

# Goodfellow Involvement



**During the Vietnam War**, the Air Force developed a highly effective method of using aircrews to pinpoint enemy positions by triangulating their low-powered radio transmissions. Called Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF), this advanced technology was installed on modified C-47 "Electric Goon" aircraft such as the one on display in front of this building. Goodfellow provided training for the signals intelligence operators, linguists, analysts, and maintainers who flew these missions as members of the 6994th Security Squadron. **This is their story.**

## ARDF Training

**How was that done?** As new personnel arrived in country, they immediately entered ground training to become familiar with the aircraft, emergency procedures, radio discipline, items of personal equipment, and of course the ARDF equipment they would operate. After passing a written and performance test, they next would be assigned an instructor radio operator (IRO) who guided the trainee through qualification training, usually 6-8 weeks. When the instructor radio operator was satisfied with the crew member proficiency, he would recommend a standardization and evaluation flight examiner (SEFE) check ride.

**So highly classified and shrouded in mystery was the ARDF mission that the first candidates were even given ejection-seat training... for a WWII cargo plane!**

At the outset of these missions, all ARDF training was accomplished under combat conditions in Vietnam. The first 94th SS personnel learned by doing, under the guidance of the contractors who built the systems... and then trained their cohorts and their replacements.



**▲ ABOVE:** Raymond Smith, James Horton, and Dennis Adolph are prepared for an EC-47 HAWKEYE mission at Tan Son Nhut AB.

**▲ LEFT:** Mike Hunt manning the Y-position on the EC-47N aircraft at Nha Trang AB.



**ABOVE:** TEWS pilot Steven Stahl, 94th SS ARDF operator Dave D'Auria, TEWS navigator (U/I) and 94th SS ARDF operator Bob Molder complete pre-flight checklists at Danang AB.

## TRAINEE COMMENTS

"We had absolutely no formal ARDF equipment training prior to our arrival in country."

**Ed Bendinelli, Nha Trang, 1966-67**

"SEFE NCOs were the bad-asses of the 94th at all units. They were almost anal in their evaluations and critiques. It was a proven fact that if you were flying with the 94th... you were a highly qualified crew member in every aspect of the mission."

**Tom Nurre, NKP, 1970-71**

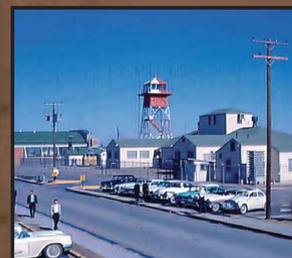
## Hazardous Duty

The C-47s slow speed and reliability made it the ideal platform for the ARDF mission. It also exposed the crewmembers to considerable risk. In recognition of their sacrifice, six of the 17 ARDF back-enders who perished in or remain unaccounted for from the Vietnam War are memorialized on Goodfellow. The six are: Sgt Dale Brandenburg, Sgt Peter Cressman, TSgt Ray Leftwich, SSgt Todd Melton, MSgt John Ryon, and TSgt Fred Sebers.



## The 1st ARDF Operators

The first ARDF operators aboard the Electric Goons were Morse intercept operators who received their 3-level initial skills training at Keesler AFB. In early 1967, Vietnamese linguists, radio intercept analysts, and maintenance specialists were added to the 94th SS aircrews. A significant number of these crew members were 1st-term Airmen and career NCOs who had already received specialty technical training at the USAFSS School at Goodfellow.



The analyst school compound took over what had been flight operations, still in the shadow of a control tower and hanger (later renamed Carswell Field House)



An analyst class stands in formation near the water tower, a base fixture well into the 21st century.

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
SECURITY SERVICE  
SCHOOL AT GOODFELLOW**



Much of the training also took place inside Goodfellow's first permanent brick building (501), re-purposed from a warehouse built in 1954



## Training at Goodfellow

As the fleet of EC-47s in southeast Asia increased, numbering 57 aircraft by 1968, the training burden imposed on the limited number of 6994th aircrews became overwhelming. In response, USAFSS tasked Goodfellow as early as autumn 1966 to implement ARDF operator and maintenance courses with an eye towards cutting combat environment qualification training time in half while increasing aircrew proficiency and productivity. By 1967 the two courses were ready.

**What was the impact of the training at Goodfellow?** Before the stand-up of the ARDF operators course at Goodfellow, crew members typically required 6 to 8 weeks of in-country on-the-job training (OJT) with an instructor radio operator to qualify. Afterwards, operators were qualifying in 10 or fewer missions. "It was so helpful to have operated the X console and been exposed to Vietnamese communications at Goodfellow so that this in-flight OJT went quite smoothly," Chief Tom Nurre recalled, adding that it "directly shortened the overall qualification training time required."



ARDF operator trainer (X-console ALR-35 system)