

# **148 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON**

## **MISSION**

## **LINEAGE**

148 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

## **STATIONS**

Compton, CA

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Edmund F. Shaheen

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Allotted: 24 May 1946 to Compton ANG Base, California ANG

Assigned: 12 May 1951 at Tuttle, Oklahoma as the 159th AC&WG

Relocated: Tinker AFB, Oklahoma 15 August 1951 transferred to 33rd Air Division on 16 Feb 52

Relieved from active duty: 1 February 1953 and returned to control of California

The 148th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was first constituted and allotted to the Air National Guard on May 24th, 1946. For various reasons, however, the first meeting incident to

the actual formation of the Squadron was not held until March 29th, 1948. This meeting, held at the offices of the Mid-Cities Escrow Co., and preceded by publicity, was attended by a small group of Reserve Officers and former enlisted men. At this point it was definitely ascertained that this area could offer the necessary technical skills and interests to form and house such a group.

The problems facing the small group were multiple and complex. Housing facilities and more personnel were needed before Federal Recognition could be obtained. Under the guidance of Lt. Colonel Richard Andrew, each man embarked on a project to recruit new members. By the first of April definite steps had been taken towards obtaining adequate temporary housing facilities, and the Compton Airport was decided upon as a likely spot for the proposed installations. April 11, 1948 was the date when the Squadron was activated as a unit and all possible speed became necessary in training and enlarging the group. The third meeting, held on April 13th, witnessed the first training program. W/O H. H. Pol-linger gave a talk explaining the over-all operation and mission of the new organization and Capt. Frank A. Saunders spoke on the duties of a controller. At this meeting, Sgt George Simmons of the ,U. S. Army, volunteered the use of the U. S. Army Recruiting Office as a meeting hall for as long a time as it could be of service.

On May 10th, 1948, Colonel Burrows, then Chief of Staff for California Air National Guard, visiting the new group, stated that he intended to wire Washington, D. C., for permission to federally recognize the unit as soon as possible. He further pointed out that any proposed site would have to be inspected before either the National Guard or the ,U. S. Air Force would build an installation. At the conclusion of the meeting, Captain Saunders reported that the unit now had a total, of fifty members.

On May 15th, 1948, a California Air National Guard Inspection Party surveyed the Compton Airport for its possibilities as a Radar Site. It had already been announced that if a temporary plant was to be built, the State of California would finance it, whereas the U. S. Government would provide funds for a permanent location.

On June 7th, 1948, by order of the Adjutant General, State of California, Captain Frank Saunders was appointed Squadron Commander of the 148th. Shortly afterwards the Compton Airport site was approved and the Guard moved to its first home. The site provided an administration building and an open plot of ground for the parking of military vehicles and for drilling purposes. Arrangements were also made with Mr. Earl Woodley, the lessor, for the use of half of an adjoining hangar as a classroom. No time was lost in getting a schedule under way. To facilitate more rapid training, the group was divided into four flights—each flight taking its turn in the different classes offered. Enlisted men who had no former military service were required to take basic training before they could go into technical training.

Several important events took place during the early part of the summer of 1948. On June 14th an Inspection Team from the 4th Air Force inspected the outfit, to determine whether Federal Recognition could be extended.

During this period a Recruiting Station was set up at Compton Junior College for 148th; one

hundred men had joined the 148th. On June 23rd, caretakers were employed for the week-day work of the squadron, and the general maintenance of valuable equipment and properties.

On July 7th, the unit received its first Air Force Instructor, S/Sgt. Grant A. Forbes, from 4th AF, Hamilton Field, California, who was assigned to the 148th, for full time duty as an administrative instructor. On July 13th, Captain Edmund F. Shaheen was assigned as Commanding Officer of the outfit and Captain Saunders became the senior controller, a key position for which he was well qualified. The unit was advised also that the technical staff would be increased with the assignment of a regular Air Force radar specialist to assist in technical instruction. It became obvious that the 148th needed as many instructors as the Air Force could provide, for by this time it had grown to 142 enlisted men and 9 officers.

As the Squadron began to show such definite progress, enlistments began to grow, and the excellent training offered showed its effect. A Motion Picture Projector was acquired and actual pictures having greater value afforded additional advancement in knowledge. The lack of adequate building facilities did not hamper the enthusiasm of the group, for little time was available for such minor matters.

