

616 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

616 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron
Inactivated, 1 Jan 1979

STATIONS

Wasserkuppe, West Germany

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

ZAt this point in the development of the European TAGS, a parallel situation developed in that the 526th TCG was activated at Spangdahlem AB on 1 November 1953. Its operational component units were the 619th TCS (Toul-Rosiers AB, France), the 604th AC&WS (Freising, Germany), the 615th AC&WS (Pruem, Germany), and the 616th AC&WS (Ulm, Germany).

1 November 1968, several of the Central Region's fixed radar sites came under the wing's control as the 86th Air Division relinquished responsibility for its three subordinate AC&WS squadrons. These fixed elements were the 606th AC&WS (a reporting post at Doebraberg), the 615th AC&WS (a control and reporting post at Birkenfeld Air Station), and the 616th AC&WS (a control and reporting post at Wasserkuppe). This transfer brought together the 412L fixed NATO air defense system with the 407L mobile air control network. Several other significant events also occurred on 1 November 1968 as wing FACPs began converting to the new "two dimensional" TPS-44 radars and several detachments were activated.

On 4 October 1977, the 603rd TCS started an extensive four week training program for the final 13 newly arrived TPS-43E radars. Each unit in the wing practiced setting up their own radar at the 603rd's technical site in Mehlingen. This period proved to be a busy time for the 603rd TCS which, along with the 615th and 616th AC&WS', participated in an E-3A AWACS demonstration in November and December 1977. The purpose of this demonstration, which proved to be very impressive to NATO officials who observed the activity, was to advertise the advanced capabilities of the E-3A to provide improved air surveillance for the European theater and its ability to down-link data through the ground environment system.

In another key development, a change of command ceremony was held on 31 December 1978 which passed control and ownership of the Wasserkuppe 412L fixed radar site from the wing to the German Air Force. This concluded the transfer of various 4 ATAF 412L sites to the Germans that had been planned since 1959. On the next day, the 616th AC&WS was officially inactivated.

616th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron/Tactical Control Wing, Provisional

Redesignated: 2 July, From the 581st Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion.

Commander: Capt. C.H. McIsaac

Redesignated: 1 August 1946, the 318th Fighter Control Squadron was Redesignated 616th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron and assigned to 526th Aircraft Control and Warning Group.

Ft Shafter, Hawaii

Subordinate to: 1 August 1946, 526th Tactical Control Group

2 July, 1946 – 11 December, 1948

Kahuku, Hawaii

See 123rd Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron. 1 November 1953, Became the 616th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron.

Located: 1954, Neu-Ulm, Germany

Subordinate to: 526th Tactical Control Group, Twelfth Air Force, USAF

Note: January-June 1957, Designated Tactical Control Wing, Provisional

Located: 1958, Flandern Kaserne, Ulm, Wasserkuppe, Germany; main operational site located at Turkheim, Germany

Mission: 1958, To operate and maintain a control Reporting Post in the Southeastern Track Production Area as defined by 501st Tactical Control Wing Operations Order 202-58, which reports to, and is under the operation control of the 604th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron Control Reporting Center. To operate and maintain a Mobile Reserve Control Reporting Center. The function of this unit is to provide a limited CRC function when required. It is equipped and organized so as to be capable of deployment on a highly mobile basis as an individual unit. This facility is normally operated on an eight hour per day, five days a week basis and if placed on 24 hour operation augmentation of personnel can be expected.

Personnel: 1958, 51 Officers, 456 Airmen, and 7 civilians

Note: Main operating site was located at Turkheim, Germany

Subordinate to: 1958, 526th Tactical Control Group, Twelfth Air Force, USAF

Note: Operations Order 202-58 with code name "New Look," directed the realignment of the existing Tactical Control System operated by the 501st TCW. The complete realignment was implemented through a series of directives published by the 501st TCW. The end result of the realignment was a three track production area system. The transition into the realignment system required a period of four months. The realignment as pertains to this unit, changed the mission from the operation of a Control and Reporting Center to a Control and Reporting Post. Upon making this change, the operational requirements and functions of this unit were greatly reduced. The final posture of the realignment resulted in the squadron operation location at Turkheim functioning as a CRP and reporting surveillance information only to the Southeastern Track Production Area CRC located at Freising (604th AC&W Squadron).

