

916 AAF BASE UNIT

MISSION

LINEAGE

916 AAF Base Unit

STATIONS

Fort Slocum, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

916th Army Air Forces Base Unit

Stationed: 31 Jul 47 - 30 Sep 47 - First "Caretaker" unit on base after 1st Fighter command was disbanded. Unit was based out of Ft. Slocum

Mission: Maintaining and developing Roslyn Control Center.

Roslyn Air National Guard Station

Operating personnel were withdrawn on or about 14 January 1946, and caretaker personnel from Mitchell Field were assigned to protect the interests of the government against pilfering and vandalism. On 20 March 1947, Mitchell Field, in a letter to Air Defense Command, declared Roslyn an excess, inactive installation to the needs of their headquarters. On 20 May 1947, ADC published General Order Number 55 announcing the transfer of Sub-Post Number 3, Mitchell Field, Roslyn Long Island (Mackay Estate) from the Commander, Mitchell Field to the commanding General, 1st Air Force, Fort Slocum, New York. R & U responsibilities remained with the commanding officer at Mitchell Field. On 23 Jul 1947, the transfer of military construction to the 1st Air Force, Fort Slocum, New York was accomplished. 1st Air Force outlined administrative and operative procedures for Roslyn Control Center on 31 July 1947. The maintenance and development of Roslyn Control Center was a function of the 916th AAFBU (AAAGp). The commanding officer of this unit was designated commanding officer of Roslyn Control Center in addition to his other duties.

The mission of the 916th AAFBU(AAAGp) included the following specific tasks:

- a. Within the limitations of available funds and resources, to develop an efficient Control Center
- b. Maintain facilities in instant readiness for use in an emergency.
- c. Allocate space facilities for the several organizations scheduled to operate at Roslyn
- d. Establish an AAA operations room.
- e. Procure and maintain such maps, charts, and other items necessary for use in an emergency and in combined training.
- f. In conjunction with Headquarters, 1st Air Force, implement, to the extent practicable the communications plan defined in the Air Defense Plans, Headquarters, 1st Air Force.

On 31 Jul 1947, Headquarters First Air Force assigned to the 916th AAF PU (AAA GP) the mission of maintaining and developing the Roslyn Control Center, Roslyn, Long Island, NY

In addition, the Commanding Officer of this organization was assigned the mission of preparing the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Defense

Plan of the New York Vital Area (Appendix B), and also that of Washington D.C.

At a conference between the Commanding Officer of the 916th and the Assistant Chief of Staff A-5, First Air Force, it was mutually agreed that if the 916th were to temporarily place an officer on special duty with the A-5 division, A-5 would assist in preparing the AAA Defense plans for New York and Washington. On 14 November, the New York Area AAA Defense Plan was completed and forwarded for approval prior to incorporation into the First Air Force air defense plan.

Between 1 July and 30 September the assigned strength of the organization increased from 2 officers, 1 warrant officer and 29 enlisted men to 8 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 49 enlisted men. An exact manning table was prepared on 30 June along the lines of the Tables of Organization and Equipment for an AAA Group Headquarters and an AAA Operation Room Detachment. Only minor changes were made during this quarter. One change was the authorization of a medical section consisting of 3 medical Corpsmen. In a normal AAA group, each battalion has its own medical section and the group headquarters has none. The 916th does not have any battalions assigned to it, at present, which makes it necessary to allot medical personnel.

An inspection by a team of officers and enlisted men from the office of the Air Inspector, First Air Force, on 20 August resulted in an all around rating of excellent.

During the first week in August, a copy of the First Air Force Letter No. 20-2 was received. This letter charged the 916th AAF BU (AAA GP) with the development and maintenance of the Roslyn Control Center, and necessitated a movement of part of the organization to the Control Center on 8 September.

On arrival at Roslyn, the detachment commander contacted the civil authorities of the nearby community and promised mutual cooperation. Thus far, the conduct of the personnel has been exemplary.

Since the First Air Force maintained a daily courier service between Fort Slocum and Mitchel Field, arrangements were made to have the courier stop at Roslyn so that correspondence or other pertinent matters can be forwarded without delay.

