

## **TWENTY-FIFTH AIR FORCE**

### **BRIEF HISTORY**

Twenty-Fifth Air Force traces its origin to 20 October 1948, when the Department of the Air Force established the U. S. Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) as a major air command at Arlington Hall Station, Va. Initially, USAFSS had 34 officers, 6 enlisted members, and 116 civilians authorized to perform the cryptologic mission for the U. S. Air Force.

In January 1949, the Department of the Army transferred three radio squadrons mobile (RSM) and one radio security section from the Army Security Agency to USAFSS. The units included the 1 RSM in Japan, the 2 RSM in Germany, and the 8 RSM at Vint Hill Farms, Va., and the 136th Radio Security Detachment at Fort Slocum, N. Y. In May 1949, the USAFSS headquarters and the 8 RSM moved from Arlington Hall Station to Brooks AFB, Tex. Plans at the time called for the establishment of ten RSMs worldwide.

When the Korean War erupted on 25 June 1950, USAFSS and its 3,050 assigned personnel answered the call. The 1 RSM began providing key intelligence support to Far East Air Forces in early 1951. Then in early 1953, the command began experimental airborne operations under Project BLUE SKY by using converted C-47s from Fifth Air Force. The command's performance in the Korean War earned it a permanent place in America's intelligence community.

On 31 July 1953, USAFSS ceased operations at Brooks AFB, and in early August the command opened its headquarters at Kelly AFB, Tex. At the time, command strength stood at 17,143 personnel, with operating sites at various locations in Europe, the Pacific, Alaska, and the continental U. S.

In 1958, USAFSS assumed control and operations of several overseas bases: Misawa Air Base and Wakkanai Air Station in Japan; San Vito Air Station, Italy; Iraklion Air Station, Greece; Royal Air Force (RAF) Station Chicksands, United Kingdom; Karamursel, Turkey; and Shu Lin Kou Air Station, Taiwan. The command also claimed ownership over Goodfellow AFB and its intelligence training school in Texas.

In mid-1966 as the tempo of the Vietnam War increased, the Air Staff made USAFSS the central evaluation agency for all USAF electronic warfare activities. In early 1967, USAFSS's Air Force Special Communications Center (later Air Force Electronic Warfare Center), took on that new mission, the first major change in the command's responsibilities in years.

In 1966, USAFSS-manned EC-47s began airborne radio direction finding operations in Southeast Asia, while in September 1967 the new 6990th Security Squadron began RC-135 operations at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. During the Vietnam War, USAFSS personnel served with distinction in airborne and ground operations throughout Southeast Asia.

The 1970s saw numerous changes in the command's structure and strength as the Vietnam war came to an end. The Air Force placed more emphasis on electronic warfare by renaming the Air Force Special Communications Center under USAFSS as the Air Force Electronic Warfare Center on 1 July 1975. The change gave the command greater visibility throughout the Department of Defense.

In early 1978, USAFSS transferred its cryptologic school training mission and host base duties at Goodfellow AFB, Tex., to Air Training Command (later Air Education and Training Command). Then on 1 October 1978, USAFSS ended 20 years of base management by turning over its last four overseas bases to the respective theater commands. The late 1970s also saw major manpower cuts for the organization as its authorized strength dropped from 15,490 in late 1977 to 11,683 in late 1978.

On 1 August 1979, the Air Force redesignated USAFSS as the Electronic Security Command (ESC). ESC, with its long standing SIGINT responsibilities, took on a new mission to improve the Air Force's use of electronic warfare technology in combat. Subsequently, the command developed new ways to jam, confuse, or destroy opposing command, control, and communication systems.

In May 1985, ESC also assumed the computer security mission from the Air Force Computer Security Office at Gunter Air Force Station, Al. A year later, ESC activated HQs Space Electronic Security Division at Peterson AFB, Col., to begin a relationship with the Air Force Space Command. ESC also played a key role in Operations JUST CAUSE in December 1989 and Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM in January 1991. In the latter conflict, ESC helped the U. S. achieve operational supremacy over Iraqi forces.

On 1 October 1991, the Air Force redesignated ESC as the Air Force Intelligence Command (AFIC) to implement a Secretary of Defense direction to consolidate existing intelligence commands, agencies, and elements into a single intelligence command. That action also brought the Foreign Technology Division (later National Air and Space Intelligence Center) at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and the Air Force Technical Applications Center at Patrick AFB, Fla., with its nuclear treaty compliance mission under AFIC.

On 1 October 1993, the Air Force redesignated AFIC as the Air Intelligence Agency (AIA). As a Field Operating Agency (FOA), the organization reported directly to the USAF Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence. Throughout the 1990s, the AIA focused on Information Operations. Then on 1 February 2001, AIA became a primary subordinate unit of Air Combat Command (ACC). The Air Force also reassigned AIA's two wings, the 67th Intelligence Wing and the 70th Intelligence Wing, to Eighth Air Force at Barksdale AFB, La.

The Air Force redesignated AIA as the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Agency (AF ISR Agency) on 8 June 2007. As a FOA again, the organization reported to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (A2) at Headquarters USAF. That transformation turned the AF ISR Agency into a multi-disciplined intelligence organization, with its Distributed

Common Ground System under the 480th Intelligence Wing functioning as a fully integrated weapons system for the Air Force.

In late 2013, the Air Force decided to implement a 20 percent reduction in headquarters manpower and eliminate as many FOAs and Direct Reporting Units as possible. That change turned the AF ISR Agency into Twenty-Fifth Air Force (25 AF) on Sept. 29, 2014, again as a subordinate unit to Air Combat Command. In that transformation, 25 AF gained several new units—the 9th Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB, Calif., the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, Nebr., and the Air Force Targeting Center (redesignated as the 363d ISR Wing) at Langley AFB, VA. At the same time, the Air Force reassigned NASIC from 25 AF to the Air Staff/A2.