

818th MOBILITY SUPPORT ADVISORY SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The Air Resupply and Communications Service was activated on a cold February morning on 23 February 1951 at Andrews Air Force Base, just outside Washington, D.C.⁶ The high-level impetus for its creation had begun two years earlier when the secretary of defense was requested by “an agency outside the Department of Defense” to “provide support services similar to the type that provided covert airlift operations during World War II.” The request clearly had in mind the Army Air Forces’ Carpetbagger special operations flown into Nazi-occupied Europe from bases in England and North Africa.

The Carpetbagger comparison was particularly useful in describing the type of “services” expected from the Air Force. While ultimately successful enough to serve as a future model for

the ARCS, the Carpetbagger units had initially suffered badly from a low priority within the European theater. The Carpetbagger experience underscored the subsequent convictions of many Air Force planners that unconventional air warfare units “must become part and parcel of the military organization, rather than a crazy quilt of temporary expedients tacked on to the main body during wartime.”

The publicly unidentified agency’s request was quickly approved by the powerful National Security Council and sent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who promptly gave the mission to the Air Force. Headquarters Air Force in turn tasked its Military Air Transport Service to organize, train, and equip the new service and its tactical wings. It was no small task. The plan envisioned nothing less than a service-level command headquarters and seven subordinate psywar wings to be activated in threemonth intervals and then be deployed overseas following six months of training.

“Freedom through Truth” was the motto of the Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS), a special psychological warfare force activated by the Air Force in 1951. ARCS units worked closely with US intelligence and Army Special Forces to develop an anti-Communist guerrilla capability in Soviet rear areas should the cold war suddenly turn hot.

Incredibly, the first wing was to be activated less than 60 days after the February activation of the service headquarters itself. The frenetic pace of the ARC wing’s activation boggles the mind even today. It wasn’t just that each ARC wing would require well over 1,000 personnel ranging from heavy bomber mechanics to foreign language specialists; that four distinctly different types of aircraft with very different maintenance requirements were to be used; or even that something called a Holding and Briefing Squadron required selected Air Force officers to undergo Army Special Forces and US intelligence (hereafter USI) tactical training in guerrilla warfare. These would prove the easy problems to solve. The major problem defies understanding even 50 years after the fact. But the bald truth, agonized over repeatedly in official archives, is that even after launching this massive effort, Headquarters Air Force found itself unable to define the mission of this service and its proposed seven wings!

Four months after the activation of the service, representatives of the Air Force’s major commands met to resolve once and for all the elusive and maddening problem of defining the ARCS mission. Yet even this conference could do no better than conclude with the feeble agreement that “there is an urgent need for a realistic mission letter to each of the major commands.” In all fairness to the conference representatives, it must be stated that it was not only the mission itself that defied ready definition but also the unique chain of command proposed for this precedent-breaking service. The official records underscore the problem: Compounding the difficulty in clarifying the ARCS mission was the fact that its Wings were actually operational arms of the Psychological Warfare Division, Directorate of Plans, Headquarters, USAF. This division under General [Orrin L.] Grover, was charged with “planning Air Force Psychological Warfare, unconventional warfare and special operations.”

Operational air wings being deployed to overseas theaters but commanded personally by staff officers in the Pentagon? It’s not difficult to imagine the response of both theater commanders

and senior flag-rank officers commanding the fighter, bomber, and transport commands. Despite these fundamental problems, the ARCS program pressed forward at a furious pace with general guidance to prosecute two distinct but related functions:

1. Aerial resupply: Introduce and evacuate ranger-type personnel behind enemy lines and supply them and guerrilla units.

2. Psychological warfare: Prepare psychological warfare material for audio and printed distribution. A third mission, dubbed “Project Reach High,” was later assigned to the service. It required the service to establish . . . a balloon flying squadron! This squadron would “employ balloons as an efficient and inexpensive delivery of material to potential enemy target areas.”¹¹ In due course, this squadron was to be activated. For the moment, the service had more pressing problems, chief of which was selecting the type of aircraft required to fulfill the aerial resupply mission. There were some surprising twists in what at first glance seemed to be a simple issue.

To “introduce ranger-type personnel and supplies” deep into the Soviet-occupied territories of Eastern Europe and Asia, the service developed demanding operational criteria for its long-range aircraft. These included a 4,000-nautical-mile range; a minimum payload of 4,000 pounds; lowlevel, long-range navigation capabilities; and, of course, the capability to drop parachutists and resupply bundles. Only one such aircraft in the Air Force inventory was available in the quantity required—the World War II-era B-29. The required number of bombers were soon pulled from the mothball fleet at Robins AFB, Georgia, and restored for duty, some with fuselage markings still showing the number of combat missions flown over Japan.

The Superfortress was not a happy choice for the service, which noted the limitations of using a high-speed, high-altitude bomber for low-speed, low-level, night infiltration missions. The B-29’s tendency to stall near parachute-dropping airspeed and its lack of maneuverability at these low airspeeds did not portend well for the mission or the survival of the aircraft itself. Extensive modifications to the giant bomber would be required, but in the end these would still provide only limited operational improvements.