Directives governing personnel, functions, and duties at Roslyn Control Center have been written. These are based on directives and regulations current at Fort Slocum, and where applicable, at Mitchel Field. It was deemed advisable by the commanding officer to comply with both, since, although the organization is under the jurisdiction of Fort Slocum, personnel and vehicles are constantly at Mitchel Field.

The organization had in its files a mass of intelligence material. The section was assigned the task of downgrading this material where applicable, of removing obsolete material and readying it for disposition, and of centralizing pertinent information. During August and early September, the Intelligence Officer assisted the Operations and Training Officer in preparation of the New York AAA Defense Plan.

On the job training continued during the quarter. Arrangements were made with the Base Surgeon at Mitchel Field to send two enlisted men to the base hospital for training in first aid. Officers of this unit who were not qualified for exemption, attended the Interim Training Program for AAF Officers classes at Mitchel Field. A number one priority task assigned to this section during August and early September was the preparation of the Anti Aircraft Artillery Defense Plan of the New York Vital Area

During August many problems relative to supply and maintenance became apparent. With a detachment scheduled to move to the Roslyn Control Center in early September, it was necessary to make arrangements for setting up mess facilities and for transportation. Frequent consultations between the unit supply officer and the base supply officer at Mitchel Field resulted in ironing out the problems as fast as they appeared. The biggest single factor in aiding the unit to obtain supplies and services from Mitchel Field was AAF Letter 80-46, dated 29 July 1947, Subject: "Services in support of special activities," stating in effect that detachments such as that at Roslyn would be serviced and supplied from nearby AAF installation. Some items as silverware, dishware, and white uniforms for mess personnel were unobtainable in sufficient quantity. This was

due in a large measure to the implementation of the Air Forces 55 Group program thereby causing a drain on the normal stock levels. Mitchel Field has assured the supply officer that his requisitions would be filled as soon as possible.

The holiday season was ushered in by a well attended and enjoyed Halloween party on 31 October 1947. On Thanksgiving and Christmas special effort was devoted to festive decorations for the mess hall and to seeing that all personnel present had the customary meal and all the trimmings. Relatives attended these holiday functions.

Personnel, except for the minimum number required for duty, were granted Christmas leaves from 22 December 1947.

The greatest snow fall since 1888 commenced in the wee hours of the morning of 26 December. In a little over 14 hours the area was blanketed less than 26 inches of snow. Our semi-isolated installation at Roslyn became truly isolated. Though the cooperation of the Nassau County Department of Highways, a snow plow was obtained to clear the Control Center roads.

On 22 October, an inspection of the 916th AF BU was conducted by two officers from the field of the Air Inspector, Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Langley Field, Virginia. The inspection report noted the mission of the 916th at the Roslyn Control Center and further added the specific tasks assigned to it in the development and observation of the Control Center. The report further stated that at the time of the inspection this unit was considered to be still in the stage of organization. No deficiencies or irregularities were found as a result of the inspection.

The assigned strength of the unit during the period of this report showed an increase of five officers and thirteen enlisted men bringing the total strength, as of 31 December 1947, to thirteen officers, one warrant officer and sixty two enlisted men.

In October a visit was made to the Artillery Section, G-3, Headquarters, First Army, Governors Island, N.Y. to obtain anti-aircraft artillery information. G-3 had in its possession a series of Anti-aircraft Artillery Installations Station lists prepared and used by the Eastern Defense Command during World War II. The lists were made available through the efforts of Lt. Col. Marsh, Chief of the Artillery Section. They were invaluable in obtaining background information for anti-aircraft artillery defense plans.

A meeting of interest was held at this installation on 11 December 1947 by a joint planning board, consisting of staff representatives of the First Air Force, Eastern Sea Frontier, Eastern Coast Guard Area, and First Army. Following the meeting, members of the board were shown through the Control Center and future plans were explained to them.

The Anti-aircraft Artillery Defense Plan for the defense of New York underwent several modifications, and in all probability will continue to be subject to change.

In November a visit was made to the Air Defense Branch, A-5, Headquarters, First Air Force, where details of the Antiaircraft Artillery Defense Plan for Washington D.C. were explained to Col Herron, Commanding Officer and staff officers of the 916th.

On 1 November a training program in Air Defense was inaugurated for all personnel of the 916th. The lectures and courses covered included such subjects as Functioning of the Antiaircraft Artillery Operations Room, the Air Defense Grid, the operations of the Fighter Control Center and other military subjects necessary for the efficient operation of the Roslyn Control Center.

