

## 1961 COMMUNICATIONS GROUP



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

The 141 Airways and Air Communications Service Squadron designated, 14 May 1948  
Organized, 1 Jun 1948  
Redesignated 1961 Airways and Air Communications Service Squadron, 1 Oct 1948  
Redesignated 1961 Airways and Air Communications Service Group, 8 Oct 1959  
Redesignated 1961 Communications Group,  
Redesignated 1961 Information Systems Group, 1 Aug 1984  
Redesignated 1961 Communications Group, 1 Nov 1986

### STATIONS

Clark AFB (later, Clark AB) Philippines

### ASSIGNMENTS

72 Airways and Air Communications Service Group (later, 1811th AACS Group)  
1810 Airways and Air Communications Service Group, 1 Nov 1954  
Pacific Airways and Air Communications Service Area, 1 Nov 1957  
Far East Airways and Air Communications Service Region, 8 Oct 1958  
Pacific Airways and Air Communications Service Area, 18 Sep 1959  
Southeast Asia Communications Region 8 Jan 1962  
Pacific Communications Area (later, Pacific Communications Division; Pacific Information Systems Division; Pacific Communications Division), 30 Jun 1971

### COMMANDERS

Maj Allan C. Forbes, 1 Oct 1948  
Maj Hawley W. Martin, 1949  
Maj Eugene E. Skinner, Nov 1949

Col Cecil V. Broadway, 1951  
Maj Deward W. Zumbro, 1952-?  
Lt Col Sidney A. Goldman, Dec 1959  
Col Howard L. Byerley, Apr 1960  
Lt Col Tom B. Foulk, Jr., Jun 1962  
Lt Col Donald M. Orth, 1963  
Lt Col Lynn W. Ruddick, 25 Aug 1963  
Col Robert J. Hennessey, 5 Mar 1965  
Lt Col Richard S. Harder, 24 Jun 1965  
Col Marshall C. Brown, Jr., 9 Aug 1965  
Col Elmer N. Tyndall, 1 Jul 1966  
Col James H. Terrell, Jr., 20 Jul 1967  
Lt Col Eugene M. R. Olsen, 5 Jun 1969  
Col Harry L. Wystock, 21 Jul 1969  
Col Ralph G. Backes, 20 Sep 1970  
Col Tom B. Foulk, Jr., 26 Jan 1972  
Col Louis P. Cyr, 8 Aug 1972  
Col Harry Jaffers, 4 Feb 1974  
Col Walter H. Petrie, 29 Jul 1975  
Col Melville E. Eaton, Jr., 16 Jul 1976  
Col William P. Drugan, 2 Aug 1976  
Col Harold A. Hornbarger, 24 Mar 1978  
Col John R. McWilliams, 2 Jul 1979  
Col David J. Martinson, 9 Jun 1980  
Col Vincent Majkowski, 2 Apr 1982  
Col Horace M. Brawley, 13 Jun 1983  
Col William D. Rothe, 25 Feb 1985  
Col Terrance E. Severson, 3 Jul 1986  
Col John L. Woodward, Jr., 29 May 1987  
Col Alfred R. Garcia, 18 Jun 1989

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Oct 1966-31 Dec 1967

1 Jan 1980-31 Dec 1981

1 Feb 1983-31 Jan 1985

1 Jul 1987-30 Jun 1989

Republic of Vietnam GC with Palm  
1 Apr 1966-28 Jan 1973

PRPUC  
21 Jul 1972-15 Aug 1972

### **EMBLEM**

The mailed fist represents Pacific Air Force commanders who exercise the command and control of aerospace forces in the Western Pacific. The two reins represent forms of aerospace communications through which control of aerospace forces is provided. The lightning bolt is symbolic of the air-to-ground communications services provided around the clock by the group's operations and maintenance personnel. The control tower rising above the horizon signifies the safe, orderly, and continuous flow of air traffic through the Western Pacific skies. The constellation Orion symbolizes the navigational aids in the Pacific which provides guidance for pilots, sailors, and astronauts. The satellite is representative of all telecommunications linking command and control as an integral part in the defense of the group's area of responsibility. The world portrays the global aspect of the group and the Air Force.

### **MOTTO**

Serving with Pride

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Communication among the Ash Warriors was superb, thanks to the brick network maintained by the 1961st Communications Group and some innovative phone connections they made. Controls and the central brick station were located in the Dau command post, which had its own electrical generators, so the net never went off the air. The CAT, the wing commander, and Thirteenth Air Force commander were always in touch with the troops. When the decision was made to move to the alternate command post, telephone technicians installed a visual display unit (VDU) and a remote switchboard at Dau. The equipment allowed technicians to control telephone connections and routings on the entire base from a remote location.

Communication beyond the base was a different story. The ash and mud flows disabled the satellite facility that was the nerve center of military communications to the outside world. Fortunately, the communications commander foresaw the possibility of losing use of the satellite facility and installed an alternate piece of equipment in the Dau command post. The alternative system could not handle the same volume of messages as the primary, but throughout the days after the major eruptions, the base was still able to receive and transmit official message traffic."

