

## Chronology of the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing

**8 Mar 1955** -- The 963<sup>d</sup> and 964<sup>th</sup> Airborne Early Warning and Control Squadrons (AEW&CS) activated at McClellan AFB, California, and equipped with the new EC-121 *Constellation*.

**8 Jul 1955** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Early Warning & Control Wing (AEW&CW) gained permanent status at McClellan AFB and its assigned squadrons received the RC-121 aircraft to carry out the mission of detecting aircraft and controlling defensive interceptors beyond the range of ground-based radar.

**8 Aug 1955** -- The Air Force activated the 965 AEW&CS as part of the 552 AEW&CW.



**Figure 17** - An EC-121 sits in a hangar awaiting maintenance.

**1 Jul 1957** -- The USAF inactivated the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Division making the 552 AEW&CW a part of the Western Defense Force.

**1 Jul 1960** -- The USAF inactivated the Western Defense Force and the 552 AEW&CW shifted under the 28 AD and became part of the Air Defense Command.

**Oct 1962** -- The 552 AEW&CW participated in the NASA's Project Mercury and assisted in the recovery of the Mercury space capsules.

**1 May 1963** -- The 966 AEW&CS was reassigned from the 551 AEW&CW to the 552 AEW&CW.

**May 1963** -- The 964 AEW&CS participated in the recovery of astronaut pilot Gordon Cooper's *Faith 7* the space capsule.

**10 Jul 1965** -- An EC-121 aircraft from the 552 AEW&CW teamed up with an F-4 Phantom II from the 8<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) for the 8 TFW's first confirmed air-to-air MIG kill in Southeast Asia.

**Mar 1968** -- The 552 AEW&CW aircraft number 554 became the first EC-121 to log more than 20,000 flying hours.

**Nov 1969** -- The 551 AEW&CW Icelandic Deployment Forces transferred to the 552 AEW&CW.

**Dec 1969** -- The 552 AEW&CW added the RC-121 aircraft to its inventory.

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**Figure 18** - Aircraft *Triple Nickel* rests on the tarmac at Korat RTAFB, Thailand, September 1970. In the background are several C-121 transports.

**Jul 1970** -- Boeing Aerospace Company received a contract to develop and flight test two E-3 aircraft radar systems. The Westinghouse Electric Company's radar eventually became the choice for the E-3.

**1 Aug 1972** -- "*Triple Nickel*" EC-121 aircraft 555 retired and went on display at the Air Force Aircraft Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. "*Triple Nickel*" logged over 22,000 flying hours and 4.8 million air miles.

**9 Feb 1973** -- The first E-3 airframe accomplished its initial flight test.

**30 Jun 1974** -- College Eye inactivated. During the course of the Vietnam conflict, the members of the 552 AEW&CW had controlled over 210,000 aircraft; issued 700 MIG warnings; flown 4,713 combat missions for 48,954.3 combat hours; and perhaps most importantly, assisted in the recovery of 80 downed US aircrew members.

**30 Jun 1974** -- The 964 AEW&CS received inactivation orders.

**1 Jul 1974** -- The 552 AEW&CW became the 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Early Warning and Control Group (AEW&CG).

**22 Nov 1974** -- The Department of Defense announced that the 552 AEW&CG would inactivate in the summer of 1976.

**Apr 1975** -- The Systems Integration Demonstration of the E-3 aircraft prototypes resulted in the decision to produce the aircraft and its assorted components.

**Aug 1975** -- Four E-3 aircraft completed a 16-month test period at the Air Force Test and Evaluation Center, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

**Oct 1975** -- Engineering and test evaluations began on the E-3 aircraft at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

**1 Jul 1976** -- The Air Force activated the 552 AEW&CG and redesignated it as the 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing (AWACW) at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

**11 Sep 1976** -- Headquarters TAC informed the 552 AWACW that the Air Force Chief of Staff approved the realignment of the 7<sup>th</sup> Airborne Command and Control Squadron under the 552 AWACW.

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**20 Jan 1977** -- The 552 AWACW's new command post facility became operational.

**5 Feb 1977** -- The USAF redesignated the 964 AEW&CS as the 964<sup>th</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Squadron (AWACS).