Relocated: November 1958, Boeloke Kaserne, Germany

Commanders:

1946, Captain C.H. Mclsaac

1958, Lt. Colonel Edwin L. Murrill

Equipment: MPS-14, MPS-11; 1958, AN/MPS-11, AN/MPS-14, AN/MPS-16, AN/GPS-4

Detachment 1

Located: 1955 -1956, Freising, Germany

Detachment 2

Located: 1955 - 1956, Hegenaberg, Germany

Detachment 4

Located: 1955 - 1956, Landshut, Germany

Operating Location 1

Located: 1958, Lauterberg, Germany

Operating Location 6

Located: 1958, Pforzheim, Germany

Mission: 1958, Mobile Reserve Control and Reporting Center/CRC

Equipment: 1958, AN/MPS-11

Harold S. Wojtaluk

We were stationed at Donaldson AFB, Greenville, S.C. until 17 OCT 1952 when we went by train to Newport News, thence to Stuttgart via Wiesbaden aboard the MSTS General Hershey. Upon arriving in Germany we first went to Nellingen Army Base near Stuttgart for about a month until Flandernkaserne in Ulm was ready for occupancy by US Forces. We (123rd) moved to Flandernkaserne and then I was with Joplin Detachment #1 in Freising alongside the 604th AC&W and a friend of mine was with Joplin Detachment #3 in Wels, Austria. Lt. Col. Zed Barnes was CO when I left in 1955

Joe Rushton

It is sad to see that no one seems to care about the old 616th. I have remained in touch with two other former members of the squadron, lost touch with two others, ran into one other some years ago, but don't know what became of him. Of course, we all referred to the place as "Heartbreak Hotel," a direct reference to the Elvis Presley hit song.

Also, worked for a while with a former member of TACONWG (Prov) that was actually at the Tuerkheim CRC for one day while a new radar was being delivered and installed while I was there. We met almost fifty years later, had lived within a few miles of one another all that time and never knew it. The others have been in touch with a few additional members of 616th, but no one wants to remember those days.

I came into the 616th early in July 1955, not long after the activation of TACONWG. We had just pulled our detachment back from Wels, Austria. If memory serves me correctly that was Det. 1, which you might say merged with 604th at Freising. Det 2 was at Regensburg and Det 4 was at Landshut. Our headquarters was at Flandern Kaserne, Ulm, Germany with the operational site at Tuerkheim. We were Southern Sector CRC, Freising (604th) was a CRP and the other two were RP's

I can't recall who the Commander was at that time, but Col. George Armstrong came in shortly after I did and was there when I left. We endured three "manuevers" under his command. All three named Operation Strong Arm. The second was in October 1956, during the Hungarian Revolution and the Anglo-French-Israeli incursion into Suez. The other two don't count, they were of no importance.

The organization had begun life as an Air Guard outfit, 123rd ACW, activated at the outbreak of hostilities in Korea while we were still afraid that the USSR might take advantage of our weakness and make an effort to drive through to the English Channel at the same time. They shipped out by boat from Charleston, South Carolina sometime in late 1950 or early 1951. A few of the 123rd's hold overs were still with us when I came in, mostly awaiting administrative procedures of one sort or another.

Late in 1954 or early 1955, the 123rd and its sister squadrons were converted to regular Air Force units. As I recall the story, 526th TACONGP had been the headquarters for the Guard units.

As time went on, we opened Det. 6 at Pforzheim as a back-up CRC for periods of maintenance, etc., but no real day-to-day function. We never knew, but assumed that it would replace Tuerkheim when that facility was returned to the Germans. And we all KNEW the site was going to be turned over very soon. Commanding officer at Det. 6 was Major Edwin L. Jalozinski who had been a C&E officer at Tuerkheim before his promotion and reassignment. It was late in 1958 that the 616th was disbanded and at least some of the scope dopes from Operations were reassigned to Berlin.

Gene Sanderson

I was stationed in Ulm with the 616th AC&WS from Sept 1958 to Sept 1961. I was in radar ops and trained German AF personnel when they took over the station around 1960. I remember Flandern Kaserne then Boelcke Kaserne. Flandern Kaserne was the headquarters (of the 616th AC&WS) at the time when I arrived, then in early 1959 we moved to Boelcke Kaserne. Boelcke was much nicer and larger.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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