It was also during the early summer of 1948 that the Orange Coast College officials requested that a satellite station of the Air Guard be organized on their campus and offered the facilities of the College, located at Costa Mesa. Since this institution was located on the site of the former Santa Ana Army Air Base and seemed to offer a suitable location, several officers of the 148th investigated the possibilities. However there was a great need for technical equipment and as the 148th was not Federally Recognized itself at that time, it wasn't possible to establish a smaller section of the group. After several weeks of waiting, with numerous visits and much correspondence and cooperation between Captain Shaheen, Lt. Pollinger, and Dr. B. H. Peterson, President of the Board of Trustees and head of the Orange Coast College, and with the approval of Group Headquarters, it was decided that a satellite station at Costa Mesa would be activated as soon as possible. This group was to be composed of 44 enlisted men and one officer, and was to be a self-sufficient Radar station.

For the next several months the basics were hard at work learning the Air Force's methods of accomplishment. Close order drill, military courtesy, and safe-guarding military information were main topics of each drill. During this same period, the veterans of the outfit were taking refresher courses in radio and radar so that they would be in a position to teach these subjects to the basics when they finished their preliminary training and were ready for technical instruction. The training schedule was devised so that class-room subjects were taught on Monday night meetings and drilling was done during the Sunday morning periods. Visits were made periodically by Colonel Andrew, Major Trigg and Captain Parker, of group headquarters in Burbank, and their favorable comments did much to encourage the members of the 148th.

On Sunday morning, September 28th, members heard that the 148th might move from its Compton location, and Captain Shaheen discussed the possibility of moving to North Long Beach. This announcement met with both favorable and unfavorable comments, but no one knew at

that time of the future effort to be made to retain the 148th in Compton, its home city. By October, the basics were entering the home stretch of their training and a survey was made to determine the choices of the men as to sectional and technical training. However, all was not work and in early November members of the unit were given a free ride in C-47's, and as this was the first airplane ride for a number of the men, it served as a great boost to morale. However, the big boost came on November 6th with the notification of Federal Recognition with pay retroactive to June 14th, 1948. This news was received with much enthusiasm as the first payroll could now be prepared.

On December 5th, 1948, the first of a series of visits by honored guests began. On this date the Honorable Clyde Doyle, U.S. Congressman from this district, Mr. Harry Laugharn, Mayor of the City of Compton, and Mr. Thomas Shaheen, a local Civic leader, visited the 148th. Mr. Doyle gave a short talk in which he assured the group of his assistance whenever possible. On December 15th, Mayor Laugharn and the entire Compton City Council inspected the Squadron. Several days later the Council voted to instruct the City Attorney to contact Mr. E. G. "Slim" Kidwell, owner of the Central Airport, in regard to four acres of land north of the Airport to determine whether negotiations could be worked out to take an option on the property to offer it to the Federal Government to build permanent facilities on for the Squadron. The citizens of Compton definitely wanted the 148th to stay in its home city.

December 19th was a day long awaited—for 75 men it was the first pay call and indicated that funds would be coming through regularly. It was such a big event that a newspaper photographer was on hand to take pictures. It wasn't long before pay call came around again, on January 3rd, 1949 and this time it was accompanied by the issuance of uniforms. These were almost as welcome as the pay. Unfortunately, all the men could not be issued uniforms, but more were promised by February.

January 4th was just as big a day for the Squadron—the fight to keep the unit in Compton was under way. Colonel C. S. Smith, publisher of the Herald American, took the initiative in telephone calls and telegrams to the Honorable Clyde Doyle and the Honorable Sheridan Downey in Washington, D.C. The Compton City Council forwarded a telegram to General Curtis D. O'Sullivan, the Adjutant General of California in Sacramento, making a specific offer of the location at Central Airport. It was also pointed out that 80% of the members were from Compton, and the hard work of getting the unit organized and functioning was done by local leaders with the help of the community. Furthermore, 4th Air Force upheld Lt. Pollinger's and Sgt. Tobler's report that the Compton site was far superior for a Radar Installation. The fight spread to the entire City of Compton and the Chamber of Commerce had a pamphlet issued and distributed to the citizens to inform them of the proposed change of site.

Friday, January 9th, 1949, word was received that the Air Guard was to stay and plans were formed for the U.S. Air Force to inspect the four-acre site at the Central Airport, and if suitable, it was contemplated that the Compton City Council's offer for the site would be accepted and 148th would remain in Compton.

On Sunday, January 16th, one hundred men graduated from basic training after each had passed a written examination. This date marked the actual "shaping-up" of the outfit into sections and the relegation of the basic training program from a major to a minor position.