These modifications included removing all guns for self-defense, saving those in the tail turret, and installing a “joe hole” in the former aftbelly gun turret space for parachutists to exit. Resupply bundles would hang like clusters of melons in the bomb bay to be dropped like bombs as the plane passed over the drop zone. Beyond the technical limitations of the B-29 itself, another problem soon surfaced—one that could (and did) prove deadly to inexperienced crews. The ARCS leadership had acknowledged from the start that the critical key to safely flying a high-altitude bomber for the dangerous low-level ARCS mission depended on the assignment of highly experienced B-29 aircrews. In practice this meant transferring experienced B-29 pilots from other Air Force commands flying the bomber, or at least putting highly experienced pilots of four-engined transports through the B-29 Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS) training at Randolph AFB, Texas. The former rarely happened, as the commander of the 580th ARC Wing’s flying squadron noted:

Without exception all aircraft commanders received by us were recalled officers with low total time and very little experience within the last five years. The total time within this period, including the B-29 training, ran from 90 to 130 hours. What took place at Randolph was even less encouraging. Following an inspection of aircrew proficiency at Mountain Home AFB,

Idaho, in July 1951, an inspecting officer included in his report to the commander, ARCS, that the director of training at Randolph had said that the ARC wings were receiving the poorest crews completing CCTS in B-29s.¹³ Two months later, a flight examiner from MATS's Chief Pilot's Division completed a similar inspection of aircrew performance at Mountain Home, only to recommend that "the C-119 and B-29 schools be investigated to determine whether the least qualified crews are being assigned to ARCS."

By then ARCS had already reported the unsatisfactory aircrew-experience situation to Headquarters MATS along with a request for eight B-29 instructor pilots for Mountain Home. A subsequent ARCS letter to Headquarters USAF further requested an aircrew training squadron be assigned to Mountain Home. As an interim measure, MATS sent one instructor pilot, 1st Lt Robert S. Ross, to Mountain Home while considering the overall problem. Less than 60 days later, Lieutenant Ross and six other crew members of a 580th ARC Wing B-29 died on a night training flight at Mountain Home. The ARCS commander subsequently noted: The investigation reveals that a probable cause factor was the practicing of engine failure procedures at low altitudes before the student pilot's operational ability had progressed to the point where he could cope with such practices.¹⁵

Headquarters Air Force subsequently responded to the ARCS request for instructors with the decision that such a request was "unfeasible" at that time. Additional comments in the response reveal the lack of understanding prevalent among those inexperienced in the dangerous world of low-level night flying: It is difficult to believe that any B-29 aircraft commander successfully completing the course at Randolph, and who prior to that course met input criteria for Randolph, could be as deficient as the basic correspondence alleges. In the 1990s, units of the Air Force Special Operations Command are able to invite key

As the Superfortress had never before been used in low-level, psychological warfare missions, the inexperienced crews were further burdened with setting the operational limits of the bomber in this role. Missions lasting up to 20 hours were flown at altitudes below 300 feet to test the limits of human and airframe endurance. Perhaps one of the most bizarre of these tests involved using the giant bomber to execute the air-to-ground "snatch" recovery system developed during the Korean War using much smaller, twin-engined transports. During the summer of 1951, a B-29 from the 580th ARC Wing conducted trials at Eglin AFB in the Florida panhandle to determine the feasibility of using the bomber to conduct air-to ground personnel extractions from deep insideneemy territory. Modifications to Superfortress no. 470113 included cutting a 48-inch diameter hole in place of the aft-belly turret and fitting an elongated tailhook—similar to that used by Navy aircraft for carrier landings—to the rear of the B-29. As the bomber swooped down on the "extractee," its tailhook caught a horizontal wire over the individual, who in turn was reeled intact through the 48-inch hole in the aircraft's underbelly . . . maybe.

On the first attempt, a test pig in a small cage atop a tower "fared poorly" after the cable snapped following a successful hook engagement. A subsequent test with a human volunteer was more successful but still resulted in a nasty head gash to the extractee as he was reeled through the too-small opening in the aircraft's belly. While technically feasible, the project was eventually dropped in favor of higher-priority programs. Fortunately for the ARCS, its other aircraft selections proved much easier than the B-29 to employ.

To round out its unconventional aerial warfare capabilities, the service proposed the addition of four helicopters to each ARC wing. While only the 581st ARC Wing fighting in Korea would actually receive helicopters, their performance in that war would validate their usefulness for inserting and extracting operatives behind enemy lines.

Thus, the final aircraft authorization tables allocated to each wing included 12 B-29s; four C-119s; four SA-16s; and, for the 581st only, four H-19s. The aircraft balance was a versatile mixture and one that would in time prove exceptionally well thought-out.

The service initiated and managed a three-stage psywar training program that provided carefully selected officers* with the necessary training in international relations, psychology, geography, regional cultures, languages, communications, and propaganda-dissemination techniques. Stage 1 (academic) began with four months of intensive and specially tailored training at Georgetown University's Institute of Languages and Linguistics in Washington, D.C., one of the premier academic institutions in the country. A total of 555 Air Force officers completed this demanding stage of the ARCS psywar course prior to its termination in May 1953.