By nightfall on June 16, the small security force that returned to Clark was bedded down in the Dau command post. They went to bed very tired and very dirty. Water buffaloes, some of which had been filled from the fire department's cache of chlorinated water, were stationed at strategic

locations. The water was only for drinking, however, and bathing with potable water was not permitted. The gritty ash coated their bodies under their BDUs. The abrasive stuff rubbed ankles raw inside their boots and reddened skin under their belts. It caked in their hair (some called it "cement-head"), and many wrapped their heads in bandanas, motorcycle gang-style, to keep the stuff out. The abrasive ash was particularly hard on the security forces' weapons. There was no way to handle the weapons without rubbing the ash on the metal finish. The abrasion quickly wore away protective lubrication and the weapons started to rust in the humid tropical air.

By the end of the day on June 19, the entire mission essential force had returned to Clark from the college. Eagle brought them back in manageable increments. Security police and engineers who could work the electrical and water problems returned first. Support personnel followed. Everyone pitched in to shovel roofs. Clever carpenters constructed make-shift "ash pushers" from plywood and scrap lumber to make the roof clearing operation faster and easier. The CAT submitted an emergency request for snow shovels. One officer commented that he shoveled ash until he "could not stand up straight." Their efforts were more than busy work; buildings and roofs continued to collapse from the stress of the heavy ash and the shaking from earthquakes that frequently rolled through the base.

The 1961st Communications Group was tasked with removing the communications and computer systems supporting Clark Air Base, Wallace Air Station, and Camp O'Donnell. These removals also affected remote microwave radio repeater sites at Tinang, Santo Tomas, Angat, Villamor, and the US Embassy in Manila. The 1961CG created a dedicated staff of four people to complete the planning process and monitor system removals. A 20-person removal team was also organized. To provide removal expertise in the specific areas of heavy radar and antennas, the assistance of a 12-person engineering and installation (EI) team was obtained from the 1837E15, Yokota AB, Japan. Removal time lines were established based on mandated drawdown dates, communications requirements supporting base closure efforts, systems threatened with destruction, and systems not required. Most communications-computer systems received only minor damage and were totally recoverable. The only equipment not recovered due to corrosive effects of the ash were the antennas which were all abandoned in place.

Removal of all Wallace AS communications-computer systems was accomplished by 1961 CG, OL-F personnel with minor support of Clark people. Camp O'Donnell equipment was removed. Both installations were completed by 10 Sep 91, with only minor difficulties.

Two communications areas, the satellite communications facility and the high frequency (HF) radio receiver site, were considered in danger of total destruction by high waters and hot mudflows. The satellite communications area, being closer to the volcano and a river, was the most threatened facility. This facility received major water and mud damage to the solid state uninterruptible power supply area, due to a collapsed roof, but the actual system received only minor water damage and was identified as salvageable. To ensure this \$29 million facility was salvaged, the maximum removal time was established as 30 days and a specialized Army team from Ft Huachuca AZ was gained through coordination with Defense Communications Agency (DCA) and PACAF. Eighteen personnel arrived on 15 Aug 91. Local communications personnel coordinated with transportation,

civil engineering, and removal team personnel to provide cranes, forklifts and trucks. Complete system removal was finished on 9 Sep 91. Removal of the HF facility was simultaneously accomplished by 1961 CG and EI people without any significant problems.

Minor adjustments to the removal schedule were continuously made throughout the process, All changes resulted in the earlier removal of equipment to reflect loss of missions or to protect equipment from vandalism. Examples were the decision to close the radar approach and control facility (RAPCON) and reduce HF radio and weather operations. Closure of the RAPCON allowed the radar and radio equipment, 10 sea-vans of equipment, to be removed 45 days ahead of the original schedule. This permitted the early release of 15 people. Reducing HF radio and weather operations allowed the shipment of 6 vans of equipment 60 days early, release of 4 people, and saved the equipment from destruction by vandals breaking into our remote areas.

Last day communications needs were identified as worldwide telephone, message, land mobile radio, and limited high frequency radio capabilities. Telephone service was provided by replacing the \$7.5 million, DMS 100 switch with a smaller, 600 line, switch previously ordered to support base requirements. Switch cut-over was accomplished without incident on 6 Nov 91. Crates, boxes, and packing materials were pre-positioned for all remaining equipment to facilitate removal on 26 Nov 91. Removal, packing, and disposition of over 31 different communications-computer systems valued in excess of \$140 million were accomplished in less than 120 days.

During the Clark Air Base closure process, the 1961 CG provided training to Philippine Air Force personnel. Fifteen PAF personnel received training in the Air Traffic Control tower. This training covered tower procedures and radio operations. Our operations personnel provided training to two people on switchboard operations. Training on switch maintenance, cable repair, land mobile radio repair, and technical control repair was provided to 30 people by our maintenance branch.

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USAF Unit Histories

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#### Sources

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

Major Command history. A Salute to Air Force Communications Command Leaders and Lineage. Office of Air Force Communications Command History. Scott AFB, IL. 1 Oct 1990.

*Ash Warriors*. C.R. Anderegg.