The next drill, January 24th saw the newly assigned personnel taking up their new duties. A radio-school had been set up and the control center started its classes. The new fields boosted up the enthusiasm of the members and training proceeded at a greater speed than was anticipated. On January 31st, the Annual Federal Inspection was held—a team of Air Force Officers from Washington started the inspection early Sunday morning, and training procedures and personnel were thoroughly checked. The Inspection lasted until Tuesday, and the last day special attention was given to the tactical mission of the Squadron. The successful inspection spurred the Compton City Council into purchasing the Central Airport Site.

Meanwhile, a new hangar building was being constructed by Mr. Woodley at the Compton Airport site to be used by the Air Guard until the move could be made to the Central Airport. This construction created some confusion in drill classes but the prospect of additional space overshadowed this by far. By March the 21st the new hangar was complete and ready for use and on March 23rd, 1949, the unit received the first Heavy Radar Set—(SCR-527).

On April 1st, the Federal and State authorities reversed their decision of an earlier date concerning the move to the Long Beach site, and accepted the City of Compton's offer of land at Central Airport. In fact, the need for the new installation was felt to be so urgent that special representatives were sent to get the bids out. The bids specified eight months construction with the building to begin in June. The plant to be built was to consist of an Air-Direction center, a motor pool, and a warehouse. Later the area was to be provided also with a paved parking area, and with the feeling that the unit was to have a permanent home at last, morales reached a new high. Floor plan drawings were studied enthusiastically by all.

The other topic of conversation was the ensuing summer encampment. Many rumors had started as to where and when it was to be held, and a preliminary survey was taken to determine how many members would attend. On April 10th, the rumor was passed around that the encampment was to be held August 7th through 21st at Victorville, California, but the news was not too enthusiastically received. For most of the men this was to be the first encampment and the prospects of a two weeks encampment at Victorville in the midst of desert heat were not pleasant. However, on April 19th, the first dozen graduates of the unit's basic training school received their P.F.C. stripes which factor helped to boost morale; it was more pleasing to go to camp as a P.F.C. than a private. It was also announced at this meeting that the Squadron would assist members in obtaining leave from their employers to attend the encampment.

On April 29th, the bids for the first building of the new Armory were opened and the contract was awarded to John A. Klarquist. Actual work was slated to begin May 20th with the Air Direction, Center to be completed in 120 working days. The radar and other equipment were to be installed as soon as the building was finished, but the motor pool and the warehouse could not be started until more funds were allocated.

During the early part of the summer, supplies by the tons began rolling in and the members were talking more and more about plans for the summer camp. Training was stepped up and many "practice problems" of operations were carried out to help insure the mastering of each job by individual members. Many stories circulated on what to expect at Camp and the vets of the outfit were giving the "green-horns" advice on Army life. Although the encampment seemed far off at the time, days passed rapidly and the time for the camp arrived.

On August 5th, the day before the unit was to leave, a special meeting was called and complete uniforms and equipment were issued. Orders were given that all personnel were to report back at 0830 the following morning. The next day the group assembled as ordered. The motor pool provided transportation from the airport to the P. E. station in downtown Compton, and from there the unit was moved to the Union Station in Los Angeles - arriving at approximately 1200. The ride on the train to Victorville seemed to take much longer than it actually did - some six hours in all.

The first glimpse of Victorville was somewhat disappointing to those men who had envisioned a larger camp - and a neater one. As the Camp had not been in official, full-time operation since 1945, much clean-up work had to be done, and after moving into the assigned barracks and area, the first "G.I." party was held on the following morning. After the area was finally cleaned up everyone was proud of it for it proved to be a good central location for operations as the mess hall was only a block away, the camp swimming pool was across the street, and the PX was also close.

The first of the two weeks of the encampment was taken up with more training. The day started off at 0345 with a race to the over-crowded mess hall to get breakfast finished as soon as possible. After breakfast and after the barracks were well cleaned, the second roll-call of the day occurred at 0530. There the daily bulletin was read, the orders of the day were given - to the groups as a whole at first, and later to the individual sections who were absorbed in specialized training. Work was often over at 1130 but sometimes necessary additional work had to be completed. Lunch was at 1200 and after lunch various recreational activities occupied the time. The swimming pool was a popular place - but most of the men were too tired for much more than a dip - followed by a nap in the barracks . . . where the "air-conditioning" was doubtful at times. Supper was at 1730, but the food was not appealing to the men due to the poor facilities of an over-taxed mess hall. This condition was the major complaint during the first week - but fortunately the situation cleared up considerably during the second.