**23 Mar 1977** -- The first E-3A Airborne Warning and Control Systems aircraft arrived at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, aircraft tail number 75-0557.

**24 Mar 1977** -- The wing conducted the arrival ceremony for the first E-3A.



**Figure 19** - The arrival ceremony of 75-0557 at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma on 24 March 1977.

**31 Mar 1977** -- The first operational flight of the E-3A AWACS “*Sentry*” 75-0557 took place.

**7 Jul 1977** -- The 964 AWACS activated at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma under the 552 AWACW.

**11 Dec 1977** -- Imperial Iranian Air Force representatives visited the 552 AWACW to negotiate the purchase of E-3 aircraft for Iran. This initiative, called “Peace Sky,” never materialized.

**16 Apr 1978** -- The 552 AWACW E-3 AWACS achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC).

**26 Jun 1978** -- The 8<sup>th</sup> Tactical Deployment Control Squadron and the oldest C-135 airframe in the Air Force inventory transferred to Tinker AFB under the 552 AWACW.

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**1 Jul 1978** -- The 965 AWACS activated at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

**Sep 1978** -- The 963 AWACS made its first operational deployment utilizing the E-3 AWACS to Kadana AB, Japan. The 963 AWACS exercised over the Republic of Korea in a multinational operation called COPE JADE CHARLIE.

**Sep 1978** -- The 964 AWACS deployed personnel and equipment to Keflavik NAS, Iceland.

**Dec 1978** -- North Atlantic Treaty Organization decided to purchase 18 E-3 aircraft for its airborne early warning role.

**Jan 1979** -- The 552 ACW and its E-3s began service with the NORAD.

**15 Jan 1979** -- An E-3 mission assisted in the apprehension of an aircraft smuggling marijuana into Florida.

**Mar 1979** -- Aircraft 59-1518 converted to an EC-135K to replace EC-135 aircraft 62-3536, that had been lost in 1977.



**Figure 20** - An E-3, escorted by two F-15 Eagles, over the coastline of Iceland.

**Mar-Apr 1979** -- A 552 AWACW E-3 completed an around-the-world mission, with the 964 AWACS as lead squadron for the mission. During the flight, the E-3 touched down at the following locations: Alaska, Hawaii, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and the Azores.

**Oct 1979** -- Rising tensions caused in the North Yemen - South Yemen Civil War resulting in the Air Force to send two E-3s to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**Oct 1979** -- South Korean President, Park Chung Hee, was assassinated. In less than six hours, the 963 AWACS mobilized making its way to South Korea. The aircraft and aircrews remained in South Korea for 60 days and flew 54 missions for a total of 374 flying hours.

**Nov 1979** -- The 8<sup>th</sup> Airborne Deployment and Control Squadron refurbished a C-135 aircraft, tail number 59-1518. The 8 ADCS transformed it into an EC-135, adapting it to perform a specialized mission of transporting distinguished visitors and airborne deployment control missions.

**14-24 Jan 1980** -- The 7 ACCS participated in EMPIRE GLACIER, a cold-weather exercise involving Air Force, Army, and Navy elements at Fort Drum, New York.

**14 Mar 1980** -- A crew from the 963 AWACS, while on scramble over Iceland, located and saved a lost civilian aircraft.

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**23 May 1980** -- The USAF activated the 961 AWACS at Kadena AB, Japan.

**17 Jun 1980** -- The Air Force announced the activation of the 552 AWACW's geographically separated unit the 41<sup>st</sup> Electronic Combat Squadron, at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

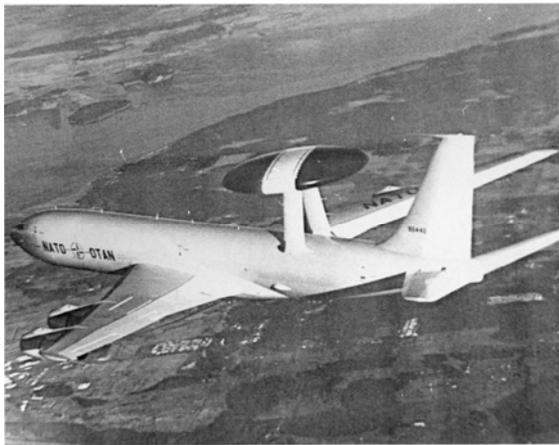
**26 Jun 1980** -- North Atlantic Treaty Organization aircrews began arriving at Tinker AFB to begin training on the E-3A.

**1 Jul 1980** -- Headquarters TAC assigned the 41 ECS to the 552 AWACW.

**8 Jul 1980** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**1 Oct 1980** -- Four E-3As and over 200 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing personnel deployed to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in support of European Liaison Force-One (ELF-One).

**9 Dec 1980** -- Four E-3As and over 200 552 AWACW personnel deployed to Ramstein AB, West Germany, in support of exercise Greek Sentry.



**Figure 21 - The NATO E-3.**

**11 Aug 1981** -- The first flight of the NATO standard E-3As took place.

**14 Aug 1981** -- Two E-3As deployed to Egypt following the assassination of that country's president, Anwar el-Sadat.

**10 Dec 1981** -- The first NATO standard E-3A tail number 80-0137 was delivered to Tinker AFB. Further, aircraft 80-0137 was the 25<sup>th</sup> E-3 delivered to the 552 ACW.

**1 Jan 1982** -- North Atlantic Treaty Organization accepted delivery of the first of 18 E-3 aircraft.

**9 Mar 1982** -- The 41 ECS received its first EC-130H, *Compass Call*, aircraft.

**18 May 1982** -- For the first time, an E-3 controlled the intercept of a Soviet *Bison* aircraft near Iceland.

**19 Mar 1982** -- Exercise ELF-One Sentry initiated the deployment of one E-3A from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma to Cairo, Egypt.

**31 Sep 1982** -- The 552 AWACW set a fiscal year flying record of 26,365 hours with 24 aircraft, amounting to approximately 1,099 flying hours per aircraft.

**15 Feb 1983** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Equipment Maintenance Squadron activated under the 552 AWACW.

**Aug 1983** -- Two E-3 aircraft, aircrews, and support personnel deployed to Khartoum, Sudan, assisting the Sudanese in repelling rebel forces.

**1-15 Sep 1983** -- The 552 AWACW flew in support of the Korean Airlines flight 007 salvage operation.

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**1 Oct 1983** -- Tactical Air Command redesignated the 552 AWACW as the 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Division.

**1 Nov 1983** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Tactical Training Squadron activated under the 552 AWACD.

**9 Nov 1983** -- The 961 AWACS escorted President Ronald Reagan's aircraft.

**1 Apr 1984** -- The Air Force activated the 965 AWACS under the 552 AWACW.

**20 Jul 1984** -- The first operational E-3B became part of the Air Force and 552 AWACW inventory.

**1 Oct 1984** -- Boeing assumed responsibility for all E-3 pilot training.

**1 Apr 1985** -- The 28<sup>th</sup> Air Division activated, and the 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Division returned to its designation as the 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing under the command of the 28 AD.

**1 Apr 1985** -- Saudi Arabian aircrew students arrived at Tinker for E-3 training.



**Figure 22** - The *Connie* is towed to its final resting place at Connie Park, located just west of the 552 ACW headquarters building.

**1 Oct 1985** -- An EC-121 *Connie* arrived at Tinker to become a static display aircraft at a new airpark just west of building 280. The *Connie* flew in from Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. Volunteers from the 41 ECS donated their time to prepare the old veteran for its final flight.

**1 Jul 1986** -- The United States Air Force activated the 962 AWACS at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

**2 Aug 1987** -- The deployed E-3 AWACS flew their 5,000<sup>th</sup> sortie at ELF-One.

**Mar 1988** -- The Air Force recognized the 552 AWACW's efforts during ELF-One, with the award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

**28 Mar 1988** -- Tinker AFB experienced a severe hailstorm that causing substantial damage to aircraft and facilities.

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

**31 Oct 1988** -- A letter of agreement between the Air Force and the US Customs office established a Customs National Aviation Center at Tinker AFB.

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**16 Apr 1989** -- The final two 552 AWACW E-3s returned from Saudi Arabia marking the end of the ELF-One commitment. The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing logged more than 6,000 sorties and 87,000 flying hours in eight and one half years during ELF-One.

**Feb 1990** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing deployed E-3 aircraft to Roosevelt Roads NAS, Puerto Rico in response to the expanded drug interdiction missions assigned to the 552 AWACW.

**7 Aug 1990** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing E-3 aircraft, aircrews and personnel deployed in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD.

**Oct 1990** -- Tactical Air Command recognized the 552<sup>d</sup> Component Repair Squadron was recognized as the “Best in TAC.”

**Oct 1990** -- Tactical Air Command named the 552 AWACW as the “Best Tenant Facility in TAC.”

**Oct 1990** -- The 552 AWACW completed training the French E-3 aircrew members for the French Air Force E-3 fleet.

**Oct 1990** -- Headquarters USAF reassigned the 961 AWACS to Pacific Air Forces.

**17 Jan 1991** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Airborne Warning and Control Wing E-3s began flying in support of the war with Iraq -- Operation DESERT STORM. The 552 AWACW flew a total of **7,314.7** combat hours during DESERT STORM, with a combined **91.36** percent mission capable rate. They controlled a total of **31,924** strike sorties, which dropped a total of **88,500** tons of munitions, without losing a single Allied aircraft in air-to-air action. In addition, E-3s controlled **20,401** aerial refueling sorties. The aerial tankers off loaded a total of **178.4** million gallons of fuel to **60,543** receivers. Furthermore, the 552 AWACW also assisted in **39 of 41** Allied air-to-air shoot downs during DESERT STORM.

**17 Jan 1991** -- The E-3s began flying in Operation PROVEN FORCE and continued throughout the war. They controlled 4,401 sorties equating to 14,117.8 flying hours. While flying 490.4 hours, the E-3s assisted in five air-to-air kills and the delivery of 6.6 million pounds of ordnance.

**28 Feb 1991** -- Operation DESERT STORM ended. After the war, E-3s remained in the region in support of NATO Operations PROVIDE COMFORT and SOUTHERN WATCH.

**Oct 1991** -- Headquarters Air Force redesignated the 552 AWACW as the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing.

**Nov 1991** -- Headquarters Air Force redesignated the 8<sup>th</sup> Tactical Deployment and Control Squadron as the 8<sup>th</sup> Airborne Deployment and Control Squadron (ADCS).



**Figure 23** - An ABCCC of the 7 ACCS returns from DESERT STORM.

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**27 May 1992** -- The 28 AD received its third Air Force Outstanding Unit Award since April 1985.

**28 May 1992** -- Headquarters TAC assigned the 3<sup>d</sup> Combat Communications Group under the 552 ACW.

**29 May 1992** -- The USAF inactivated the 28<sup>th</sup> Air Division and aligned the 552 ACW directly under TAC.

**1 Jun 1992** -- The 552 ACW was relieved from Tactical Air Command control and reassigned to Air Combat Command.

**Dec 1992** -- The 552 ACW underwent a Quality Air Force Assessment and achieved an overall Excellent from the Air Combat Command Inspector General.

**13 Jan 1993** -- A 552 ACW E-3, flying a SOUTHERN WATCH mission over the Persian Gulf, guided an Allied air strike against Iraqi ground targets in response to Iraq's violations of the United Nations resolutions.

**17 Jan 1993** -- A 552 ACW E-3 and crew, flew a PROVIDE COMFORT mission, guiding an USAF F-16 in the interception and destruction of an Iraqi MIG-29 after the MIG violated the United Nations' no-fly zone over Northern Iraq.

**18 Jan 1993** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Ground Computer Squadron's small computer flight completed testing of a computer software program called Battlefield Mapping Station (BMS) and released it for immediate operational use. The 7 ACCS used BMS to produce navigation maps during Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center III missions.



**Figure 24** - Action aboard the ABCCC during a routine mission.

**1 Jul 1993** -- The 552 ACW became an operational unit for the Twelfth Air Force.

**17 Jul 1993** -- The 7 ACCS deployed to Aviano AB, Italy in support of United Nations Operation DENY FLIGHT. DENY FLIGHT sought to help end the war in the former Yugoslavia.

**1-19 Jan 1994** -- The 8 ADCS performed mission CODEL JOHNSTON, consisting of the 8 ADCS flying the US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to Southeast Asia for trade meetings. The mission originated at Andrews AFB, District of Columbia and proceeded to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Yokota AB, Japan; Beijing, China; Guangzhou, China; Hanoi, Vietnam; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Bangkok, Thailand; Jakarta, Indonesia; Timika, New Guinea; Saipan, the Marianas Islands; Hickam AFB, Hawaii and terminated at Langley AFB, Virginia.

**15 Mar 1994** -- The 552 ACW hosted two key members of the Polish military establishment and provided the dignitaries with a tour of the E-3 aircraft and a briefing on the aircraft's capabilities.

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**Mar 1994** -- First Lieutenant Julie E. Petrina was chosen as the first female for A-10 pilot training. The 175<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, assigned to Maryland Air National Guard, selected 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Petrina as their choice while she performed as the 552<sup>d</sup> Computer Systems Group Executive Officer.

**1 Apr 1994** -- The 3 CCG realigned and began reporting directly to Twelfth Air Force. The 3 CCG had reported to the 552 ACW since 27 May 1992.

**14 Apr 1994** -- Two USAF F-15s shot down a pair of US Army “*Blackhawk*” helicopters over the northern no-fly zone in Iraq, mistaking them for Soviet built “*HIND*” helicopters. The fighters had been controlled by 552 ACW E-3s during the mission. The “friendly fire” incident caused the deaths of 26 people aboard the two helicopters.

**21 Apr 1994** -- Crew Chief Technical Sergeant Robert L. Stanley and his crew launched a “black letter” (no maintenance discrepancies on the E-3 aircraft) E-3 aircraft tail number 78-0578. Aircraft 78-0578 took off as the first time a “black letter” E-3 aircraft launched in five years.

**15-27 May 1994** -- The Commander of Space Command, General Charles A. Horner, received support from the 8 ADCS on a Distinguished Visitor (DV) mission. The DV mission began at Peterson AFB, Colorado, and proceeded to Travis AFB, California; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; Kwajalein (an island in the Pacific Ocean); Guam; Hong Kong; Kadena AB, Japan; Anchorage, Alaska; and terminated back at Peterson AFB, Colorado.

**27 Jun 1994** -- Special Order GA-325 awarded the 552 ACW (subordinate groups and squadrons included ) the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The AFOUA effective dates were 1 Apr 1992 to 31 May 1994.

**17 Jun 1994** -- Brigadier General Silas R. Johnson, Jr., took command of the 552 ACW. Brigadier General David Oakes retired later in the same ceremony, ending 28 years of distinguished service to the USAF.



**Figure 25** - A view from the cockpit of an E-3 during an aerial refueling mission courtesy of the Washington Air National Guard.

**1 Jul 1994** -- Headquarters ACC directed the renaming of the Airborne Warning and Control Squadrons as Airborne Air Control Squadrons, and the 8 ADCS became the 8<sup>th</sup> Airborne Command and Control Squadron (ACCS).

**15 Jul 1994** -- Captain Robert T. Aman, of the Canadian Air Force, became the first Canadian aircraft commander of a USAF E-3.

**19 Jul 1994** -- The 7 ACCS unit designation left the 552 ACW and relocated under the control of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, Offutt AFB, Nebraska. The 7 ACCS personnel and aircraft transferred to the 42<sup>d</sup> Airborne Command and Control Squadron stationed at Davis-

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Monthan AFB, Arizona.

**Sep 1994** -- The 552 ACW members flew the 2,000<sup>th</sup> sortie in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH in E-3 aircraft tail number 79-0001.

**Oct 1994** -- When Iraq forces began assembling near the Kuwaiti border region, the 552 ACW began to build up aircraft in support of Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR. The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing began mobility-processing procedures and scheduled four E-3s for deployment. Fortunately, the deployment orders were canceled when Iraq pulled its troops back to a safe distance from Kuwait.

**Oct 1994** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing supported Operation UPHOLD/MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY, the planned invasion of Haiti. Operations ended when a US delegation, led by former President Jimmy Carter, resolved the situation without an armed insurgence into Haiti by US Forces.

**3 Oct 1994** -- Field Training Detachment 413 (413 FTD) conducted its last class under Air Education and Training Command. The 413 FTD became the 552<sup>d</sup> Logistics Group Deployment and Application Training Section. This move came in response to USAF Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak's "one base-one boss" concept.

**23 Oct 1994** -- In a move to improve real-time battle management capabilities, representatives from the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing (Offutt AFB, Nebraska) and 552 ACW met to begin negotiations for increased interoperability. The 55<sup>th</sup> Wing owned the RC-135 *RIVET JOINT* electronic intelligence aircraft. The two agreed to a personnel exchange program and created a *RIVET JOINT/AWACS* Battlefield Management Quality Improvement Team. They also discussed joint exercise participation and combined operations at deployed locations such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

**26 Oct 1994** -- The Article 32 hearings for the five 552 ACW officers charged with dereliction of duty ended at Tinker AFB. After several weeks of testimony Lt. General Stephen Croker, the Eighth Air Force Commander, decided to dismiss the courts martial charges against all but one officer. General Croker charged Captain James Wang, the mission crew senior director, with dereliction of duty. Captain Wang's court-martial was scheduled for early 1995.

**9 Dec 1994** -- The 552 ACW honored a pioneer of E-3 operations when it named its flight simulator facility as "The Jerry Auth Flight Training Center" in honor of the late Lt. Col Edward G. (Jerry) Auth (retired).

**23-25 Jan 1995** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing conducted exercise Sentry Leap 95-2 at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma. All of the 552 ACW operational squadrons participated in the ORI preparation, utilizing six E-3 aircraft and six aircrews during the exercise.

**8 Feb 1995** -- First Lieutenant Treisa D. Schumacher, assigned to the 552<sup>d</sup> Computer Systems Group, served as the Air Force's nominee for two operations security based awards, including the 1995 National Operations Security Organizational Achievement Award.

**5-10 Mar 1995** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing began an ACC sponsored Operational Readiness Inspection Phase I, at Tinker AFB. The 552 ACW achieved an overall rating of Excellent. Six E-3 AWACS aircraft and six aircrews flew during the ORI.

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**19 Apr 1995** -- Tragedy struck Oklahoma City at 0902 when a truck bomb with over 2,000 pounds of chemical explosives, exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building, leaving 168 people dead and several hundred others injured. The federal government transported one suspect, Timothy James McVeigh, to Tinker AFB via helicopter on 21 April. Federal authorities then took Mr. McVeigh to the El Reno Federal Correctional Facility, approximately 30 miles northwest of Tinker AFB.

**30 Apr-6 May 1995** -- The 552ACW supported Woodland Cougar 95 (WC 95), the Air Force's largest combat search and rescue exercise to date. The Twelfth Air Force hosted WC 95 and units from the Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy all participated. The 963 AACS supplied one E-3 AWACS aircraft and one aircrew.

**19 May 1995** -- Air Combat Command named the 552<sup>d</sup> Logistics Squadron and the 966<sup>th</sup> Airborne Air Control Squadron as "Air Combat Command's Best" for 1994.

**20 Jun 1995** -- The Air Force announced the Article 32 Court Martial decision of Captain James Wang. The Court acquitted Captain Wang of all charges in conjunction with the 14 April 1994 downing of a US Army *Blackhawk* helicopter over Northern Iraq.

**21-27 Jul 1995** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing participated in Sentry Leap Phase II. The ORI took place at Mt. Home AFB, Idaho and the 552 ACW earned an overall grade of Excellent. The ORI was also one of the largest in Air Force history.

**Aug 1995** -- Senior Master Sergeant Frank Grant, the 966 AACS Maintenance Superintendent, received the General Lew Allen, Jr., Trophy. Senior Master Sergeant Grant achieved the award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to sortie generations at Tinker in the form of 440 sorties garnering 3,400 flying hours, and producing 700 qualified crewmembers.



**Figure 26** - The members of Yukla 27 remembered at a memorial ceremony held at Tinker AFB. Pictured are Casie DeFrancesco and her daughter Brittany, family of SrA Lawrence DeFrancesco, killed in the crash.

**22 Sep 1995** -- The first crash of a United States Air Force E-3 AWACS Aircraft (call sign Yukla-27, tail number 77-0354) occurred at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. Twenty-two USAF aircrew and two Canadian Air Force crewmembers lost their lives in the crash. The Air Force later determined that Yukla-27 ingested geese (a.k.a. bird strike) into the engines during takeoff, causing the AWACS to crash.

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**Figure 27**

Artist R. T. Foster donated this painting at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ceremony honoring the fallen airman of Yukla 27.

**4 Oct 1995** -- The first E-3 AWACS aircraft (tail number 80-0137) received the Block 30/35 upgrade rolled out at Tinker AFB. Block 30/35 comprised the single largest upgrade to the E-3 aircraft ever accomplished.

**5-9 Nov 1995** -- Tinker AFB and the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing sponsored and hosted the third Multi-national Airborne Early Warning Commander's Conference (MACC). The MACC participants came to Tinker from Britain (55 participants), France (30), NATO (55), and the US Navy (7).

**1 Dec 1995** -- The 952<sup>d</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron (Test) activated with Major Richard A. Lane assuming command.

**Dec 1995** -- The 552 ACW accomplished the goal of increasing aircrews from 28 in April 1994 to 40 in December 1995. The increase in aircrews succeeded in reducing the average temporary duty rate for 552 ACW personnel from 160 days per year to fewer than 120 days per year.

**Jan 1996** -- Air Combat Command named the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing commander, Brigadier General Silas R. Johnson, Jr., as the winner of the 1995 Moller Trophy. Headquarters ACC presents the Moller Trophy annually to signify ACC's best wing commander.

**3 Jan 1996** -- Air Combat Command announced the command's Annual Ground Safety Award winner for 1995; the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing.

**24 Feb 1996** -- The 964 AACS supported Atlantic Command in conjunction with the shoot down of two civilian Cessna aircraft by the Cuban Air Force over international waters. The "Brothers to the Rescue" (a Cuban protest organization) planned to protest Cuban policies and organized a peaceful flotilla against Cuba in the Florida Straits.

**5 Apr 1996** -- United States President William J. Clinton came to Oklahoma City to meet with victims of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing.

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**Apr 1996** -- Twelfth Air Force Standards and Evaluations appraised the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing Standardization-Evaluation Team. The 552 ACW merited a grade of Excellent.

**22-26 Apr 1996** -- Air Combat Command evaluated the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing during a Quality Air Force Assessment. The wing achieved an overall grade of Excellent.

**1 May 1996** -- Air Combat Command Special Order GB-75 guided a major reorganization affecting the 552<sup>d</sup> Logistics Group subordinate units. The 552<sup>d</sup> Maintenance Squadron inactivated. In conjunction, the 552<sup>d</sup> Component Repair Squadron and 552<sup>d</sup> Equipment Maintenance Squadron activated after being previously inactivated on 29 May 1992. Major Merkel C. Joseph assumed command of the 552 CRS and Major James R. Watts received command of the 552 EMS.

**15 May 1996** -- The 8<sup>th</sup> Airborne Air Control Squadron inactivated via G-Series Order GB-80. The assigned aircraft went to the 89<sup>th</sup> Airborne Command and Control Squadron at Andrews AFB, Maryland.

**Jul 1996** -- The Air Force notified the 963<sup>d</sup> Airborne Air Control Squadron that they had named Senior Airman Gregory White as the “Air Force Outstanding Aircrew Member of the Year.”

**13 Jul 1996** -- The Air Force Reserve activated the 513<sup>th</sup> Air Control Group (ACG). The 513 ACG worked in conjunction with the 552 ACW and the host reserve unit at Tinker AFB, under the 507<sup>th</sup> Wing. The Air Force Reserve named Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Suggs as commander.



**Figure 28** - An 8 AACS aircraft awaits reassignment.

**16 Jul 1996** -- Air Combat Command Special Order GA-077 awarded the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing and its subordinate units the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with effective dates of 1 Jun 1994-31 May 1996.