Stage 2 (psywar training) was conducted at Mountain Home AFB by the 1300th Air Base Wing's Psychological Warfare and Intelligence School. The 1300th ABW took the brunt of the unglamorous task of setting up Mountain Home AFB for the ARC program. In addition to basic "housekeeping" chores and the Psywar School, it also helped run the survival school for the ARC aircrews. This second stage supplemented the Georgetown curriculum with practical application and was in turn divided into phases 1 and 2. The first phase transitioned the students from theory to operation with classes in newspaper, magazine, and radio programming techniques. In stage 2/phase 2, the students were further divided into their future specialties. Some attended the Psychological Warfare Intelligence Officer's Course, while others started in the Psychological Warfare Course for team personnel. The latter course taught advanced propaganda techniques and leaflet operations. Phase 2 training comprised 420 hours of instruction to be completed in 12 weeks, and approximately 95 percent of the Georgetown graduates successfully completed the intensive instruction. From this point on, only volunteers were accepted for specialized stage

Stage 3 study could involve advanced language study in various government or academic institutions, both domestic and foreign, or on-the-job (OJT) training with "government agencies, or advanced intelligence courses in Army or USAF schools."¹⁸ For the select few destined for assignment to the holding and briefing squadrons, it could also include "special" programs to include Special Forces guerrilla training as well as parachute, Ranger, and USI tactical field training at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The concept of Air Force officers undergoing Ranger and Special Forces training was obviously

a stretch from the traditional Air Force role. But how much tradition can a three-year-old Air Force have? Besides, if guerrilla warfare was a stretch, what came next was absolutely mind-boggling in an era of nuclear weapons and jet-engined strategic bombers.

Records of the ARCS state that “the ARCS balloon program is somewhat difficult to explain.” During the summer and fall of 1951, a series of directives, from the Air Force deputy chief of staff, operations, directed MATS to organize a balloon-flying squadron as a cheap alternative for propaganda dissemination into foreign countries.

It was in some respects reminiscent of Japanese attempts during World War II to use fire bombs floated by balloons over America’s Pacific Northwest with the intention of igniting fires in the region’s huge forests. MATS in turn passed the mission to the ARCS, which directed the task to its Research and Development (R&D) Division, which was already working feverishly to meet deadlines for aircraft modification and psywar-unique equipment acquisition.

One can almost hear the screeching sound of locked brakes and burning rubber as the R&D staff vehicle slammed into the first roadblock. What could the table of organization and equipment (TO&E) possibly look like for a balloon squadron? And, as with everything else at the time, Headquarters Air Force wanted the balloon squadron now—1 January 1952 to be exact. With less than four months of planning time prior to the target balloon squadron’s activation date, the R&D staff found itself behind the power curve before it even started. On a more positive note, there could hardly be any existing balloon-flying regulations or established bureaucracies to slow them down!

The January 1952 squadron activation date came and went as Headquarters USAF assessed the proposed TO&E submitted by the service. In the meantime, R&D staffers hungry for technical information descended on Holloman AFB, New Mexico. Holloman was home to USAF’s Air Research and Development Command (ARDC), then experimenting with high-altitude meteorological research in Project Moby Dick. Not only did the ARDC have information badly needed by the service R&D team, the unclassified Project Moby Dick provided a very useful cover story for the ARCS’s highly classified balloon program, which was dubbed Project Reach High.** Still pressing forward in March without an approved TO&E, the R&D staffers began to clarify the capabilities that the proposed balloon flying squadron needed to accomplish the following

The squadron would be able to launch 1,840 balloons monthly, carrying a total of 276 tons of cargo (propaganda leaflets). Mobile tactical ground communication sites would be capable of maintaining communications over a large geographic area. To fill the balloons, it had to be capable of generating 1,152,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas monthly. Each of its eight Flights was to be mobile and self-sufficient under field conditions.

The use of hydrogen was deemed “dangerous but necessary” by the R&D staffers, who proceeded to build as many practical safeguards into the system as feasible. To predict the necessary favorable high-altitude winds, the Air Force’s Air Weather Service would augment the squadron with five officers and three airmen. The Airways and Air Communications Service

would further augment it with 31 airmen to track the balloons, which could be launched in maximum winds of 12 knots from a 40-by-17-foot trailer dubbed the "Prairie Schooner."

The balloons themselves were to be manufactured by General Mills of Minneapolis, while the University of Minnesota was contracted to provide a three-month-long course for the personnel who were to launch the balloons.²⁰ Further, OJT would be provided by the squadron once it was activated.

And activated it was on 1 November 1952 as the 1300th ARC Squadron (Special). It was the first (and last) of the Air Force's special operations balloon squadrons. Never destined for operational deployment, the squadron nonetheless deserves its hard-earned niche in the history of USAF special operations. If the World War II Air Commando motto "Any place, Any time!" had been remembered during this period, it could perhaps have been expanded to claim "Any place, Any time, Any which way we can!"

By late 1952, it was beginning to look like the Air Force really was going to take the lead Department of Defense role in unconventional warfare. From high-altitude psywar balloons to low-altitude aerial resupply to "blue-suit special forces," the ARCS's hot enthusiasm and three years of experience supporting the CIA appeared to give the Air Force the lead role in DOD psywar/special operations. If such a wide-ranging, wide-open program confirmed the worst fears of General McClure, it seemed that little could be done about it for the moment. And when the Air Force chose another canny Scotsman, Brig Gen Monroe MacCloskey, to assume command of the service in September 1952, it must have seemed to the Army that the die had been cast.

General MacCloskey proved to be an inspired choice to command the ARCS. His command of a Carpetbagger squadron in World War II made him one of the few officers in ARCS with previous experience in special operations. And as his performance in the Pentagon would soon demonstrate, he was an articulate and powerful spokesman for the Air Force's most controversial command. All of his formidable skills would be tested immediately upon his assumption of command, as his arrival had been preceded only two months earlier by a Headquarters Air Force decision to drastically cut back on its plans for a psywar force.