In the evenings, a motion picture theatre provided entertainment along with the popular PX, but it was always a good bet to' be back at the barracks as soon as possible for much needed rest. The week-end of the 13th and 14th of August was relatively quiet - the lull before the storm - and many men received passes and went into Victorville and other near-by towns. Things began to happen fast and furiously on the following Monday morning. A tactical problem had been planned to test the abilities of the various groups in operation, and the problem was scheduled to start at any time . . . demanding that everyone be on the alert at all times. Each section was

divided into teams so that operations could be carried on 24 hours around the clock.

The problem proceeded through Thursday and over a year's training went into the four days of that active week. Mistakes were evident, but the spirit, the cooperation, and the determination to do as complete a job as possible under the circumstances carried the problem through. Many previously vague details became clear realities and had to be dealt with, despite the terrain and out-dated equipment which were definite handicaps. Friday was spent with last minute details of packing equipment, dismantling the various technical set-ups, and the numerous activities that always occur in such a case. The enthusiasm of returning home rapidly spread through the Squadron, and after one of the longest and most difficult days of the entire period, informal parties were held in the barracks and suggestions were discussed and plans were made as to how next year's camp could be improved upon for two successful weeks of activity.

In returning from Camp the transportation system was reversed -by train to Los Angeles - P. E. to Compton . . . and by truck back to the airport. Everyone was glad to be home - and the return was brightened further by a "welcome-home" party at the home base when wives, mothers, and sweethearts of the members served coffee and cake to the weary returnees.

At the next regular meeting, the following Sunday, members were disappointed to learn that the new Armory had not been completed — strikes and shortages had slowed down construction. The month of September left little time for disappointment as a new T. O. had come through and various members of the outfit had to be reassigned to new sections. With this new arrangement and the experience learned at Camp, the Squadron faced the problem of bettering itself and learning to do the job better, and settled down to a new, vigorous training program.

All through September, the Squadron was reorganizing sections in accordance with a general order redesignating the outfit as a "Type C" Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron. As this redesignation was effective the first of October, and involved streamlining the Squadron into two heavy Radar stations instead of one heavy and two light, the task was not an easy one.

Reorganization lasted through October with everyone at last finding his new spot in the Squadron and training was again established to develop proficiency in the new job.

With the end of October came the new pay scale and the coming December payroll promised to offset, in a measure, the Christmas spending.

All through November the Squadron awaited with growing enthusiasm the final completion of the new Air Direction Center building which was to be its permanent "home". The usual "Red Tape", however, held up the actual moving in until the first drill of January 1950.

The drill on 9 January 1950 marked the "coming out" of the Squadron into the bare concrete building that was a challenge to all sections. Now work could be done that would establish a permanent Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron Base to train men in a concrete way to perform their duties with the Air Force if need be.

The installation of Heavy Radar Equipment, multiple radio communications channels, establishment of offices and a day room all had to be completed before the new building would function as it was designed. All the Squadron equipment and issued supplies were moved to the new location, and the installation was begun. Work was now more satisfying as the men knew that whatever was installed would not have to be removed except for maintenance.

By the middle of March both the warehouse and 3 stall motor pool were completed and the whole base was ready for activation. Plans were then made for a large dedication ceremony sometime in May to invite the public in and formally dedicate the Base as a training site for national defense.

The Compton City Nursery donated some shrubs and trees while the civic organizations agreed to back a drive for landscaping the area before the dedication ceremony.

The Squadron is now training for Summer Encampment to be held from 5 August through 19 August 1950.

The progress that has been made in the past despite the many handicaps, the encouraging aspects of the coming months, in the new Armory, combine to install in each member - officer and airmen alike, the desire to make the 148th the best Squadron of the Air National Guard.

The administration section of the 148th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was organized in late May 1948, upon receipt of orders of the Adjutant General, on activating the unit of the California Air National Guard.

On 14 June the section consisted of Lt. Woodbury, Adjutant, T/Sgt. James B. Johnson, 1st Sgt., Sgt. L. D. Clauson squadron clerk. Although few in number the section worked constantly to initiate and maintain all personnel records, enlistment forms, service records and the ever increasing flow of correspondence incident to the early growth of such a unit.

23 June, 1948, saw the largest work load ever placed upon such a section, for on that date over 100 men were enlisted prior to the draft. Thus instead of 45 individual sets of records there now were over 145 sets of records to be prepared. This mountain of work was slowly attacked by Sgt. Johnson, Sgt. Nolan and Sgt. Galley.

