

1241 AIRWAYS AND AIR COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

1241 Airways and Air Communications Service Squadron

STATIONS

RAF Manston, England, 1955

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Dean W. Bennett, #1955

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Throughout the free world, wherever the planes of our far-flung Air Force may operate, the Airways and Air Communications Service of the Military Air Transport Service is performing a

most important and never-ceasing function for the USAF and for aviation in general. Gone are the days when pilots flew by the "seat of their pants," depending upon their instinct, knowledge of terrain and experience to see them safely home. Now, the all-seeing eyes of radar, the precise beams of radio direction finders and the guiding voices of high frequency radio are ever at their disposal—expertly manned by experienced and superbly trained AACS operators whose dedication to the cause of guarding valuable aircraft and their irreplaceable human cargos is legendary.

Here at Mansion, these services are ably provided by the 1241st AACS Squadron commanded by Major Dean W. Bennett.

Perhaps the most noteworthy achievement of the 1241st has been the manner in which it has fulfilled its most vital mission despite a severe shortage of trained personnel. Perhaps in no other organization are the technical requirements so rigid and exacting as in AACS. In addition to possessing an AFQT equivalent to that required for OCS, it takes from three to five years of costly and concentrated training to turn out a fully qualified OCA operator.

On the maintenance side, it requires no less than four years of extensive training to master the vastly complicated electronics equipment with which they work. Then, too, the AACS operator must be psychologically fit for the job—able to talk and think clearly and to arrive at correct, clear-cut decisions without hesitation. Consider these facts, plus the fact that AACS personnel are highly prized catches for civilian industry, and there's no doubt as to why the system perpetually suffers from a lack of suitable manpower.

For the men of the 1241st, the watchword is constant practice, for only by actual experience can they remain fully proficient and accurate. Each month the squadron racks up about 500 GCA (Ground Control Approach) runs—many of them actual live runs necessitated by the adverse and ever-changing weather conditions encountered in the British Isles.

Not all of their efforts are directed towards assistance to military planes. On numerous occasions in the past, the squadron has proved to be a good Samaritan to civil aircraft lost or in difficulties within their area of responsibility.

Mansion is one of five master air fields in the United Kingdom which are never 'out of business'. Therefore, when London or continental airports are weather-bound, aircraft frequently divert to Mansion, taxing control tower and GCA facilities to the utmost. The skillful, round-the-clock vigilance of AACS is a most powerful deterrent to aviation disaster.