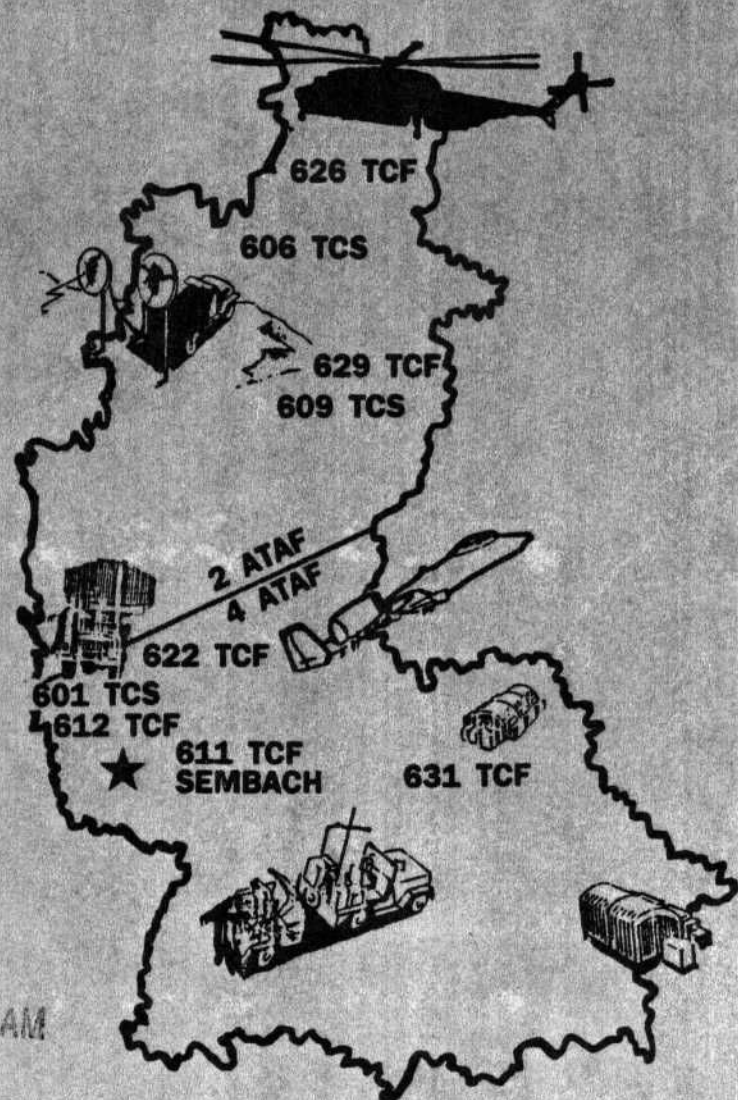




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K. W. G. - 601 - HI
1 Jan 1919 - 31 Dec 1986

HISTORY OF 601 TACTICAL CONTROL WING (U)



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1 Jan 1919 - 31 Dec 1956

PREFACE

The 601st Tactical Control Wing's relatively short but colorful past is marked by a number of significant achievements and milestones in support of NATO, particularly in the Central Region with respect to the European tactical air control system. Activated over 18 years ago at Sembach Air Base, on 1 July 1968, this fledgling unit consolidated a number of existing tactical air control functions to better provide Command, Control, and Communications services to NATO forces. At its height, the 601st TCW was comprised of close to 70 geographically separated units stretching from Bremerhaven, Germany, in the north to Vicenza, Italy, in the south.

The purpose of this history is to serve as a ready reference to wing members and future researchers on matters of importance involving the ever changing 601st Tactical Control Wing.

I would like to express my appreciation to the folks of the 66th Combat Support Group's Reproduction Management Branch and members of the Detachment 2, 1367th Audiovisual Squadron's Graphics Section, for their respective quality printing and art work arrangements. My appreciation also extends to the present commander, Colonel Thomas A. Cardwell III, who supported me fully in my efforts in compiling this history. Past and present 601st TCW staff agency officials also deserve mention for their contributions and support.


CHARLES W. GRINDSTAFF, BSgt, USAF
601st TCW Historian

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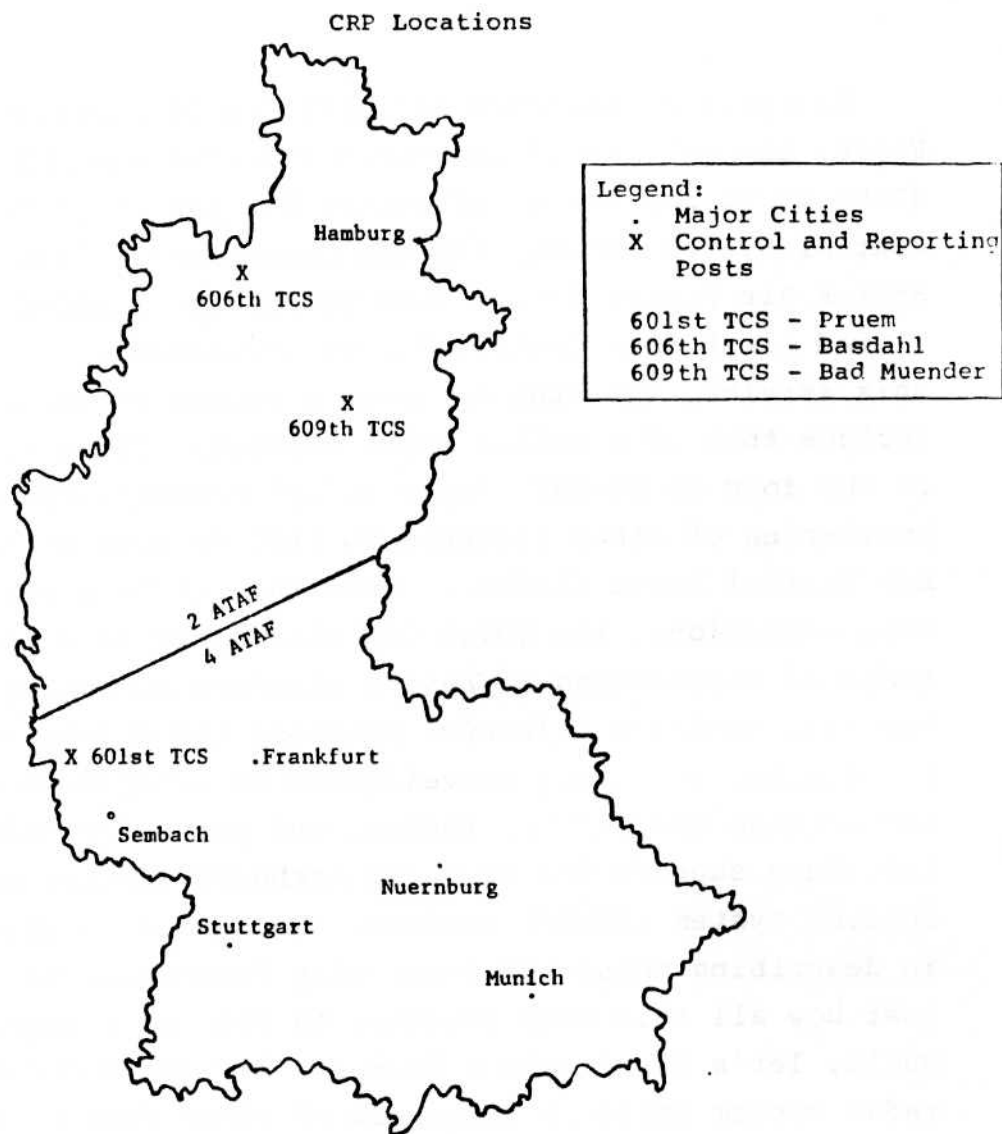
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THE MISSION

Assigned to the 65th Air Division of Seventeenth Air Force, the mission of the 601st Tactical Control Wing (TCW) is to provide an effective European Tactical Air Control System (ETACS) for the Commander-In-Chief United States Air Forces Europe (CINCUSAFE) and Commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe (COMAAFCE). To provide this service, the wing employed a number of resources to include that of a mobile radar network, flying operations in the form of CH-53C "*Super Jolly*" helicopters, and a smattering of other elements to include several Forward Air Control Posts (FACPs). Over the entire spectrum of wing operations, the 601st TCW ultimately took in the tasks of controlling *Offensive* missions against ground targets, handling *Defensive* missions for air-to-air intercepts, supplying surveillance of airspace both in and outside the Central Region, and providing valuable interface support for European Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) sorties. To save on confusion in describing these and other wing functions, to include just how all this fits together to form an integrated whole, let's first take a look at the wing's mobile radar system which is comprised of three Control and Reporting Posts (CRPs) and six FACPs.