This phase of training covered five hours a week. Attendance was mandatory for all personnel. The courses were conducted by the officers and qualified enlisted men of this unit. An examination given in December on the subjects covered the gratifying result of an average 98.6.

Other phases of training included five hours physical training weekly, military courtesy and discipline, and continued on-the job training.

In addition two hours a week were given to the Information and Education Program. The basis for the program consisted primarily of the "Armed Forces Talks", supplemented by discussions on current events and lectures given by personnel recently returned from overseas stations.

In mid December, an educational interest survey was prepared by the Information and Education Section.

The survey covers the individual's past education, present and future plans, even going so far as to obtain information on his social inclinations and activities. It should prove to be of value in planning future training and education programs.

A Vocational Guidance Kit was received in early December and has been available to all interested personnel.

Officers of the 916th required to participate in the Interim training Program attended classes at Mitchel Field.

A complete radio set, SCR-399, was issued to the Communications Section during the last of November and on-the-spot training in its assembly and operation was participated in by the section. Other duties performed included the removal and servicing of all field wire within the base area.

On 15 October 1947 the Department of the Air Force approved a list of Signal, Ordnance and Engineer equipment to be used by this unit as a temporary Table of Equipment. Requisitions for this equipment were submitted to Mitchel Field on 15 November 1947, but at this date nothing has been forthcoming.

Air Defense Command requested on 21 October 1947 that this unit submit a proposed Table of Allowance for the operation of Roslyn Control Center. A board of five officers were appointed to

promulgate this Table of Allowance and have it prepared and submitted by 18 February 1948. Meetings of the board have been held approximately three times weekly and much of the task of preparing the Table of Allowance has been accomplished at this date.

Requisitions for repairs and labor were forwarded to the Air Installations Division, Mitchel Air Force Base. During January, February and early March, workmen checked and replaced damage or missing parts. On 18 March, Headquarters, 916th AF Base unit, moved into the Control Center building.

It is contemplated that in the future the two amphitheatres in the building will be used for classrooms and an Control Center Operations Room.

A team from the office of the Air Inspector, Headquarters, First Air Force, made an inspection of the 916th AF Base Unit on the 9th and 10th of February. There were no major discrepancies and a rating of "Excellent" was received.

During the period 1 January – 31 March 1948, the assigned strength of the unit showed an increase of 3 officers and 13 enlisted men, bringing the total strength to 16 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 75 enlisted men. Several personnel left for overseas assignments and to attend service schools.

In the past three months, several visits have been made to the Control Center by staff officers of Air Defense Command and First Air Force.

In February, a group of Air Defense Command officers headed by Lt. Col. Yeager, A-G Division, made an inspection to determine the suitability of the Center as a Command Post for proposed air defense maneuvers. In March, members of the Army Airways Communications Service Staff at Mitchel Air Force Base made an inspection to determine whether the Center should be utilized for flight service facilities. In addition, Col. Gibbs, Director of Air Defense, First Air Force, and members of his staff made several visits.

Liaison with the Directorate of Air Defense, First Air Force, and with G-3, Artillery Section, First Army, was maintained. This enabled the 916th AF Base Unit to obtain the latest information relative to the activation, training, and changes in the status of National Guard and Reserve AAA units in the First Army area.

Through the efforts of A-2, First Air Force, information pertaining to guided missiles, new trends in antiaircraft artillery and air defense were made available.

Training was comprised of both on-the-job training and specialized classes. Information and education Section continued to interest members in advancing their individual educational level. A member of the 916th AF Base Unit, Mr. Champlin, received superior grades following completion of the two year college level United States Armed Forces Institute examinations. Of the four

examinations taken, all were rated 90% or better, with two of them rated 99%. According to the rating schedule used by USAFI, this meant that Mr. Champlin received higher grades than 90% and 99% respectively of the freshmen and sophomores who completed a survey course in the subjects covered by these examinations. Weekly discussions have been held on pertinent topics of the day. Following the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, Capt McNamara, a member of the 916th AF Base Unit, formerly with the Military Government Division and who was in charge of an area in Germany bordering Czechoslovakia, gave a detailed discussion of the modus operandi of the USSR in Germany and Czechoslovakia.

