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HISTORY

VOL. 2 OF [REDACTED]

OF

IVY
REF: C.4.8-3

WEATHER

68970

RECONNAISSANCE

LEMENT, PROV. (132.4.3.1

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26 AUGUST THROUGH
15 OCTOBER 1952

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DECLASSIFIED BY *Arthur Schell / SCW*
SIGNATURE *John H. B. [unclear]*

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HISTORICAL RECORDS



HISTORY

OF

WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENT, PROVISIONAL (132.4.3.1)

Period Covered

26 August through 15 October 1952

Edward L. Schurr
Edward L. Schurr
M/Sgt USAF
Historian

Fred G. Simpson
Fred G. Simpson
Lt Col USAF
Commanding

Headquarters

Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional (132.4.3.1)

Navy 824, FPO, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California



PCS: JTF-132-CG-U

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MILITARY AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 51)

14 April 1952

DESIGNATION AND ORGANIZATION OF PROVISIONAL ELEMENTS (132.4.3)

1. The following provisional elements are designated and organized at locations and in accordance with Tables of Distribution, indicated, effective 1 May 1952.

UNITS	ORGANIZATION AF-MATS-TD-NO	AUTH STRENGTH		LOCATION
		OFF	AME	
Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional, (132.4.3.1)	PW-1, 1 Mar 52	56	253	Hickam Air Force Base, HI
Weather Reporting Element, Provisional, (132.4.3.2)	PW-2, 1 Mar 52	16	115	Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma
Communications Element, Provisional, (132.4.3.3)	PC-1, 1 Feb 52	14	222	Kwajalein, Marsh- all Islands
Search and Rescue Element, Provisional, (132.4.3.4)	PR-1, 1 Mar 52	8	9	Kwajalein, Marsh- all Islands

2. Personnel will be attached for duty to the above elements from organizations within the Air Weather Service, Airways and Air Communications Service, and Air Rescue Service respectively.

3. Equipment and supplies required in addition to that furnished from within resources of Military Air Transport Service, will be requisitioned through Headquarters, Task Group, (132.4).

4. The above elements are attached to Task Group 132.4 for operational control for planning and coordination only during period prior to movement to forward areas.

