

A Brief History of Engineering Installation (USAF/ANG)

Air National Guard Engineering Installation Squadrons

Though none of the Air National Guard (ANG) EI units have changed their Squadron number since raising their unit's flag (that we know of); ANG EI units have gone through the same MAJCOM changes as their active duty counterparts (AACS, GEEIA, AFCS, AFCC, AFMC, ACC, and, potentially, AF Cyber Command).

The current-standing ANG units are:

130EIS, UT	202EIS, GA	205EIS, OK	210EIS, MN
211EIS, PA	212EIS, MA	213EIS, NY	214EIS, LA
215EIS, WA	217EIS, IL	219EIS, OK	220EIS, OH
241EIS, TN	243EIS, ME	270EIS, PA	272EIS, TX

ANG EI units that have furled their flag over the past several years are:

216EIS, CA	218EIS, MO	273EIS, TX
------------	------------	------------

While some ANG EI units can trace a very visible lineage to pre-1947 US Army Air Corps units, many came on board with the advent of the US Air Force, circa 1947. Units, whose flag date is prior to 1947, gained missions that ranged from communications units to actual flying units (like the 202EIS, GA). In short, most EI ANG raised their flags between 1947 and 1955.

United States Air Force Engineering Installation

USAF EI heritage has gone through just about every kind of reorganization that can come down the pike. Most original USAF EI units can go back directly to their AACS (then the *Army Airways Communications Service*) roots. In 1947, AACS simply changed to reflect America's newest branch of the armed forces, *Air and Airways Communications Service*.

On 15 June 1958, General Curtis LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff, precipitated a milestone in Air Force EI history by creating the first unified EI organization -- the **Ground Electronics Engineering Installation Agency**, better known as **GEEIA**. GEEIA's purpose was to provide centralized management of worldwide EI resources. As a subordinate agency of the Air Materiel Command, GEEIA was headquartered at Griffiss AFB, NY. Griffiss AFB was where the Rome Air Materiel Area already handled such functions as scheme (now project) review, establishing engineering standards, and warehousing scheme materiel.

GEEIA was divided into five geographic regions, three in the United States, one in Europe, and the other in the Pacific. Each region had its own headquarters and several subordinate installation squadrons. This EI organization carried the Air Force into the Vietnam conflict before falling victim to the budgetary axe in 1970.

The original USAF GEEIA units were:

2860 GEEIA, Robins, AFB	2861 GEEIA, Griffiss, AFB	2862 GEEIA, Patrick, AFB
2865 GEEIA, Chanute, AFB	2866 GEEIA, Kelly, AFB	2867 GEEIA, McClellan, AFB
2869 GEEIA, Norton, AFB	2870 GEEIA, Hill, AFB	2874 GEEIA, Ramstein, AB
2876 GEEIA, Clark, AB	485 GEEIA, Griffiss, AFB	2863 GEEIA, Wright-Patterson, AFB
2868 GEEIA, Elmendorf, AFB	2875 GEEIA, Tachikawa, AB	

(Note: The Air Guard units listed above were also included in GEEIA, although no changes have been made to their unit number, e.g., 241GEEIA – 241 EIS)

In 1970, the Air Staff merged GEEIA into the Air Force Communication Service (AFCS). The idea was to allow existing AFCS personnel to assume some of the installation and high-level maintenance tasks GEEIA had performed. The resulting experiment scattered the worldwide EI resources among several AFCS areas, as subordinate commands were called. The resulting experiment scattered the worldwide EI resources among several AFCS areas, as subordinate commands were called. During the mid-1970s, AFCS undertook a short-lived and basically unsuccessful experiment by merging most of its EI squadrons into existing O&M units. The hybrid organizations created by this test -- so called **Communications Installations Groups** (CIGs) -- proved unworkable.