The CRP is a mobile, semi-automatic radar facility subordinate to the Allied Tactical Operations Center (ATOC) at Sembach Air Base (AB) for units in 4 ATAF (Allied Tactical Air Force) and to the NATO Operations Support Cell (NOSC) for units located in 2 ATAF. Depicted in Figure 1 on the next page, two CRPs (also designated Tactical Control Squadrons or TACs) operated



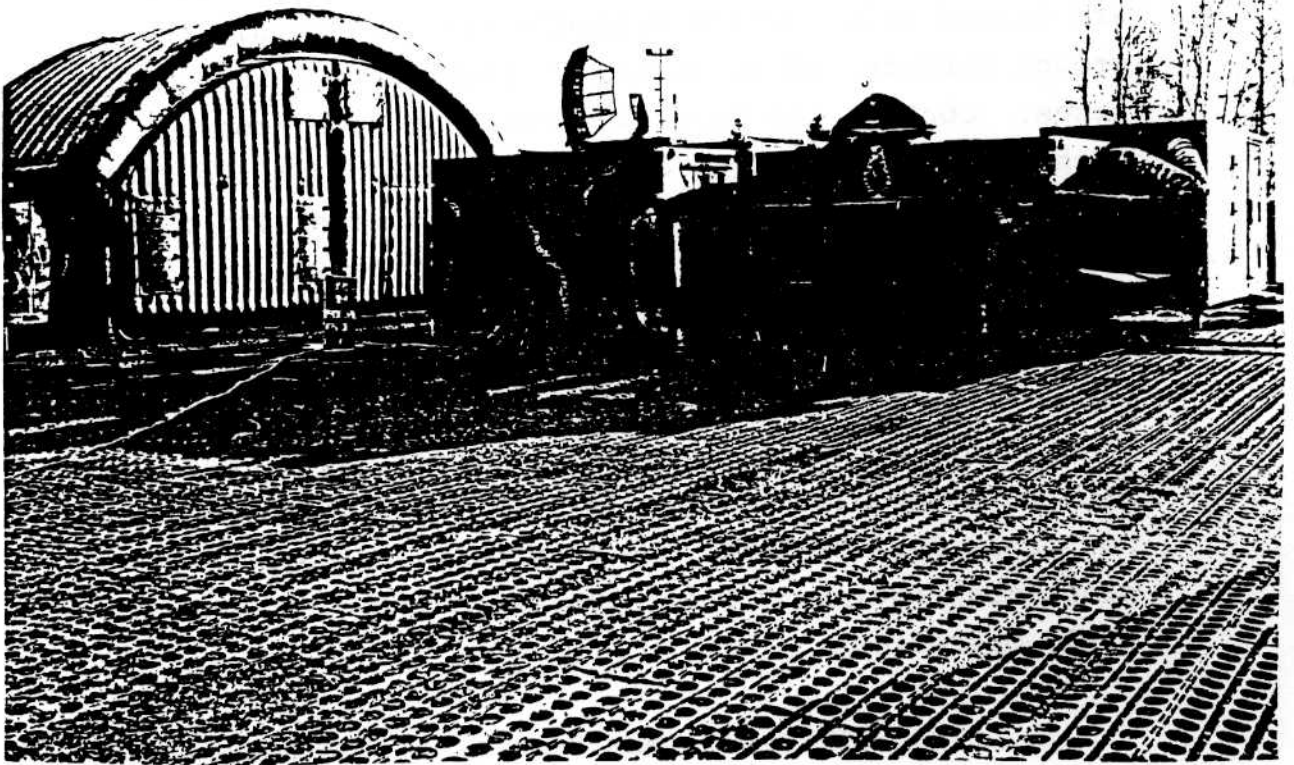
(Figure 1)

out of 2 ATAF and one conducted business within the boundaries of 4 ATAF. Particularly, these "heavy" radar units are designed to: provide radar control in support of friendly aircraft; maintain surveillance of assigned airspace to include the classification of aircraft which enter their area of responsibility; and to collect, display, and disseminate information on all activity

picked up by their radar. In addition to providing radar control for reconnaissance and refueling missions, CRPs are tasked with guiding friendly aircraft to air or ground targets and assisting in their return to home bases. Control and Reporting Posts operate from technical sites or from deployed locations in the field with complete autonomy with respect to receiving outside logistical support. If a CRP needs to deploy, it can be ready to move within 24 hours. Their more important assets include the AN/TSQ-91V "Operations Central" as depicted on the next page, a TPS-43E Radar Set (Figure 3 on page 5), a Message Processing Center (MPC), the GSQ-120 Radar Data Transfer System (RDTS), the ASIT or Adaptable Surface Interface Terminal, and various power production equipment which run the CRP's equipment during field operations.

An AN/TSQ-91V Operations Central is the nerve center of CRP operations. This three-celled building (now Hard Hat modified) replaced the old TSQ-91V configuration which is a large cellular structure enclosed by a large rubberized bubble, commonly referred to as a "Rubber Duck". Thus, the newer design improved CRP mobility and survivability by replacing the inflatable portion of the operations shelter with a more suitable rigid structure and to ease support requirements and improve the operational environment. In any event, the AN/TSQ-91V Hard Hat houses 14 radar consoles used by Air Weapons Controllers (AWCs) and Air Surveillance Officers (ASOs). The number of scopes dedicated between the surveillance function or actual control of aircraft varies with changing mission requirements at any given time. In essence, inputs from the AN/TPS-43E radar are received by a Hughes-built 4118 computer inside the operations central. The computer converts this raw data into

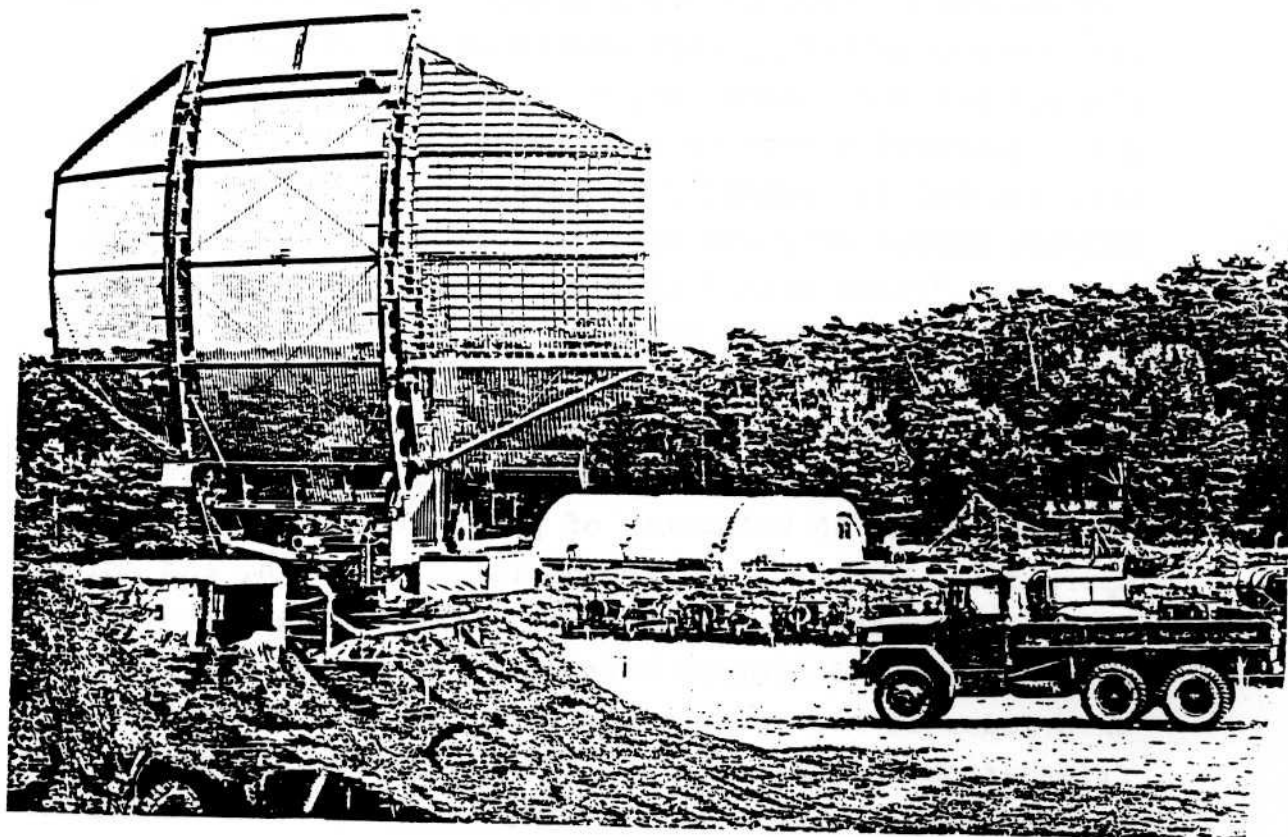
(Figure 2)



This photo provides a comparative look between an older TSQ-91V Operations Central cell and the newly developed "HARD HAT".

workable data which can be displayed on the CRP's radar consoles. A rather large and bulky manual display board is also located inside the Operations Central so that information can be manually logged in the event of a computer breakdown. These manual display boards also contain other information which is not stored in the computer, such as frequency assignments, weather information, call signs, and frag orders. Though controllers need this backup system to insure mission accomplishment during computer outages, its presence requires the use of the AN/TSQ-91V which ultimately results in the 24-hour deployment criteria.

(Figure 3)



This is the highly mobile TPS-43E Radar Set used by wing CRPs and FACPs which further demonstrates its versatility for field operations.

