



An airman tunes a receiver used for communications collection.

694th IG more than just a mission

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Tucked away in a far corner of the Army's Fort George Meade in Maryland is a little known Air Force contingent with a great big mission.

The 694th Intelligence Group is headquartered on a 52-acre plot of the fort, known to airmen who live and work there as the "9800 Area." It is composed of a mission support squadron, an operational support squadron, a tactical squadron, and four intelligence squadrons conducting intelligence operations as an integral part of the National Security Agency.

The 694th is truly diverse, with airmen encompassing 43 Air Force Specialty Codes, not counting the 560 linguists whose skills span 27 languages. Officers fill 22 AFSCs, including doctors, lawyers, engineers and chaplains.

People assigned to the 694th are dispersed throughout NSA and perform a myriad of missions in support of military theater and deployed tactical commanders throughout the conflict spectrum.

❖ The 94th Intelligence Squadron, Air Intelligence Agency's tactical unit at Fort Meade, manages nearly one-fourth of AIA's Air and Space Component Informa-

tion Network billets. They also provide operational control of the Consolidated Remote Operations Facility Airborne, a state-of-the-art collection, analysis and production facility that serves as a hub for distributed IO around the globe.

❖ The 694th Operational Support Squadron manages and directs several group and AIA programs, as well as special projects. Its members lead an air tactics and weapons analysis cell providing combat commanders with tailored intelligence products that support U.S. and allied air operations.

❖ The 22nd IS conducts airborne and ground operational and technical intelligence, collection, analysis, training and dissemination missions.

❖ Members of the 29th are involved in intelligence analysis and intelligence collection missions.

❖ 32nd IS personnel perform vital IO missions, providing real-time reporting of critical strategic/tactical combat information, and warning support to operationally-tasked aircraft.

❖ Members of 91st IS work in diverse areas of research and development, including Nuclear C2, communications security, and defensive aspects of IO.

According to Col. Carla D. Bass, 694th IG com-

mander, the group operates in three domains.

The first domain involves partnering with NSA, working the daily intricacies of operational control/administrative control relationships.

“This domain is especially challenging given that of the 2,400 active duty personnel assigned to the group, more than 1,900 are operationally controlled by NSA. We also have 350 reserve personnel who serve their tours within the agency,” said Bass.

“NSA is more than 75 percent civilian. There’s a good chance our bluesuiters will have a civilian supervisor or they may have a supervisor from one of our sister services.”

Squadron commanders within the 694th, therefore, take a proactive, hands-on approach in maintaining awareness of where their troops are assigned, how they are applied, and ensure unit personnel are appropriately supervised in this joint environment.

Along these lines, the 694th aggressively pursue high standards for timeliness and quality of performance reports, and awards and decorations. This is integral to taking care of the people here.

Additionally, the group invests heavily in honing skills of its junior officer and enlisted personnel.

Members of the 694th, at every level, have opportunities to be involved and make a difference in the professional development arena. The 694th’s NCO Professional Development Course for staff and technical sergeants is an excellent example of the group’s



This airman uses an illuminated magnifying glass while performing maintenance of communications equipment.

commitment to growing future Air Force senior NCOs. Executed and taught by members of the group’s Top 3 Association, the week-long program includes blocks of instruction in the profession of arms, effective communication, stress and people management, discipline, leadership, and word sculpting.

Student critiques of three classes graduated thus far confirm its success. It’s been

called “awesome,” “informative,” and “a great refresher.” Recent graduate Staff Sgt. Travis Collins said the course has “great instructors with a wealth of knowledge and experience.” He gave “kudos to the whole program.”

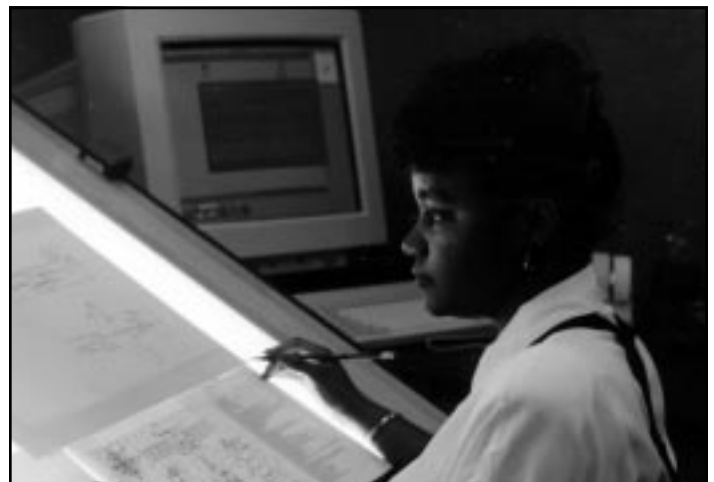
The 694th hosts AIA’s only Airman Leadership School which graduates classes bimonthly and routinely receives rave reviews. Company grade officers benefit from monthly CGO Professional Development Seminars which feature a mixture of professional reading assignments and presentations by guest speakers on issues such as air power application, enlisted force issues, writing Enlisted Performance Reports and Officer Performance Reports, air and space integration, and much more.

“We also offer many and varied opportunities for individuals to get involved for both their own professional development and in developing the younger generation enlisted and officer force,” said Command Chief Master Sgt. Tom Giroir.

“It is vital that our folks maintain their Air Force identity and strong sense of Air Force responsibilities



An airman processes collected communications data.



This civilian performs technical analysis.

while assigned to a civilian and multi-service environment.”

