

# 166 COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT

## **MISSION**

The flight's mission is the planning, management, operations, and maintenance of information technology networks (local/wide area networks) and non-secure and secure communications using the latest commercial digital technology.

The peacetime mission of the 166th CF was to provide normal Communication/Electronic staff support for its host flying unit, provide required communications services and train its personnel to meet its wartime mission. The wartime mission of the 166th CF was to augment personnel in support of fixed, base-type communications. To accomplish this two-fold mission, the new 166th CF was allocated two officers and twenty-seven airmen. Because the 166th CF is part of the Delaware Air National Guard, it has, in addition to its Federal mission, a State mission. The state mission of the 166th CF is to maintain a ready, organized, trained unit that, under orders from State or Federal authorities, can protect life, property and preserve public order and safety.

## **LINEAGE**

177 Communications Flight, activated, 16 Jun 1966  
Redesignated 166 Information Systems Flight, 1 Jul 1985  
Redesignated 166 Communications Flight, 1 Dec 1986  
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1993  
Activated 30 Aug 1994

## **STATIONS**

New Castle ANGB, DE

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

166 Mission Support Group

## **COMMANDERS**

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

The flight supported Operation Noble Eagle in 2001-2002, AEF deployments since 2002 in multiple locations throughout the world supporting both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in 2008. Supported state missions included Hurricane Rita support in 2004, Operation Jumpstart in 2006, and Hurricane Gustav in 2008. The unit received "excellent" and "outstanding" ratings on its Air Force Operation Readiness Inspection in 2004 and the Air Force Unit Compliance Inspection in 2006. The unit also achieved full compliance during Air Mobility Command COMSEC inspections in 2006 and 2008.

At the request of Maj. William G. Irwin, personnel officer for the 166th Tactical Air Group, a Federal Recognition Board mandated that a communications flight be formed to serve the Delaware Air National Guard. As a result of the of the Board's mandate, the 166<sup>th</sup> Communications Flight was established as an individual functionary unit on 6 Jun 1966. Maj Franklin Welch, a Communications Electronics Staff Officer, was appointed the unit's first Commander. Prior to the formation of the 166th CF as a separate unit, base communications were maintained by the 166th CAMS.

Just as the technologies of communication have changed since 1966, when the 166th CF was first formed, the Flight has adapted to meet these changes. The first major change came about in September 1981, when the 166th CF was designated as a "COB/BSE" unit. COB/BSE is an acronym for Collocated Operating Base and Base Support Element. Again the 166th CF maintained a dual mission (wartime and peacetime). With this new designation came added responsibilities which were separate and distinct for each of the elements. This necessitated a separate and distinct wartime mission for each side of the house. As a result of this new designation, the 166th CF became two separate, almost mirrored, elements within the same unit. The peacetime mission remained the same for the 166th CF along with its now two elements. The wartime mission changed: Collocated Operating Base - The wartime mission of the 166th CF (COB) is to provide communications, using prepositioned equipment, to flying units deployed at overseas locations. Base Support Element - The wartime mission of the 166th CF (BSE) is to provide 24-hour per day operations of normal, in-place communications services using in-place equipment (communications center, telephone switchboard, and radio operations). Maintenance capabilities include telephone (inside and outside plant), crypto, and radio. Support functions include COMSEC accounting, frequency management, planning,

programming, and administration.

The second and most recent change to the 166 CF has been its name change. In 1985, the 166 CF was restructured and is now known as the 166<sup>th</sup> Information Systems Flight. This restructuring was a result of the Air Forces' efforts to streamline the communications area. The COB/BSE structure remained intact, now the 166 ISF includes the Data Automation section that was formerly attached to the 166<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Squadron. Now the 166 ISF encompasses the entire communications arena, from data automation to telecommunications, from telephone operations to radio operations and from crypto maintenance to telephone and radio maintenance.

The 166<sup>th</sup> ISF has never been a unit to take second seat to anyone. Whenever there was a job to be done the 166<sup>th</sup> ISF was always the first in volunteering time and energies to complete any task called upon to perform. By being a unit that is always prepared to go that one step further, the 166<sup>th</sup> ISF has achieved several firsts. This not only reflects the true dedication of the members of the 166<sup>th</sup> ISF, but shows the 166<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Group as one the standard bearers in the Nation.

The 166 ISF was the first Air National Guard unit in the nation to go operational on the DCT1000, the original Autodin network of the Air National Guard. So high was the 166 ISF's level of performance, it was determined that this unit would set the operational standards and procedures for all other ANG units employing this system.

During annual field training for FY'84, conducted at MacDill AFB, Florida, the 166 ISF supported the 2198<sup>th</sup> Communications Group and trained with the Joint Communications Support Element, a direct support group to the Pentagon. As a result of the superior performance by the 166<sup>th</sup> ISF's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Specialist section a special citation by the Commander of the JCSE was given for the inspection and repairing of JCSE equipment, that had been up until then, deemed unserviceable. According to JCSE personnel, this citation had never before been presented to guardsmen.

---

USAF Unit Histories  
Created: 12 Mar 2021  
Updated:

#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
Unit yearbook. *166 Tactical Airlift Group, Delaware Air National Guard, 40th Anniversary, 1946-1986.*  
Unit yearbook. *166 Airlift Wing, Delaware Air National Guard, 50th Anniversary, 1946-1996.*