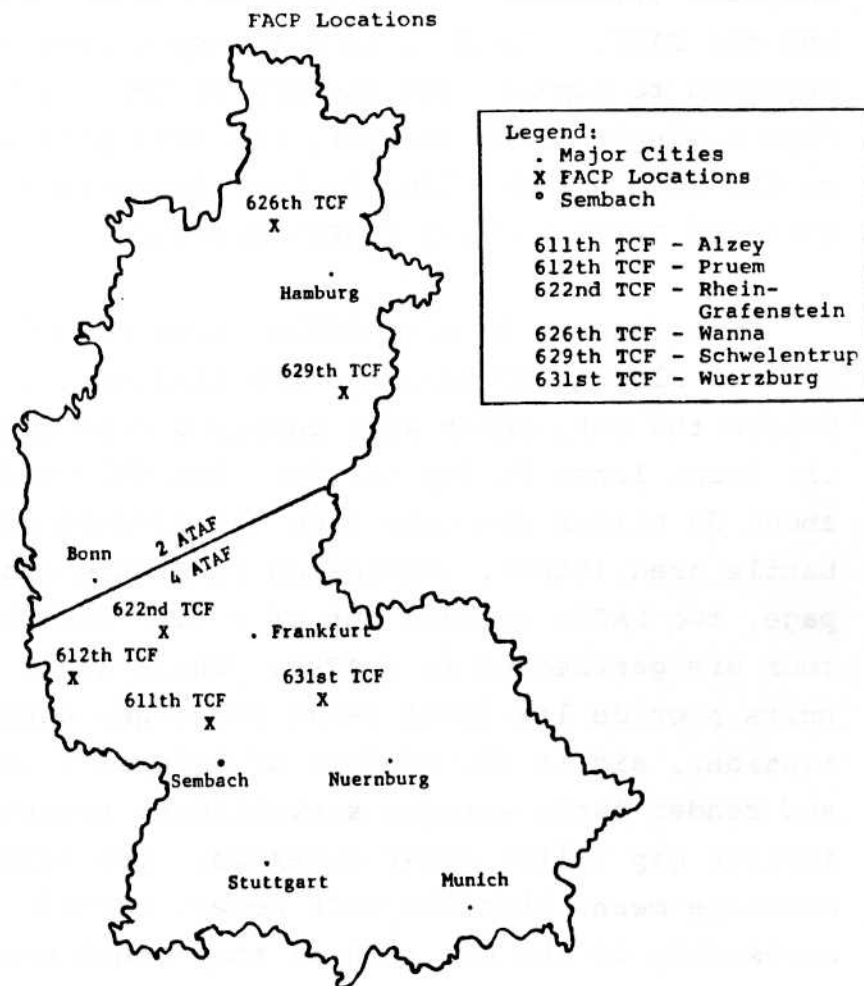
Message processing centers or MPCs allow mobile 407L TACS units to exchange radar data with all other mobile, fixed, and airborne radar systems in the central European region (407L describes the type equipment employed by CRPs). Basically, this piece of equipment, designated the AN/TYC-10, takes information received in the "language" of the 407L system and converts it into one of several formats understood by other computer systems used by German Air Defense Ground Environment (GEADGE) units and our NATO allies. The MPC can also "downlink" automated data from E-3A Sentry AWACS aircraft.

Such interfaces are critical in providing adequate command and control services within the NATO environment. With this capability, strategists at all levels of command can instantaneously view the air picture of any given quadrant almost as soon as the CRP. Under current use, the MPC is generally attached to one end of the TSQ-91V though they can operate considerable distances away in a "stand alone" configuration. The major factor inhibiting more frequent use of the stand alone posture is the lack of spare support equipment and personnel. Next, the AN/TPS-43E is a lightweight, transportable, three-dimensional surveillance radar which requires 60 kilowatts of power at 400HZ for operation. Designed to provide range, azimuth, and height data on targets of interest within the TACS environment, it possesses a detection capability up to 100,000 feet. This radar is also compatible with the identification friend-from friend/selective identification feature (IFF/SIF) system used to interrogate aircraft to determine whether or not they are friendly.

Yet another important asset used by CRPs is the AN/GSQ-120 RDTS. The GSQ-120 is comprised of two complete, self-contained, terminals each and uses a GRC-99 microwave line-of-sight radio with a six-foot diameter dish antenna to transfer radar data. While not particularly impressive in looks, use of this equipment allows the TPS-43E to be placed up to six miles away from the TSQ-91V. This capability has two distinct advantages. First, the TPS-43E can operate from locations more conducive for radar operations in areas not accessible to the main CRP element due to rugged terrain. Second, remoting of the TPS-43E greatly increases the survivability of the CRP's main element should the enemy use radar seeking warheads. Last,

one of the newer additions to the TACS inventory is the ASIT. Basically, it is a semi-transparent, secure, and high capacity interface, or adapter, between the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS) network and the TACS. The ASIT is a transportable system, designed to deploy with the MPC or CRP which it serves. From a single S-280 shelter, the ASIT provides the MPC or CRP with a radio link to both American and NATO Airborne Early Warning (NAEW) aircraft.

With respect to wing FACP, also called Tactical Control Flights (TCFs), two are assigned to each CRP. Unlike the CRP, which will deploy a good distance from the front lines during wartime, the FACP will operate about 30 kilometers away from the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). Indicated in Figure 4 on the next page, two FACP operate out of 2 ATAF and the remaining four are garrisoned in 4 ATAF. These lean, highly mobile units provide low-level radar coverage, control offensive missions, aid in the conduct of defensive intercepts, and render early warning surveillance assistance to include gap filler radar coverage. Gap filler radar coverage means that the FACP covers certain airspace not accessible to the CRP such as that found around mountainous or hilly regions. The FACP possesses much less equipment than the CRP and thus can be ready to deploy within six hours after notification to do so. The FACP radar consoles are manned by both AWCs and air surveillance technicians (AST), the latter being enlisted members. Where the CRP possesses 14 radar consoles within the TSQ-91V Operations Central, each FACP only possesses four--two in the TSQ-61V Operations Central and two in the TPS-43E Radar Set van. Neither of these vans have the HM-4118 computer used by the CRP. Rather, FACP controllers use a small circular slide rule with special markings to



(Figure 4)

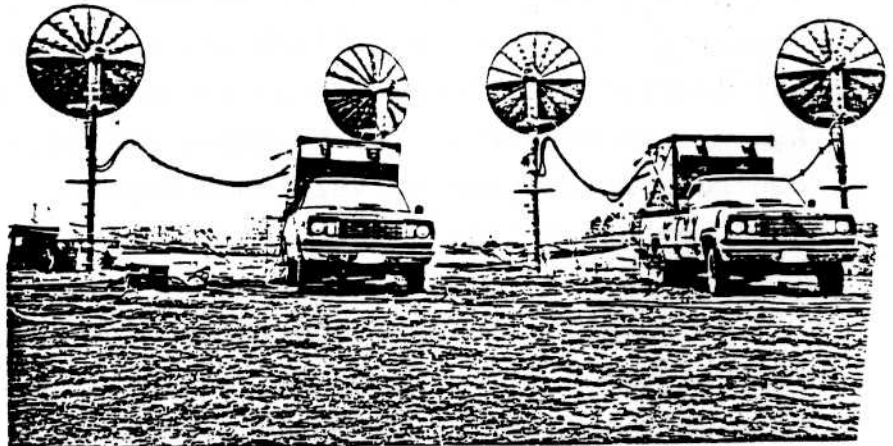
work air mass problems as input by their TPS-43E. Obviously, this slide rule does not possess the capabilities of the highly sophisticated HM-4118. However, it is adequate for FACP operations. Basically, FACP AWCs accept control of aircraft from either the Control and Reporting Center (CRC) or CRP during offensive missions and subsequently hand them off to airborne or ground forward air controller for final targeting guidance. Forward air control posts are also qualified to work defensive missions. After pilots complete their mission they will normally return home by

contacting the TACS elements in reverse order. When required, FACP ASTs establish and maintain an accurate air traffic picture within their assigned airspace. Again, the number of radar scopes dedicated to aircraft control or airspace surveillance depends on mission requirements at the time.

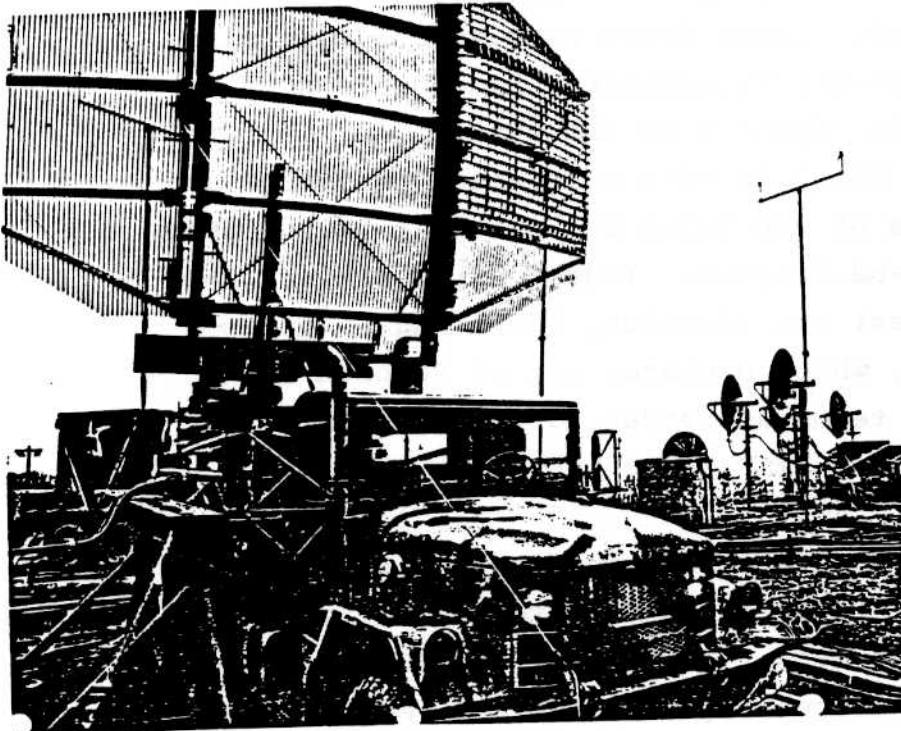
In addition to CRPs and FACPs, the 601st TCW operates several radio relay teams to provide TACS communications connectivity between the wing's assigned squadrons and flights when they are deployed and to NATO command and control elements. These teams operate and maintain AN/TRC-97A Microwave Troposcatter Radio sets such as the ones depicted in Figure 5 on the next page. Each relay team has three TRC-97As with associated equipment and vehicles. Some of the teams are integral to the 601st TCW squadrons and flights. Indeed, five are assigned to the wing's newest organization, Operating Location-Charlie (OL-C), which operates out of Sembach AB and provides relay teams as needed for various exercises conducted in the 4 ATAF region.