The Communications Section initiated a code practice school for all radio operators on 1 March, requiring that each operator attain a set standard before being excused from further practice. The Chemical officer commenced a two hours a week, ten week course in Chemical Warfare training on 19 February. The Motor Transportation Section began a six week course in motor pool and automotive vehicle operations on 2 March. The AA Operations Detachment Section continued training four men as Information Center Operators, MOS 610. In addition to the training given in the operation of the AA Operations Room, instruction was given in the operation of an Air Direction Center and an Air Control Center. On completion of their instruction, these four men should be qualified to assist in teaching other personnel in these subjects.

Prior to March of this year, the 916th AF Base Unit did not have its own motor transportation section. Two or three vehicles were temporarily borrowed from the base motor pool at Mitchel Air Force base, and whenever they require maintenance other than that normally performed by the driver, they were returned to the base motor pool. If available, another vehicle was loaned to the unit; if not, then transportation was lacking. The arrangement was unsatisfactory, yet was better than none at all. The Base Motor Transportation Officer at Mitchel Air Force Base was most cooperative and assisted in every matter possible.

In early March seven vehicles were received. Lt Adam, who had been appointed 916th AF Base Unit Motor Transportation Officer on 2 February, organized and set up a motor pool utilizing the few automotive equipment mechanics who were assigned to the organization. Currently only first echelon maintenance is being performed. Other work is sent to Mitchel Air Force base Motor Pool.

Tests for prospective drivers are given under the supervision of the Mitchel Air Force base Motor Pool and all personnel must pass these tests prior to being issued a driver's license.

In mid January an SCR 399 radio set was set up and placed in operation as part of the First Air Force radio net. Operators were assigned to regular watches. Radio communications were maintained with other units of the First Air Force. Preliminary arrangements were made to operate a radio in the National Guard net of the First Air Force, but a lack of equipment has prevented completion of this plan. Field telephones were received and installed providing a much needed communications net within the area. A code practice training device had been borrowed from First Air Force and practice for radio operators initiated. Tests were given to all operator personnel to determine their efficiency.

HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT- The shortage of enlisted duty personnel had created a problem in carrying out the normal detachment duties. It was necessary to make all personnel through the grade of Sergeant eligible for such duties as guard, kitchen police, and firemen.

The Enlisted men's Club at the Control Center was repaired on 1 March. The club is equipped with a bar, juke box, and amusement devices. Plans are under way to obtain a television set. Under the supervision of S/Sgt Pritchard, the mess sergeant, much of the interior of the mess hall was repainted.

A major problem encountered in preparing the Table of Allowance was in correlating items of ground Forces issue with those of the Air Forces. A-4, First Air Force, advised that their division would assume responsibility for making these substitutions where necessary. Funding approval of the proposed T/A, a temporary one authorized by HQ USAF has been used as the basis in the requisition of equipment and supplies. In early March, a teletype was received from HQ USAF advising that an "Operation Center" – AN/TTQ-1" would arrive about 22 March. The plotting equipment is needed to assist in training. As of the end of March it had not yet arrived.

First Air Force Letter 20-2, 2 July 1948, directed that the 916th Air Force Base unit (AAA Group) maintain an AAA Operations Room in the Roslyn Control Center, and establish training facilities and procedures for appropriate units.

On 24 May the 916th AFBU was reduced in strength to one officer and one enlisted man. The first National Guard training problem was conducted by this group on 20 Jun 1948 in the Roslyn Control Center Operations Room. Personnel formerly assigned to the 916th AFBU were released from duty with the 503rd AC & W Group for this problem. Five Officers and fifteen enlisted men from the 369th OA (AAA) Reg., New York National Guard Unit attended. A letter of thanks and commendation was received from the 369th Reg. For the services rendered during the training period. On 22 Jun 1948 a nucleus for an Operations Detachment was reassigned to the 916th AFBU. Establishment of an AAOR commenced immediately. Upon completion of the AAOR it will be used as a classroom as well as filling its operational position.

The Food Service Supervisor, Mitchel Air Force base, Major Gorisse, inspected operations of the mess hall on 13 April 1948.

During the period 1 Apr – 30 Jun 1948 the assigned strength showed a decrease of 12 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 56 enlisted men, bringing the total strength down to 4 officers and 19 enlisted men.

