

## 6948<sup>th</sup> ELECTRONIC SECURITY SQUADRON



6948th SSM GAFB, Texas

6948th TanSonNhut AB, Viet Nam

6948th Kelly AFB, TX (Jim Houle) Ft. Meade, MD-Mobile (Dillard Lane)

Medina Annex, TX

6948th ESS 1 Aug '79-30 Sept '93

### LINEAGE

6948<sup>th</sup> Security Squadron

6948<sup>th</sup> Electronic Security Squadron

### STATIONS

Goodfellow AFB, TX, 1 Jul 1963-1 Aug 1973

Kelly AFB, TX, 1 Aug 1973

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **COMMANDERS**

Lt Col. Walter D. Wood

### **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

The 6948th Electronic Security Squadron, widely acknowledged as Electronic Security Command's premier mobile unit, is located on Lackland AFB's Training Annex. Members of the "Fighting '48th" have repeatedly received high marks from supported tactical commanders as well as command evaluators during exercises, inspections and real-world deployments.

Unlike most other ESC units, the 6948th's operational mission is conducted in the field rather than at a fixed site. In fact, the 6948th is the only unit in the Air Force tasked to provide specialized cryptologic support to tactical Air Force commanders at any location around the globe.

Typical overseas exercise locations have included such areas as the Middle East and Central America. Stateside exercises are conducted at major Air Force bases all over the U.S., including California, Florida, Nevada and North Carolina.

Living accommodations while deployed range from semi-private hotel rooms to "camping trips" complete with tents, sleeping bags and dehydrated meals.

Depending on the exercise location, off-duty time while deployed can offer squadron members a chance to visit some of the most popular tourist attractions in the world.

The 6948th is scheduled to replace its deployable Comfy Shield system with a Senior Troupe system later this year. The multi-million dollar Senior Troupe system will greatly enhance the unit's operational capabilities. Additionally, Senior Troupe can be airlifted with just two C-141 s, while the

Comfy Shield system needs as many as 11 C-141 s to deploy.

Since the unit must be prepared to move large numbers of people and equipment long distances on short notice, the squadron's mobility and readiness branch places a great deal of emphasis on training squadron members in every aspect of mobility operations. Newly assigned personnel spend approximately two months training in such diverse areas as erecting camouflage, weapons qualifications, driving specialized vehicles, fire protection, chemical warfare, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and preparing equipment for airlift.

The squadron's operations branch provides specialized support. Enlisted people assigned to operations are made-up of analysts and Morse operators who interact with tactical commanders on cryptologic matters and man secure communications links.

The logistics branch has the task of keeping the entire unit's equipment in a constant state of readiness. Along with maintaining the largest vehicle fleet in the command, logistics technicians care for equipment ranging from mobile generators and air-conditioners to electronic components in computers and radios.

The unit also has one of only two dedicated communications-computer systems branches in ESC. They man mobile communications centers, while deployed and manage the squadron's COMSEC account and office automation systems while in garrison.

The programs and resources branch is the commander's innovative staff agency. In spite of their paper-pushing expertise in such areas as war plans and budget, branch members continue to maintain their mobility skills and operational qualifications so they can deploy with the rest of the unit.

The 6948th enjoys a healthy reputation both on Kelly AFB and within the San Antonio community. Squadron teams are near the top of the Kelly standings in all sports. Squadron members enthusiastically support community activities such as Special Olympics, Boy Scout functions and fund-raising jogathons.

The mission and the people of the "Fightin" '48th" are unique within ESC. Regardless of the challenge, the 6948th will be ready to go, any time, any place.

6948TH SCTYS	AFOUA	1 OCT 65 - 30 SEP 67
	AFOUA	3 FEB 68 - 13 OCT 68
	AFOUA	1 JUL 74 - 30 JUN 76
	AFOUA	1 JUL 76 - 30 JUN 77

As regional trouble spots began to develop in the Cold War world, USAFSS reacted accordingly. In 1956, the first USAFSS mobile unit deployed to the Middle East in response to instability in the area. Later in 1963, in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, the command activated three Emergency Reaction Units the 6948th Security Squadron, Mobile (SSM) at Goodfellow AFB, the 6926 SSM at Clark Air Base, Philippines, and the 6911 SSM at Darmstadt, Germany.

On 17 January 1991, when DESERT SHIELD gave way to DESERT STORM, ESC personnel were providing key intelligence to support both air and ground operations. The 6948 ESS, which operated from three different locations in Saudi Arabia and Turkey during the conflict, provided valuable intelligence and communications support to the air commanders. The unparalleled success of U.S. and coalition forces in DESERT STORM ushered in the age of information warfare. Airpower successfully killed Iraq's command and control systems long before the ground war began, and that air assault became the prime example of how to use information dominance in warfare. In the emerging information warfare doctrine, it became clear that ESC forces helped the U.S. achieve operational supremacy over Iraqi forces in the Persian Gulf war.

