

114th COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT

LINEAGE

114 Information Systems Flight

STATIONS

Sioux Falls, SD

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Ed Kunkel, #1986

Maj Dale A. Faeth

Maj. Brent Post

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The current mission of the 114th Communications Flight (CF) is to provide management of all systems processing voice, word, data, and image for the 114th Fighter Wing. The structure of the present 114 CF consists of four sections, 11 full-time technicians, and 42 guard members, compared to one section, two technicians, and eight guard members of the original Comm Flt, started in the 1950s.

The Comm Flt was originally located in one room in a corner of Base Operations. This one

room facility housed torn-tape teletype and off-line encode /decode cryptographic equipment. With the increased responsibility of providing state-of-the-art Communications - Computer Command and Control services and the increase in manpower, an upgrade in workspace precipitated the move to the Duke Corning Composite facility in 1993. This modern facility houses the Base Network Control Center (BNCC), Small Computer Training area, Communications/ Computer Maintenance, Base telephone switch and cable plant, Customer Support, and Plans and Implementation offices.

The first full-time technician hired in 1951 was Robert H. Niblick. During the Korean Conflict Bob was activated and sent to Ellsworth AFB. Then, in 1963, the full-time staff doubled with the hiring of Jerry L. Snyder. Bob usually handled maintenance duties (radios and telephones) while Jerry focused on the operational and administrative duties. Both were extremely skilled technicians whose personalities contributed tremendously to unit morale. Through the years they were responsible for the very high personnel retention rates of unit members. Bob Niblick held the rank of Senior Master Sergeant for 27 years.

As flying missions changed, so too did the responsibilities and staffing of the Comm Flt. During the Air Defense days, personnel were often called in to process messages during off-duty hours. In 1970, as the FG was assigned to Tactical Air Command (TAG), we had grown to 29 members with Warren Roske as commander and were assigned to the Air Force Communications Service (AFCS). During this time, the first Vietnam Era Veterans were joining. These people played an active role in development of the CF and 114th FG as part of the Total Force.

As flying missions and organizations grew and matured, technological advances were being made in the area of communications. The ASR-28 teletype was introduced in the 1960s. This advancement meant that personnel no longer had to encode/decode messages manually. In the 1970s improvements were made to provide better communications capabilities. Among them were new telephone switching equipment and underground cable systems. The Comm Center replaced the teletype system with a Univac DCT-1000 card and narrative message computer system. This was the beginning of the computer age for the Comm Flt.

AFCS started more thorough inspections of mobility, operations, maintenance, administration, and personnel. Through the years CF has performed extremely well, receiving many Excellent and Outstanding ratings. In 1986 the unit received the Outstanding Air National Guard Communications Flight award.

The 1980s saw an expansion of the activities started in the 1970s. In 1985 the unit name changed to the Information Systems Flight with more positions added. The flight consisted of two elements, Collocated Operating Base (COB) and Base Support Element (BSE). COB was responsible for communications support at deployed bases in Norway, Belgium, England, Panama, California, Alaska, Wisconsin and locally.

Data Processing became part of the Comm Flt. They were responsible for providing all host base computer service to the 114FG. They started out as part of Base Supply with an IBM 407 computer. System and user input was done by way of punched cards. Glenn (Hoot) Gibson was

the first technician. DP then became part of the Comptrollers shop at the old "North End". A Honeywell 716 was in-stalled for on-line input from Supply, Accounting and Personnel. In 1986 Data moved to building #61 where a Sperry 11 was in-stalled. Punch cards were discarded in favor of on-line editing. At its peak, 125 terminals were connected to the Sperry 11 network for on-line in-put.

Again in 1987 reorganization occurred with the COB element becoming the Comm Fit with 19 people. Visual Information (VI) and Information Management (IM) merged with the BSE to form the 43 person Mission Support Flight (MSF).

Visual Information (VI), before settling in building #63 in 1988, was located in various buildings around the base. The first full-time technician was Elmer Ibis. VI equipment has seen technological changes as well. These changes range from cameras that used 4" x 5" film to video, graphics, and computerized photo systems and equipment.

IM started out as Administrative Support for the Command function with Bill Flood and Beverly Nielson as the first full-time technicians assigned. In 1959 this function moved to their new offices in building #60. The original state-of-the-art equipment consisted of manual Remington typewriters and the base's only copy machine. Technology strikes again, changing the way business is done. Now equipment includes small computers, high speed copiers, facsimile machines, Electronic Mail (E-mail), automated forms applications, and Base Central Libraries on compact discs (CD-ROM). Through the years this function has been indispensable because of all the support provided to various commanders, visiting inspection teams, and guidance on records management, publications, and files systems.

The 1980s also saw the arrival of the small computer. This technological wonder would forever change the way the SDANG operates. The MSF and CF would become responsible for small computer operations, training, maintenance, and administration.

The 1990s have been characterized by technological change, organization change, and a new facility. All the changes are driven by digital electronic advancement, downsizing of the military, and the desire to serve the communications/computer users better. The military, like the rest of society, started using small computers to do more and more work. The SDANG now has over 350 small computers to perform various operations. The Sperry 11 network was replaced by a fiber optic Banyan Vines Local Area Network. Over 250 small computers are connected to this network. The 20 person Comm Fit was disbanded in 1993. The MSF personnel, along with the Comm Fit personnel, became the new Communications Flight. The Comm Fit now has four sections. Systems Management supervises operations and maintenance. Customer Support provides a one-stop shop where any Comm services may be requested. Visual Information provides still photo, video, graphics, and combat camera services. Plans and Implementation acquires and implements the installation of systems equipment and services, as well as planning for the future.

The future is very bright for the Comm Fit. New technologies are the source of expanding services. Closed circuit TV will provide training through satellite downlink. Televideo conferencing will be accessible at the desktop computer. Client/Server data systems via the

LAN will provide improved data collection and report distribution to users. Photos will be taken with Compact Disc cameras and printed immediately from the computer. Computers will also be used to edit video.

The Communications Flight looks forward to the challenges that technology and the future will provide. We are confident in what the future will bring based on our past performance and our desire to do well.

The communications section moved into a corner of the new operations building during the mid fifties. The one room facility housed the torn tape teletype equipment and off line cryptographic equipment. The lack of emphasis on security was apparent by the existence of several windows in an area where a substantial amount of classified material was processed and stored. The eight guardsmen and two technicians were inadequate to provide 24 hour service during deployments so additional individuals from other base units were temporarily assigned to it.

Although limited radios were available on base the greatest workload was within the communications center. The introduction of the ASR-28 teletype and one time tape, which was synchronized with the other end for message coding, were viewed as major technological advances. Previous to its installation messages were decoded after their receipt on base with it being difficult and terribly time consuming. SMSgt Niblick recalls an incident when a security inspector arrived unknowingly to anyone on base because the notification message of the visit had not been decoded!

Further equipment modifications were made and staff increases evolved coincidental with the flying mission. Message traffic increased as the flying mission expanded. Because the mission was active air defense individuals were periodically called at home during the evening hours to activate the communications center for high priority messages. The unit was one of several others, including flying units and radar sites, on a communications network throughout the Midwest with each location receiving message traffic for all others as well as their own.

As the base was reassigned to the Tactical Air Command the communications flight was similarly reassigned to the Air Force Communications Command (AFCC) gaining federal recognition on May 23, 1970. Since then virtually all technical direction and inspections have been provided or conducted by AFCC in coordination with TAC and the National Guard Bureau. Unit manning for all air guard communications units which provided on base communications support was also established at 29.

Throughout the seventies additional communications changes or improvements were made. Improvements to the base telephone system included new switching equipment and conversion from overhead line to underground cable. Radio and cryptographic equipment was modernized as well. In 1975 the coding/decoding of teletype messages was converted to an entirely electronic process rather than with previous inefficient paper tape equipment. Shortly thereafter

the UNIVAC DCT-1000 was installed as the first magnetic tape teletype equipment in the unit. The increased message processing capability both for transmission and reception as well as operators efficiency was significant. While providing communications support to the 114th Tactical Fighter Group mobility was increasingly emphasized. Complete equipment inventories, test equipment availability, packaging, and personal protective equipment were regularly reviewed in relation to changing plans and evaluated during local simulated exercises or during deployments.

The eighties have been dominated with remodeling, reorganizing, inspections, and deployments. Equipment modernization was also completed with the Class C telephone system, which was installed in 1961, expanded to 200 lines. The base telephone system was improved again during early 1986 with a modern electronic switch controlled by a computerized system and programmable telephone instruments. Responsibility for data processing and the simultaneous change in title to the 114th Information Systems Flight was made during 1985.

The communications mission was clarified with the addition of ten individuals and a subdivision into a Collocated Operating Base (COB) and a Base Support Element (BSE). For the first time individuals were assigned to a specific mobility position and knew that should mobilization occur they would deploy to a specific location and be responsible for a specific mission. Others were aware that their role during mobilization was to continue providing communications support at Joe Foss Field. The entire flight or individual members have participated in deployments to Wyoming, Michigan, Volk Field, Alaska, Norway, Panama, and England. Personnel have provided effective communications support to both United States and allied forces during those deployments.

Compared to earlier days inspections are more comprehensive and technical in nature. Humorous incidents have occurred such as when MSgt Joe Winfree, an Air Force advisor, backed into an antenna pole while transporting an AFCC inspector who later complained of "whiplash" and could not conduct an aggressive inspection. SMSgt Snyder feels recent inspectors appreciate the infrequent formations called during inspections which had previously interrupted their work. Five formations each day had been common and caused one senior inspector to comment, "You stood more formations this weekend than I've stood in my whole career!" Favorable inspection results and mission performance are the best indicators of the effective communication support provided by the 114th Information Systems Flight and is a tribute to its members.

The 114th Communications Flight provided communications and computer support for the SDANG. Significant accomplishments for the 114th CF in 2010 included completion of the allied support for the planned Combat Information Transport System network fiber optic upgrade, deployment of multi-function printers in accordance with the Digital Print Initiative, upgrade to the Windows Vista operating system for networked computers, submission of the Certification and Accreditation package to AFNIC for the Authority to Operate for the SIPR Net and completion of the certification for the Video Teleconferencing System.

THE 114TH COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT provides communications and computers in

support of the SDANG. Several of their accomplishments in 2011 were significant. They included personnel and communication support to flood relief missions of the SDNG joint task forces. The network control center completed an upgrade as part of the standardization of all ANG units. A new telephone switch was installed meeting increased requirements and providing voice-over -internet protocol capability. The network hardware was completely upgraded to current gigabit standards. The Air Force Network Integration Center conducted an Information Assurance Assessment and Assistance Program assessment determining the program to be satisfactory. The base's computers were migrated to the Windows 7 operating system. The base SIPTNet received a full authority to operate from AFNIC. Final preparations were completed for the inside plant and outside plant projects that will provide a complete replacement and upgrade of the base network's fiber optic and copper cabling. 2011 was a banner year for the flight.

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Sources