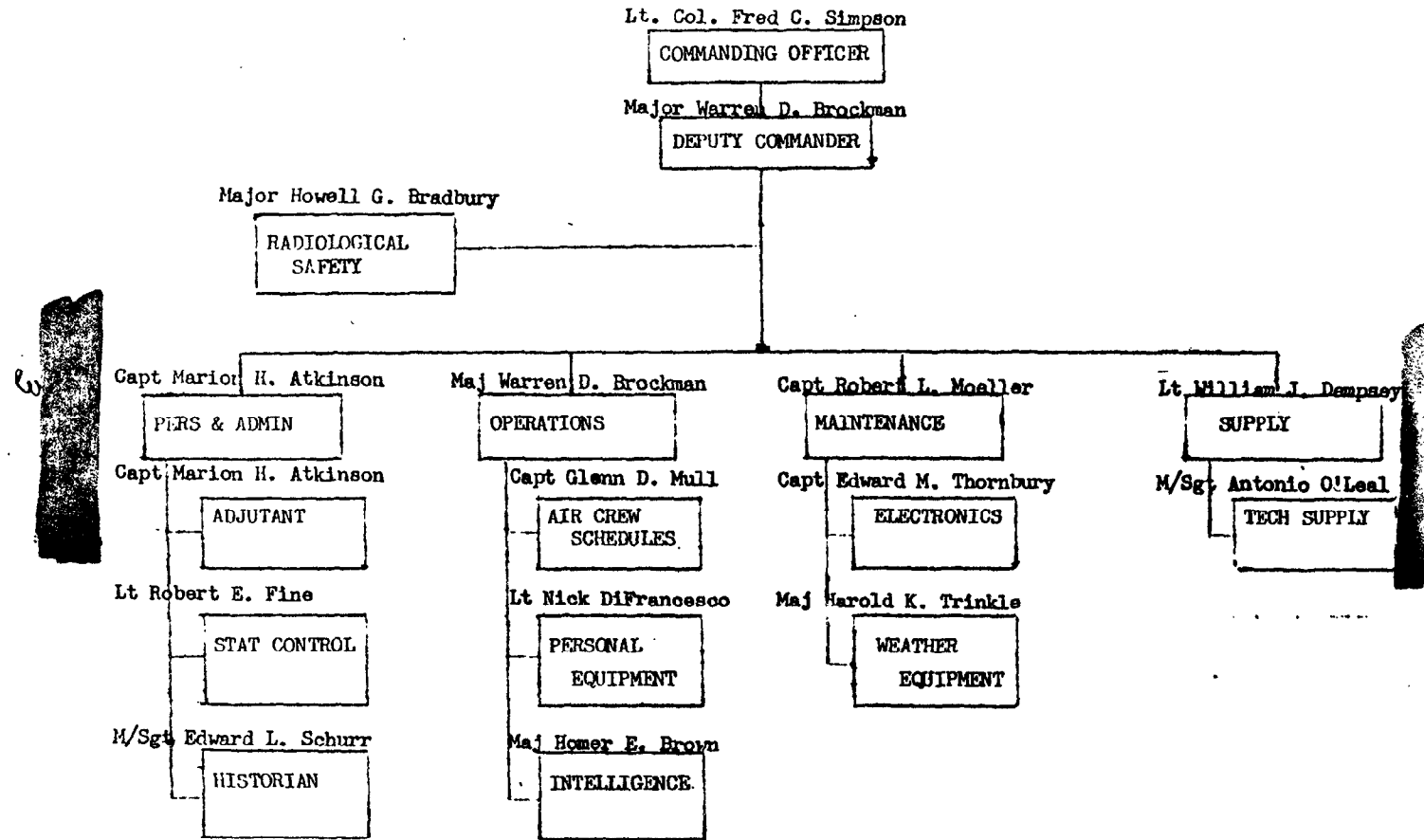
5. Action directed herein will be reported by means of the Air Force Organization Status Change Report (RCS-AF-01).

6. AUTHORITY: Message, Headquarters USAF, AFOOP-ZI, 51866, 5 February 1952.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENT, PROVISIONAL (132.4.3.1)



GD # 51, MAES, USAF, Wash 25, D. C.

14 April 1952

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL SMITH:

OFFICIAL:

WENTWORTH GOSS
Brigadier General, USAF
Chief of Staff

JEROME S. ARNOLD
Colonel, USAF
Adjutant General

A TRUE COPY

Marion H. Atkinson

MARION H. ATKINSON
Captain, USAF

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THE MISSION

As stated in, "Operations Plan 1-52, Task Group 132.4", the mission of The Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional (132.4.3.1) is as follows:

1. Provide, operate, and maintain ten (10) WB-29 aircraft for the purpose of conducting air-weather reconnaissance missions as required by the Commander, Joint Task Force 132.
2. Perform sampling missions in connection with AFOAT-1 programs. (Project 7.3.)
3. Provide aircraft to track the radioactive cloud after each detonation to determine cloud location and the direction of movement.

Following are extracts taken from Annex "E" to Operations Plan 1-52, as issued by Headquarters, Task Group 132.4, Provisional, Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, dated 16 June 1952, 1300T.

"The Weather Reconnaissance Element to be stationed at Kwajalein for the purpose of conducting weather reconnaissance and long-range tracking flights and accomplishing sampling missions will:

1. Conduct long-range weather reconnaissance missions:
 - a. To supply meteorological data to Eniwetok Weather Central transmitting in-flight weather reports via AAGC ground station at Eniwetok.
 - b. To obtain in-flight weather observations in accordance with current procedures along tracks and at times requested by the Task Force Weather Central.
 - c. Maintaining close liaison with the Search and Rescue Center

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at Kwajalein for flight following.