Hopefully, one isn't too confused in reading the previous pages of narrative and, to make matters even clearer, perhaps it's time to put the TACS in operational perspective by discussing the remaining major element involved with the tactical air control process: ground controllers. Very simply, during a general defensive operation, the forward-based FACP will pick up incoming communications to pass on pertinent information to the rearward-based CRP, which subsequently forwards the reported sighting to the CRC and, if need be, to the appropriate Sector Operations Center (SOC). As pictured on page 11, the SOC will then frag (order) an alert

(Figure 5)



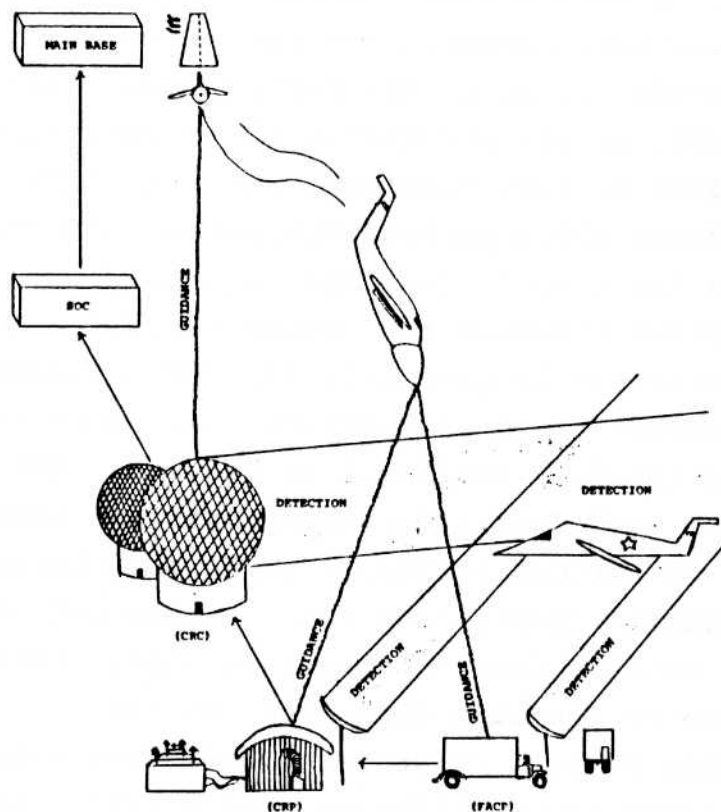
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2

(1) A typical TRC-97A Troposcatter Radio Relay
(2) View of a TPS-43E configured on the bed of
an M-35 truck with TRC-97As set up on the right

DEFENSIVE AIR SUPPORT
(AIR-TO-AIR INTERCEPTS)

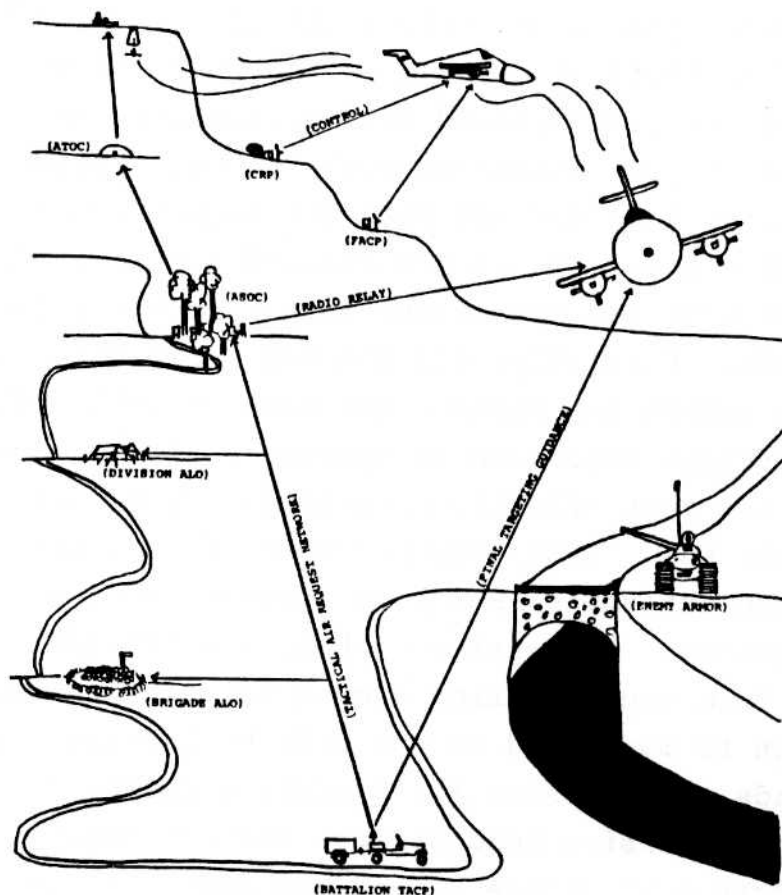


(Figure 6)

aircraft to intercept the intruder and notify the appropriate radar units of the mission number and radio frequency to be used in its control. Following ground radar directions, the interceptor's control will usually pass from the CRC to the CRP and, if needed to the FACP. After mission accomplishment, the friendly aircraft will return home using the same TACS assistance he received

in arriving at the intercept location. While many scenarios could be cited to describe defensive missions, virtually all involved two types of procedures used by wing controllers. The first pertained to the traditional intercept process wherein interceptors were brought to the intercept coordinates of unknown or hostile aircraft. Many individuals aren't aware of the international doctrine that places certain restrictions on peacetime intercepts whenever aircraft are sent up to identify unknown aircraft or, in controller's terms, "tracks". Operating under strict international regulations governing the conduct of such missions, wing controllers provide guidance which permit intercepting aircraft to overtake the intruder at just the right angle and speed to prevent alarming the latter's pilot or passengers should the aircraft be privately owned or a commercial carrier. Because of these restrictions, intercept missions are the most difficult to control. The other major process used during defensive missions involve the control of Air Combat Tactic (ACT) and Dissimilar Air Combat Tactic (DACT) missions. Simply put, the term ACT is used to describe tactical engagements involving two of the same type aircraft (ie: an F-16 versus another F-16). Conversely, DACT dogfights involve engagements of differing type aircraft (ie: F-16 versus an F-5). For peacetime operations, wing controllers are held responsible for flight safety in keeping aircraft properly separated and within the confines of temporary reserved airspace during ACT and DACT sorties. In war, these controllers will help friendly pilots attain advantageous positions over enemy aircraft and keep them informed of the tactical situation to include the location of any hostile fighters in the area.

OFFENSIVE AIR OPERATIONS
(AIR-TO-GROUND CLOSE AIR SUPPORT)



(Figure 7)

Illustrated in Figure 6 above, control of close air support missions against ground targets brought most of the TACS system into the picture at one time or another, though the role of the radar units is definitely subordinate to the 65th Air Division's Air Support Operations Centers (ASOCs) and the Tactical Air Control Partys (TACPs) in terms of aggressive involvement. In an example of an average close air support operation,

a battalion might be faced with superior opposing forces or stiff armored resistance and, indeed, most close air support requests begin with the forward-based TACP at the battalion level. They will subsequently request an air strike from the ASOC squadron collocated with the Corps Tactical Operations Centers (CTOCs) via High Frequency (HF) Tactical Air Request Network (TARN). For the most part, the ground unit originating the request will only be concerned with the destruction of the obstacle at hand and not with the selection of ordnance but neither the ground Forward Air Controller (FAC) or the Army was authorized to direct specific weapons loads. Basically, all the Air Force needs is an accurate target description and ASOC or ATOC officers will weigh target requirements against available weapons and select the most effective ordnance. Thus, the Army specifies the WHAT, WHEN, AND FOR WHOM of a mission and the Air Force determines HOW with respect to close air support missions. In getting back to the request itself, which goes from the battalion ground FAC to the ASOC, the petition is monitored on the TARN by intermediate level brigade and division Air Liaison Officers (ALOs). If brigade or division headquarters doesn't negate the request within a 10-minute period the ASOC will go on and ask the ATOC to order sorties for the mission. These intermediate echelons might cancel the air support request within this grace period if they felt other methods are available to remove the threat. That is, if artillery, mortar fire, or other friendly ground troops in the area are available. In conclusion, 601st TCW elements play a major role in NATO's tactical control network. Whether command and control is provided through radar or FAC resources, tactical aircraft would be hard pressed to accomplish their respective missions without the assistance rendered by wing functions.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 601ST TCW

THE PRE-601ST TCW ERA

Roots of the modern day TACS network go back to the World War II era and the Army's 555th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion. This "triple nickel" unit, formed in 1942 from a group of specialists who worked at the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, stormed ashore in Normandy on D-Day and progressed across Europe gathering six battle streamers. Throughout the war the 555th provided badly needed aircraft control and surveillance services. On 31 December 1945, the four companies of the 555th became the 601st TCS, 602nd TCS, 603rd TCS, and 604th TCS. The 601st TCS, still active under the 601st TCW today, was activated at Simmershausen, Germany. These newly formed units were assigned to the 501st Tactical Control Group and, from these fundamental and rudimentary beginnings, the TACS system has become what is today.