During the week and by 5 August 1948, Sgt. Clauson was added to the week-day force to assist in dealing with the problems. With the issue of 3 desks and two filing cabinets in late August the administrative section finally had adequate work space and facilities. Work was continued through the fall and winter months and by January 1949, the basics' graduated from basic training and administrative section gained additional personnel.

With the spring of '49, came the initial flow of correspondence concerning summer encampment. In preparing for this encampment Sgt. Johnson and his force could often be found after midnight



preparing camp letters, work schedules and the like.

With the appointment of Lt. Lindstrom to the squadron a change was made and Lt. Woodbury was assigned to lend a hand in the ever growing problems of supply. Lt. Lindstrom was assigned to lend a hand in the problems of supply. Lt. Lindstrom was assigned as Adjutant. At summer camp the section "learned by doing" the many administrative problems confronting the squadron. It should be noted that the Radar, Communications and like sections could be split-up to carry out operations enabling those section members to rest properly, but members of the administrative section often found their work was never done as the orderly room was open at all times. Thanks to the section, the 4th Air Force Inspectors rated the squadron highly and even more important, all the members of the squadron were properly cleared and paid before leaving camp.

The Fighter Control Section, under Captain Frank A. Saunders, Senior Controller, was by necessity required to conduct all the training classes from few available materials. No manuals or material were available for such training and therefore it was based on the experience he had, along with the help of S/Sgt Rork and S/Sgt Strohm, both of whom had worked on Radar during World War II. This course of classes covered all phases of Fighter Control and interception of enemy aircraft as well as procedures for the "bringing home" of lost aircraft and any other procedures which could be synthesized. Since all training in the earlier stages was artificial, only the basic fundamentals could be taught. It remained for problems of attack and interception to be worked in conjunction with Fighter and Bomber units of the 62d Fighter Wing of which the 148th A C & W Squadron is a member.

When all the methods had been tried out under actual conditions, the embryo fighter directors found that they had a long way to go in perfecting their skill to the point that they could be considered efficient and capable of actually taking charge of the air defense of Los Angeles.

Since the organization of the 148th had been recognized so late in 1948, the Squadron did not attend camp during the summer of 1948. Training, both synthetic and actual, continued during the fall and winter of 1948 and when Spring came, the Squadron made preparations for their first summer camp at Victorville Air Base, Victorville, California. It was there \_ that the Controllers really got their first baptism of an actual series of raids, and in the hot close atmosphere of a closed Radar van on the desert outside the airbase, the boys acquitted themselves well enough to gain an accolade from the Air Force Officers present to observe the problems. Considering the actual time given to training, they did a remarkable job. It is to the everlasting credit of the new controllers who had taken hold of an unknown skill and mastered it at the rate of two and a half hours a week. The men, who comprised the controllers section, had been bombardiers, fighter pilots, bomber pilots, and navigators. They had been in the Air Force during the war. Lt John Bazan had flown Mustangs over the Rhine; Lt Richard Barnes had been a navigator instructor in the States; Lt Owen W. Moore had been a bombardier; Lt John Barrett had been a bombardier in the 7th Air Force; Lt Ross Howe had piloted B-24s in Italy with the 15th Air Force; and Lt Richard Dana piloted B-29s over the Pacific.

The Radar Section of the 148th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was organized officially 14 June 1948. The original members included 2nd Lt. H. H. Pollinger, assigned as officer in charge of the section, S/Sgt Galley—Radar Repairman during World War II, S/Sgt Caughthran, Cpl Chavez and Pvt Dollins.

The mission of the section was to provide personnel adequately trained to man and maintain all Radar Equipment issued the Squadron and to provide reliable Air Surveillance of any assigned area. Training was established immediately, but consisted entirely of lectures on maintenance and operation of Radar Equipment, as no equipment was available.

It was not until September 1948, that one light weight early warning portable Radar Set and several components of obsolete and unusable Radar Sets were received. The Radar Section then set to work to fabricate an operational Radar Set to train Radar operators. By late fall the construction was completed with fair results at 80 to 95 miles distance.

In January 1949, 25 men were assigned to the Radar section from basic training and training began on the Radar equipment.

By March of that year a large scale Radar weighing several tons and two small units were received. The large scale Radar Unit was designated as the main unit for the Squadron, but could not be operated as the frequency coincided with one of the local Television Stations. Modification was begun at once to change the operation of the set above the maximum for which it was originally designed.

