

771 RADAR SQUADRON (SAGE)



MISSION

The mission of the 771 Radar Squadron is to operate and maintain ground radar, data processing, and associated communications and electronics equipment and facilities, including assigned seaward extension equipment, for air defense under the SAGE system of operation, as directed by appropriate authority. To equip and cross-train assigned or attached personnel for SAGE emergency operations and to operate and maintain such personnel and equipment, as directed. To support the operations of other commands, as directed.

LINEAGE

771 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron activated, 6 Dec 1950

Redesignated 771 Radar Squadron, 8 Apr 1959

STATIONS

Fort Meade, MD

Fort John Custis, VA

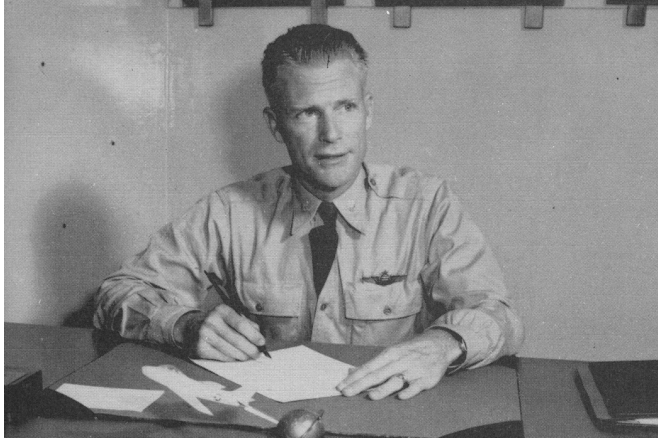
Cape Charles AFS, VA

ASSIGNMENTS

503 Aircraft Control and Warning Group

Washington Air Defense Sector

COMMANDERS



Maj David Rennie (USAF photo)

Maj Gilbert R. Ralston, Jr., 14 Apr 1954

Maj John W. King, #2 Mar 1956

Maj Samuel C. Harris Sep 1957

Maj David Rennie

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

GPS-5 Radar

FPS-3 Radar

A new link in the chain for the Air Defense of the United States was born on the 27th of November 1950. With the signing of the 26th Air Division (Defense) General Order No. 13, announcement was made of the activation and assignment of the 503rd Aircraft Control and Warning Group, 26th Air Division, Roslyn, New York, with the 771st Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Fort Eustis, Virginia, as a regular Air Force Unit. The 771st was issued a total strength of 16 Officers and 176 Airmen, under the command of Captain Troy A. Burris.

On the 16th of November 1958, General Orders from ADC changed the official designation of the 771st to Cape Charles Air Force Station, Cape Charles, Virginia. The 771st continued under this set up until March 1956 when they again reassigned, this time with the activation of the new 85th Air Division (Defense), located at Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, D. C.

The 771st had its beginning in the early days of Air Defense radar as Detachment 1, 647th AC&W Squadron, located at Fort Meade, Maryland under the 503rd AC&W Group at Roslyn, New York, a part of the 26th Air Division (Def).

The station was opened in the summer of 1949 by two officers and eighteen enlisted men, at Fort John Custis, Virginia, on the southern most tip of Cape Charles. A GPS-5 radar set was installed on top of an old concrete observation tower remaining from the World War II days of Ft. Custis.

The first floor of the tower was used for radar equipment and consoles. The second floor contained the communications center and the third floor was used by radio transmitters. This old tower still stands near the present housing area. Operations and other base facilities were housed in buildings grouped around the tower.

Special Order No. 260, Headquarters 26th Air Division (Defense), Roslyn, N. Y., dated 6 December 1950 changed the name to the 771st AC&W Squadron.

After the erection of several new buildings during 1957; the main base was moved to its present location. At the same time the FPS-3 radar set was installed.

In September, 1957, Major Samuel C. Harris assumed the command of the 771st AC&W Squadron.

The 771st was assigned to the Washington Air Defense Sector 1 Sept. 1958, and was redesignated the 771st Radar Squadron (SAGE) effective 8 April 1959.

Radar types: AN/CPS-6B, AN/TPS-1, AN/CPS-4

771 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Cape Charles, Virginia

771st Radar Sq (SAGE): assigned 1 Jan 51 at Ft. Custis, VA, assigned to 503rd ACW Gp; transferred to 26th AD 6 Feb 52; transferred to 4710th Def Wg 16 Feb 53; site redesignated to Cape Charles AFS, VA 1 Dec 53; transferred to 85th AD 1 Mar 56; transferred to Washington ADS:1 Sep 58; redesignated from AC&W Sq to 771st Radar Sq (SAGE) 1 Oct 59; transferred to 33rd AD 1 Apr 66; reassigned to 20th AD 19 Nov 69; redesignated 771 Radar Sq 1 Feb 74.