After undergoing a series of relocations, changes of assignment, and inactivations/activations, the four squadrons were assigned to USAFE (United States Air Forces in Europe) by 1 July 1948; just in time to take part in the Berlin airlift. These radar units helped guide air transports along air routes to Berlin and were awarded the Medal for Humane Action for their efforts. On 1 December 1948, each of the four tactical control squadrons was designated an Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron (AC&WS). Seven months later, on 10 June 1949, the AC&WS elements

were once again assigned to the 501st TCG. For the next four years, things remained relatively stable with the exception of the addition of several detachments to the squadrons.

At this point in the development of the European TACS, 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). These subordinate units came from several sources. For instance, the 604th AC&WS had originally been Company "D" of the 555th and was assigned to the 501st TCG prior to 15 July 1952. At this time, control of the 604th passed to the 155th TCG prior to being assigned to the 526th TCG in November 1953. Conversely, the 619th TCS was a newly activated unit which took over the personnel and equipment of the just inactivated 121st TCS; an National Guard unit whose main element arrived in Europe on 4 November 1952. In any event, like the 501st TCG, the 526th reported directly to Twelfth Air Force under USAFE.

On 1 July 1955, the 501st and 526th TCGs merged to form the Tactical Control Wing, Provisional. In all, this consolidation process brought a number of elements together to form Twelfth Air Force's tactical control system. These included two tactical control squadrons (the 897th TCS and 619th TCS), six aircraft control and warning squadrons (the 601st AC&WS, 602nd AC&WS, 603rd AC&WS, 604th AC&WS, 615th AC&WS, and 616th AC&WS), and three Shoran Beacon Squadrons (the 3rd, 6th, and 7th Shoran Beacons). The Tactical Control Wing, Provisional, was created as a tentative measure designed to improve the effectiveness of the radar and aircraft control

organizations within Twelfth Air Force. After operating as a provisional wing for two years, the unit had ample opportunity to determine the most suitable type of organization for the effective accomplishment of the USAFE tactical control mission. Accordingly, on 18 December 1957, this tentative status was dropped and the unit was designated the 501st Tactical Control Wing. Finally, on 18 November 1960, the 501st TCW merged with the 86th Fighter Interceptor Wing to form the 86th Air Division (Defense). For the next five years the various TACS elements under the 86th Air Division went through a series of relocations, activations, inactivations and redesignations.

On 15 February 1965, the 601st TCG was activated at Sembach AB, Germany. It was assigned three major subordinate units: the 601st TCS; the 601st TCMS (Tactical Control Maintenance Squadron); and the 601st DASS (Direct Air Support Squadron). The 601st TCS had been realigned under the 601st TCG from the 86th Air Division along with its two subordinate control and reporting post and six forward air control post detachments (Det 0001 - Kirchgoens, Det 0003 - Fulda, Det 0004 - Wuerzburg, Det 0005 - Bamberg, Det 0006 - Grafenwoehr, Det 0007 - Straubing, Det 0100 - Celle, and Det 0300 - Neu Ulm). The 601st TCMS was activated from in-house resources and tasked with the mission of providing centralized field maintenance and supply support for the 601st TCG. The 601st DASS was also formed along with four subordinate Direct Air Support Centers (DASCs): Det 0100 - a DASC at Stuttgart, Det 0200 - a DASC at Mannheim, Det 0300 - a DASC at Koblenz, and Det 0400 - a DASC at Frankfurt. A group staff was set up, composed

of personnel from the former 601st TCS staff sections. On 20 May 1965, operational control of the 601st TCG and its subordinate units passed from the 86th Air Division to Seventeenth Air Force. However, the former headquarters maintained responsibility for running the fixed radar system. For the next three years the 601st TCG experienced a vast expansion in both stature and mission responsibilities.

THE POST-1968 YEARS*

The 601st Tactical Control Wing was organized at Sembach Air Base on 1 July 1968. The new wing assumed the missions of the 601st TCG and 603rd Air Base Wing (ABW) which were discontinued and returned to the control of the Department of the Air Force. The latter unit had primarily been a housekeeping and support organization charged with the operations and maintenance of Sembach AB and five nearby former missile and missile support sites. The new wing, under the command of Colonel Jack R. Best, was organized in the dual deputy concept with a deputy commander for operations and a deputy commander for maintenance. The newly activated 601st Combat Support Group (CSG) assumed the wing's secondary mission of operating the base and performing support functions thereby allowing the wing commander and his deputies to concentrate on the widely scattered and complex tactical air control system operation. While the official wing activation date was 1 July 1968, an activation ceremony was held nine days

* For in-depth listings of Post-1968 events, see the wing chronology following this section.

later as Major General Rollen H. Anthis, Seventeenth Air Force commander, welcomed the 601st TCW into his command.

Four months later, on 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. The newly activated detachments at 3 (Freising) and 6 (Giebelstadt) provided operational assistance at fixed radar sites owned by the German Air Force (GAF). The third detachment activated, Det 4 at Ramstein, was a consolidated field maintenance facility for the USAFE 412L radar system.

On 27 June 1969, the first of three AN/TPS-43 radar sets (SN #14) planned for wing mobile radar unit use was accepted by Det 8, 601st TCS (later to become the 603rd TCS). Work on the conversion plan for replacing the AN/TPS-44 with the "three dimensional" TPS-43 at the 601st TCS and both CRPs began in early 1969. However, numerous problems arose which precluded the plan from being completed by the end of the fiscal year (FY). Particularly, a firm delivery date could not be established for the first radar which was to be used as a training device. Because of this, an

Air Training Command team could not establish a firm school start date to train wing personnel. Also, an interface kit being developed by Westinghouse was required to allow the use of the TPS-43 until the wing received the new TSQ-91V operations centrals, expected to be delivered in 1971 though actually received in February 1972. These problems kept the wing from beginning the conversion until nine months later. Yet another major equipment modification occurred on 1 September 1969, this time within the 412L fixed radar system. A modification was completed in computer programming which created 4,096 possible codes for aircraft identification. This gave each aircraft in 4 ATAF a different code thus providing a more positive identification capability.

Where command attention was placed on force modernization projects toward the end of 1969, implementation of the higher headquarter's direction REDCOSTE project pretty well reduced the scope and responsibility of 601st CSG operations. Under REDCOSTE reductions, control of Sembach's Consolidated Base Personnel Office (CBPO) was transferred to the 26th CSG at Ramstein on 19 September 1969 and the accounting and finance office and comptrollers division were also inactivated. Further, the 601st CSG lost control of the Base Operations and Training function to Ramstein the very next month, closely followed by the transfer of Sembach's transportation and munitions maintenance responsibilities to the 26th CSG. Indeed, before mid November 1969, the data automation section, base procurement, and the office of information function at Sembach fell victim to REDCOSTE reductions--it would be almost two years before Sembach

would once again publish a base newspaper. In other organizational areas, on 1 October 1969, Det 1 and Det 2 of the 601st DASS were redesignated as detachments 41 and 42 respectively. Further, on this same date, all eight detachments of the 601st TCS were redesignated as follows: Det 1 became Det 21; Det 2 became Det 22; Det 3 became Det 23; Det 4 became Det 24; Det 4 became Det 24; Det 5 became Det 25; Det 6 became Det 26; Det 7 became Det 27; and Det 8 became Det 28.

For the most part, the wing continued to function as normal going into 1970. But, on 15 February, the wing acquired yet another mission with the arrival of three Cessna 0-2A aircraft. The wing was notified in early January of its tasking to develop an airborne FAC capability. Specific goals assigned to the wing included the development of airborne FAC techniques and training policies and procedures. An airborne FAC meeting was conducted at Seventeenth Air Force on 15 January 1970. It was decided that the 601st TCW would be assigned operational control of FAC aircraft, but that the 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW) would be responsible for their maintenance and ground support. Consequently, for the next three years, all FAC aircraft assigned to the 601st TCW would fly out of Ramstein AB. However, this situation would change once the wing relocated to Wiesbaden in 1973. In any event, on 2 March 1970, Colonel Roy Peterson, 601st TCW Deputy Commander for Operations, made the first operational flight of a wing-controlled 0-2A aircraft. The wing's airborne FAC capability was further developed from 20 through 26 May via the employment of an 0-2A aircraft in support of the Army at the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment's Annual Training Tests at the Hohenfels

tank gunnery range. This marked the beginning of a new concept of operations for tactical air forces in Europe. Nine days later, the 601st TCW deployed its entire fleet of three O-2A aircraft to Italy in support of Dawn Patrol '70. The operational capabilities of the airborne FACs were displayed to great advantage during both deployments.

Remaining activity during the first several years of the 1970's was marked by several TACs unit relocations, several activation/inactivations, and the acquisition of new operations centrals for wing CRPs, the two DASS detachments, and the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC). At the beginning of 1972, both 601st DASS detachments began converting to the new AN/TSQ-93 shelters and, at the same time, the TACC began its conversion to the AN/TSQ-92. The three conversions took approximately one month each. At the start of March 1972, the 601st TCS and its detachment 22 (later to become the 602nd TCS) also began converting to their new AN/TSQ-91V shelters. In the latter two cases, the conversion process took about five months. Detachment 28, 601st TCS (later to become the 603rd TCS), followed suit three months later when it too began the AN/TSQ-91V conversion.