On 11 August, Col William C. Bender arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to serve as ESC's first Task Force Director for DESERT SHIELD. The 6948 ESS also arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to participate in the operation. 1990

On 23 August, ESC accepted the Senior Troupe system as an operational asset and assigned it to the 6948 ESS for operation and support. 1991

#### 6948<sup>TM</sup> ERU

In addition to its SIGINT and NCO leadership training missions, Goodfellow became home to a contingency squadron—6948 Security Squadron (Mobile), an emergency reaction unit (ERU)— in the second half of 1963. Activating the 6948th Security Squadron (M) and sister ERU's, 6911th SS (M) at Darmstadt, Germany, and 6926th SS (M) at Clark AB in the Philippines raised the visibility of the command's contingency mission.<sup>141</sup> In staffing the ERU's, USAFSS assigned a few operators, analysts, maintenance technicians and a few linguists (primarily in low-demand, aka "exotic," languages), so that a team could be deployed anywhere in the world on short notice. During deployments, USAFSS brought in additional staffing on temporary duty from other units.

After a decade of contingency operations from Goodfellow, the 6948th SS (M) relocated to Medina Annex, Lackland AFB, Texas, in 1973. The 6948th also maintained small numbers of contingency personnel at several operating locations (OL's) as shown in the table below.

#### 6948th Security Squadron (Mobile) Medina Annex, Lackland AFB, Texas 1973-1979

OL-AA, 6948th SS (M)	Offiitt AFB, Nebraska	1970-73
OL-EA, 6948th SS (M)	Offutt AFB, Nebraska	1973-78
OL-BB, 6948th SS (M)	Fort Meade, Maryland	1971-73
OL-EB, 6948th SS (M) *	Fort Meade, Maryland	1973-77
OL-EE, 6948th SS (M)	Brooks AFB, Texas	1975-77

\* Det 1, 6948th SS (M) also linked to Fort Meade, MD, briefly in 1977.

While stationed at Goodfellow and Medina Annex, 6948th elements frequently deployed to various locations for training and to demonstrate mobility and contingency operations. Flight-qualified and on flying status, detached 6948th SS (M) airmen assigned to Offutt AFB and Ft Meade, Maryland, flew recon missions in addition to participating in 6948th contingency operations.

The 6948th Security Squadron (Mobile) was redesignated the 6948th Electronic Security Squadron in 1979. On 11 August 1990, the 6948th ESS arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where it supported Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations during the first Persian Gulf War.

The 6948th Electronic Security Squadron operated the Signals Intelligence Compound utilized by Allied SIGINT personnel participating in Desert Shield/Desert Storm operations.

#### Senior Troupe

On 23 August 1991, Senior Troupe, a new mobile/airborne SIGINT collection and exploitation system, became an operational asset when the Electronic Security Command assigned it to the 6948th ESS for operation and support. The 6948th ESS was deactivated on 30 September 1993, its mission absorbed by elements of the newly activated Air Intelligence Agency. A year later (November 1994), the AIA activated the 48th Intelligence Squadron at Beale AFB, California, carrying on the traditions and contingency of the former 6948th ESS.

A Decade before the 6948th was created as an emergency reaction unit, the Air Force Special Communications Center at Kelly AFB often performed special operational missions for HQ USAFSS. One of these missions—Project Crosstalk—occurred in 1957-1958.

The lack of official history on Project Crosstalk prompts one to wonder how many similar events have disappeared from the recorded annals of USAFSS history. Out of the clear blue during a recent chat with retired USAFSS Chief Master Sergeant William R. Sparky Rogers, Sparky said, "Did I ever tell you about my TOY tour in Greenland?" He remembered the deployment site as being "not far from the North Pole."

We have cigarette lighters that say we were 1129 miles north of the Arctic Circle... In the time we were there, we had a lot of weird things happen—an RB-47 made an emergency landing; we almost caused an international incident by setting up a "ham" station, etc.

The actual site was Nord, Greenland (81°43N 17°50E) a Danish military facility and weather station. According to Richard P. Campbell, a USAFSS Morse intercept operator on the deployment Nord was so far out in the boondocks that he and team members went on rest and recuperation trips to Thule, Greenland. SAS Scandinavian Airlines used the Nord site as a checkpoint during over-the-pole commercial flights in the area.

Designated Project Crosstalk, the USAFSS HQ Plans and Programs office managed the USAFSS project in Greenland. The 6960th Support Group at Kelly AFB activated Detachment 1, 6960th SG, specifically for the mission in the Arctic wasteland, and Det 1 (about 30 men) deployed to Greenland in the July-August 1957 period. Major J.C. Thigpen was Detachment 1 commander, and

Capt. Joseph Mundorff served as operations officer. Det 1 reported operationally to the Air Force Special Communications Center at Kelly, which provided most of the Morse and voice intercept operators and the one traffic analyst, Wallace Belt. Other USAFSS units also provided personnel to support the deployment.

Per Bill Rogers who later earned the nickname "Sparky," his detachment claimed to be engaged in an "International Geophysical Year" study—a USAFSS cover story that one of the Danes readily dismissed. The Dane had been a signals intelligence Morse intercept operator during World War II. In reality, the USAFSS team was monitoring Soviet communications from Siberia. Concurrently, British and Canadian intercept teams at Alert Station, Greenland, and Resolut Bay, Canada, carried out similar activities.

In 2006, retired USAFSS SMSgt. Lucius M. Ruff Jr. reminisced with the author about Project Crosstalk. Lucius had been assigned to AFSCC when selected as a Morse intercept operator for the deployment that was initially planned for six months.

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Air Force Order of Battle  
Created: 2 Sep 2011  
Updated:

Sources