

617 AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS CENTER



MISSION

LINEAGE

617 Air Support Operations Group established, 27 May 1994
Activated, 1 Jul 1994
Inactivated, 1 Aug 1996
Redesignated 617 Air and Space Operations Center, 26 Mar 2009
Activated, 1 Jun 2009

STATIONS

Heidelberg, Germany, 1 Jul 1994-1 Aug 1996
Ramstein AB, Germany, 1 Jun 2009

ASSIGNMENTS

Seventeenth Air Force, 1 Jul 1994
Third Air Force, 31 Jul-1 Aug 1996
Seventeenth Air Force (Air Forces Africa), 1 Jun 2009

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
[1 Jul 1994]-31 Aug 1995

EMBLEM

Azure, emitting from base a globe of the field gridlined Argent surmounted by a stylized lion's head guardant Or detailed of the first; in chief a lightning flash bendwise point to dexter Gules fimbriated of the second, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "617TH AIR & SPACE OPERATIONS CENTER" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The globe represents the unit's ability to coordinate and perform air and space activities throughout the world. The lion symbolizes the unit's courage and knowledge. The lightning flash signifies the command and control mission of the unit. (Approved, 1 May 2009)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

2/2009 Officials at 17th Air Force took another big step toward full operational capability May 29 with the activation of the 617th Air and Space Operations Center here. The new AOC gives leaders at 17th AF, also known as Air Forces Africa, an increased command and control capability integral to their function as the air component for U.S. Africa Command. Since 17th AF officials declared initial operational capability Oct. 1, 2008, command and control has been conducted by Airmen in the Command and Control Center, or "C2C," a precursor to the AOC. Col. Andy Redmond, who led the C2C, became the 617th AOC commander during the activation ceremony. He said that while funding and resources are a challenge, the group of people running the new unit will make sure of its success. "We are looking for ways to get what we need to make sure our capabilities are state of the art, and that we have access to all the tools necessary to execute command and control of the air domain for U.S. Africa Command," Colonel Redmond said. "We have an excellent group of people, and they've done a great job making our C2C run, and they'll do a great job to make our Air and Space Operations Center run." The colonel explained that while about 60 people are now on-station in the AOC, 17th AF officials expect to have about 130 on board around Oct. 1, when plans call for them to declare full operational capability. The expanding team not only will execute overall command and control for 17th AF, but will flight-follow and support U.S. air operations within the African area of activity. A combination of Air Force specialties comprises the center, including but not limited to command and control, communications, and intelligence.

"We are building a complete air picture for Africa, which includes acquiring new systems, training and continuing to build on relationships with partner units," Colonel Redmond said. As the AOC team continues to build and expand in personnel and capacity, Colonel Redmond said they will continue to rely on partners like the 603rd Air and Space Operations Center. The 603rd AOC has a similar role for 3rd Air Force under U.S. Air Forces in Europe and U.S. European Command. Before 17th AF stood up, they were also responsible for operations in Africa. "The 603rd has been outstanding since 17th Air

Force stood up last October, and we couldn't have arrived where we are without their support," Colonel Redmond said. He also lauded 17th AF leadership, and the other leadership in the C2C for working together to on the execution and progression of command and control. Superintendent Senior Master Sgt Mike Topps, who also participated in the activation ceremony, received praise from the colonel for his leadership and hard work. Maj. Gen. Ron Ladnier, 17th AF commander and presiding official at the activation, said support from senior leaders in USAFE and by both the former and current Air Force chiefs of staff also has been crucial. "We really have to thank General (Roger) Brady, General (Michael) Mosley, and General (Norton) Schwartz for their support in building 17th Air Force," Gen. Ladnier said. "They really care about making us the best we can be." The 617th AOC is collocated with 17th AF headquarters at Ramstein

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.