Avenues for involvement include the Company Grade Officers Council and Top 3 Association. The 694th also recently formed a First 6 Association, providing an avenue for younger airmen “to have a voice in issues that affect them,” according to association president Tech. Sgt. Beth Longfritz.

This is very important since the 694th is primarily enlisted with many airmen coming straight to Ft. Meade from their technical schools.

The 694th boasts one of AIA’s two honor guards, the other serving at the 67th Intelligence Wing. It also has a highly talented group choir, the Stellar Tones.

“These two groups are jewels in our crown,” said Bass. “They lend that fine touch of professional dignity and elegance to all of our ceremonies.” She noted that in addition to their on-base performances, the Stellar Tones had the honor of singing the National Anthem twice in front of more than 48,000 fans at Baltimore Orioles games.

The second domain in which the 694th operates is referred to as “Mayor of Area 9800,” which actually resembles running a small Air Force base. The 694th provides all functions normally found on a base, including chaplains, Staff Judge Advocate, plans, a clinical psychologist, safety, logistics, budget, social actions, public affairs, and Inspector General. The group, under the auspices of the 694th Mission Support Squadron, also operates a full-fledged military personnel flight, base individual mobilization augmentee office, education services, consolidated training flight,



These airmen set a communications antenna.

dorm management office, communications-information flight, security forces, civil engineering flight, and a services flight.

“We are the only AIA group that operates its own dining facility, serving 1,000 meals daily,” said Bass.

The group also mans its own health and fitness facility, which serves several thousand active duty personnel monthly, manages three dorms, and maintains a fleet of 20 vehicles.

Why is this necessary?

The 694th has the largest concentration of AIA people at any field unit; more than on Security Hill located at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and more than at some full-fledged Air Force bases.

According to Bass, “Many AIA personnel currently assigned to the group will return. Because of their special skills, many will spend better than half of their Air Force careers right here at Fort Meade.

“We are committed to providing the same quality of life available to personnel at Air Force installations . . . and will settle for nothing less. We are grateful for the tremendous support from the HQ AIA staff in recognizing and supporting the unique requirements of our personnel assigned here.”

Recognizing the difference in service standards, the group has worked diligently with Headquarters AIA, NSA and the Army to obtain funding to upgrade facilities in the 9800 Area.



An airman performs maintenance on communications equipment.

“Keen planning, budgeting, and execution expedited our efforts to bring our facilities up to Air Force standards,” said 694th MSS Commander Lt. Col. Kathleen Grabowski.

“Convenience is the key here,” said Bass.

“We’re on an Army post and many of these services are not readily available to our people. We receive support from the post and from neighboring bases, such as Bolling and Andrews (Air Force Bases). But a majority of our folks are junior enlisted. They may not have the time or resources to use services farther afield. With our own facilities collocated with both dormitories and adjacent to NSA, our people can walk to the dining facility or work out at the gym at lunch time and still return to duty within a reasonable amount of time.”

Members of 694th’s civil engineering flight are bona fide heroes in the 9800 area. These young troops were successfully awarded and successfully executed \$7 million in renovation projects for the nine Air Force-zoned buildings. Another \$6 million is in the design phase awaiting funding. Grabowski noted that these upgrades are the first since the facilities’ original construction in the early 1950s and 1970s.

“We are among the first locations worldwide to champion the Air Force One-plus-One dormitory standard,” said Grabowski. “A multi-million dollar renovation on one of the dormitories now allows residents a shared bathroom, while maintaining private rooms.”

Old heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems were also gutted and replaced, critical fire sprinkler systems were installed, and the group also managed to procure funds to install microwave ovens in each room. Similar renovations are underway in another dormitory.

The fitness center, which is a totally “homegrown” project, also received a facelift.

After months of extensive renovations, the facility recently reopened with a refurbished basketball court, first-class weight room, fully equipped Nautilus room, and a new 600-square-foot ergometry room addition, according to Grabowski.

“Our goal is to bring the fitness center up to the standards of an Air Force Health and Wellness Center,” said Bass. “We’re currently working with Bolling Air Force Base and with the Air Force Surgeon General’s office to evolve our health and fitness center into a full fledged HAWC.”

From the current renovations in the “4 Hats” dining facility to the completed renovations of 694th IG staff and support working spaces, Air Force people



Linguists perform communications security monitoring.

coming to Ft. Meade are bound to be pleasantly surprised.

“Just because we live and work on an Army installation, doesn’t mean we can’t maintain our Air Force way of life,” said Bass.

She said that’s why the 694th extends its support to include Air Force people in other tenant organizations at Ft. Meade – such as the Defense Information School and Defense Courier Service – as well as to Air Force retirees in the greater Baltimore and Washington, D.C. areas.

This cooperative involvement with the Ft. Meade

community is the third domain in which the group operates.

“The 694th is the largest of about 115 tenant organizations at Ft. Meade,” said Bass. “We work closely with our Army counterparts on matters dealing with facilities and Air Force personnel here. We are also intricately involved with the post in a wide variety

of activities that support our surrounding communities.”

Group members volunteer time to Partners in Education, supporting Ft. Meade’s high school, two middle schools and four elementary schools. They’re active in Sarah’s House, a local shelter for battered women and children, as well as participating in local anti-drug efforts through the Demand Reduction Program, another 694th function unique in AIA.

Bass said the 694th IG is a dynamic organization, with many people who live on an Army post while working in a joint environment.

“The challenges are unique but leadership of 694th IG has more than proven it’s up to the challenge . . . especially when the personal and professional welfare of its people are at stake!” ■

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–694th Command Chief Master Sgt. Tom Giroir