

# 242<sup>nd</sup> COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON



## **LINEAGE**

242<sup>nd</sup> Airways and Air Communications Service Operations Flight activated, 15 Oct 1952  
Redesignated the 242d Mobile Communications Squadron 1 July 1961  
Redesignated 242<sup>nd</sup> Combat Communications Squadron  
Redesignated 242<sup>nd</sup> Combat Information Systems Squadron, 1 Jul 1985

## **STATIONS**

Geiger Field, Spokane International Airport, Spokane, WA  
F-37 NIKE site, Four Lakes, Washington 9 March 1962

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

252<sup>nd</sup> Combat Communications Group

## **COMMANDERS**

Cpt Richard G. Ahrens  
Maj Ros Hill, #1984  
Maj Mark S. Sweitzer

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATION**

The mission of the 242 CBCS is to provide tactical and mobile communications. Equipment includes satellite, microwave, HF, UHF, and VHF radios, computer data processors (communications center), and telephone and system switching capabilities. Personnel and equipment have deployed to all areas of the United States and to the far corners of the world in support of real world missions and JCS exercises.

The 242 Combat Communications Squadron (CMBTCS) and the 242 Air Traffic Control Flight (ATCF) are located at Spokane International Airport and are subordinate to the 252 Combat Communications Group. The squadron was federally recognized on 10 Oct 52 and the flight on 5 Apr 66. The missions of the 242 units are to provide mobile air traffic control (ATC) services (both sq and flt) and mobile communications (Sq). Equipment includes tower, radar approach control, tactical air navigation aids for ATC and VHF, UHF, HF and microwave radios, teletype(communications center), telephone switchboard, and a communications switching center for communications.

Equipment and personnel have deployed to all areas of the U.S. and to the far corners of the world in support of real world missions and JCS exercises. Countries include Korea, England, Germans, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Egypt. Active community efforts include ash cleanup after the Mt St Helens eruption, Fones for the Deaf Program, and an active control tower operation at the Couer d'Alene airport it Idaho.

The 242 Combat Communications Squadron (ANG) received Presidential Mobilization Orders in February 2002 on short notice for 33 unit members to mobilize and deploy overseas on a demanding overseas tour joining the Nation's fight against terrorism. The citizen-soldiers from Spokane and the Pacific Northwest were called up on short notice to design, install, maintain, and upgrade high-demand communication services at overseas bases, known as "tent cities". Working conditions proved challenging when faced with operating and maintaining delicate communications equipment in the desert with sand and daytime temperatures exceeding 125 degrees. Unit personnel deployed to various locations in Southwest Asia on 6-month tours with several extended by 30-40 days.

The 242nd Combat Communications Squadron, at Geiger Field Air National Guard Base, Spokane International Airport, Wash., celebrates its golden anniversary this year and continues to provide combat communications to the warfighter at locations around the globe. The 130-

person Air National Guard communications squadron is responsible for providing satellite, microwave, telephone and network communications in a combat environment. They normally deploy with a flying wing such as the 92nd Air Refueling Wing to provide the everyday communications services we take for granted stateside. "When you deploy to a remote location overseas, access to secure radios, phones, e-mail and the Internet is an absolute necessity," said Maj. Mark Sweitzer, 242nd flight commander. "The 242nd's job is to establish this 'communications flow' and continuously sustain the transfer of data measured in 'gigabytes per second' that directly supports wartime operations." The 242nd was slated for an operational readiness inspection this summer after a successful dress rehearsal at Fairchild AFB, Wash., last year. Last February the unit was activated under presidential mobilization orders and deployed more than 33 airmen overseas on a demanding 180-day mission to join the war against terrorism. The list of Spokane area guardsmen deployed overseas is an interesting group of salesmen, students, college professors, phone company technicians, bankers and a CPA. "I'm extremely proud of the way the Air National Guard stood up to a demanding 180-day mission overseas when called upon to fight the war on terrorism ... The 242nd is conducting a wartime operation which requires the highest level of commitment," said Lt. Col. Jim Hutchinson, 242<sup>nd</sup> CBCS commander. During peacetime, guardsmen normally go on active duty orders to complete initial training and then drill one weekend a month and two weeks each summer. The 180-day deployment by the 242nd underscores the ANG's significant contribution to support the nation's war effort. Due to its proximity to Fairchild, the 242nd is part of the 141st ARW family and a member of Team Fairchild. Last summer, the ramp space at Geiger Field hosted 92nd and 141st Air Refueling Wing flight operations during Fairchild's runway closure. The 242nd maintained aircraft ramp access, installed remote telephone lines, and provided a break area for security forces on 24-hour patrols. They also off-loaded more than 600 gallons of fuel to keep aerospace ground equipment and support vehicles on the move. The 242nd CBCS is also tasked to provide specialized communications assistance during natural disasters and civil disturbances under direction of the governor of the State of Washington and the adjutant general.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources