### History of 5th Signal Command

Headquarters, 5th Signal Command was constituted in the Regular Army and activated in Germany on July 1, 1974. The Command traces its original heritage to the U.S. Army Signal Command, Europe, organized under USAREUR General Order dated March 20, 1958, which consolidated military communications in the European Theater. It consisted of the 4th and 516th Signal Groups and 102nd Signal Battalion supporting Army Group, Central Europe; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; USAREUR; and other elements in Europe as directed.

The organization expanded from 1961 to 1964, adding 22nd and 106th Signal Groups, with theater responsibilities extending from Belgium, through France and Germany, to Italy. The effort to meet the challenges of rapid growth in technology and communications prompted the birth of U.S. Army Strategic Communications Command in Washington, D.C., in March 1964. Its role was to manage the Army’s portion of military global communications. A group of sub-commands evolved from USSTRATCOM, the first of which was STRATCOM-Europe, established July 1, 1964, in Schwetzingen, Germany.

STRATCOM-Europe absorbed the 22nd and 106th Signal Groups and other communications responsibilities from USAREUR. By the end of 1965, all USAREUR communications duties, and even the position of USAREUR Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications–Electronics, had been transferred to the STRATCOM-Europe sub-command. The Signal transformation trend continued through the 1970s; 7th Signal Brigade was activated in 1970 from assets of the deactivated Seventh Army communications command. STRATCOM-Europe assumed operational control of the brigade in June 1972 and was redesignated as Army Communications Command-Europe (ACC-E) in October 1973. The 106th and 516th Signal Groups were also inactivated during this time and replaced by the 4th Signal Group.

During the summer of 1974, ACC-E reorganized as Headquarters, 5th Signal Command at Kilbourne Kaserne in Schwetzingen. The reorganization called for the activation of the 2nd and 160th Signal Groups from resources of inactivated units from the 22nd and 4th Signal Groups and the assignment of the 6981st Labor Service Group and 72nd Signal Battalion to 5th Signal Command. Additionally, the Command relocated to Taukkunen Barracks, Germany, in August 1974, and the 12th Signal Group was inactivated by July 1975. 7th Signal Brigade remained under 5th Signal Command’s operational control until 1981, when it was officially assigned to the Command. The collapse of communism, dismantlement of the Soviet empire, and disintegration of the Soviet Union introduced a new international world and prompted an Army-wide drawdown. This resulted in changes to military policy during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Warming superpower relations induced a period of adjustment and 5th Signal Command adjusted accordingly by: inactivating the 160th Signal Brigade and consolidating its units into the 2nd Signal Brigade; inactivating the 73rd Signal Battalion and 1st Signal Battalion of 7th Signal Brigade; and relocating the 63rd Signal Battalion to Fort Gordon, Ga. In the aftermath, 5th Signal Command retained an organizational structure that remains intact today. The 2nd Signal Brigade was comprised of 39th, 43rd, 52nd, 69th, 102nd, and 509th Signal Battalions. The 7th Signal Brigade was comprised of 44th and 72nd Signal Battalions.

Base closures accompanied troop drawdown. The closure of the Worms Military Community brought the Command to its current home at Funari Barracks in Mannheim in September 1996. The closure of Karlsruhe Military Community required 7th Signal Brigade and assigned units to relocate to Sullivan and Taylor Barracks, also in Mannheim. The commanding general of 5th Signal Command became the senior mission commander for the Mannheim military community.

Since the 1990s, 5th Signal Command’s subordinate units have maintained a consistently high operational tempo. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Command deployed elements of 7th Signal Brigade to the Persian Gulf. The 44th and 63rd Signal Battalions deployed and were attached to the 11th Signal Brigade, supporting Third Army/Army Central Command and XVIII Airborne Corps. The 1st Signal Battalion and the 268th Signal Company from the 72nd Signal Battalion also deployed and were attached to VII Corps. In July 1991, the 7th Signal Brigade supported the humanitarian relief and protection efforts for the Kurds during Operation Provide Comfort.

Since September 11th, 2001, 5th Signal Command’s role as USAREUR’s communication arm became even more critical in the effort to support the Warfighter. The process to build the infostructure in Europe as part of the larger Global Information Grid continues to evolve. With the increasing demand for bandwidth and diversity across the USAREUR footprint, 5th Signal Command initiated an intense effort in 2003 to develop the infrastructure with fiber optic connectivity throughout Europe and to begin elimination of the legacy microwave infrastructure.

Additionally, 5th Signal Command deployed significant tactical capabilities in support of Global War On Terrorism. 7th Signal Brigade deployed in February 2003 into Turkey and later southern Iraq in support of 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Airborne Division’s invasion into northern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The ability to establish satellite connectivity in support of OIF 1 leveraged 2nd Signal Brigade’s regional bandwidth, switching capabilities, and satellite downlinks into strategic satellite tactical and commercial entry points. This reach back extended the GIG and enabled the commander on the ground to: see friendly and enemy movements; disperse forces and conduct split-based operations; reduce the operational footprint; provide in-transit visibility of supplies, personnel, and equipment; and exploit information dominance. From January through December 2004, Headquarters, 7th Signal Brigade and 72nd Signal Battalion deployed to Kuwait and Iraq in support of OIF 2, providing tactical communications. From March 2005 through March 2006, 7th Signal Brigade deployed Task Force Lightning, comprised of elements of 44th and 509th Signal Battalions, to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom in support of the Southern European Task Force. From November of 2005 through November 2006, 72nd Signal Battalion, Task Force Desert Fighter, deployed in support of OIF.

Throughout 2006, 2nd Signal Brigade and USAREUR G6 continued their transformation throughout the strategic Europe base. Upon installation of I3MP and DWDM, a fiber optic backbone that provides increased bandwidth capabilities for the theater, 21 Network Service Centers were consolidated into four processing centers and one enterprise service desk, in accordance with Army Knowledge Management Goals.

In November of 2006, 5th Signal Command absorbed command and control of the 22nd Signal Brigade from V Corps as it continued its leadership of the transformation of Signal forces in Europe. 5th Signal Command provided oversight to the 22nd Signal Brigade throughout its inactivation process. Through the years, 5th Signal Command has served the United States Army with distinction in a broad range of peacetime, stability, and contingency operations, including: Partnership for Peace; numerous operational and humanitarian missions; and the Global War on Terrorism. The Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members of 5th Signal Command continue to espouse its motto, “Dragon Warriors, Army Strong!”