Two major events occurred in 1973. On 2 May, HQ USAFE announced that the 601st TCW would move to Wiesbaden AB on approximately 1 June 1973. Specifically, the 601st TCW, 601st TCS, 621st TCF (formerly Det 27), and the 601st TCMS were to move to Wiesbaden with personnel and equipment, whereas the 601st Supply Squadron, 601st Civil Engineering Squadron, 601st Security Police, 601st DASS, 601st Transportation Squadron, and 601st CSG were to move to Wiesbaden without personnel or equipment. It was also announced that

an entirely new unit, the 7400th Air Base Group (ABG), would be created on 1 June 1973 to operate and maintain Sembach AB. On 1 June 1973, the wing began its relocation from Sembach to Wiesbaden though the official ceremony marking the move wasn't held until 29 June 1973. The three O-2A aircraft relocated from Ramstein to Wiesbaden on 16 July 1973 and, seven days later, the Wiesbaden command post assumed all command and control functions for the 601st TCW. At this time, the Wiesbaden vehicle operations branch assumed responsibility for providing "round robin" resupply of outlying TACS radar units. By 1 October 1973, the wing's relocation to Wiesbaden was essentially complete. In the other major occurrence during the year, the 601st TCW went through a major reorganization on 1 July 1973. In some of the major activations, the 601st TCG was once again activated and placed under the control of the 601st TCW. Also, the two 601st DASS detachments were activated as the 601st and 602nd DASC squadrons and their parent unit was inactivated. Further, all of the 601st TCS detachments were activated as numbered flights and squadrons and Det 1, 601st TCW, became the 601st TACC Squadron. Two other new units were brought on line in the form of the 601st Tactical Air Support Group (TASG) and the 601st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (601st CAMS). The 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron or 20th TASS was not activated until 1 October 1973. Other miscellaneous activity during 1973 included the TACS assisted demonstration of AWACS capabilities in April and the arrival of the first contingent of OV-10A pilots in October. On the last day of the year, TACP operating locations of the 601st and 602nd DASC Squadron's were discontinued. The TACPs were reactivated as detachment operating locations of the 20th TASS.

On 21 June 1974, the wing's first two OV-10A aircraft arrived at Wiesbaden AB from Hurlburt AFB. The airplanes had been loaded aboard a LASH (Lighter Aboard Ship) barge at a stateside port and shipped across the ocean on the "SS Almeria Lykes" to Rotterdam, Netherlands. The barge was then floated off and sent down the Rhine River to the inland water port at Mainz, near Wiesbaden. On 12 July 1974, OV-10A flying operations officially commenced at Wiesbaden AB and three months later, on 10 October 1974, the 20th TASS flew the first OV-10A sortie involved with airborne FAC coverage of an exercise (Certain Pledge). Additional OV-10As arrived from Thailand 11 days later and, on 18 December 1974, use of O-2A aircraft for wing flying operations was terminated. Also, in an expansion of airborne mission taskings during 1974, the 601st TASS was activated on 1 July in preparation for the arrival of CH-53C helicopters. However, the first CH-53C would not arrive until six months later.

The wing's first two helicopters arrived on 15 January 1975, and flying operations for this newest addition to the wing's aircraft inventory commenced on 6 February. Five additional CH-53Cs were received during the last two months of the year. Also, 12 additional OV-10As arrived at Wiesbaden in August 1975, followed by 10 more two months later. However, all these events were overshadowed by the announcement, on 8 August 1975, of project Creek Swap, wherein the wing was notified it would again have to pack its bags and move back to Sembach. Thus, in January 1976, after a two year stay at Wiesbaden, the wing began its move en masse back to Sembach AB. The first OV-10A aircraft from Wiesbaden landed at Sembach on 7 January 1976, and Colonel Fleetwood Pride Jr., the 601st TCW commander, landed another the next day to officially mark the wing's return to Sembach. By 31 March 1976, the wing's move back to Sembach was largely completed.

The year 1975 was a relatively quiet one for wing radar units. But, 1976 was, altogether, quite a different story. In an effort to provide mobile radar coverage services for Northern Germany, the 601st TCW planned on opening up several new units in 2 ATAF. Final planning stages for Creek North were completed by 31 March 1976, and, by year's end, the wing's mobile TACS network grew by 40 percent. This expansion project involved the activation of eight units and first took in the development of three new sites in Northern Germany--Hessisch Oldendorf, Bad Muender, and Schwelentrup. Hessisch Oldendorf was the site of a former Royal Netherlands Air Force Hawk missile battery headquarters and the other two locations were its satellite missile launch sites. The 609th TCS and 619th TCF were activated at Bad Muender and Schwelentrup respectively on 1 April 1976. A month later, on 1 May 1976, the 629th TCF was also activated at Schwelentrup. Equipment for the 609th TCS came from Cannon AFB, New Mexico, and that for its two flights arrived from the 103rd TCF, Orange County, Connecticut, and the 101st TCF, Worcester, Massachusetts. Shortly after, on 21 May 1976, Hessisch-Oldendorf Air Station was officially opened under project Creek Control and, on 20 September 1976, the 600th TCG and 600th Combat Support Squadron (CSS) were activated to provide control and support for 2 ATAF radar units. This left three new units yet to be activated. Almost a year later under project Creek Brahman, on 15 March 1977, the 606th TCS, 626th TCF, and 636th TCF were activated at Carl Schurz Kaserne near Bremerhaven. This marked the completion of mobile radar expansion into Northern Germany. But, unknown to wing officials at that time, the final bed-down of these latter two flights would become a monumental headache.

Several aircraft related milestones were also reached in 1976. First, on 4 July, the 704th TASS was activated

at Sembach AB as a "Bicentennial Squadron". Second, on 1 November 1976, wing OV-10A aircraft, pilots from the 20th TASS, and maintenance personnel from the 601st CAMS deployed to Zaragoza AB, Spain, to "kick off" a four-month weapons training detachment (WTD) deployment nicknamed "Creek Tally". This was the first time wing aircraft deployed to Spain for this type training. In a related operation, the 611th TCF also deployed their FACP to Zaragoza at the same time. While there, the 611th provided radar and radio coverage for dissimilar air combat training missions between Northrop F-5E Tiger IIs of the 527th Tactical Fighter Training Aggressor Squadron (TFTAGS) and F-4 Phantoms. Also, the 611th TCF was airlifted in two C-5A Galaxies rather than the C-130s or C-141s normally used for radar airborne movements.

Going into 1977, the 609th TCS and its two subordinate flights were declared operationally ready on 1 February. Also, yet another TACS milestone was reached on 22 March 1977, when the 603rd TCS received the first two "E" model TPS-43 radars. After initial checkout at the 603rd TCS, one of the TPS-43Es was sent to the 601st TCS on 22 April 1977. Four days later a TPS-43E radar was used for the first time in an exercise as the 601st TCS participated in Certain Fighter. Eventually, all wing mobile radar units would receive the TPS-43E radar set. Indeed, 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. The 603rd TCS deployed to Gruenstadt from 9 November through 15 December to support this demonstration. In several other TACS related events during the year, on 14 November 1977, the 626th and 636th TCFs moved off Carl Shurz Kaserne to a location on top of the Bremerhaven City Dump at Muellplatz Grauer Wall, just down the road from their previous site. They would operate here, literally surrounded by garbage, for the next three years. Also, on 1 December 1977, the 636th TCF controlled its first mission, a sortie of two F-111s out of RAF Lakenheath, England. However, like the other two newly activated units, they would not be fully operational for several months.

The major aircraft related event of 1977 involved the arrival of four additional OV-10As from the states on 9 September. The four aircraft were flown across the Atlantic ocean, accomplishing what is believed to be the first transoceanic crossing of an OV-10. The four OV-10As made the 6,500-mile trip at an average airspeed of 200 knots, and the journey was completed in 36 hours of actual flying time. In all, the total mission lasted 15 days.

TPS-43E activity dominated the early months of 1978. On 20 January, the 606th TCS became the last CRP to receive the new radar set and several months later, on 31 March 1978, the remaining eight TPS-43Es stored at the 603rd TCS were released to the gaining FACPs. At this time, only two wing units still operated the TPS-44--the 626th and 636th TCFs. However, on 8 May 1978, TPS-43E radar sets became operational at the last two FACPs. This

completed the wing's conversion to one type of radar set for the first time in the history of the 601st TCW. Several other operational "firsts" also highlighted 1978. The 629th TCF assisted the 636th TCF in its first practice deployment from 4 through 7 January 1978 and the 606th TCS controlled its first practice intercept several weeks later on 2 February. The intercept involved F-15 aircraft from Bitburg AFB. On 22 March 1978, the 606th TCS, 626th TCF, and 636th TCF officially came on line as operational units and were declared fully operationally ready. Their sister radar units in 2 ATAF had previously achieved the same status on 1 February 1977. Also, 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. Since the 606th AC&WS was previously inactivated and the Doebraberg site turned over to the GAF on 1 July 1974, only the 615th AC&WS fixed 412L radar site at Boerfink remained assigned to the wing. The remaining five fixed radar sites were now owned and operated by the German Air Force.

With the exception of the arrival of nine newly assigned OV-10As, which made yet another transoceanic crossing on 22 July 1978, things remained relatively quiet for the aircraft side of the house during 1978 and most of 1979. In one of the several significant events of the latter year, the 601st TCW sent its first CH-53C helicopter to the Fokker Plant at Speyer for a major Analytical Condition Inspection (ACI). Also, the wing fully implemented the production oriented maintenance organization (POMO) concept on 30 April 1979 whereby the

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601st CAMS was inactivated with the simultaneous activations of the 601st Aircraft Generation Squadron (601st AGS) and the 601st Component Repair Squadron (601st CRS). The POMO concept, originally called the tactical aircraft maintenance system (TAMS), was designed to increase sortie generation production rates and increase aircraft readiness rates. For the 601st TCW, which was the third USAFE wing to convert to POMO, it took six months to fully implement the program. Also, the first two wing OV-10As to receive camouflage painting returned to Sembach on 14 August 1979 from Alverca, Portugal, where the work was performed.