By April 1949, Federal Communications Commission, after exhaustive tests, cleared the operations of the Radar Set, having proved conclusively that it would not interfere with Television reception. Radar operators were then trained on the large Radar Set for operation at summer encampment. During summer encampment the Radar Personnel encountered the problem of operating an obsolete Radar Unit against modern high speed aircraft. The men operated equipment at any and all hours.

With three Radar sites the men and equipment were spread as thin as possible and the Squadron Radar officer was "On the Road" most of the time. The Air Force Instructors Lt H. J. Taylor and S/Sgt Tobler, could often be found at the Radar Site well after midnight, in fact, under their supervision, when Air Force personnel couldn't get Radar equipment in operation, the Radar maintenance section worked for 26 hours continuously to modify and repair the equipment for use.

After camp, training was instituted to cover weaknesses encountered at camp.

In the fall of 1949, still another large scale Radar Set was received, but in view of moving to the new Armory no action, was taken to modify it for operation. When the move was made to the new Armory the Radar section turned carpenter and constructed the Air Direction Center, dismantled the Mobile equipment, raised two 5 ton Antenna's to the roof of the building and

built in the Radar Station as a permanent installation.

From this permanent site the section can further learn the technique of Radar operation and train themselves to take their place within the USAF Radar Net when called upon to do so.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The 148th A C & W Squadron was activated on June 14, 1948, with the Communications Section consisting of Lt. Swift, S/Sgt. Erdie, Sgt. Campbell, Sgt. John Nolan, Cpl. Webster, recruits Raymond Webster and Perry Babcock. Lt. Swift served during the war as a communications officer in an Airdrome Squadron and with the Signal Corps. Cpl. Webster served with a Signal Construction Company and as a Radio Operator Gunner. Sgt. Campbell served during the war as a Radio Operator and Wire Chief in the Signal Corps.

The Section was assigned a corner of the old hangar to use as radio repair and maintenance room. For equipment, they had one radio set, SCR-188, loaned to us by Group Headquarters for use in a Group Net. Approximately 50 discarded radio receivers were donated by leading Radio repair shops in Compton, Lynwood, and Willowbrook. These donated radios were carefully dismantled to obtain parts with which to build training aids. While the recruits were undergoing a course in basic training, the veterans were taking a brush-up course with Sgt. Tobler as their instructor so they might, in turn, instruct those graduating from Basic training.

Lt. Rosenberger, a qualified Air Force Communications Officer, joined the Squadron in December, 1948. The training schedule for basic communications personnel was initiated under Sgt. Ellis and S/Sgt. Galley and the Basics started toward a goal of complete communications training for all men in the Section. In addition to the theory classes, a code class was conducted by M/Sgt. Webster to train radio operators. One of his first students, Cpl. Cheney, has advanced to Assistant Radio Operator under T/Sgt. Campbell. Among the original men in the basic radio course, Cpl. Cesar and Cpl. Frerking (now of the radar section) are attending an advanced Air Force School for further training in Radar maintenance.

Upon completion of the new hangar, which was to serve as rooms for all classes, the whole program took on a more academic aspect and training went ahead at a rapid rate.

Of note in regards to promotions were: Cpl. Webster was now a M/Sgt, Sgt. Campbell a T/Sgt., Sgt. Ellis a T/Sgt, Pvt. Cheney a Cpl., Pvt. T. E. Smith a Cpl, Pvt. Webster a Cpl., Sgt. Medina a S/Sgt, and at least one stripe to all others with only a few exceptions. The proverbial "Gold Bricks" were hard to find.

In August, 1949, the Squadron went to Victorville Air Base for the annual 15 day encampment. The communications section was well represented having 16 men and 2 officers present at camp. The first week of the encampment was spent in setting up the equipment. The highlight of the encampment was a test during which operations were carried out on a 24 hour basis. The whole operation was very successful with everyone doing his part. What was lacking in technical knowledge was more than made up for in cooperation and willingness to work.

In September, shortly after the return from Victorville, due to a change in organization, Lt. Swift was transferred from communications to the Control section.

More equipment was now on hand and this is now being installed in the new Armory by M/Sgt. Webster. With encampment in the very near future the emphasis has been shifted to practical training.

In February, 1950, T/Sgt. Ellis received his Reserve Commission and was assigned as Message Center Officer and assigned the task of organizing a Message Center. He selected S/Sgt. Raymond and Private Fritz for Message Center Clerks and started a training program.

