

The Expanded Chronology of the
552d Air Control Wing
1 July 2000 – 31 December 2005

(U) The history of the Airborne Warning and Control System (E-3, AWACS, or *Sentry*) began about 30 years ago when the Air Force (AF) realized the need to replace the EC-121D. After several trials and competition between Boeing Aerospace Company and McDonnell-Douglas, the AF contracted Boeing to develop and produce the E-3. The first E-3 rolled out of the Boeing hanger in October 1976, 23 months after they received production authorization.

(U) The E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System is an all-weather airborne surveillance, command, control and communications platform utilized by commanders of the United States U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air defense forces to detect and track fixed-wing aircraft at all altitudes against both land and sea; to detect and track maritime surface vessels, and to direct friendly aircraft against the enemy before they reach their ordnance release points.

(U) The Air Force chose Tinker Air Force Base AFB as the main operating base for the E-3 fleet assigning the E-3 to the newly designated 552d Airborne Warning and Control Wing. On 24 March 1977, the first E-3 touched down at Tinker AFB. Taking on a worldwide commitment, the 552d Airborne Warning and Control Wing initiated E-3 operations in early 1977.

(U) The last few years the 552 ACW has been involved in every major military operation undertaken by the United States. In addition the wing has conducted counterdrug operations and helped secure the boundaries of North America following the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. This diverse wing has earned its motto “In Vigilance is Strength” proven by its dedication to continuously provide our country with the best airborne surveillance platform in the world.

The following pages chronicle the events of the 552 ACW from 1 July 2000 through 31 December 2005.

11-12 Jul 2000

(U) The 552 ACW participated in a “phase one” Sentry Leap 01 war-readiness exercise demonstrating the wing’s ability to generate, deploy, and employ the E-3 from operating locations away from Tinker AFB. The wing earned an “Outstanding” rating in the areas of “aircraft deployment” and “regeneration after deployment.” The wing received an “Excellent” rating in the “deployment” area of the exercise. Overall the wing earned a “Satisfactory” rating. See Appendix M for individual ratings in each area.

14 July 2000

(U) Colonel Rory A. Quesinberry assumed command of the 552d Computer Systems Group from Colonel Michael Y. Ryan change of command ceremony.

18 July 2000

(U) The 552d Training Squadron welcomed its new commander Lieutenant Colonel Michael P. Crowley. Lt Col Crowley assumed command from Lieutenant Colonel Stanley E. Albaugh.

9 August 2000

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Andrew M. Mueller assumed command of the 964th Airborne Air Control Squadron (AACS) from Lieutenant Colonel Regina S. Giles.

10 August 2000

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Kimberly J. Corcoran assumed command of the 963rd AACS from Lieutenant Colonel James W. Patterson Jr.

21-25 August 2000

(U) The 552 ACW hosted “CORNET SENTRY 2000” a unique exercise specifically designed to demonstrate and refine airborne battle management tactics, techniques and procedures between the E-3 Sentry (AWACS), E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), and RC-135 Rivet Joint aircraft. These three distinctive weapon platforms are known amongst the surveillance community as the “Iron Triad”. Cornet Sentry, with all its moving parts, combined the strengths from each airframe. The JSTARS aircraft tracked movement on the ground while Rivet Joint and AWACS aircraft monitored enemy communications and surveyed the airspace during a simulated air battle flown in the airspace over Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. E-3s also provided air control to all weapons systems involved in the exercise. Another shining point for the exercise was the first use of an Air Operations Center (AOC) cell. The AOC cell stood up inside the Tinker AFB command post. Brigadier General Robinson, 552 ACW Commander, acted as the Joint Force Air Component Commander. The exercise proved that all components were ready to execute their wartime missions.

27 September 2000

Members of the 552 ACW crowded the E-3 ramp to celebrate the landing of the final flight for fiscal year 2000. This year AWACS eclipsed its original flying hour goal by 1,729 hours. The increase in hours was due to additional flying hour expectations from Air Combat Command (ACC). Wing planners worked diligently trying to find the right mix of hours and an efficient way to balance out the flying between squadrons before the end of the flying hour period. The wing flew off the excess hours by flying weekends, longer sorties, quick turns and surging.

20 October 2000

In a dual change of command ceremony Lt. Col. Kevin T. Betz relinquished command of the 552d Logistics Support Squadron to Major Ronald Kieklak Jr. and assumed command of the 552d Aircraft Generation Squadron from Lt. Col. Robert L. Stine.