Quoting manpower restrictions, the Air Staff announced in the summer of 1952 its intention to cut the planned number of ARC wings from seven to four (three proved to be the final number actually activated). During the same period, Headquarters MATS declared its intent to deactivate the ARC Service, as its primary function of managing the training of subordinate ARC wings could no longer be justified with the deployment of these wings overseas. Such training and facilities still required were to be transferred to the Tactical Air Command (TAC).

General MacCloskey dissented from MATS's view that the training of personnel for deployed ARC wings did not appear to warrant any special arrangement, and he was dubious of the support TAC's "fighter Mafia" would provide ARCS's psywar and aerial resupply missions. He began his own psychological operations campaign in the Pentagon.

Though convinced that the service had a unique contribution to offer the Air Force, he was also enough of a realist to understand that it had to justify its continued existence by first

demonstrating that such a unique contribution could come from nowhere else in the Air Force but from ARCS. The air resupply mission could not be quoted as such a contribution, as both MATS and the Air Staff had already cited their position that this mission did not warrant special training or assignment considerations. ARCS's psywar mission, on the other hand, was unique and, better yet, a strong case could be made that it was very much needed to counter Soviet propaganda. Less than 30 days after taking command of ARCS, the quick-moving general successfully presented his case to the Air Force's deputy chief of staff, operations, with members of the Air Staff's Psychological Warfare Division in attendance. With this renewed support, MacCloskey initiated Operation Think, a program that challenged the imagination of the greatest single psywar resource in the United States government: ARCS's 500-plus thoroughly trained psywar officers. The challenge took form in the development of psywar programs designed to counter the Soviets' own massive and disturbingly successful psywar efforts. During the following five months, two Operation Think programs in particular drew praise for their effectiveness.

In April 1953, the Air Staff indicated that "ARCS should confine itself to projects requiring implementation only by the Air Force."²³ The Air Staff guidance effectively signaled the end of its interest in a special operations force at the service command level. The ARCS experiment had lasted just over three years, coming to a final end with Department of Air Force Letter 322 and General Order 174, issued by the Military Air Transport Service, deactivating the service effective 1 January 1954. But like ripples spreading outward from a stone cast into a pond, the activities of the ARCS's overseas wings had gathered too much momentum to be turned off like a light switch. Three still-active ARC groups were deployed overseas. Not only was the "agency outside the Department of Defense" that had initiated the birth of ARCS still in business, but its need for the Air Force to "provide support services similar to the type that provided covert and overt operations during World War II" had not diminished.

By 1954, Air Force plans to phase out the remaining three active duty air resupply groups by 1956 brought Headquarters USAF face-to-face with the same thorny question it had attempted to answer in 1950: who will provide air support for military and CIA unconventional warfare forces in the event of war? While Air Force enthusiasm for special operations had clearly waned, the potential for the cold war to suddenly turn hot clearly had not. At a minimum, a lowcost cadre of aircrews and aircraft had to be maintained somewhere by someone. But where, and by whom?

The Air Resupply And Communications Service (ARCS) is an inactive United States Air Force organization. It was assigned to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

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[edit] Mission

The mission of ARCS was:

- Introducing, evacuating and supplying guerrilla-type units in enemy occupied territory.
- Storing and packaging psychological warfare propaganda materials and storing and packing supplies used by guerilla-type personnel.
- Housing, supplying, administering, training and briefing guerilla-type personnel.
- Composing and reproducing psychological warfare propaganda.
- Composing and transmitting by radio, psychological warfare propaganda.
- Providing and maintaining communications circuits and communications security for the transmission and reception of intelligence material and for the analysis of such intelligence material.
- Perform such other functions as may be assigned.

[edit] History

[edit] Background

By 1948, it became apparent to US leadership that the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin could not be appeased, persuaded, or otherwise convinced to respect the territorial rights of its neighbor nations. The United States Air Force (USAF) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been created by the National Security Act of 1947 and activated a short time later.

Visionaries in the Pentagon reasoned that the next war would be fought and won (or lost) in the minds of those fighting it. Subsequently, the Psychological Warfare Division was established at the Air Staff in February 1948. By definition psychological warfare in 1948 was synonymous with special operations as defined during World War II. The new Psychological Warfare Division (also known as PW) division immediately set about to develop plans to fight this "new" type of warfare, which came to be known as psychological warfare, or PSYWAR for short.

In 1950 Air Staff/PW created two special operations wings devoted to the PSYWAR mission and scheduled them to be activated in 1952. The plan called for three additional wings to be activated in 1953, with future growth programmed to seven wings. On 5 January 1951 the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) was tasked to organize, train, and equip these new wings. For security purposes, the special operations wings were designated "Air Resupply and

Communications wings". A new service was established to provide oversight for this new capability and was designated the Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS).

Activated on 23 February 1951 at Andrews AFB, Maryland, the ARCS represented the most ambitious commitment to special operations since World War II and was responsible for oversight of the PSYWAR mission of the US Air Force. The catalyst for this new capability was the requirement by the CIA for long-range air transport of guerrilla warfare agents and supplies into Soviet occupied Europe and Northwest Asia. ARCS was responsible for USAF unconventional warfare (guerrilla warfare), direct action (commando-type raids), strategic reconnaissance (intelligence gathering), and PSYWAR operations.[citation needed]

[edit] Equipment

Assigned to an Air Resupply Wing were 12 specially modified B-29 heavy bombers, four C-119 heavy transports, four SA-16 amphibians, and four H-19A helicopters. All aircraft were new, except for the B-29s, which had been pulled from USAF storage at Warner Robins AFB, Georgia.

