114th COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT

MISSION
The mission of the 114th Communications Flight is to provide trained communications and computer operators, audio-visual, and maintenance personnel to perform communications and computer staff, audio-visual, communications and computer operations and maintenance functions for Air Combat Command flying unit. The Flight will organize, equip, and train to provide services for which they are tasked by Air Combat Command.

LINEAGE
114 Information Systems Flight
Redesignated 114th Communications Flight

STATIONS
Sioux Falls, SD

ASSIGNMENTS
114th Mission Support Group

COMMANDERS
Maj Ed Kunkel, #1986
Maj Dale A. Faeth
Maj. Brent Post

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

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.

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.

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.

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 be-cause of all the support provided to various commanders, visiting inspection teams, and guidance on records management, publications, and files systems.

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 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.

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.

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 person-

nel, 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 communications mission was clarified with the addition often 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.

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.

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.

Air Force Lineage and Honors
Created: 23 May 2020
Updated:

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