

INAUGURATION AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS CENTER

603 rd opens doors to new AOC - AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS CENTER

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After nearly three years of construction, the 603rd Air and Space Operations Center team held a ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 7 for its new state-of-the-art facility.

U.S. Air Forces in Europe Commander Gen. Mark A. Welsh III attended the ceremony for the AOC, which allows the critical mission of monitoring the airspace above Europe and Africa to take place.

Ultimately, air and war fighting on the two continents couldn't happen without 60,800 square feet of cement, brick and mortar that house an impressive lineup of equipment and personnel charged with controlling the skies from the Arctic Circle to the Cape of Needles.

Since breaking ground in 2008, tea work across the base ensured the successful construction and capability of the new facility.

The new AOC comes with 40 communication systems, 553 workstations, 1,500 computers, 1,700 monitors, 22,000 connections and enough fiberoptics to stretch from here to the Louvre in Paris.

"Everyone on the team deserves significant praise for their contributions", said Bob Suggs, 603rd civilian engineer support project manager.

In addition to the 603rd team, project planners included Space and Naval Warfare Command, the USAFE communication and information directorate, the Air Force Center for Engineering and Environment, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Each agency played a part in aiding the nearly 400 service members who man the facility 365 days a year.

Suggs said the foresight and understanding that this structure is mission critical helped the team accomplish the speedy turnover.

"We make weekly, we were able to exchange information and we could call on the experts," Suggs said. "We quickly overcame issues with the team approach".

The completion of the building shell last summer to the full integration of Bldg. 570 took a quick paced 13 months.

The remarkable turnover gives significant credit to the project planning team, but assisting them was the support of senior leadership.

In long standing tradition, Col. D. Peter Hemlinger, commander of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe district, presented the building key to Col. Pete Davey, 603rd AOC commander.

The symbolic presentation and ceremony not only welcomed the 603rd to its new home, but also congratulated the efforts of everyone involved in assuring the completion of a mission critical facility for the military.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tyrone Lawson
From left, Col. D. Peter Hemlinger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe commander, Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander, Col. Peter F. Davey, 603rd Air and Space Operations Center commander, Lt. Gen. Frank Gorenc, 3rd Air Force commander, and Maj. Gen. Margaret Woodward, 17th Air Force commander, commemorate the opening of the new 603rd AOC Oct. 7 on Ramstein.