On the radar side of the house, the three major events of the year involved the arrival of the first GSQ-120 radar data transfer system on 15 March 1979, the inactivation of the 601st TACC Squadron on 10 April 1979, and the October 1979 activation of a Phase III computer software change for wing TYC-10s which permitted interface between the CRP message processing centers and the fixed radar sites. This accomplishment ended the five-year-long Salty Net TACS modernization project which also ultimately allowed wing CRPs to interface with other NATO computer systems in the Central Region to include those of the airborne AWACS aircraft.

Many major events occurred in 1980. The 601st TASG gained additional CH-53Cs and OV-10As, a major wing reorganization occurred, the 626th and 636th TCFs finally moved off their garbage dump near Bremerhaven to another temporary site in Nordholz, and the 412L site at Boerfink shut down to undergo the GEADGE modification. However, all this activity was overshadowed by the distant guns being sounded in the

Persian Gulf area; called the Arabian Gulf after the fall of the Shah of Iran.

War broke out between Iran and Iraq on 22 September 1980. Shortly after, the Saudis requested and received US assistance in the form of various radar elements to ensure that Saudi Arabian airspace was not violated during the on-going hostilities. Indeed, early in October 1980, the 601st TCW received a short notice order to deploy a survey team to Riyadh to assist in setting up a mobile radar network in Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, stateside TAC elements dispatched a FACP, a TSQ-91V CRP operations central cell, and a TYC-10 MPC to Saudi Arabia. The overall radar operation in Saudi Arabia was collectively known as Elf One. Actually, Elf One's operation involved three operating locations set up along the eastern edge of the Arabian peninsula on the coast of the Arabian Gulf and in the central city of Riyadh. The MPC and E-3A AWACS aircraft operated out of the latter location. The TSQ-91V cell, along with the communications element of the Saudi Arabian SOC, was situated at a location on Dhahran AB, just inland from the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. The FACP operated out of Al Jubayl, also along the eastern coast of the country. The primary mission of this operation was to maintain an air defense enhancement package in Saudi Arabia in providing support to the Saudi Arabian government through air defense radar surveillance of the Gulf area. Some 500 personnel made up the population at the three operating locations. Since its activation in 1980, the wing has alternated with stateside TAC units in fulfilling the bulk of Elf One manning requirements. On 11 April 1981, the 602nd TCS began deploying en masse to

Elf One with vans and equipment. Prior to this date, the majority of wing members who supported Elf One were taken more or less equally from all 601st TCW TACS units. By the close of 1981, the 606th TCS, 619th TCF, 621st TCF, and 622nd TCF also served tours in Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, other significant events of 1981 which included the arrival of the wing's second AN/TPC-1C Air Support Radar Team (ASRT) radar, the first time participation of wing aircraft in practice search and rescue (SAR) missions, and the activation of EIFEL I system at Sembach's ATOC, were once again overshadowed by violence. This time, the threat resulted from terrorist activity in Germany which continued to grow in intensity throughout the year, culminating in a major bomb explosion at HQ USAFE on 31 August 1981. Because of the terrorist threat in Germany, the 601st TCW remained in an indefinite "Bravo" enhanced security condition throughout the remainder of the year.

During January 1982, a major accomplishment was realized at the FACP level. Although controllers had previously provided back up to AWACS and SOC controllers, the FACP members had never been designated as primary controllers. Because of this back up role, the FACP had never been scheduled to control practice intercepts or refuelings. However, on 2 January 1982, a request was approved to make the FACP at Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, a primary control agency and on 10 January 1982, members of the 622nd TCF controlled the Elf One FACP's first training mission as a primary control agency. In another "first", on 15 January 1982, the

609th TCS was assigned the task of being the first USAFE CRP to participate in the Unit Type Code (UTC) program. The UTCs are digital codes used to identify pre-selected deployment packages made up of varying equipment and personnel; the contents of which depended on the tactical need at the time. Anyway, the 609th TCS began their UTC tear down and inventory on 18 January 1982, with the equipment being loaded and weighed seven days later. Next, prior to 30 January 1982; the clinic was officially designated as the 601st Tactical Hospital. Originally, the hospital designation was put into effect with the concept of Sembach's clinic being a 2nd echelon unit with an air transportable hospital. Though the concept had not changed, HQ USAFE decided the "hospital" classification was not required and the unit was inactivated effective 30 January 1982. Also in 1982, the bulk of EIFEL I equipment was installed at ATOC Sembach by the close of 1981. Pre-qualification software tests began in June 1982 and, on 29 July 1982, initial operational capability ceremonies took place at Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE) Headquarters. Last, on 5 November 1982, testing of the new "HARD HAT" TSQ-91V operations central configuration began at the 601st TCS.

In 1983, wing officials expressed concern over the change of provisional support squadron responsibilities wherein, on 1 July 1983, the Elf One Support Squadron Provisional, 7069th (USAFE) was inactivated with the simultaneous activation of the Elf One Support Squadron Provisional 4400th (TAC). Where the former outfit was staffed by USAFE specialists, the latter organization was attached to the 363rd TFW out of Shaw AFB, South Carolina. As a matter of clarification, after 1 October 1983, Shaw AFB took over the mini-records of all personnel

on temporary duty (TDY) to Elf One. However, Officer Efficiency Reports, Airman Performance Reports, and awards and decoration processing for wing members remained in the 601st TCW. In another major occurrence during the year, the CRC at Boerfink completed upgrade evaluations for surveillance, identification, and command and control operations. Specifically, on 17 October 1983, the CRC assumed all surveillance and identification responsibilities daily (Monday through Friday) with the CRC at Lauda serving as a back-up system. On 1 November 1983, this operation was expanded to both day and swing-shifts, seven days-a-week. Several weeks later, on 21 November 1983, the Boerfink CRC received its first operational tasking from SOC III. From then on, the 615th AC&WS was responsible for Boerfink's airspace surveillance, identification, and command and control operations on a 24 hour-a-day basis.

The year 1984 had a "Bonanza" of events over and above that normally encountered. On 1 February 1984, the 601st TCW and all its assigned units were awarded the "Air Force Outstanding Award" for the period 1 May 1981 through 30 April 1983. Next, due to a congressionally-imposed European troop strength ceiling, all 45 wing OV-10A aircraft along with approximately 800 support personnel of both flying squadrons (the 20th TASS and 704th TASS) and much of the maintenance complex returned to the states during the period 5 June 1984 through 29 August 1984. This major move reduced four squadrons (20th TASS, 704th TASS, 601st AGS and 601st CRS) to zero manning and equipment. Another 601st CAMS was activated. In any event, the first wave of 12 OV-10As took off from Sembach AB on the morning of 5 June 1984. The 15 day trip averaged about 40 total

flying hours and the cells landed at George AFB, California, on 19 June 1984. The second wave of 12 OV-10As took off from Sembach AB on 10 July 1984, and despite being put on a weather hold at Keflavik, Iceland, landed at George AFB 12 days later. The third wave of 12 OV-10As departed Sembach AB on 30 July 1984 and, after an uneventful 12 day flight, they landed at George AFB on 11 August 1984.

Fianlly, marking an end of an era for OV-10A operations in Europe, on 29 August 1984, the fourth and last wave of nine OV-10A aircraft took off from Sembach AB for the 6,500 mile journey to George AFB. As was the case with the preceding flights, the trip went remarkably well and all aircraft landed at the California base on 7 September 1984. The 45 OV-10A aircraft previously assigned to the 601st TCW were now assigned to the 27th TASS at George AFB. With the transfer of wing OV-10As to George AFB, more than 650 maintenance and flying squadron technicians moved. Effective 15 July 1984, the 601st Aircraft Generation Squadron and the 601st Component Repair Squadron were inactivated. Simultaneously, their supplies, equipment, and many of their personnel were transferred to the newly activated 601st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. Last but not least, the wing's two Bronco squadrons (the 20th and 704th TASS) were inactivated on 30 September 1984.

On 1 June 1985, the issue involving a major wing reorganization and the subsequent activation of an Air Division and Electronic Combat Wing (ECW) finally became a reality. On 31 May 1985, HQ USAFE notified the 601st TCW that the Air Staff had approved the formation of the 65th Air Division and the 66th ECW

with an activation date of 1 June 1985. In a nutshell, the 601st TCW structure was divided into the 65th Air Division staff with two subordinate wings: a tactical control wing to operate the current TACS (by combining the 600th and 601st TCGs to form the new 601st TCW); and the 66th ECW to operate new electronic combat assets which included the EF-111s of the 42nd Electronic Combat Squadron stationed at Upper Heyford, England. The 52nd TFW based out of Spangdahlem AB, Germany rounded out the newly established 65th Air Division with its three squadrons of F-4s, dedicated to the defense suppression mission. In addition, the 66th ECW was assigned host wing responsibilities at Sembach AB which included support of the many geographically separated units of the 601st TCW.