Several officers and enlisted men left for overseas assignments and the remainder of the losses were to the 503rd Aircraft Control and Warning Group located at this station.

In the three months covered by this report, visits were made to the Control Center by General Stratemeyer and staff officers of Air Defense Command, and General Webster and Staff Officers from First Air Force. These visits were in the form of informal orientation inspections.

Liaison is still being maintained with the Directorate of Air Defense, First Air Force and with G-3 Artillery Section, First Army. New liaison was established with the 369th OA (AAA) National Guard Regiment for purpose of assisting in training as well as for disseminating pertinent Operations

Training was compromised of both on-the-job and specialized classes.

The AA Operations Detachment Section continued training four men as Information Center Operators (MOS 510) until the group was reduced on 24 May 1948. All four of these trainees returned to the group upon reactivation and have resumed training in their primary MOS. In addition to these regular trainees a program has been set up to give every E. M. several hours of MOS 510 training weekly.

The unit Chemical Warfare Officer continued with a program of one hour per week for Chemical Warfare training.

The Communications Section held classes on various phases of lineman's duties from April until the group was reduced.

Since reactivation, the Communications Section has been engaged full-time in setting up the AN/TTQ-2 set.

Continued interest has been shown by the enlisted men and officers in the General Education Development Courses in both High School and College level. Approximately 26% of the 916th personnel have completed one or more of these tests over this three month period.

Two hours of instruction were given to the 369th OA Regiment on 20 Jun 1948, on the functions of the Air Defense Center, Organization of Air Defense as concerns AAA, and the AAO.

At the completion of this instruction a "canned plotting problem" was conducted by the officers and enlisted men of the 916th AFBU. The remaining four hours were spent by the 369th regiment in practicing plotting and operating the AAOR under the supervision of the 916th AFBU

Transportation continued to be a problem for the 916th Air Force base Unit. Due to the fact that all housekeeping duties of the Roslyn Control center were being performed by this relatively small organization, the task was almost too great for the number of trucks available. The one Staff car made a daily trip to First Air Force Headquarters, Fort Slocum. Other requirements included trips to Mitchel Field for coal for the mess hall and barracks, to the post offices in Roslyn and Roslyn Heights twice daily for mail, and to Mitchel Field on frequent trips for the supply officer. The daily sick call trip to Mitchel Field was consolidated with the regular run to that base.

The motor pool itself was given an entirely new look by personnel assigned to the section. Mechanics were utilized, when possible, in painting the buildings of the motor pool & larger work bench was installed, and a new system of displaying tools on the walls was devised. Though a small section with few trucks to supply all the transportation for the base, its members have rendered superior service to the organization. On 1 June 1948, the 503rd AC & W Group assumed all functions of motor transportation for the Roslyn Control Center.

COMMUNICATIONS--Full scale operations were not achieved during April, May, and June. Additional telephone lines were installed and maintained as needed.

The preliminary arrangements made to operate a radio in the National Guard net of the First Air Force never materialized and the SCR- 399 was shipped to First Air Force in the early part of June. This left our radio operators without means for on-the-job training. Two of the operators were placed on special duty with Air Defense Command as a partial remedy of this situation. After the 916th AAA Group was reactivated, the AN/TTQ-2 was assembled in operating position in the Control Center. Plans are now under way to tie in communication with the 503rd Air Control and Warning Group for demonstration and training purposes primarily for the benefit of National Guard troops. All equipment previously in possession of the 916th was transferred to the 645th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, but much of it has since been returned to the 916th AFBU

HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT--During the period from April until inactivation there was an acute shortage of personnel in Headquarters Detachment. After reactivation, and with the new allocation of personnel, a headquarters detachment was deemed unnecessary. This simplified the administrative problem considerably since all routine duties are now accomplished in conjunction with, and under the control of the 645th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron. The Enlisted Men's Club, established by the 916th, has since passed to the control of the 503rd Group. Several necessary pieces of equipment and furniture were acquired during this period.

In lieu of the "Operations Center – AN/TTQ-1" as previously advised, actual receipt was an "Operations Center – AN/TTQ-2". The set has been assembled and checked for operational defects. On 8 May 1948, the personnel from the 503rd AC&W Group at the Canal Zone were transferred to Roslyn.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, AL.