Five other non-flying squadrons were assigned to support the wing's operations by providing maintenance, cargo airdrop rigging, long-range communications, and PSYWAR/leaflet production. One unique squadron was devoted to preparing guerrilla-type personnel for insertion into enemy occupied territory.

Extensive modifications were required for the B-29 Superfortress to enable it to perform the special operations mission. All turrets, except the tail turret, were removed from the aircraft, leaving the aircraft unarmed and incapable of self-defense. A parachutist's exit was made where the belly gun turret was originally located. Resupply bundles were mounted on bomb racks inside the bomb bay, thus allowing the bundles to be dropped like bombs over the drop zone. Aircraft were painted black, and a crude HTR-13 obstruction-warning radar was installed to warn the crew of approaching terrain. The major flaw in the B-29 employed in the special operations role, however, was that it had been designed for high-altitude precision bombing, not low-level airdrop. Over the drop zone at drop airspeed, the aircraft was near its stall speed and was difficult to maneuver.

A B-29 was assigned to the 580th ARCW conducted trials at Eglin AFB, Florida, during the summer of 1951 to determine if the aircraft could be used to extract personnel utilizing the prototype Personnel Pickup Ground Station extraction system. The test aircraft was modified with a 48-inch-diameter (1,200 mm) opening in place of the aft-belly turret and with an elongated tailhook at the rear of the aircraft. The system was similar to the one adopted in 1952 by Fifth Air Force for the C-47s of the Special Air Missions detachment in South Korea. The tests proved technically feasible, but the project was dropped for the B-29 aircraft due to aircraft size and safety considerations of flying it so close to the ground.

[edit] Units/bases assigned

Headquarters, Air Resupply and Communications Service

Andrews AFB, Maryland 580th Air Resupply and Communications Wing

Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, 16 Apr 1951 – 17 Sep 1952
Wheelus Air Base, Libya, 22 Sep 1952 – 8 Sep 1953
580th Air Resupply Group
Wheelus Air Base, Libya, 8 Sep 1953 – 12 Oct 1956 581st Air Resupply and Communications Wing
Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, 23 Jul 1951 – 18 Jul 1952
Clark Air Base, Philippines, 18 Jul 1952 – 8 Sep 1953
581st Air Resupply Group
Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, 8 Sep 1953 – 1 Sep 1956 582nd Air Resupply and Communications Wing
Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, 24 Sep 1952 – 1 May 1953
Great Falls AFB, Montana, 1 May – 14 Aug 53
582nd Air Resupply Group
RAF Molesworth, England, 21 Feb 1954 – 25 Oct 1956 1300th Air Base Wing (Training)
Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
[edit] Aircraft assigned
C-119 Flying Boxcar (1950–1953)
B-29 Superfortress (1951–1953)
SA-16 Albatross (1951–1953)
Sikorsky H-19 (1952–1953)
C-54 Skymaster (1952)
C-118 (1952–1953)

[edit] Deactivation

By 1953 USAF interest in the unconventional warfare mission had run its course. The primary reason for this reduction was funding. The Air Force was essentially operating a national-level special operations program for an agency outside the Department of Defense—the CIA—with dollars needed for higher priority strategic forces. With the rapid buildup of the Strategic Air Command to counter Soviet Cold War aggression and the resulting funding requirements, the lesser priority PSYWAR mission was curtailed.

In April 1953 the Air Staff directed ARCS to limit operations to Air Force only projects, thus ending support for such outside agencies as the CIA. Nine months later Department of the Air Force Letter 322 and Military Air Transport Service General Order 174 deactivated ARCS, effective 1 January 1954.

In September 1953, after the Korean Armistice was signed that ended active conflict on the Korean peninsula and three months before deactivation of the ARCS, the three active wings were reduced to air resupply groups. The downsized groups were approximately one-half the size of the former wings and consisted of two squadrons—one flying squadron and one support squadron, as compared to six squadrons in each wing before the reorganization

General Order 37, Headquarters Seventeenth Air Force, dated 12 October 1956, deactivated the 580th ARG in place in Libya. Third Air Force General Order 86, dated 18 October 1956, deactivated the 582d ARS, effective 25 October 1956. With the deactivation of the 581st at

Kadena AB in September 1956, the USAF closed the book on the long-range unconventional warfare mission around which the ARCS and its associated wings were based.

Eight years later, the United States found itself in the Vietnam War, and the formation of the Air Commando, later renamed Special Operations Wings. In 1990, the Air Force formed the Air Force Special Operations Command.

HISTORY

HEADQUARTERS - AIR RESUPPLY AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

Introduction

Hq, Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS) was activated, organized and assigned to the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) at Andrews AFB on 23 Feb 51. The mission of organizing and training personnel for the air support of resupply and communications activities had been assigned to MATS on 5 Jan 51, and the new headquarters represented the beginnings of an organization for this purpose. In general terms this responsibility involved developing a wartime capability of introducing, supplying and evacuating Ranger-type personnel behind enemy lines and of preparing, reproducing and disseminating psychological warfare materials. What these capabilities meant in specific terms as well as what they meant in terms of the Hq, ARCS mission as compared with that of a tactical Air Resupply and Communications (ARC) Wing involved definitions which were constantly under review during 1951.

