit and link-install, cease and rearrange authorities received from Headquarters USAFE. This distribution is made to all headquarters and bases concerned, and in many cases coordinated with the U.S. Army signal agency at Heidelberg, by the fastest means available.

The construction of a 2d Communications Group Technical Training School was also begun during this period. A 20x80-foot prefabricated building, it was to house classes in military ground training, microwave fundamentals, and teletype procedures.

As the Christmas season approached during 1954, the 2d Communications Group made an outstanding gesture toward good community relations, as, on Dec 17, several hundred members of the group drove to Nussbach, Germany, where they sponsored a Christmas party for the children. Bags of assorted candies, fruits, nuts, dates and chewing gum were distributed to the village children. Every child between the ages of one and sixteen was given a pair of shoes. In appreciation of this Yuletide gesture, the Bürgermeister of Nussbuch sent a letter of thanks to the 2d Communications Group Chaplain.

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Colonel Joseph C. Dillow replaced Colonel Glenn R. Kraus as the Group Commander in August, 1955. Expansion of communications facilities continued during 1955 of Twelfth Air Force bases in France - where telephone facilities for 150 trailer units were provided and outside telephone plants were started; at Sembach, where keying and communications lines were installed from tower to GCA units; at Ramstein, where telephone facilities were provided for 3 new billets. In addition, an AN/TRC circuit was installed between Kindsbach and Loan Air Base, and the microwave system in being was re-engineered.

Emphasis on community relations gained new impetus during this first half of 1956. The 2d Communications Group became well known for its good-will visits and gifts to local institutions and homes of the needy and afflicted. In addition, construction units of the group furnished assistance to local communities in water, and drainage systems. At Nanzweiler, Obermohr and Steinwenden alone, ditch-digging machines dug over 2,210 meters of ditch for drainage systems. This "Help-Your-Neighbor" policy was not restricted to civilian villages only, but was also extended to local and remote military units.

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Big Deer exercised mobile capabilities of USAFE (ADVON) with a pre-exercise test of communications (Little Deer). Since the latter exercises were limited in scope, few circuits were involved.

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With the group's assignment to USAFE, its mission statement also changed. USAFE (ADVON) defined this mission of the 2d Communications Group as follows:

'To furnish communications support to USAFE, to include installation, operation and maintenance of tactical and fixed telecommunications facilities. . . In addition . . . will establish telecommunications facilities in support of headquarters above wing level . . . non-AF or allied units (support) will be in accordance with policies (of) . . . the Deputy Chief of Staff, Communications.

And so, complete with a realigned mission, the 2d Communications Group passed into the new year of 1958 still in the process of reorganization.

Construction continued during the first half of 1958 and consisted of expansion and modernization of outside telephone plants at various USAFE stations. In addition, 'Project Caravan' (installation of telephone facilities in 8 trailer parks on bases in France) which was started in 1955 was completed.

Operational units of the 2d Communications Group saw activity in the field again as they participated in 3 major exercises.

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In November 1959, the 2d Communications Group was removed from direct USAFE control and assigned to Seventeenth Air Force.

Also in December 1959, the information program of the Group forged ahead, as the first issue of the group magazine came off the press. Initially called News and Views, it was later renamed The Comm Net after an extensive 'Name-the-Magazine' contest.

January 1960 saw the creation of incentive for the maintenance of morale and leadership within the group structure. A morale leadership program was instituted involving trophies to be

awarded units with 'high' and 'low' standings based on number of accidents, bad checks, reenlistment rates, etc.

In February 1960, the group participated in several exercises. Exercise Ski Jump was conducted in cooperation with the US European Command in order to test movement plans.

In July 1960, an award program was instituted which had as its goal the attainment of high operational efficiency by operating locations assigned to the 2d Communications Group. Called the Outstanding Pennant Award, it consisted of the awarding of pennants to Operating Locations on a quarterly basis, based on (1) Systems Performance, (2) Ground Safety, (3) Morale Leadership, (4) OJT Effectiveness, (5) Site Appearance and improvement efforts and (6) Community Relations. Winning sites fly pennants from sunrise to sundown below the United States flag.

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Sources

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