**6 Sep 1996** -- The Air Force reassigned Brigadier General Silas R. Johnson, Jr., to the Pentagon in Washington DC. Brigadier General Robert T. Newell, III became the new 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing commander. Brigadier General Newell's previous assignment had been as commander of the NATO E-3 component, NATO Airborne Early Warning Force, Geilenkirchen, AB, Germany.

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**8 Oct 1996** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing flew a mission in support of United States Counterdrug Operations. During the mission, the AWACS tracked a suspicious boat. Law enforcement official stopped the boat and confiscated 6,800 kilograms of cocaine.

**24 Oct 1996** -- Colonel John M. Howell, assumed command of the 552 ACW from Brigadier General Robert T. Newell, III.

**5 Nov 1996** -- Air Force chief of staff General Ronald R. Fogleman addressed the men and women of Tinker AFB. General Fogleman dealt with several Air Force issues primarily touching upon the Air Force's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, quality of life for Air Force members, and "Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Air Force."

**26 Nov 1996** -- Brigadier General James W. Morehouse took command of the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing. Brigadier General Morehouse came from Ramstein AB, Germany, where he served as the assistant director of operations, United States Air Forces in Europe.

**15 Jan 1997** -- Lieutenant Colonel John J. Kennedy, Jr., assumed command of the 963<sup>d</sup> Airborne Air Control Squadron replacing Lieutenant Colonel Alan L. Vogel. Lieutenant Colonel John J. Kennedy, Jr., became the first non-rated officer in Air Force history to command a operational flying squadron.

**Feb 1997** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing Public Affairs Office magazine *Eyes of the Eagle* received Air Combat Command's award for "Best Magazine for 1996."

**22 Apr 1997** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing flew a mission in support of United States Counterdrug Operations. During the mission, the AWACS tracked a suspicious boat. When law enforcement officials stopped the craft they confiscated 1,780 kilograms of cocaine.

**23-28 Apr 1997** -- Air Combat Command conducted an Operational Readiness Inspection of the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing. The 552 ACW recorded the highest scores ever achieved in ACC history with across-the-board ratings of Outstanding.

**27-29 Jun 1997** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, commemorating 20 years of AWACS operations.

**15 Sep 1997** -- The 952<sup>d</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron provisional was inactivated. At the same ceremony the 552<sup>d</sup> Maintenance Squadron was again activated and redesignated as the 552<sup>d</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron.

**16 Feb 1998** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing joined in Gulf Build-up deploying two additional E-3s to join the three previously rotated E-3's at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, bringing the total number of E-3s on station to five. The 552 ACW flew five additional sorties per month.

**31 Mar 1998** -- The 552 ACW declared initial operational capability for the E-3 Sentry block 30/35 upgrade. The largest upgrade performed on the E-3 since its initial production. The enhancements integrated operators and systems, improving the E-3's ability to perform its air battle management mission worldwide.

**4 Jun 1998** -- Two aircraft deployed during the Gulf Build-up returned along with more than 120 people assigned to the 552 ACW.

## Chronology of the 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing

**29 April 1999** -- Three E-3s along with 125 members of the 552 ACW deployed to Geilenkirchen AB, Germany, in support of Operation ALLIED FORCE. The crews flew 47 sorties supporting NATO and NATO led policies worldwide.

**3 May 1999** -- Oklahoma and Tinker AFB residents witnessed one of its worst storms in a half of a century. The tornado passed within one-quarter mile of Tinkers AFB's west gates, causing major damage to dormitories, softball fields, and horse stables.

**8 May 1999** -- Members of the 513<sup>th</sup> Air Control Group departed Tinker to backfill active duty counterparts at Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia and Incirlik AB, Turkey. More than 200 members from the 513 ACG were activated under the Presidential selected reserve call in support of Joint Chief of Staff taskings.

**15 Mar 2000** -- The 552<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing welcomed Brigadier General Ben T. Robinson as new wing commander. General Robinson was previously assigned at Robbins Air Force Base, Georgia, as commander of the 93<sup>d</sup> Air Control Wing.

**28 Apr 2000** -- The 552 ACW achieved an Outstanding rating during ACC's Initial Response Operational Readiness Inspection.



**Figure 29** – South Ramp for AWACS at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.