Headquarters, ARCS Mission

Hq, MATS was provided with a generalized mission statement for ARCS units by Hq, USAF on 22 Jan 51, and it was forwarded to Hq, ARCS on 28 May. Prior to 10 Aug 51, however, Hq, ARCS had not been the direct recipient of a detailed, firm statement of the ARCS mission, nor of its own specific responsibilities. It was apparent that its primary mission for the immediate future was organizing, manning, equipping and training the ARC Wings.

A conference at Hq, MATS on 16 Mar 51 had made it clear that training was the peacetime mission of all ARCS units, but this still left Hq, ARCS with the task of formulating a specific mission for training purposes.

Tables of Organization (TO's) were published 14 May 51, and they indicated the make-up of the mission squadrons and provided a limited definition of their missions. With these as a guide, HQ, ARCS drew up a tentative mission for an ARC Wing and forwarded it to the first Wing on 23 May 51. Indirectly this statement provided a working guide to the Hq, ARCS mission, for the

headquarters would have to supervise and assist in the accomplishment of the tasks which were allotted to the Wing.

A General Mission Definition

The Hq, ARCS directive stated the mission of an ARC Wing as that of activating, manning, equipping, training and operating Air Force units capable of:

- a. - Introducing, evacuating and supplying guerrilla-type units in enemy occupied territory.
- b. - Storing and packaging psychological warfare propaganda materials and storing and packing supplies used by guerilla-type personnel.
- c. - Housing, supplying, administering, training and briefing guerilla-type personnel.
- d. - Composing and reproducing psychological warfare propaganda.
- e. - Composing and transmitting by radio, psychological warfare propaganda.
- f. - Providing and maintaining communications circuits and communications security for the transmission and reception of intelligence material and for the analysis of such intelligence material.
- g. - Perform such other functions as may be assigned.

This letter provided a basis for training the first Wing, but it was still no substitute for a complete, detailed mission statement from higher headquarters. In a letter to the Commander of MATS on 8 Aug 51, Col. Millard C. Young the Commander of ARCS, pointed this out. As he put it:

"This headquarters is experiencing difficulty in planning certain aspects of ARC Wing operations and requirements for associated equipment due to incomplete definition of the ARCS mission. It is felt that decisions involving overlapping functions of participating units cannot adequately be made until a clarification is received of the exact scope of operations of this service is expected to perform."

Difficulties of Further Mission Definition

Clarification of the ARCS mission was not an easy matter. Although ARCS was comparable to the other "Services" in MATS as far as its status within the command was concerned, its Wings were actually operational arms of the Psychological Warfare Division, Directorate of Plans, Hq, USAF. This Division, under Col. Orrin L. Grover, a wartime fighter commander, was charged with "planning Air Force Psychological Warfare, Conventional Warfare and Special Operations." These activities were new to the Air Force and consequently the framing of a precise ARCS mission was more difficult than would have been the case for a more conventional Air Force organization.

A number of factors were involved. General uncertainty about the role the Air Force was to play in psychological warfare activities, the shifting international situation and the need for definition of the operational concepts to be employed in Special Operations were among the factors which delayed a precise mission definition. Without adequate precedent to serve as a guide the solution of these problems depended on policy decisions at many levels, experimentation, and experience. While Hq, ARCS could to some extent contribute the experimentation and experience, it had need of a working directives on which to proceed. This was provided by Hq, MATS in a letter of 10 Aug 51.

A Mission Directive from MATS

The mission directive of 10 August stated definitely that the primary peacetime mission of ARCS was training and that Hq, ARCS would be responsible for neither strategic plans nor basic operational matters. In addition, the Wings' wartime mission was spelled out in some detail.

This still left plenty of scope for Hq, ARCS activity. Training, in one respect or another, involved determination of the aircraft, equipment, personnel and techniques to be used in accomplishing the wartime mission. Since Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E's) were incomplete and there was no adequate precedent for the training and operational techniques best suited to the accomplishment of the mission, Hq, ARCS was forced to supplement directives from higher headquarters by experimentation and experience. In the process a valuable reservoir of specialized knowledge and facilities was bound to be created. This raised the problem of the relationship between Hq, ARCS and the deployed Wings.

Accompanying the 10 August letter from MATS was a proposed Air Force Regulation (AFR) governing ARCS. It had originated in April, prior to the activation of the first Wing, and in late June and early July it had been coordinated, in a slightly changed version, between Hq, USAF and MATS. As 1951 ended, however, it still had not been published since the relationship of Hq, ARCS to the deployed Wings was still under consideration.

As far as the mission was concerned, the proposed regulation was very general, stating that ARCS would provide world-wide air resupply and communications service for all U.S. military activities requiring such service, maintain facilities in operational readiness and monitor the training of ARCS organizations under ARCS control, and perform such other missions as might be directed by the Chief of Staff, USAF.

The August mission letter to ARCS stated the the appropriate parts of this proposed regulation would be considered an additional mission directive to the organization. In October, Lt. Gen. Laurence S. Kuter, the MATS Commander, again specified that these two documents were the governing mission directives for ARCS and in addition he made the ARCS Commander "responsible for the establishment, command, operation and maintenance of such bases and other facilities assigned to MATS in the continental United States which are or may be made the responsibility of ARCS".

Headquarters ARCS' Relation to Deployed Wings

The proposed AFR supported the assumption that Hq, ARCS would retain administrative and technical control over its deployed Wings. This assumption had been based on the uniqueness of the ARCS mission; the need for specialized personnel, equipment, and techniques; the fact that ARCS units would be tenants on bases controlled by other Commands; and the world-wide coverage it was anticipated they would give. From this point of view it seemed that HQ, ARCS would logically be the centralizing agency required to assimilate and disseminate the information gained from practical experience in the fields of warfare for which it had trained the Wings.

