

END OF AN ERA

Mission complete in Germany

By 1st Lt. Gerardo Gonzalez

52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany — Weather may be a topic of conversation for many but for some Spangdahlem Air Base communicators it has been their mission for over a decade, until now.

The Global Weather Intercept Program mission of the 52nd Communications Squadron Operating Location-C at Pruem Air Station came to an end prompting the closure of this historic site.

“It’s the end of an era,” said Tech. Sergeant Joseph Rogers, 52nd Communications Squadron OL-C chief. “Life’s been good ... not many technical sergeants in the Air Force can say they have their own base.”

Pruem AB was originally activated in the early 50’s and hosted a number of different units and roles until 1991 when it inherited the GWIP mission following the closure of a site in Turkey, said Sergeant Rogers. Up until 2000, the unit was a geographically separated unit from Sembach AB before being placed under the 52nd Fighter Wing.

The mission of the GWIP is to intercept foreign broadcasted weather data unavailable from other sources, according to Sergeant Rogers. The data is intercepted using high frequency radio receivers and relayed to the Air Force Weather Agency for use in observation predictions, and ultimately to support military operations worldwide.

“The German Military Geophysical Office does the same thing for the Federal Republic of Germany,” said the sergeant about one of the reasons for bringing Pruem GWIP operations to an end. “AFWA has an agreement with them to provide the data that we were providing them.”

At the height of Sergeant Rogers’ tour at Pruem, the site had about 35 military members assigned in addition to contractors and other civilian employees.

“There was a BX, shoppette and a movie theater,” he said. “Anything that Spangdahlem has, we had here.”

Most of the buildings at Pruem AS now sit empty. Eventually they will be demolished or returned to the Germans, said Sergeant Rogers. The only item that will remain is the contractor supported antenna tower that holds a variety of microwave relay dishes used for other missions.

“I’m glad to have been here and sad to see it go,” said Sergeant Rogers. “But it’s time to move on.”

The Air Force still operates three other GWIP sites in Japan and on two islands in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.



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Front, Staff Sgt. Joshua Brown, 52nd Communications Squadron Operating Location-C, Global Weather Intercept Program operator, and Tech. Sgt. Joseph Rogers, 52nd CS OL-C chief, pull out a high frequency radio receiver from a rack at Pruem Air Station. The GWIP mission at Pruem AS ended and the installation is slated to close this summer.

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