

7368 COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP

MISSION

LINEAGE

7368 Combat Support Group

STATIONS

Etain AB, France

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

On 8 May 1962, while the 7121st Tactical Wing was operating at Etain, the 7368th Combat Support Group was activated to operate the base after its departure. The 7368th reported to the newly activated 366th Tactical Fighter Wing at Chaumont and supported the 391st TFSq at Etain. The Combat Support Group consisted of the HQ Squadron, the 7368th Air Police Sq, 7368th Material Sq and the 7368th USAF Dispensary. It began with one officer and three airmen, but by 1 January 1963, the Group had grown to 73 officers, 439 airmen, and 96 LWR French employees. A French O&M contractor with seventy-eight men maintained Etain's real estate, i.e., buildings, roads, and fences, under the direction of the 7368th base civil engineer.

Other tenants were HQ Company and Company D 249th Engineer Battalion, Construction, who were stationed at Etain to perform base improvements, but their primary job was constructing a large atomic blast resistant depot near Roselier and Verdun. The 7368th maintained very good relations with the Engineering Bn and provided support when needed. The 7368th Civil Engineer gave them their own area including a hangar for indoor storage of trucks, equipment, and tools in the northwest corner of the base.

The 391st TFSq departed Etain on 16 July 1963, when the 366th Wing moved to Holloman AFB, New Mexico. The 7368th CSGp manning was reduced, as Etain changed into a standby base, and additional support came from the 7544th Support Group at Toul. A French contractor continued to maintain base real property.

Etain was maintained in standby status by the 7368th until 1 July 1966 when the first FRELOC directives were followed. The 7368th CSGp was the primary agent to remove all U.S. property and close the base. All airways radio aids and control tower equipment were removed by 1 September, and Det #8, 31st Weather Sq departed. Etain still had 5,600 tons of general supplies, even after three-and-one-half years in standby status. There was a small inventory of support aircraft spare parts, some aircraft shop equipment, aircraft ground support equipment, and many vehicles remaining after the 1963 departure of the 391st TFSq. One thousand tons of conventional aircraft munitions still stored in the ammunition storage site were moved to air bases in Germany. After removal of all equipment and supplies, each building was inspected by a team of USAFE and French officers then closed and sealed. All the metal prefab buildings were disassembled by U.S. Army troops and moved to Germany to store depot supplies. Officers and airmen were moved into hotels in Etain city after 15 October, when the base heating plant was shut down.

By 15 November 1966 all equipment was removed and total base personnel numbered about forty men. French civilian employees numbered about thirty, many of whom were terminated on 31 December 1966. The last to leave was the radio relay detachment after removing its equipment on 10 March. Etain Air Base was transferred to the French government on 15 March 1967. Etain served the USAF and NATO for seven years so it must be considered only a fair investment.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.