General Kuter himself expressed these feelings in a letter to Major General T.H. Landon, Deputy Commander in Chief, Hq, USAFE, on 23 Aug 51. In part he said:

"I feel that the overseas commanders must have the greatest latitude in developing and expressing the requirements for an organizational structure and operational use of these units with centralized supervision of mobilization, personnel assignments, training, overall technical matters and continuing support including the provision of training replacements resting with Hq, ARCS."

The tentative operating instructions drawn up for the deployment of the 580th AR&C Wing on 25 Sep 51, embodied this concept of overseas operation. They stated that the Commander, ARCS would retain command jurisdiction over ARCS units, though they would be attached to the overseas commands for logistical support, and operational control was to be in accordance with theater policies. Operational control was defined to include designation of the Wing operating base, forward deployment areas, target areas of operation, assignment of operational missions and radio operating frequencies.

Under this concept, technical and administrative control was to remain with ARCS. Technical control, as defined in the proposed AFR, consisted of the development and application of ARCS procedures, policies, methods, standards, techniques and training programs. Administrative control involved such functions as the analysis and determination of organization and manning requirements; procurement, assignment, promotion and replacement of personnel; comptroller activities, including logistics and operational reporting, budgeting and finance, and management analysis; and, finally, administrative inspections. However, this concept was not to prevail.

Official confirmation of the decision to relieve ARCS administrative and technical control of overseas Wings was contained in the 580th Wing's Movement Order, dated 1 Nov 51. It stated: "This movement constitutes a permanent change of station. After arrival of all units at the overseas destination, they will be relieved from assignment to MATS and will be assigned to United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE) and attached to MATS for logistic support. This decision was also to be applied to the 581st AR&C Wing upon deployment. In a message from Hq, USAF to Hq, MATS, on 21 Nov 51, it was stated that "both operational and administrative control" of the 581st AR&C Wing would go to FEAF on deployment.

As 1951 ended the exact relationship of Hq, ARCS to the overseas units had not been finally clarified, although it seemed likely that liaison visits on technical matters would be permitted. Since no Wing had yet been deployed, the matter remained an academic but nevertheless, from a planning standpoint, important one.

A New Responsibility

An additional mission was assigned to Hq, ARCS as the result of a directive from the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Hq, USAF, to the MATS Commander, dated 26 Jul 51. It directed MATS to develop the capability of balloon flying by 1 Jan 52. This responsibility was delegated to ARCS, which was to develop a Provisional Unit pending the approval of a Balloon Launching Squadron T/O&E. The operational mission of this squadron was to be "the employment of balloons as an efficient and inexpensive aerial delivery of material to potential enemy target areas." Here again all the problems of translating a mission statement into an operational organization faced Hq, ARCS.

HEADQUARTERS ORGANIZATION AND KEY PERSONNEL

Command

On 1 Jul 51 Col. Earle W. Hockenberry commanded ARCS and Col. John R. Kane was Chief of Staff. In April it had been planned that Col. Hockenberry would be made Director of Plans and Col. Millard C. Young, who was slated to arrive in July, would be Chief of Staff. On 23 Jul 51, however, Col. Young assumed command, Hockenberry was made Chief of Staff and Kane became Director of Plans.

Col. Young came to his new assignment fresh from the National War College where he had been a student since Aug 50. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he had been detailed to the Air Corps for flying training in 1931 and held many varied assignments in the intervening years. After the usual Pre-war tours, he spent over three years in the Southwest Pacific during World War II, chiefly with the Air Service Command. In 1946 he became Chief of Staff, Task Force 1.5, Operation Crossroads, and later went to Kwajalein as Chief of Staff and Commander of the Advanced Echelon.

Upon his return from this project, he was assigned in Oct 46 to the Guided Missiles Branch, Research and Development Directorate, Hq, USAF. In Jul 47 he became Chief of the Branch and remained in that position until he entered the War College. This experience proved valuable for the barriers confronting the psychological warfare program of the Air Force were much the as those connected with the guided missiles program in 1946. As the following pages will show, Col. Young had need for all the experience gained from his many and varied assignments to direct the expansion of ARCS in the face of Many obstacles.

Operations

The impact of ARCS expansion was felt most strongly in the Directorate of Operations, whose task was to determine and satisfy operational and training requirements for the ARCS mission. The Director of Operations, Col. Robert W. Fish, had had experience with ARCS- type operations as Commander of the 492nd Bomb Group during World War II. Under his supervision the Directorate proliferated as the training program gathered momentum.

In Jul 51, there were only two Divisions in the Operations Directorate--Training and Communications. Under Major (later Lt. Col.) James L. Atkins the Training Division was expanded into four branches, Flying Training, Technical Training, Special; Training and Psychological Warfare. It was their job to produce and implement an overall ARCS training program, one of the major tasks with which the headquarters was concerned.

The Communications Division under Lt. Col. Everet C. Wogstad was organized with three branches--Airborne Communications, Ground Communications and Communications Security. The airborne and ground communications activities of ARCS units naturally fell in their province, providing many problems which will be discussed later.

The Operations Division, of which Major Andrew B. Creo and then Lt. Col. Robert O. Fricks was Chief, handled the operational problems incident to ARCS training. Its two branches, Materials Assembly and Reproduction, monitored and assisted the development of the squadrons devoted to these activities.