15 November 2000

(U) The 552 conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for its new 60-million dollar flight simulator facility. This facility will replace the existing 24-year structure. The current structure will house new simulators. The new simulators will mirror the actual E-3 cockpit and incorporate a 200-degree panoramic visual display system allowing pilots to perform certain flight training events impossible with the old simulator. The visual system will also simulate in-flight refueling. Use of the new simulator likely lessen the wear and tear on actual jets and free up jets for operational missions.

Nov 2000

(U) Major General Johann G Dora, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Airborne Early Warning and Control Force Command commander presented the 552 ACW with the Allied Command Europe Campaign Pennant for its contributions during Operation Allied Force air campaign over Kosovo. This is the first battle streamer earned by the 552 ACW. The battle streamer has roots dating back to the Civil War.

23 Jan 2001

(U) Lieutenant General Williams T. Hobbins, 12th Air Force Commander, conducted a question and answer session with troops during a visit to the 552 ACW. General Hobbins toured AWACS facilities and spoke with leadership. A complete transcript of the question and answer session can be found in the February edition of the 552 ACW PA publication "Eyes of the Eagle" magazine.

5 Feb 2001

(U) The last block 20/25 E-3 took off from Tinker AFB heading to Hanscom AFB, Maine. The E-3 will be upgraded to the block 30/35 avionics package. The 30/35 upgrade is comprised of four components; replacement of the older inertial navigation system with a Global Positioning System (GPS), an upgrade of computer memory for faster processing and increased reliability, an upgrade of the Joint Terminal Information Distribution System (JTIDS) giving crews the capability to link with joint and coalition command and control platforms. The most significant feature of the upgrade is the electronic support measures (ESM). This modification

will enable E-3 crews in detecting electronic signal emitting objects such as radios and radars. The expected completion date for the upgrade is later this year.

19 Feb 2001

(U) President Bush visits Tinker AFB while enroute to speak at the Oklahoma City National Memorial.

1 Mar 2001

(U) The 960th AACS is reactivated under the 552 Air Control Wing after nine years of dormancy. Lieutenant Colonel Donald Williams, deputy commander, 965th AACS, assumed command of the squadron. The activation allows the 552 ACW to better meet the demands of the Expeditionary Aerospace Forces. The 960th is the 552 ACW's fourth operational squadron.

6 Apr 2001

(U) The 552^d Air Control Wing celebrated its 10th Anniversary patrolling the no-fly zone over the skies of Iraq since signing a cease-fire agreement. During operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH, the 552 ACW has had more than 250 support personnel on location at any given time. There have been over 370 Iraqi provocations including Iraqis shooting at U-2 and Navy E-2 reconnaissance planes. The E-3 has had a presence in the region for over 21 years.

16-21 Apr 2001

(U) The 552 ACW achieved an overall rating of Outstanding during the ACC Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI). Inspectors noted the wing's overall 95 percent compliance rate, 91 outstanding individual performers, 23 outstanding teams, and four best practices. *"The bottom line is this UCI validated we are a great wing,"* said Brig Gen Ben Robinson, 552 ACW, commander.

7-11 May 2001

(U) The wing participated in a SENTRY SHIELD 01-04 phase two, Operational Readiness Exercise. It was the largest single build up of AWACS flying operations since DESERT STORM. The exercise also deployed the AWACS Deployable Mission Support

System (ADMSS) for the first time. The ADMSS was designed and developed by the 552 Computer Systems Group.

1 Jun 2001

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Robert A. Nuanes assumes command of the 965th Airborne Air Control Squadron.

7 Jun 2001

(U) Lieutenant Colonel George C. Carpenter II assumes command of the 966th AACCS.

19 Jun 2001

(U) Colonel Patrick J. Sheets assumes command of the 552d Operations Group from Colonel John J. Kennedy.

22 Jun 01

(U) Lieutenant Colonel David E. Crane assumes command of 552d Computer Systems Squadron.

18 Jul 2001

(U) Major Frank R. Heinsohn assumes command of the 552d Component Repair Squadron.

24 Aug 2001

(U) Major William Z. Zeck assumes command of the 552d Equipment Maintenance Squadron from Major James R. Witter.

31 Aug 2001

(U) Major James J. Tomaszewski assumes command of the 752d Computer Systems Squadron.

11 Sep 2001

(U) The 552 ACW was directed by higher headquarters to patrol the skies over the eastern quadrant of the U.S. following the terrorist attacks of the world trade center. The 552 was one of the first units tasked by the North American Aerospace Defense Command to protect the airspace over North America. These sorties are still flown under Operation NOBLE EAGLE.