GEEIA transferred the following units to AFCS where they were assigned new identities:

2860 GEEIA to the 1831 EIS, Robins, AFB	2861 GEEIA to the 1829 EIS, Griffiss, AFB	2862 GEEIA to the 1830 EIS, Patrick, AFB
2865 GEEIA to the 1826 EIS, Chanute, AFB	2866 GEEIA to the 1827 EIS, Kelly, AFB	2867 GEEIA to the 1849 EIS, McClellan, AFB
2869 GEEIA to the 1835 EIS, Norton, AFB	2870 GEEIA to the 1832 EIS, Hill, AFB	2874 GEEIA to the 1836 EIS, Ramstein, AB
2876 GEEIA to the 1838 EIS, Clark, AB	485 GEEIA to the 485 EIG, Griffiss, AFB	2863 GEEIA to the 1828 EIS, Wright-Patterson, AFB
2868 GEEIA to the 1825 EIS, Elmendorf, AFB	2875 GEEIA to the 1837 EIS, Tachikawa, AB	

Other active duty EI units included:

1834 EIS, McChord AFB	1839 EIG, Keesler AFB	1840 ABW, Richards-Gebaur AFB
1842 EEG, Richards-GeBaur AFB	1843 EES/EIG, Wheeler AFB	1845 EES/EIG, Oklahoma City

One has to remember that in these early days of Air Force communications, EI performed **ALL** comm services for the Air Force: construction, outside plant, inside plant, airfield systems, control tower and infield communications, comm squadron/flight equipment room construction and installations, and so on. EI personnel, globally, numbered around 15,000 personnel (USAF and ANG) and the center of the EI universe was located at Tinker AFB, OK (although for a period of

time there were two commands – Northern and Southern. Tinker AFB oversaw the Southern, while the 485EIG, Griffiss AFB, NY ran the Northern).

In 1979, AFCS became the **Air Force Communications Command (AFCC)** and embarked on extensive reorganization plans that would not only break up the CIGs into their component EI and O&M segments, but also reestablish centralized management of the Command's EI resources. It took two years for the reorganization to become a reality. On 1 June 1981, AFCC established the **Engineering Installation Center (EIC)** at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, as the Air Force single manager for the worldwide Engineering and Installation mission. Consolidation of the project materials into one warehouse at Tinker was effected the next year. On 1 March 1985, the Air Force authorized changing the EIC's name to the **Engineering Installation Division (EID)**, which better reflected its character as a major headquarters with subordinate units.

Prompted by the frenetic pace of change and innovation in the electronics industry, the EI mission underwent another major change in 1987. During that year, HQ USAF designated AFCC as one of its three acquisition organizations. Concurrently the EID became one of AFCC's two acquisition divisions, thus enlarging its customary mission to include procurement of off-the-shelf communications-electronics equipment and services and provision of life cycle support services for its customers. The EI business had entered a new age.

By this time, while all of the original 19 Air Guard EI units were still flying their flags, some of the active duty EI community was feeling the hammer of BRAC and the encroachment of civilian contractors. As such, by 1990, there were 4 active duty CONUS EI units remaining. Their unit designations (except for one) had been again changed to reflect the active duty EI community centered at the 38th EIW, Tinker AFB. They were:

738 EIS, Keesler AFB	838EIS, Kelly AFB	938 EIS, McClellan AFB	485 EIG, Griffiss AFB
----------------------	-------------------	------------------------	-----------------------

The OCONUS activities remaining were in Germany and Japan (1836 EIS and 1837 EIS, respectively), but the writing was on the wall for these units, as workload continued to filter into to other activities.

Further restructuring brought about the demise of AFCC and in March 1993, EI came under the control of the **Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC)**.

Since September 11 2001, EI has met the demandingly high OPSTEMPO and much needed Communications skill-sets that have directly supported the Global War on Terrorism. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the 'Stans', Afghanistan, and Iraq now have EI footprints imprinted on their soil. To meet the ever-changing USAF wartime mission, in 2005, EI aligned itself with **Air Combat Command (ACC)**.

Currently, EI is comprised of 17 EI Squadrons: 16 of which are Air National Guard and the remaining Active Duty EI element, the 85EIS, Kessler AFB, MS.

If any reader has additional information or changes to this information, please contact: LFA.REGISTRAR@PAHARR.ANG.AF.MIL. Thank you.

Kevin H. Markel, MSgt
Lightning Force Academy