On 29 Nov 51 a new Requirements and Development Division was established under Lt. Col. Norman D. Vaughan. This Division had one of the most interesting missions in the headquarters, for it was charged with the testing and development of aircraft, allied equipment and techniques which could be effectively employed in fulfilling the ARCS mission. In addition, it handled such specialized projects as the development of a new Balloon Launching Squadron.

Intelligence

Of necessity there was a close coordination between the Directorate of Operations and the Intelligence Directorate, for both were concerned with the development of the ARCS psychological warfare training program. Under Col. Robert L. Wright four Divisions were established in the Directorate--Operational Intelligence, Psychological Warfare, Analysis and Evaluation and Historical. Three Divisions, with the exception of Psychological Warfare, performed normal intelligence functions, though naturally conditioned by the psychological warfare mission of the organization.

The Psychological Warfare Division, whose chief was Major Leslie C. Tinany, had a more unique task since its field of operation was new in the Air Force. In conjunction with the Training Division, Directorate of Operations, it had to pioneer a PW training program and provide the materials to execute it. The difficulties which were encountered in this operation bulk large in the ARCS story during the latter part of 1951.

Plans

The Plans Directorate performed the functions normally associated with such a section, but with ARCS' rapid development and many problems these functions assumed more than normal importance.

When Col. Hockenberry became Chief of Staff in Jul 51, Col. Kane was made Director of Plans. In Nov 51, however, he replaced Col. William O. Eareckson as commander of the 580th ARC

Wing and his position in Plans went to Lt. Col. Earl J. Livesay, formerly Deputy Director of Operations.

Under him were three Divisions--Operational Plans, Equipment and Facilities, and Manpower and Organization. Their activities included plans for the deployment of the 580th ARC Wing; a study of the activation and deployment of ARCS tactical wings and the training of replacement personnel; the preparation of a mission statement for the 1300th Air Base Wing; determination of ARCS needs for area and language specialists; and the revision of the headquarters and 1300th Wing Table of Distribution.

Material

A major task of HQ, ARCS during the second half of 1951 was securing the supplies and equipment needed for the training base at Mountain Home, Idaho and for the deployment of the two activated Wings. The accomplishment of this task was the business of the Directorate of Material, of which Major James P. Carey was Acting Director on 1 Jul 51. He continued in this position until the arrival of Col. William R. Johnson, who took over the Directorate on 15 Sep 51.

With only two officers and one airman assigned in July, the Directorate grew to a strength of eight officers and one airman by Jan 52. In the interim, Col. Haven Nichols, whose special interest was Reproduction Squadron equipment, was assigned from the Operations Directorate as Special Projects Officer. The other functions of the Directorate were performed by four Divisions--Services, Maintenance, Supply and Transportation.

In addition to procuring normal supply items, which as the following pages will indicate was a job of major proportions, the Directorate had to develop a TA for the 1300th Training Squadron and secure changes in existing T/O&E's. Following the organization of the 1300th Air Base Wing, Air Installations became an additional responsibility.

Personnel

On 1 Jul 51 Lt. Col. Kenneth B. Falcooner was serving as head of the Personnel Directorate pending the arrival of Lt. Col. Rudolph A. Parker, who took over the Directorate on 25 Jul 51. The latter had extensive experience with difficult personnel problems, first as Personnel Officer, India Division of the "China-Burma-India Hump Operation" of World War II, and later as Chief of Personnel for the Berlin Airlift Task Force on "Operation Vittles." He came to ARCS from the Far East where he had assisted in the establishment of the Combat Cargo Command.

Like the other Directorates, Personnel expanded during the last part of 1951, its functions being discharged by four Divisions--Officer Personnel, Enlisted Personnel, Special Projects, and classification. In addition to handling routine personnel matters, the Directorate had the difficult problem of arranging the return of the 580th Wing personnel from Camp Kilmer, N.J. to Mountain Home when the Wing's deployment was canceled, and it assisted other Directorates in solving specialized personnel problems such as the procurement of language specialists for the psychological warfare program.

Comptroller

On 2 Jul 51, Lt. Col. Robert D. Banker was announced as Comptroller. Unlike other offices in the headquarters, this one had not been organized by 1 Jul since its functions were being handled by HQ, MATS. Once established, however, it grew rapidly and by the year's end consisted of four Divisions--Accounting, Budget, Management Analysis, and Statistical Services.

Besides establishing the Comptroller function in subordinate headquarters and performing normal functions, this section placed emphasis on the development of an integrated management program designed to fully and effectively utilize ARCS resources. Due to the newness of the ARCS-type mission and operations, the need for such a program was particularly acute.

Other Sections

In addition to the offices already mentioned and a Headquarters Squadron, ARCS included the following sections -- Adjutant General, Inspector General, Command Staff Surgeon, and a Public Information Office. Major Mark W. Magnam remained as Headquarters Commandant. Lt. Col. Lynwood P. Grady continued as the Adjutant General, Col. John O. Neal remained Inspector General, and Lt. Col. Courand H. Bothe was assigned as Command Surgeon on 10 Aug 51. When funds for public relations work were cut throughout the Air Force, Capt. Kenneth C. Coberly, the Public Information Officer, continued his work in a newly formed Personnel Services Division.

Reprinted from the "HISTORY OF THE AIR RESUPPLY AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE"

1 July to 31 December 1951

Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 26 Feb 2012
Updated:

Sources