The communications section also has its "off duty" station of the Military Amateur Radio System (MARS) under the direction of Lt. H. H. Pollinger and operated by T/Sgt. DoUins (AF6RFQ).

The Motor Section has a dual responsibility. It is charged with furnishing both transportation and power for the squadron. These functions are indispensable if the squadron is to fulfill its Control and Warning missions.

Drivers, Mechanics and Powermen are specialized personnel within the Motor Section. First and Second echelon maintenance and repair are performed in addition to primary operation of the vehicles and power units.

The first location of this group was a rectangular piece of land at the Compton Airport. Security consisted of a woven wire fence and tools and work facilities were non-existent. Under these conditions, the functioning of the motor pool was a major achievement.

In spite of the adverse conditions, eighteen vehicles were received and made ready for operation in the period from 8 Dec. 48 to 3 March 50. These consisted of Radio Vans, Two and one half Ton Cargoes, Jeeps and an ambulance. Fuel and other trailers were also received and made ready for operation.

Power units range from small one cylinder two cycle gasoline engines driving generators used for smallest radar and radio sets to a class 185 diesel unit generating twenty-five kilowatts of electricity. There are twenty-three power units in all capable of producing all the electricity needed by the entire squadron under field conditions.

The Motor Section has its share of the original thirty men who made up the Squadron. Sgt. G. W. Clark of the permanent party was among these pioneers as were Cpl. E. P. Rivas, Pfc. G. L. Bonfadini, Pfc. J. R. Nicholson and Pvt. M. W. Twiggs. Command of the Section is vested in Captain August H. Zellmer assisted by S/'Sgt. Frank G. Miklich

Today we occupy a new 3000-square-foot motor shop with surrounding parking area of 10,000 square feet. New tools and equipment have greatly added to our efficiency and morale as well

and we are rapidly reaching our set goal for operations.

The supply section was officially activated 14 June 1948. Its mission was that of requisitioning, posting, storing, issuing all supplies and to keep the Commanding Officer informed at all times of the status of supply. Items required by the Squadron were AF equipment, QM, ORD, Signal, Engineering, and Medical supplies required to carry out the training of the Squadron. S/Sgt Edgar Hudson is in charge.

The Squadron was originally located in half a hangar on the Compton Airport. The Supply section was allotted one corner approximately six by twelve feet in area. As the Squadron moved into a new hangar and supplies began to pour in, space was increased 20 times. Prior to the move to the new Armory even this space was completely filled and had overflowed until nearly the whole of the hangar was crammed with supplies and equipment.

The first supplies received by the Squadron were office supplies,, desks and chairs, and materials necessary to organize an A C & W Squadron. It was not until 1 November 1948 that uniforms for the men were received. Prior to this tune the men in the Squadron had provided themselves with uniforms as best as they could with what they had left over from their recent tours in the various services. Most of the men were veterans, those who were not, drilled in civilian clothing. With the arrival of the uniforms and their issue by the supply section the Squadron began to take on the appearance of a military unit.

During the first of 1949, supplies of all type flooded into the crowded facilities of the supply section, the completion of the new warehouse was welcome news.

Our present warehouse is the last word for a unit of this size and type. It is a unit complete in itself with nearly 10,000 square feet of usable floor space, of an arms vault, bulk storage, base supply, rubber storage, wool storage, instrument storage, an issue counter, office space and a steam heating unit for the entire building. There is a loading dock the entire length of the building. Steel bins to systematically store the property were received recently and will be installed in the near future. With the warehouse complete and the bins installed it will be possible to properly store and protect all the equipment issued to this unit.

Having progressed from a 6'x12' corner to a complete warehousing unit in less than 2 years, the Supply section feels it is capable of fulfilling its mission in the Squadron.

On Saturday, August 6, 1949, approximately 155 eager Airmen and Officers reported to the old 148th A. C. & W. Headquarters located on West Olive, Compton, California, and gathered together last minute per-sonal items and supplies in preparation for the 148th's first annual two week training period to take place at Victorville Air Force Base, Victorville, California.

At 10:00 A.M. G.I. trucks started transporting the Airmen to Compton, where they boarded the Pacific Electric train for Los Angeles Union Depot, and there joined the 147th A.C. Squadron on special Union Pacific cars which were pre-arranged for transporting troops to Victorville.

Box lunches were served en route and by 17:00 that evening the train had arrived at Victorville Air Force Base.

Immediately upon arrival, all Airmen were marched to their barracks, area of which had been previously worked out by the advance party. Housekeeping was started and within a very short time the men were reasonably comfortable and ready to turn their thoughts to the two weeks training period ahead of them.

