6952nd ELECTRONIC SECURITY SQUADRON

6952nd RSM, Kirknewton, Scotland

6952nd ESS RAF Alconbury, Eng 1 Jan '82-earlv 1990

LINEAGE

STATIONS
RAF Alconbury, England, 1 Jan 1982

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS
Maj Perry R. Kyzar

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 6952nd Electronic Security Squadron, RAF Alconbury, England, was activated Jan. 1, 1982 and is subordinate to the 693rd Electronic Security Wing, RAF Chicksands, England, and Headquarters European Electronic Security Division, Ramstein AB, West Germany. The 6952nd ESS is a tenant unit at Alconbury, the home of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing.

The mission of the 6952nd ESS is to maintain electronic sensors on board the TR-1, tactical reconnaissance aircraft. The TR-1 aircraft, a variant on the U-2, is assigned to and maintained by the 17th Reconnaissance Wing which is also a tenant at Alconbury. The 6952nd and the 17th work hand in hand to effectively accomplish the ESC mission.

Alconbury is located in the East Anglia region of England, conveniently situated between Peterborough and Cambridge.

The nearest town, Huntingdon, is a five-minute drive and most off-base trade by military members and dependents is done there.

Twenty miles to the north of the base is Peterborough, a large city with a surprisingly large number of the Alconbury military members residing there. Peterborough has much to offer by way of shopping malls, theaters, museums, cathedrals, castles and other types of off-duty entertainment. On base, Alconbury has the normal facilities found on most Air Force installations. The sports programs include football, basketball, baseball, softball, wrestling and boxing.

The medical facility includes a new clinic with dental, optometry, general medical and emergency services. This facility is located at RAF Upwood, about 12 miles from Alconbury, with regular shuttle bus service.

Other services on base include an NCO club, airmen's club, recreation center, theater, chapel,

gymnasium, bowling center, an American fast food restaurant and a new commissary. There is also a dependent youth association for younger dependents. Many of these facilities are being improved and expanded.

Educational opportunities include many U.S. colleges and universities. The on-base school includes kindergarten through 12th grade.

Government housing is generally limited with a waiting period of up to one year. There are a few houses on Alconbury proper, with the majority of government housing units located at other active and inactive RAF bases.

Housing is available on the economy as well. Rent and utilities are rather expensive. Some of the additional costs are offset by rent plus and allowances.

The 6952nd is regularly involved in activities with the rest of the Alconbury community through activities such as the intramural sports program, including bowling, softball, darts, basketball and official gatherings like military parades and dining-outs. Squadron get togethers such as picnics, etc., happen frequently.

There were 15 guys at the 8th Radio Squadron (Brooks AFB) earmarked to start up the unit at Kirknewton. They all left Brooks in February 1952 and went to the 41st RSM in Bremerhaven Germany They pulled casual duty until their background investigations were completed. They then went to work in the Ops area until May, 1952 at which time they left for Kirknewton.

The unit at Kirknewton started out as Detachment 102 of the 10th RSM and later became the 37th, then the 6952nd RSM, then the 6952nd Security Group.

The following is the history as published in the final issue of the base newspaper, the Scotsman, dated December 23, 1965.

The 37th RSM was actually born at Brooks AFB, Texas, in August 1951 with plans to occupy RAF Station Kirknewton, Scotland.

6952nd Security Group activated in June 1952 as the 37th Radio Squadron Mobile (RSM) with 6 officers and 39 airmen.

August 1952 the 37th RSM began operations as a functioning unit and by September had 17 officers and 155 airmen.

On May 8, 1955 the 37th RSM was re-designated the 6952nd RSM.

July 1, 1963 the 6952nd RSM became the 6952nd Security Group.

July 1966 unit becomes inactive.

6952ND ESS—RAF ALCONBURY
Although located in the UK, the 6952nd Electronic Security Squadron, RAF Alconbury, came under Col. Christy's 6910th chain of command, in part because the unit supported remoting SIGINT operations to the 6911th ESS at Metro Tango.

The 6952" ESS, which provided maintenance support for the TR-1 aircraft, was activated at RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom, and assigned to the 6910 ESW, effective 1 January 1982, to ensure all ESC critical support requirements would be in place prior to the Strategic Air Command's TR-1 bed-down at Alconbury in early 1983.

The first TR-1 airframe was deployed to RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom, on 10 February 1983, and the 6952nd ESS entered the era of providing direct support to intelligence operations in Europe. Concurrent with the arrival of the TR-1, U-2R operations in the Central European theater ceased, and ESC U-2R maintenance personnel assigned to the 6988th ESS at RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom, were transferred to the 6952nd ESS."

TR-1 missions in the European Theater from Alconbury reportedly continued into 1991. The final disposition of the 6952nd Electronic Security Squadron is unknown.

6952ND SS DEACTIVATED
Capt. William Bowers was one of the last Americans who served with the 6952nd Security Squadron at RAF Kirknewton. He turned out the lights on 6952nd SS operations in 1966.

As the base got nearer to closing in '661 kept absorbing more duties as attrition reduced the number of officers on base. I wrote the mission phase out plan in coordination with Laddie Marin at Chicksands, in which we transferred the mission to the 'Sands in two increments. It all went off smoothly, and it was really strange to walk around in an empty Ops building with all of the equipment moved out.

USAFSS officially closed and vacated RAF Kirknewton on 1 August 1966.180 Signal reception issues had factored in the decision to close RAF Kirknewton; the advent of the FLR-9 antenna system that came online at Chicksands, Karamursel and San Vito also played a role. With the improved antenna system, the former 6952nd Security Squadron mission was readily accommodated at other USAFSS sites.

RAF Kirknewton—Post USAFSS
Out of curiosity, retired Chief Tom Tennant stopped by RAF Kirknewton in October 1991 while visiting wife Margaret's family in Edinburgh.

It had been basically abandoned for several years and was under caretaker status with a small cadre of about 12 RAF people shooing away visitors. I got to tour the entire area. All of the buildings that were built during my last year there [1954] and in the subsequent years were all deteriorating rapidly—the bowling alley, gym, NCO club, big PX, recreation center (none of which we had in my time), as well as the new barracks and Ops buildings. There were still a number of towers standing throughout the old runway area where our antenna farm -was, but with no wires showing.

The caretakers told Tom Tennant that sometime in the '70's or early '80's, a U.S. Army special forces activity set up a training site there for a few years. The author can find no record of use of

RAI1' Kirknewton by an American organization after 1966; a UK Parliament record dated 23 February 2004 shows llinl Ilie USAF handed the base back to the British Ministry of Defence on 26 September 1991.

RAF Kirknewton was one of 42 sites/facilities included on a list "I lulled States bases handed back to MoD since 1988," the earliest little lor which information was available. Twenty-seven of the returned bases were USAF, thirteen were USN, and two were not tlel'med. Interestingly, RAF Kirknewton is shown on the list as a llONpital-type facility along with at least two inactive RAF lumpitals that were leased to the USAF and USN for use as Contingency hospitals during the Persian Gulf War (August 1990-Mnreh 1991). The USAF activated one of the hospitals—740-bed RAF at Nocton Hall—and treated a limited number of casualties there in 1991,182 but RAF Kirknewton appears to have remained only on standby during the war.

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