

8 RADIO RELAY SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

8 Radio Relay Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

A radio relay system (RRL) was constructed during 1954-55 to interconnect all USAFE facilities in France. This vital USAFE theater-wide system interconnected France, Germany, and United Kingdom air bases and supplemented the frequently intermittent national telephone systems. The RRL system crossed northern France and extended south to Bordeaux, west to La Rochelle, and north to Calais.

By 1955 the radio relay system served all the main air bases, Chateauroux Air Depot, three sub-depots, three disbursed operating bases, and connected into nearby U.S. Army RRL stations in

France. There remained only four or five USAFE sites in France not served by this system when RRL site construction was terminated in 1957 due to budget limitations.

The RRL system was operated and maintained by the 7th and 8th Radio Relay Squadrons. The 8th RRL Sq was headquartered at the Vernou site, Orly AB, and Dreux AB. RRL squadrons were divided into flights; each flight had an officer and a senior NCO supervising four to six RRL operating locations. The two squadrons had a total of approximately 24 officers and 780 airmen assigned to operate and maintain the radio relay system in France.

The network used commercial microwave radio sets that provided around-the-clock voice and teletype services. This required each RRL site to be manned by approximately fourteen airmen, most of whom lived on the RRL site. Ground radio repairmen were kept busy performing routine maintenance and continual channel testing to insure very high quality voice and teletype circuits. Mobile truck mounted RRL sets were available to immediately replace a damaged or destroyed fixed site. Microwave relay sets were installed at forty-nine off base sites and were easily recognized by their radio towers. Sites were spaced about thirty-two miles (50 kms) apart.

Every site had one or two, eighty-foot high antenna towers with microwave antennas pointed in different directions toward adjacent stations. The RRL sites were installed on the highest hilltop available in the area and adjacent to a service road. Some were rather isolated but many airmen enjoyed the duty. Most sites were within walking distance of a small village. The RRL sites obtained their support, e.g., food, fuel, medical, base exchange, commissary, post office, and recreation facilities through host-tenant agreements with the closest USAFE base or U.S. Army post. Each site had at least one Air Force truck for transportation.

In December 1962, The 8th RRL Sq inactivated and the 2059th Radio Relay Squadron was activated. There was no change in mission or equipment and the network continued to function in France.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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U.S. Air Force in France 1950-1967. Jerome J. McAuliffe. Milspec Press Way. San Diego, CA.