24 Sep 2001

(U) The 552 ACW received deployment orders to support Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), “the war against terrorism.” Three days later the wing launched its first OEF aircraft.

9 Oct 2001

(U) Five aircraft and 180, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), personnel deployed from Geilenkirchen, Germany to Tinker Air Force Base (AFB) Oklahoma for Operation “EAGLE ASSIST.” This significant event marked the first time in the 52 year history of NATO this alliance has been used to defend the U.S. On 18 January 2002, two more NATO aircraft deployed to Tinker.

20 Oct 2001

(U) The last E-3 Block 30/35 modified aircraft, 75-0557, rolled out of depot. The Block 30/35 upgrade added new electronic listening capability to the aircraft. It was the largest modification ever accomplished by OC-ALC depot maintenance. The modification reduced the number of E-3 configurations to two. Reducing the number of configurations, enhanced training, simplified scheduling and minimized maintenance logistics.

23 Jan 2002

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Philip A. Smith assumes command of the 552d Operational Support Squadron from Lieutenant Colonel Ronald C. Wiegand.

22 Feb 2002

(U) Air Force Secretary Dr. James G. Roche visited the 552 ACW thanking airmen for their contribution in securing the homeland of the United States following the events of September 11th. At that time E-3 crews had flown 14,000 operation “NOBLE EAGLE” sorties.

05 May 2002

(U) Colonel Leonard F. Benson assumes command of the 552d Logistic Group from Colonel Charles F. Hiser.

16 May 2002

(U) NATO leaves Tinker AFB and the 552 ACW after more than seven months of supporting the United States. NATO made history by invoking its Article 5 which states “an attack against one member is an attack against all.” Brigadier General Ben T. Robinson bade farewell to the NATO troops in a ceremony held on NATO’s behalf. He thanked them for their selfless sacrifice doing a critical time in our nation’s history.

19 Jun 2002

(U) The 552d Operations Group welcomed Colonel Lori J. Robinson as their new commander. Colonel Robinson assumes the command from Colonel Patrick J. Sheets.

24 Jun 2002

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Kevin M. Mulvihill is appointed commander of the 964th Airborne Air Control Squadron.

27 Jun 2002

(U) A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the wing’s newest facility, building 255. The 69,438 square foot building will house the 72^d Air Base Wing’s (ABW) mobility processing function, the 960th AACS, and the 965th AACS. A plan for the 9.6 million dollar facility had been in the works for 25 years before construction began.

29 Jun 2002

(U) The 552 ACW celebrated its 25th Anniversary. More than 1000 current and former members of the 552nd ACW made the pilgrimage to Oklahoma City to take part in the four-day celebration. The events included an ice-breaker, open house, golf tournament, banquet and Sunday brunch. Patrons also witnessed ribbon cutting ceremonies for the Squadron Operation and Installation Deployment Center and flight simulator building located adjacent to Tinker AFB.

8 Jul 2002

(U) Major Douglas R. Plymale assumes command of the 552d Logistics Support Squadron.

9 Jul 2002

Lieutenant Colonel Frank R. Heinsohn assumes command of the 552d Aircraft Generation Squadron.

9 Jul 2002

(U) Major Thomas D. Eisenhower is appointed as commander of the 552d Component Repair Squadron.

15 July 2002

(U) Colonel Marty J. Edmonds assumes command of the 552d Computer Systems Group.

15 Jul 2002

(U) The 552 ACW fell in line with Air Force Chief-of-Staff, General John P. Jumper's wishes to transform the Air Force so its missions would align with wing-level organization. The reorganization provides logical division of responsibilities allowing commanders to focus their attention on areas needing improvement within their scope of responsibility. Maintenance was the biggest benefactor of the reorganization. The 552^d Logistic Group was re-named 552^d Maintenance Group (MG). The change made Colonel Leonard Benson the first MG commander. In addition the 552^d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 552^d Component Repair Squadron, and the 552^d Logistics Support Squadron are now changed to 552^d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 552^d

Component Maintenance Squadron and the 552^d Maintenance Operations Squadron respectively. Other than re-naming, the effects of the realignment are transparent to wing members. The realignment was completed three months ahead of schedule.

29 Aug 2002

(U) Brigadier General M. Gilmary Hostage assumed command of the 552d Air Control Wing from Brigadier General Ben T. Robinson. General Hostage comes to the wing via the 363^d Air Expeditionary Wing, Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, where he served as commander. General Robinson will retire after 29 years of service to our country.

12 Sep 2002

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Joseph J. Rossacci is appointed as commander of the 963d Airborne Air Control Squadron.

17 Sep 2002

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Jody L. Blanchfield assumes command of the 552d Training Squadron from Lieutenant Colonel Michael P. Crowley.

1 Oct 2002

(U) The 552 ACW realigned under Eighth Air Forces. With the realignment the Eighth became the first numbered air force to integrate information operations into a war-fighting headquarters. Under the realignment the Eighth will operate a variety of aircraft including the E-8C Joint Stars, EC-130H Compass Call, RC-135 Rivet Joint, the U-2S Dragon Lady, B-52 Stratofortress and B-2 Spirit giving the numbered Air Force the capability to collect, process, analyze friendly and enemy force disposition, and provide this information to warfighters and national decision makers.

October 2002

(U) Crews of the 552nd reached a significant milestone logging 10,000 flying hours in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). The accomplishment was achieved by the 968th Expeditionary Airborne Air Control Squadron deployed to an **undisclosed location** in Central Asia. The unit has been supporting OEF since the end of September 2001.

18 Oct 2002

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Rodney C. Meranda assumes command of the 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron.

28 Jan 2003

(U) The 552^d ACW was awarded the Deputy Commander in Chief of the Northern American Aerospace Defense Command commendation for their contribution and performance during Operation Grizzly. E-3 crews were tasked to provide continuous airspace coverage for the G8 summit held in Alberta Canada. The G8 is an informal group of eight countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. During the operation E-3 crews detected and coordinated the intercept of two civilian aircraft entering the airspace over a designated no-fly zone above the summit. The wing flew 12 sorties providing more than 139 hours of continuous surveillance. **The General** also presented the wing's Canadian component with Southwest Asia Service Medals.

22 Feb 2003

(U) The 552^d Air Control Wing received deployment orders in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). The order's primary intention is to strengthen military forces already in the Area of Responsibility. Over 45 additional troops deployed from the wing in support of the operation.

28 May 2003 – 8 Jun 2003

(U) The first group of 552^d ACW personnel deployed in support of OEF and OIF returned to home station at Tinker AFB. Sentry crews provided 24-hour surveillance of OIF and OEF battle space in which crews flew more than 325 sorties and 3275.3 flying hours in support

of the operations. On 8 June the remaining personnel and aircraft returned to Tinker AFB ending a 13-year continuous presence in the region. For the first time 26 years all 28 E-3s were at home station.

July 2003

(U) The 552^d Air Control Wing entered a reconstitution phase addressing the training backlog caused by the high operations tempo of OEF and OIF. The wing took this opportunity to focus on training. Goals outlined for the reconstitution included the production of 40 combat mission-ready crews, mitigate the training backlog, and implement a home station flying hour program.

8 Aug 2003

(U) The 552^d Computer Systems Group was redesignated as the 552^d Communications Group, and the 752^d Computer Systems Squadron was redesignated as the 752^d Communications Squadron. The redesignations more accurately reflect group and squadron missions while and makes the name consistent with similar organizations across the Air Force. The unit provides deployable ground communications support, server support, small computer support information management, and information assurance support for the wing.

20 Sep 2003

(U)The Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame at the Omniplex museum in Oklahoma City inducted the 552^d Air Control Wing into their hall of fame. The Oklahoma Aviation Hall and Space Hall of Fame was established in 1980 to honor Oklahomans who have made significant contributions to the advancement of aviation, the exploration of space, the development of aviation and aerospace industries, and the development and use of aviation in the U.S. military. The 552 ACW was honored for its contributions to national security and advances in aviation.

December 2003

(U) Members from the 963rd Airborne Air Control Squadron was awarded the Air Force Air Battle Manager of the Year Award. The crew was recognized for demonstrating the E-3s ability to find process and prosecute mobile ground targets within 10 minutes. The refined process paved the way for single-digit time critical target prosecution.

January 2004

(U)The 552^d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron received Air Combat Command's Maintenance Effectiveness award for the fourth consecutive year. The squadron faced challenges unlike any in the previous years. The wing flew 23,400 flying hours without a mishap over the course of 2,600 sorties. Seventeen aircraft were deployed at any given time during the height of hostilities in OIF and OEF requiring a large contingent of maintainers to keep them flying. Meanwhile maintainers at home station labored long hours in support of the E-3s tasked for the ongoing "ONE" mission. Other accomplishments setting the squadron apart from similar units included setting and maintaining a mission capability rate 10 percent above the ACC standard. The squadron also supported five contingencies and 14 combat exercises, maintained a 100 percent on-time takeoff rate, managed a 200 percent increase in home station aircraft, tripled CONUS sorties, and supported three areas of responsibility, controlled more than 40,000 fighter and bomber sorties.

March 2004

(U) The 552^d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron converted its flights to Aircraft Maintenance Units (AMU). An AMU is an organization with an established number of aircraft and a certain number of maintenance and support personnel assigned to it. According to Air Force Instruction 21-101, there is normally one AMU for each assigned operations squadron, the wing currently has four operational flying squadrons however, the E-3 Sentry is considered a low density, high demand platform, and can only support three AMU's. The AMU's will be named , "Red," "White," and "Blue," respectively.

March 2004

(U) Two 552^d Air Control Wing staff agencies received ACC awards. The Public Affairs office received two command awards; the first award was for the best Magazine Format Publication “*Eyes of the Eagle*,” Airman 1st Class Kenneth L. Kimbrell won the award for Photojournalism. The Manpower office was awarded “Best Small Manpower office in ACC.”

2 March 2004

(U) Brigadier General Gilmory M. Hostage relinquished command of the 552^d Air Control Wing to Colonel Joseph F. Mudd, Jr. Brig Gen Hostage will assume the position of Director of Intelligence and Air, Space and Information Operations, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

30 April 2004

(U) Colonel Kurt A. Klausner assumes command of the 552^d Communications Group from Colonel Marty Edmonds.

25 June 2004

(U) Colonel Nancy E. Frye, assumes command of the 552^d Maintenance Group from Colonel Leonard Benson, who retired from the Air Force after 38 years of service.

November 2004

(U) Members of the 965th AACS deployed to Manta, Ecuador located on the western coast of South America. The plan is to rotate one or more E-3s and support personnel in and out of Ecuador every 60 days to support civil law enforcement in stopping the flow of illegal drugs from Latin America into the United States and Canada.

12 – 22 November 2004

(U) Air Combat Command Office of the Inspector General (IG) conducted an integrated Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). The ACC IG team evaluated the 552^d Air Control Wing and the 513th Air Control Group (ACG) simultaneously. The integrated ORI participants achieved an overall “EXCELLENT” rating.

15 November 2004

(U) 12th Air Forces activates the 965th Expeditionary Airborne Air Control Squadron (EAACS) to support the President of the United States (POTUS) during his visit to Santiago Chile for the Asian-Pacific Economic Coordination Conference. Lieutenant Colonel Gregory M. Guillot was selected as Detachment Commander for the deployment. The deployment included three aircraft with 159 personnel from the 965th, 960th with crewmembers from the wing's reserve component, the 970th AACS. After an 11-hour flight the mission crews began to familiarize themselves with the mountainous terrain and challenging operating environment. The squadron was based in the military portion of the Santiago Airport sharing facilities with the Chilean Air Force squadron "Grupo de Aviacion Numero 10." The 965th EAACS was tasked to cover the arrival of the President and 21 other world leaders, remain on station during the conference, and then cover the departure of the President and world leaders. The E-3s was originally scheduled for 18-hour coverage daily with the Chilean "Condor" early warning aircraft picking up the remaining hours however maintenance problems with the "Condor" aircraft made it necessary for the E-3s to provide 24-hour coverage the last two days of the conference. The deployment was highlighted by a positive exchange between the Air Forces. Both hosted static tours of their respective aircraft. Crewmembers from each Air Force flew with the other service providing on-scene coordination ensuring mission accomplishment. The 965th met all military objectives. This was the first ever United States Air Force E-3 deployment to Santiago Chile. On 23 November 2004 the squadron redeployed to home station.

11 January 2005

(U) The last E-3 receiving the Radar Systems Improvement Program (RSIP) upgrade launched from Tinker AFB. The RSIP initiative was coordinated between the 552 ACW, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center, Boeing, and the Electronics Systems Center at Hanscom AFB, Massachusetts. The complex modification will increase the aircraft's ability to detect cruise missiles and provide 200 percent greater fighter coverage volume. The bulk of the modification involves changing the on-board computer and installing a new console.

15 February 2005

(U) The 552 ACW officially ends its reconstitution period. The reconstitution sought to train and populate 40 operational squadron crews, attain an appropriate experience level mix, reduce training backlogs, and establish a balanced training status. Leaders' from the wing briefed ACC leadership on specific achievements of the Reconstitution. They also noted some of the wing's shortcomings in meeting their initial goals. One of the goals not meet was the effort to have all flight positions accomplish Primary Flight Training while incorporating lessons learned from OEF and OIF. Other goals with ongoing issues, were maintaining crew strength using the assignment process, 1A5 (ART/CDMT) AFSC crew ratios, and continuous building of operational aircrews. The wing did achieve completion of a comprehensive training and monitoring plan for Air Surveillance Technicians. The reconstitution also allowed the wing to recover from the ramifications suffered by the shortened Ready Aircrew Program year.

6 May 2005

(U)The 552 ACW received a higher headquarter tasking to deploy to Bourgas, Bulgaria located in southeastern Europe and borders the Black Sea, between Romania and Turkey. The wing's primary mission was to support the POTUS during his visit to Tblisi Georgia. A few days' later three aircraft from the 964th EAACS along with 122 support personnel arrived at the location and began flying operational sorties over the region. On 11 May all 552 ACW personnel redeployed back to Tinker.

8 July 2005

(U) The 552 ACW marked its 50th Anniversary. Oklahoma Governor, Brad Henry signed a letter into law proclaiming July 8th as "AWACS Day" in the state. The intent of the proclamation is to honor the men and women of the AWACS community.

11 July 2005

(U) The wing bid farewell to it's vice Commander Colonel Timothy J. Collins upon his retirement and welcomed Colonel Jeffrey K. Beene as new vice Commander. Col Beene comes to the wing after serving as 40th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander at Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory.

19 – 21 July 2005

(U) The wing hosted the Executive Multi-National AEW Commanders Conference (EMACC). The EMACC is a multi-national forum organized as a vehicle for commanders of A2 operational units to speak to, verify and prioritize areas of mutual interest which may merit coordinated multi-national staff action and acquisition plans.

September 2005

(U) The 552^d ACW assisted federal agencies in relief efforts in the devastated areas of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana caused by the category five Hurricane “Katrina.” The wing flew 16 sorties amassing 158 flying hours coordinating relief efforts of both civilian and military aircraft. A few days later the wing began flying missions to support the disaster relief efforts in southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana caused by Hurricane Rita, flying 14 sorties and 118 flying hours.

30 October 2005

(U) The 552 ACW deployed to Mar Del Plata Argentina for POTUS support during the Summit of the Americas. The higher headquarter tasking directed the deployment of four E-3 aircraft and associated personnel to be in place 1 November 2005 to begin three days of operations covering the arrival and the departure of the President and 34 other world leaders. The United States Southern Command activated the 960 EAACS for the duration of the deployment. This was the wing’s first deployment to Argentina. Lt Col Gregory Roberts commanded the squadron comprised of 189 personnel from the wing and 12 security personnel from the 72nd Air Base Wing. Crews from the 960th AACS and 970th AACS, reserve component, endured a 12-hour sortie which included area familiarization and communications checks with the deployed 12th AF Forward Control Element. Aircrews operated out of Comandante Espora Naval Air Base, in Bahia Blanca, Argentina. The 960 EAACS provided 99.3 percent of the tasked station time. Minor maintenance issues caused the squadron to lose twenty minutes of station time. Squadron leaders worked with 12 AF and the host nation to overcome “first-time” deployment issues and challenges. There were lessons learned from the deployment. These were collected and passed to wing leadership for analysis and discussion. The 960th EAACS accomplished the wing’s first deployment to Argentina and considered the deployment a resounding success.

9 November 2005

Brigadier General James M. Kowalski assumed command of the 552^d Air Control Wing from Brigadier General Joseph F. Mudd Jr. during a ceremony at Tinker AFB. General Mudd is moving on to his next assignment as Deputy Commander, Combined Air Operations Center 6, Allied Air Forces Southern Europe, NATO, in Eskisehir, Turkey. General Kowalski joins the 552^d Air Control Wing having served at the Pentagon as Deputy Director, Operational Plans and Joint Matters for Contingency Operations. General Kowalski spoke to the men and women of the 552 ACW upon accepting the wing. *“It is a privilege to serve as your commander, for nearly 30 years, our nation’s interest have been guarded by the 552^d and for most of those decades your squadrons served on foreign soil.”* After relinquishing command, General Mudd rendered a final salute to the wing.