- d. Two (2) weather missions each day, of approximately twelve (12) hours duration, commencing on first shot day minus twenty (20) days.
- e. Three (3) weather missions each day, of approximately twelve (12) hours duration, commencing on first shot day minus four (4) days.
- f. Post-shot missions, combining weather reconnaissance and observations in connection with radiological safety of two (2) missions each day of approximately twelve (12) hours duration on shot day through shot plus two (2) days.

✓ 2. Conduct sampling missions for AFOAT-1. (Project 7.3)

✓ 3. Conduct long-range cloud tracking missions after each detonation for radiological safety purposes up to a radius of 1,000 nautical miles in the significant quadrant for a period of forty-eight (48) hours after detonation.

✓ 4. Beginning 10 October 1952, assume typhoon reconnaissance responsibility in the area bounded by the equator, latitude 25°N, longitude 157°, 30'E and the meridian of 180°.



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NARRATIVE SUMMARY

At the close of the last period, ending 25 August 1952, it appeared that the major portion of the unit's problems had been satisfactorily solved. Personnel movements had been firmed up with Air Weather Service Headquarters, with two hundred personnel moving by air and one hundred scheduled for water shipment. Supply matters had been given considerable attention, with the difficulties in this category revolving around matters of certain critical supplies and equipment for aircraft maintenance. In the following paragraphs a summary of problems and solutions is noted.

The movement of one hundred and two persons by water shipment from Hawaii to Kwajalein was an undesirable feature of our proposed move due to the excessive time lost in this process. The Commanding Officer, 2143d Air Weather Wing, initiated action with the Commanding General, 1502d Air Transport Wing in Japan, to supply sufficient airlift to eliminate the need for use of water transportation. Though the facilities offered by the Commanding General, 1502d Air Transport Wing could not have filled the requirements, the action resulting from the offer was such that Pacific Division, MATS at Hickam, agreed to support an entire air movement of one hundred and fifty-two persons from Hickam to Kwajalein. (The Commanding General, 1502d Air Transport Wing, had offered to make one (1) C-54 aircraft and crew available to the unit beginning 1 October 1952.) Thus it was possible to cancel the water shipment and substitute the following air movement schedule via MATS.

15 September 1952 ---- 32 persons

24 September 1952 ---- 40 persons

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

28 September ----- 80 persons

Commitments were filled with respect to all schedules and personnel departed on the dates indicated, with the exception of the reduction of the first two (2) shipments. Thirty-one (31) and thirty-nine (39) persons were moved on the first two dates respectively, due to necessity for last minute removal of two (2) individuals. The third movement of eighty (80) persons left intact. As a matter of fact they departed Hickam a total of three different times. The incidents involved in conveyin the third shipment to Kwajalein is worthy of historical note.

One (1) officer and seventy-nine (79) airmen comprising the third MATS shipment, departed Hickam per original schedule, via C-97 at 0700 hours on 28 September 1952. Approximately two and one half hours out the C-97 returned to Hickam with engine trouble. The group was then re-scheduled to depart at 2200 hours of the 28th, and did so. At 0300 hours on the 29th, the shipment returned to Hickam with one (1) engine feathered on the C-97. The group departed again for Kwajalein at 1400 hours on the 29th. This time instead of returning to Hickam, the unit landed at Johnston Island with two (2) engines feathered. MATS at Hickam dispatched another C-97 to Johnston to complete the airlift after the emergency landing at Johnston. Eventually all personnel of the third shipment arrived at Kwajalein at 0345 local time on 2 October 1952.

A total of five (5) airmen were not moved to Kwajalein per original schedule. Of these five (5), one (1) airman was removed at the last minute due to higher headquarters rescission of his security clearance. A replacement was made and the individual departed via unit WB-29 air-

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

craft approximately four (4) days after the originally scheduled departure for that troop space. One (1) airman was sent to the Zone of Interior to be administered the aviation cadet examinations and is scheduled to report to Kwajalein immediately upon his return to Hickam. One (1) airman was held at Hickam in order to process his discharge and reenlistment on 2 October 1952. Upon completion of this process he will be shipped to Kwajalein. The fifth airman was hospitalized five (5) days prior to his scheduled departure and because of his indefinite release date, a query to the advance echelon of this element was directed in order to establish whether the troop space requirement, administrative clerk, could be deleted. An affirmative response was received and the space was deleted from the manning requirements.

During the period 20 August to 5 September 1952, a second supply survey team visited Kwajalein to obtain a last minute run-down on the supply status prior to dispatch of our advance echelon. The information obtained at that time was to the effect that only a token percentage increase in supplies was noted since our earlier visit of approximately thirty (30) days previous. Of 3665 items requisitioned, 3221 items were on hand, roughly eighty-six (86) percent of the total. It was estimated on the previous survey that between eighty (80) and eighty-five (85) percent of supplies were on hand at that time. It was also noted at the time of this second survey that many critical items of WB-29 parts and maintenance equipment had not as yet appeared at Kwajalein.

The supply situation became considerably clearer on the third of September, at which time a brownline listing of supplies was received

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

from Task Group 132.4. It was requested that this unit screen the listing and indicate items which could be cancelled, made available from base supply, be provided by the 57th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron from UPRREAL property, and those which were absolutely essential and not available from local sources. Of this list, approximately seventy-five (75) percent of the items were cancelled. Of the remaining items however, fifty (50) line items were considered to be super-critical. A great deal of work was required to screen the lists, by both the 57th SRS and AFL4SO, analyze minimum needs, and determine equipment which might be provided from local sources. Although the unit could do little with respect to critical parts, action was taken to pack and ship approximately thirty thousand pounds of UPRREAL equipment from Hickam to Kwajalein via unit IC-97 aircraft. This equipment consisted primarily of maintenance stands and certain special tools.

As early as February 1952, this unit had arranged with AFL4SO for the build-up of approximately 16 R-3350-57M and AM engines for use by the element at Kwajalein. Since these items were committed, it behooved the unit to provide for transport of these engines to Kwajalein. Thus, Headquarters, Air Weather Service, had been requested to provide MATS airlift from Hickam to Kwajalein for two (2) built-up R-3350 engines per week beginning 12 October 1952. It became evident later however, that the provision of special airlift would not be required since Task Group 132.4 had made arrangements for all R-3350 build-up for the entire project to be accomplished at Hickam, engines to be supplied to Kwajalein on an AOCB basis. At the same time there was to be no "specially allo-

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

cated" engines for the Weather Reconnaissance Element, as all engines were to be pooled and controlled by the Test Support Unit and issued as required. In view of this procedure, aTWX was dispatched to the Commanding General Air Weather Service on 5 October 1952, requesting cancellation of our Special MATS airlift for engines from Hickam to Kwajalein.

With the actual arrival at Kwajalein of four (4) officers and twenty-seven (27) airmen on 16 September 1952 at 1735 hours local, the setting up of the Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional (132.4.3.1) began to take place. Quarters being of prime importance at this time, the necessary implements and supplies were drawn from group supply and Tent Area "B", airmen's quarters, were hurriedly transformed into a livable condition. The tents were cleaned out, cots erected, and the entire area gone over with mowers and rakes. The location finally took on that "new look" and quarters for two hundred and forty airmen were ready, forty tents, six men per tent. Latrine facilities were grossly inadequate and in a deplorable condition. Action was initiated through Colonel Roy W. Nelson¹, Commander of Test Services Unit 132.4.3, to remedy this situation as soon as possible.

Building 1127, lower floor, designated as Headquarters Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional (132.4.3.1) was next in line for renovation. Under the supervision of Major Charles R. Hoyle Jr,² Commanding Officer, and Captain Marion H. Atkinson, Adjutant, the building was cleaned out and desks, file cabinets, and safes put into place. Necessary expendables needed for operation were at a premium and approximately

1. See Letter: Sbj, Rehabilitation of Latrine Facilities and Tent Area "B" - page - 54
2. See Letters from Maj. [REDACTED] Atkinson - Page - 37a

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

forty percent had to be obtained from Hickam Air Force Base. Now functioning as a unit, this headquarters housed the following sections: Commanding Officer, adjutant, first sergeant, message center, intelligence, personnel, and statistical services.

The advance echelon then turned to new fields and immediately began to set up the aircraft maintenance shop, line tents, electronics shop, and tech supply. The first three (3) days they were hampered by inadequate transportation and could not draw all the property that base supply was ready to issue.

A problem encountered while setting up our operating sites was the non-availability of hand tools, such as saws, hammers, nails, pinch bars, shovels, rakes, etc. These items were not available for issue from the base supply officer. The Navy Maintenance Compound aided us at this point by loaning us such tools on a twenty-four (24) hour basis. To prevent recurrence of this on future projects it has been suggested that base supply stock such equipment necessary for advance echelon's use. We did have the utmost cooperation from the base supply officer in procuring all items which had been ordered and were in place.

Another problem encountered by the advance echelon and particularly by the Weather Reconnaissance Element Supply Officer were the methods used in processing work orders for building laundry racks, water coolers, and other temporary structures necessary for the accomplishment of the mission. A full discussion of the problem pertaining to the laundry racks and water coolers follows: At this station, which is Naval operated, the method used requires that each section send the laundry in



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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

three (3) bundles. This requires all whites in one mattress cover, all colors in another, and all khakis in still another. The laundry came back the same way, which for sorting means that each man must have his own bin - in our case two hundred and fifty (250) bins.

b A work order was submitted to Maintenance Control for constructing these bins on 17 September 1952. By 27 September no action had been taken and on 1 October 1952 we were finally informed that we would have to supply the lumber. It was quite apparent that this agency could not do the job. Solution, we built the bins ourselves.

A work order was submitted to Maintenance Control for water coolers to be constructed of a wooden frame packed with sawdust containing a twenty-four (24) gallon GI can to be used for all flight line personnel and airmen in the tent area - no action had been started by 6 October 1952. Construction was finally begun on the wooden frame on 8 October at which time the requesting organization was asked to furnish the container. As of 13 October no containers could be furnished due to the fact that base supply has none in stock. A summary of the situation leads one to believe that such delays and lack of action by the Maintenance Control work order section is due to shortage of personnel and improper planning and coordination with the base supply office for procurement of necessary equipment with which to accomplish their mission. As a suggestion the following solution is tendered for future projects of this nature: A separate agency could be set up to deal with problems such as these. Although seemingly insignificant at the time, the two aforementioned problems are most significant from the standpoint of a smooth

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Narrative Summary (cont'd)

operation and the welfare of the men.

All problems at least temporarily solved, this element was ready for the arrival of the WB-29's from Hickam Air Force Base. The WB-29 shipments departed Hickam without incident in increments of four (4) aircraft on 1 October 1952, four (4) on 2 October, and two (2) on 3 October 1952. With the arrival at Kwajalein of these ten (10) aircraft, The Weather Reconnaissance Element, Provisional (132.4.3.1) was fully in place and became operational on 9 October 1952.

Following is a breakdown of the sections within the element and a resume' of their activities up to and including 15 October 1952:

SUPPLY

With an estimated ninety-two (92) percent of our brown line items in place as of 16 September 1952, the Weather Reconnaissance Element felt fairly secure along this line. Our attention was then given to those items which still had not arrived. These items consisted mostly of critical supplies Air Force wide, and as a result we could only surmise what the outcome would be. The most important item that had not turned up was the C-1 aircraft stand of which we had ten (10) on order. Because we felt that the arrival date of our aircraft would be earlier than the arrival date of the stands, we airlifted our TO&E stands from Hickam, also aircraft jacks and a towbar.

We encountered some difficulty with items of supply which we knew were in place in the quantities requested. However, when we drew these

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