

223rd COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON



LINEAGE

Redesignated 223rd Combat Communications Squadron
Redesignated 223rd Combat Information Systems Squadron, 1 Jul 1985
Redesignated 223rd Combat Communications Squadron
Inactivated

STATIONS

Hot Springs, AR

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

In September, the 189th Communications Flight trained with the 223rd Combat Communications Squadron in Hot Springs, AR. The 223rd CCS is part of the 254th Combat Communications Group in Garland, TX. The group has the ability to provide tactical communication anywhere,

operating under field conditions. The weekend exercise consisted of establishing a radio relay system between Hot Springs and Garland. The field exercise resulted from a recommendation by the National Guard Bureau that all National Guard communication flights familiarize themselves with tactical communications procedures.

Late winter, 1997, the word went out for emergency assistance in the wake of tornadoes that ripped through Arkansas 1 Mar. Members of the Arkansas Air National Guard answered the call. Air Guard members worked side-by-side with the Army Guard to assist the victims of the tornado-ravaged areas. Members of the 223rd Combat Communications Squadron were tasked to provide communications, portable lighting and generators in several areas of the state. The 189th Civil Engineers set up tents at two locations to be used as temporary lodging and showers for residents of the Sardis area. "They were glad to have the Guard there," he said. "The tornado victims were so grateful they wanted to buy our lunch - or put gas in the truck! Of course we didn't accept their offers, but it was gratifying just to know we were able to help. I only wish we could have done more.

The 223rd Combat Communications Squadron, located at the Hot Springs Memorial Airport, is the third largest unit in the Arkansas Air National Guard whose unit's 120 highly trained men and women are dedicated to providing the highest quality tactical communications and computer systems capability to the combatant commanders of the numbered Air Forces, under all conditions, worldwide. The unit also provides communications, transportation assets, and/or power generation support to preserve the peace, order and safety of the general public, as directed by the governor during times of emergency operations. The 223rd Combat Communications Squadron witnessed many milestones in 2004 as the unit deployed multiple personnel throughout the year, while simultaneously undergoing mission conversion to a new communications equipment system called Theater Deployable Communications. The TDC systems replace over 50 percent of the older, heavy communications shelters with rack mounted transit-cased gear that is easily scalable, providing the combatant commander quicker, more agile communications capability. In close partnership with our active duty counterparts, unit members blended as Total Force partners in several initiatives during 2004. Seven members of the 223 CBCS are in their third year of a long-term deployment Tyndall AFB, Fla., providing communications management and computer systems support. Throughout the year, several members deployed to various locations including Barksdale AFB, La., Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., Hurlburt Field, FL, Nellis AFB, NV., and throughout the state of Arkansas supporting a variety of communications initiatives.

The 223 CBCS held two separate Annual Training events during Fiscal Year 2004. In March, personnel deployed for two weeks to Tyndall AFB, FL., for specialized training in the new Theater Deployable Communications system. Building on this training, the unit hosted its sister units for the second annual ARKLATEX Training event in June. Over 180 combat communicators converged on Hot Springs to train and exercise new equipment. The successful operation established successful processes that set the stage for a Sep 2005 Air Expeditionary Force deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Well over 150 members, former members and retirees of the 223rd Combat Communications Squadron at Hot Springs gathered for a deactivation ceremony and casing of the unit's flag on Saturday, 1 Mar 2008, sealing the final chapter of the Air National Guard unit's 55-year history.

The crowd gathered in what was once the unit's spacious supply warehouse. The expanse of the now empty facility denoted that the end was near. The warehouse had always been a scene packed with rows of shelves and bins laden with communications equipment, spare parts, mobility equipment, supplies and gear. The event was highlighted by a 12-minute slide show of photos that depicted scenes throughout the units colorful history.

The Air National Guard announced the closing of the 223rd and six other communications units around the country in Dec 2006, as a result of the Air Force's Total Force Initiative. This plan called for consolidation of some career fields and assets in order to streamline the force to meet operational needs of the 21st century. In his remarks, Wofford noted that the 223rd was not unique in its closing. "This is not the first unit that Arkansas has lost in the modernization of the Army and Air Force since Operation Desert Storm in the 1990s. In fact, the Army Guard deactivated four battalion sized units in the state under the Army transformation initiative. Of those, one was the 212th Signal Battalion, a field communications unit comparable to the 223rd," Wofford said. He added that change is often difficult, and now the Army and Air Force are trying to move forward into the 21st century with different structure, different equipment and different capabilities. But he encouraged unit members and retirees to keep in mind all the great things that they helped accomplish with the 223rd over the years. Recounting some of the high points of the unit's 55 year history, Wofford noted that the 223rd had been recognized with an Outstanding Unit award eight times, either in the communications community or in the Air Guard as a whole. Maj. Greg Brooks, commander of the 223rd, also addressed those on hand for the ceremony. He said that preparing the unit for closure was a tough task like none other, but that the men and women of the 223rd were to be commended for the professionalism they exhibited as they dismantled the unit and redistributed the assets, equipment and personnel. The closure of the unit affected approximately 115 unit members, 20 of which were full time employees. Brooks lauded other units and leaders who helped find opportunities for unit members to continue their Air Guard careers. "As difficult as it is to close a unit, I have to thank leaders of the 189th Airlift Wing, the 188th Fighter Wing, their respective communications squadron commanders, and those from the National Guard Human Resource Office who stepped up to the plate and found new opportunities for 223rd members," said Brooks. The unit sign along airport road is all that remains of the Hot Springs based 223rd Combat Communications Unit of the Arkansas Air National Guard. The unit was formally closed during ceremonies on 1 Mar after 55 years serving the state of Arkansas and the U.S. Air Force.

Maj Greg Brooks, commander of the 223rd Combat Communications Unit renders a final salute to BG Riley Porter, commander of the Arkansas Air National Guard, as he relinquishes command of the unit during ceremonies 1 Mar, 2008, which marked the deactivation and closing of the unit. The unit, which was the third largest in the Arkansas Air Guard with 121 members, was closed after 55 years in Hot Springs as a result of Air Force restructuring initiative begun in 2006.

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