

961 AIRBORNE AIR CONTROL SQUADRON



MISSION

The 961 Airborne Air Control Squadron provides airborne early warning and command and control capability to the Commander-in-Chief, and the United States Pacific Command. To support this role, two E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft and 158 operations and support personnel are permanently assigned to the squadron. The 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron provides surveillance, command and control, and communications necessary to effectively manage the tactical fighter force and support forces in such operations as counter air, interdiction, close air support, rescue, aerial refueling, reconnaissance, and airlift.

LINEAGE

61 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 20 Nov 1940

Activated, 15 Jan 1941

Inactivated, 1 Apr 1944

Redesignated 61 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy and activated, 1 Apr 1944

Inactivated, 27 Dec 1945

961 Airborne Early Warning and Control Squadron constituted, 11 Oct 1954

Activated, 18 Dec 1954

Inactivated, 31 Dec 1969

Redesignated 961 Airborne Warning and Control Support Squadron, 31 Dec 1979

Activated, 1 Oct 1979

Redesignated 961 Airborne Warning and Control Squadron, 1 Jan 1982

61 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy and 961 Airborne Warning and Control Squadron Consolidated, 19 Sep 1985. Consolidated squadron retains 961 Airborne Warning and Control Squadron designation

Redesignated 961 Airborne Air Control Squadron, 1 Aug 1994

STATIONS

Ft Douglas, UT, 15 Jan 1941
Felts Field, WA, 2 Jun 1941
Geiger Field, WA, 2 Jul 1941
Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 2 Feb 1942-1 Apr 1944
Smoky Hill AAFld, KS, 1 Apr 1944
Dalhart AAFld, TX, 27 May 1944
Smoky Hill AAFld, KS, 17 Jul 1944-8 Jan 1945
North Field, Guam, 18 Feb-16 Nov 1945
Camp Anza, CA, 15-27 Dec 1945
Otis AFB, MA, 18 Dec 1954-31 Dec 1969
Kadena AB, Japan, 1 Oct 1979

ASSIGNMENTS

39 Bombardment Group, 15 Jan 1941-1 April 1944
39 Bombardment Group, 1 Apr 1944-27 Dec 1945
551 Airborne Early Warning and Control Wing, 18 Dec 1954-31 Dec 1969
552 Airborne Warning and Control Wing (later, 552 Airborne Warning and Control Division),
1 Oct 1979
28 Air Division, 1 Apr 1985
313 Air Division (attached to Fifth Air Force for operational control) 1 Oct 1990
18 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1941-1942
B-24, 1942-1944
B-29, 1944-1945
C-121, 1955-1969
E-3, 1979

COMMANDERS

1Lt John A. Way, 15 Jan 1941-unkn
Unkn, 1 Apr-1 May 1944
1Lt Joe Glickman, 1 May 1944
Maj Thomas L. McKissack, 19 Jun 1944
Maj Gordon R. Willis, Aug 1944
Cpt James S. Howard, c. Sep 1944
Maj William J. Crumm, Oct 1944-unkn
Unkn, 18 Dec 1954-31 Dec 1955
LTC Robert E. Harrington, Jan 1956
LTC Alfred W. Barrett Jr., #31 Dec 1957

LTC Ted H. Ostendorf, 24 Apr 1958
Maj Robert A. Bostick, 27 Aug 1958
LTC Clarence E. Franks, 7 Oct 1958
LTC Robert C. Kerr, 1 Feb 1960
LTC Henry M. O'Connor, 12 Dec 1961
Maj Burkhead M. Herndon , by 30 Dec 1962
LTC Frank P. Klotz Jr., 25 Aug 1963
Maj Edward J. Hennegan, 1 Jul 1964
LTC Robert V. Mitchell Sr., 30 Jul 1964
LTC Jack January Jr., by 30 Sep 1966-unkn
Unkn, 1 Oct 1967-31 Dec 1969
LTC Howard T. Cariveau, 1 Jan 1980
Col Walter E. Kowalik, 14 Apr 1982-unkn
Col Bruce J. Gold, 24 Jan 1983
Col Richard A. Riegel, 25 Jun 1985
Col Stig Egede-Nissen, 17 Jul 1987
Col Michael A. Gould, 27 Jul 1989
LTC Mark F. Benda, 31 Jul 1991
LTC Christopher J. Budinski, 23 Jun 1993
LTC Joseph M. Marchino, 16 Jun 1995
LTC Guy J. Wills III, 30 Jun 1997
LTC Derrick A. Hoxie III, 10 Jun 1999
LTC Mark E. Ware, 6 Jul 2001
LTC Keith A. Swenson, 13 Feb 2003
LTC Robert L. Guerrero, 7 Jan 2005

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Japan, 10 May 1945

Tokyo and Yokohama, Japan, 23-29 May 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1957-31 Oct 1958

[1 Oct 1979]-30 Jun 1980
1 Jul 1982-30 Jun 1984
1-10 Sep 1983
1 Sep 1995-31 Aug 1997
1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000
1 Oct 2000-30 Sep 2002
1 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

EMBLEM



61 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) emblem: On an emerald green disc a caricatured horse yellow, outlined in black, trimmed in brown, wearing coveralls; aviator's helmet and goggles of brown, shoes black, trimmed in yellow, with three zigzag speed lines of black issuing from left foot, carrying under his right arm a white aerial bomb outlined in black, shaded in yellow. (Approved, 15 May 1942)





Approved, 2 Mar 1981; modified, 7 Nov 1995

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Operational and later replacement training unit, 1942-1944. Combat in Western Pacific, 6 Apr-14 Aug 1945.

Radar surveillance along eastern coast of US, 18 Dec 1954-31 Dec 1969.

The unit's first deployment in the Pacific from Okinawa occurred in September 1980, when the 961st represented the United States in PACIFIC CONSORT, a joint multinational exercise held in Australia.

Coverage of salvage operations of downed Korean Airliner, Flight 007, 1-10 Sep 1983.

Airborne command and control for Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Command and supported US forces counter air interdiction, close air support, rescue, reconnaissance, airlift operations, and special operations, 1980.

Oct 1988 -- The 961 AWACS flew in support of the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

From 2000 to 2003, the 961st supported Operation SOUTHERN WATCH through several deployments of personnel and equipment, becoming the last AWACS squadron with dedicated support to the operation. The 961st commanded the battlespace in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and Operation NORTHERN WATCH, enabling a successfully executed Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

In 2003, the squadron supported 22 higher headquarters directed missions in the Sea of Japan. These missions enforced U.S. rights to navigate freely in the region following the North Korean intercept of an RC-135.

While supporting the 18th Wing combat readiness training operations and the Korean Theater, the 961st upholds the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement, maintains worldwide deployment readiness status, and conducts flying operations in excess of 1,200 hours and 2,400 training events annually.

AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Unit yearbook. *552 Airborne Early Warning and Control Wing. 1957.*