Scheduled working hours were from 4:30 A.M. to 12:00 N; however, the majority of the Airmen and Officers found themselves working from 16 to 18 hours a day, not from choice in most cases, but from necessity. Two portable Radar sites were set up, one at a point called Helendale and the other called El Mirage, both of which were located approximately 10 to 15 miles on two sides of the Air Base. Mock Fighter and Bomber attacks were frequent over the Base. Airmen from 148th along with Airmen from 147th, intercepted them by Radar and in turn relayed the attacking squadron's position to the Fighter Squadron Headquarters at the Air Base, who in turn took to the air to intercept them.

The weather was very hot generally throughout the two weeks with desert breezes blowing in the afternoons to help prevent the heat from becoming unbearable. Evenings and nights were very pleasant, and generally cold, at least to the degree that the majority of the men slept under blankets.

On Saturday, August 13th, 148th participated in a wing parade or review before many distinguished dignitaries, the most prominent being Governor Warren of California and Governor Don Garvey of Arizona. Official Air Force Rank was very heavy with many visiting Generals.

After the parade, around 12:00, week-end passes were given to the majority of Airmen who desired them for trips to nearby towns. Organized trips on G.I. trucks to Big Bear and San Bernardino and other points of interest were also arranged.

Entertainment during the two week period consisted of a variety of choices. There were competitive ball games between different Squadrons, swimming pools, and of course, the usual evening movies and frequent parties in the N.C.O. Club and Post Exchange.

The second week followed approximately the same pattern as the previous week with the training becoming more intensive, the food improving slightly and morale generally improving. At approximately 12:00 on the 20th of August, the Squadron boarded the train for return trip, and arrived Compton at approximately 16:00. After disposing of last minute details and equipment, the Airmen were excused, thus ending a successful, but unforgettable 1949 summer encampment.

In March, 1949, authorization was received to organize a Satellite Radar Unit of the 148th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron; 1st Lt. Paul K. Huff, was assigned the duty officer in charge. A two

story barracks was leased from Orange Coast College for the use of the detachment as headquarters, classrooms and training area.

Early in April the strength of the unit was 10 airmen and 1 officer. As the total authorization for the unit was 44 airmen and 1 officer, a re-cruiting program was started to build up the strength of the unit. Re-cruiting was the main objective throughout the early part of the unit's existence and continued through May and June of 1949. Some technical training in the form of Radio Code classes were carried out by S/Sgt. Aaby, air technician at that time.

In July, 1949 the unit attended drills at Compton, receiving training on better equipment and under more qualified instructors to prepare them for the coming summer encampment.

By August, the unit consisted of 14 airmen and 1 officer. Attendance at encampment, 6 August through 20, 1949, showed 10 airmen and 1 officer. During the encampment period the Costa Mesa Unit operated a complete Radar Station as a separate detachment. This Radar Station was sited near Helendale, California, approximately 25 miles from the Victorville Air Force Base. The equipment operated was AN/TPS-2 early warn-ing Radar Set, a Model SQ Radar Set and a SCR-188 Radio Set for communications with the Squadron operations at Victorville.

Despite insufficient equipment, extreme heat, uncertain meal times and mechanical break-downs, all personnel from the Costa Mesa Unit wholeheartedly cooperated in making the operation an enthusiastic if not complete success.

September drills were again held at Costa Mesa, this period saw many changes including installations of chain link material over doors and win-dows for security, installation of a Radio Station and receipt of a Model SQ Radar. Training was now conducted in Radio, Radar and Administration. Training continued through the fall months with an increased auth-orization to bring the total to 98 airmen and 10 officers. Recruiting was now a major problem as the strength was only 1 officer and 19 airmen.

At the beginning of 1950, changes were made in the authorization for air technicians, eliminating the spot held by S/Sgt. Abby, and authorizing three other air technician positions.

By the middle of February all air technician positions were filled and training and recruiting moved forward spurred by the receipt of two vehicles, more Radar equipment and partitions for classrooms. About this time the Orange County Fair Board indicated their interest in the unit by offering to lease four barracks which could accommodate the total complement of 98 airmen and 10 officers. As Orange Coast College could not supply additional housing for the enlarged detachment, negotiations were entered into with Orange County Fair Board.

The Costa Mesa detachment joins with the personnel at Compton in dedicating the new Armory to the cause of training young civilian Soldiers for National Defense.

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USAF Unit Histories  
Created: 19 Feb 2021  
Updated:

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