Next, a number of changes in terms of unit designations and their locations were identified and became effective 1 June 1985. First, the USAF Clinic was relieved from assignment of the 601st TCW and further assigned to the 66th ECW. Secondly, both the 601st TCW and the 52nd TFW at Spangdahlem were relieved from assignment to Seventeenth Air Force and further assigned to the 65th Air Division. Other units assigned to the 65th Air Division included headquarters 601st Air Support Operations Group (ASOG) at Frankfurt, and headquarters 602nd ASOG at Mohringen, which were relieved from assignment to the 601st TCW. Up until 1 May 1985 both the 601st ASOG and the 602nd ASOG were designated headquarters 601st and 602nd ASOCs respectively. Next, the 7201st Comptroller Squadron at Sembach AB was relieved from assignment of the 601st TCW and further assigned to the 66th ECW. Moving along, the 601st TCS at Preum, the 603rd TCS at Sembach, 615th AC&WS at Neubruecke,

the 600th TCG at Basdahl, and the 609th TCS at Hessisch-Oldendorf, were all relieved from assignment to the 601st TCG and further assigned to the 601st TCW. As one could readily see, the switchover was entirely on paper as the old units just received new designations. Also, later in the month, it was learned that, effective 15 May 1985, the 601st TASG commander's staff would be dissolved. Those responsibilities normally performed by the TASG commander's staff were transferred to other squadrons assigned to the 601st TCW. For instance all matters dealing with helicopter operations were transferred to the 601st TASS commander. Other matters that dealt with helicopter maintenance or jet engine maintenance would be referred to the 601st CAMS effective this date. Effective 8 April 1985, the 601st TASG deputy commander for operations and all its subordinate staff agencies were absorbed into other areas under the 601st TCW.

In addition to those changes mentioned above, still others were underfoot regarding a general TACS drawdown in the Central Region. Specifically, in order to meet the Fiscal Year (FY) 1985 and 1986 Department of Defense budget restrictions, the Air Staff directed the reduction of the mobile TACS by two CRPs and four FACPs in two phases. Phase I resulted in the 1 June 1985 inactivation of the 619th TCF located at Grafenwoehr and the 1 August 1985 inactivation of the 602nd TCS at Turkheim and the 632nd TCF located at Schwelentrup. The second phase of this drawdown resulted in the 1 October 1986 inactivation of the 603rd TCS at Mehlingen, the 636th TCF and the 621st TCF at Wanna and Wiesbaden, respectively. In another area of the TACS drawdown interest, was the newly designated Operating Location C, 601st TCW. The 601st TCW, OL-C was designated and organized at Sembach AB on 1 February 1986, to provide

ongoing communications support to both the ATOC and 601st TCW of which would otherwise end as a result of Phase II of the TACS drawdown. The OL-C consists of four components; an ATOC support element, a stand-alone MPC, radio relay elements, and a Combat Logistics Repair Team (CLRT). This team, in peacetime, is made up of the Chief of Maintenance and a small maintenance staff function for the OL-C. However, in event of war, these people would be augmented by wing staff personnel and become the CLRT. Another significant event at the start of 1986 involved the end of Elf One commitment at Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia on 12 February 1986. This date marked the end of over five years (activated 9 October 1980) 601st TCW FACP support for Elf One operations at various locations in Saudi Arabia.

Remaining activity during 1986 was marked by a number of reorganizational changes, activations, inactivations, and redesignations of 601st TCW elements. First, on 1 April 1986, Detachment 2, 615th AC&WS was redesignated Detachment 1, 601st TCW. Next, on 1 August 1986, the 601st CAMS was redesignated the 66th CAMS. Under this organization, an Aircraft Maintenance Unit (AMU), reporting to the 601st TASS commander, was formed to support equipment maintenance for wing helicopters. The rationale for the reorganization included insufficient numbers of maintenance people to justify two separate and distinct maintenance organizations and the fact that the transfer of the CAMS would put functions normally associated with the host wing in the 66th ECW. Moving along, on 30 June 1986, Detachment 9, 601st TCW at Kalkar City, Germany was inactivated. All personnel, funds, supplies, and equipment were transferred to Detachment 1, 66th Combat Support Group. On this same date, Operating Locations A, B, C, and D of 601st TCW Detachment 9 (NOSC) were discontinued at Kalkar City, Maastricht City, Brockzetel City, and Udem City respectively. Last, on 1 October 1986,

the 615th AC&WS fixed 412L radar site at Boerfink was officially inactivated. On this date, control and ownership of this site was passed from the 601st TCW to the German Air Force thus ending the wing's involvement with fixed CRP operations since its inception on 1 November 1968.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEMBACH AIR BASE

THE FRANCO-GERMAN PERIOD: 1919 - 1953

The history of *Flugplatz Sembach* began in 1919, after the Treaty of Versailles, when French occupation troops used the eastern half of the present flight line as an airfield. Their facilities consisted of 10 sheet-iron barracks and 26 wooden hangars with canvas coverings. As part of the general withdrawal of French occupation forces from the left bank of the Rhine, the French abandoned the airfield on 15 June 1930. After the French withdrawal, the land was returned to farmers and used as a hay field until 1939, when the German Luftwaffe ordered that the area be reserved for use as a fighter base. Because of the brevity of the French campaign in the first year of the Second World War, the area was returned to the farmers to be used as pasture in June 1940.

Early in 1951, there were rumors in the village of Sembach concerning the surveying of the former airfield by Americans. In April 1951, German surveyors visited the area in the company of French officers. The local farmers protested the construction of a hard-surface airfield which would entail the loss of much of their land and demonstrated in Mainz, the capital of the Rhineland-Palatinate. Despite this vigorous opposition, the French occupational authorities began the construction of a modern airfield at the end of June 1951. Many workers were brought in to build the new base and the village of Sembach took on the character of a boom town. Construction continued around the clock through the use of nighttime illumination. The pouring of the 8,500-foot concrete

runway was begun early in September 1951 and was finished by the end of the month. The taxiways were completed by the close of the year. During the remainder of the winter the control tower, hangars, repair shops, and other buildings were built along the taxiway. With the building of munitions bunkers to the east of the flight line and of a road connecting the taxiway to Bundesstrasse 48 in April 1952, the construction of the flight line area was finished.

In the middle of April 1952, the residents of Sembach learned that the land to the north of the now completed flight line was to be used for the construction of multi-story barracks and office buildings. On 22 April 1952 officials began to survey the land which was to be built upon. The farmers joined forces with one another and forcibly hindered the surveyors, injuring one of them. On 23 April 1952, the Chief of the State Chancellery personally visited Sembach and promised the farmers that he would do all that he could to protect their rights. The Sembach farmers were not convinced, however, and on 28 April they again denied the surveyors entrance to their fields. Despite these efforts, the land was successfully surveyed in August. In September, the Minister President of the Rhineland-Palatinate announced that the government had offered an alternative site for the planned construction. Shortly afterward, the occupation authorities agreed to build on the *Heuberg*, a sandy area of comparatively little agricultural value, located approximately a mile from the flight line. Everyone being satisfied, Sembach became a center of activity once more and construction of the administrative area of the base began in October 1952. Over 2,500 workers worked day and night, operating bulldozers, dump trucks, and cement haulers. The present barracks and administrative buildings were completed in the spring of 1953.

THE AMERICAN PERIOD: 1953 - 1986

Although Sembach Air Base was constructed in the French Zone of Occupation under French direction, it was built to be used by NATO forces and was, moreover, intended to be an American air base from the beginning. The American flag first flew at Sembach Air Base on 8 July 1953. On that day, at 1045 hours, the first of 18 RB-26 Marauder aircraft belonging to the 66th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing landed on the new flight line. The wing was welcomed by Maj Gen B. C. Strother, commander of Twelfth Air Force. The wing commander landed at 1509 hours in a T-33, bringing the remainder of the wing's aircraft with him: 32 RF-80 Shooting Stars and four T-33's.

The third and final phase of construction at Sembach Air Base was conducted in the summer of 1954 when the present housing area was built. The 66th TRW operated RF-84 Thunderjets and RB-57 Cranberras aircraft at Sembach Air Base until it was transferred to France in 1958. The base was taken over by the 7127th Support Group in June 1958. On 20 August 1959, the 38th Tactical Missile Wing (TMW) moved to Sembach from Hahn Air Base. Sembach then became the Air Force's primary missile base in Europe. The 38th TMW had the comparatively short-ranged Matador ground-to-ground weapons system when it arrived at Sembach but changed to the longer-ranged Mace B missile soon after its arrival. The 38th TMW inactivated in September 1966 and its missiles were returned to the United States. The 603rd Air Base Wing was activated at the same time to administer Sembach Air Base and to perform a mission of support for the 601st Tactical Control Group and the 7th Commando Squadron. The 2nd Mobile Communications Group moved to Sembach Air Base in November 1966 from Toul-Rousieres Air Base, France, and was also supported by the

603rd ABW. The 601st TCG had been stationed at Sembach Air Base since its activation on 15 February 1965. The 7th Air Commando Squadron had moved to Sembach from Eglin Air Force Base, Florida in March 1964 and later left Sembach in July 1968.

The 603rd ABW was inactivated on 1 July 1968 as the 601st Combat Support Group was activated under the 601st Tactical Control Wing. The 601st CSG assumed the new wing's secondary mission of operating the base and of performing the base support functions (except for the brief two year period when the 7400th ABG ran the base) up until 1 June 1985. At this time the 601st TCW underwent a major wing reorganization. The then current 601st TCW structure was divided into the 65th Air Division staff with two subordinate wings (the 66th Electronic Combat Wing and the new 601st Tactical Control Wing). As such, the newly created 66th ECW was assigned host wing responsibilities previously held by the 601st TCW. In any event, the 601st CSG was redesignated the 66th CSG with responsibilities of operating the base and providing base support functions for both the 66th ECW and the 601st TCW.