Cape Charles AFS, VA CPS-5; CPS-4; FPS-3; FPS-8/GPS-3; FPS-7B; FPS-6 (2); FPS-26A FPS-7B; FPS-6; FPS-26A BUIC-II. FPS-7B shared with FAA. Site began as a Lashup site, L-15, Fort Custis, VA. Site had ALRI receiver. Site replaced by Oceana NAS, VA, JSS radar site

This site started in April 1950 as Lashup site L-15 using AN/CPS-5 search and AN/CPS-4 height-finder radars. This equipment was used when Fort Custis was incorporated into the Lashup-permanent network as site LP-56, and then the permanent network as site P-56. The unit manning this facility, the 771st AC&W Squadron, continued operating the AN/CPS-4 and, as of April 1952, an AN/FPS-3 search radar as well; the AN/FPS-3 remained operational until 1962. In 1955 an AN/FPS-8 search radar was installed, converted to an AN/GPS-3, and operated through 1958. By the end of that year, two AN/FPS-6 height-finder radars were activated. During 1959 Cape Charles became a SAGE radar site. In 1963 the site hosted AN/FPS-7B, AN/FPS-6, and AN/FPS-26A radars. In 1963 the site also became an ADC/FAA joint-use facility. The facility came under TAC jurisdiction in 1979. The 771st Radar Squadron (SAGE) was deactivated 1 June 1981. A new JSS radar site at NAS Oceana assumed coverage for the area.

The 771st located at Cape Charles on the southern tip of VA's eastern shore.

Skilled electronics personnel operate and maintain two height finder radars and a ground to air transmitter receiver (GATR) sites. The Federal Aviation Administration also operates a search radar at the site. Data from the radar is used jointly by the FAA and ADCOM.

L-15/LP-56/P-56/Z-56 - Fort Curtis/Cape Charles

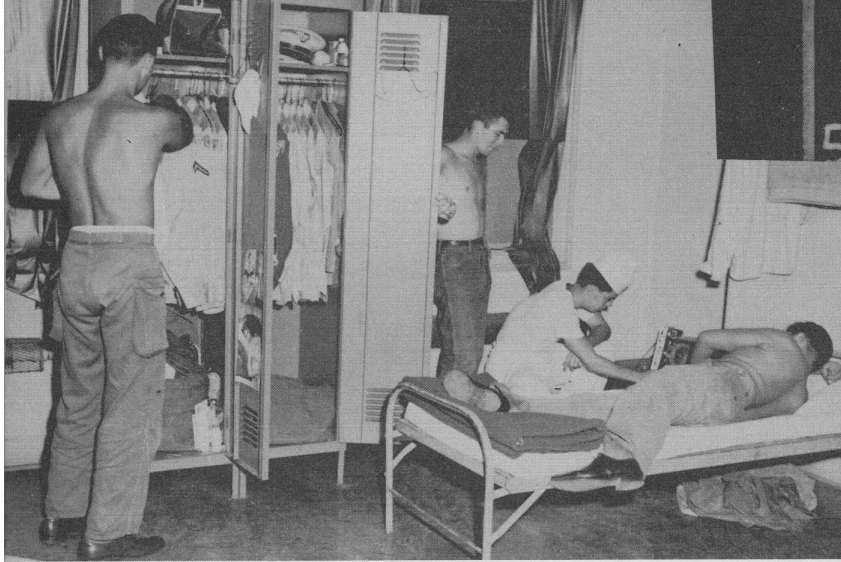
This site started in April 1950 as a Lashup site using AN/CPS-5 and AN/CPS-4 radars. This equipment was used when Fort Curtis was incorporated into the permanent network. The unit manning this facility, the 771st AC&W Squadron, continued operating the AN/CPS-4 and as of April 1952 an AN/FPS-3 radar as well. The AN/FPS-3 remained operational until 1962. In 1955 an AN/FPS-8 was installed, converted to an AN/GPS-3, and operated through 1958. By the end of that year, two AN/FPS-6 heightfinder radars were activated. During 1959 Cape Charles became a SAGE center. In 1963 the site hosted AN/FPS-7, AN/FPS-6, and AN/FPS-26A radars. In 1963 the site also became an ADC/FAA joint-use facility. The facility came under TAC jurisdiction in 1979.



(USAF photo)



(USAF photo)



(USAF photo)

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit yearbook. *4710 Defense Wing*. Taylor Publication Co. Dallas, TX. Nd.

Unit yearbook. *85 Air Division, Defense. 1957*

Unit yearbook. Washington Air Defense Sector. 1960.