

687 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

The mission of the 687 AC&W Squadron is to operate and maintain a Master Direction Center as part of the integrated air defense system and conduct the training required for the effective accomplishment of this mission. The Direction Center will be under the operational control of the 687th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron.

LINEAGE

687 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

STATIONS

Kirtland AFB, NM, 1 Oct 1953-20 Jun 1956
West Mesa AFS, NM

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Wendell M. Raschke, #1956

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

A Lashup station was operational here by late 1949. The station provided coverage for the Albuquerque-Los Alamos region. The site used AN/CPS-5 and AN/CPS-4 radars. In late 1952 an AN/CPS-5 radar was still operating on a Lashup basis to provide temporary coverage. Meanwhile plans to permanently site the radar on Mt. Vulcan were thwarted by an owner who refused to sell at the price offered. Instead the Air Force selected a site twenty-two miles west of Albuquerque. The site became operational in 1956. At this site the 687th AC&W Squadron used AN/MPS-7 and AN/MPS-14 radars. In 1960 this site was also handling air traffic control functions for the FAA. In 1961 the site hosted an AN/FPS-20 search radar. By 1966 the 687th was operating an AN/FPS-91A search set. The Air Force deactivated this squadron in September 1968.

687 West Mesa AFS, NM MPS-7; MPS-14; FPS-20A/-91A FPS-91A; MPS-14 1956
08-Sep-68 Site is 22 miles west of Albuquerque. Site was intended to go atop Mt. Vulcan, but owner refused to sell. West Mesa is FAA site now, using FPS-66A radar.

A Lashup (L-45) station was operational at Kirtland AFB by late 1949. The Lashup station provided coverage for the Albuquerque-Los Alamos region. The site used AN/CPS-5 and AN/CPS-4 radars. In late 1952 an AN/CPS-5 radar was still operating on a Lashup basis to provide temporary coverage. Meanwhile, plans to permanently site the radar on Mt. Vulcan (located within what is now the Petroglyph National Monument) were thwarted by an owner who refused to sell at the price offered. Instead, the Air Force selected a site twenty-two miles west of Albuquerque, on West Mesa. The new site (M-94) became operational in 1956. At this site the 687th AC&W Squadron used AN/MPS-7 search and AN/MPS-14 height-finder radars. In 1960 West Mesa AFS was also handling air-traffic-control functions for the FAA. In 1961 the site (Z-94) hosted an AN/FPS-20 search radar. By 1966 the 687th Radar Squadron was operating an AN/FPS-91A search set. The Air Force deactivated this squadron in September 1968. The FAA continues to operate the AN/FPS-91A search radar.]

The West Mesa Air Force Station AC&W Site, M-94, was constructed for the Air Force in 1955. DOD improvements to the site included 60 buildings, a swimming pool, a water supply system, and a heating and electrical supply system. A 27-unit family housing unit and waste annex (oxidation ponds) were added to the station four years later, in 1959. The improvements served West Mesa Air Force Station until July 1969, when the site was declared excess to GSA, and the 4.37-acre radar operations area transferred to the FAA in January 1970. The remaining 38.08 acres were transferred, along with 54 buildings, to the Office of Economic Opportunity on July 1970, which then quitclaimed the property to three private owners. 9.95 acres of the housing

area was then sold to individual private owners.

687th AC&W Squadron: activated 1 Oct 53 at Kirtland AFB, NM, as the 34th Air Division; moved to West Mesa AFS, NM in spring of 56; transferred to Albuquerque ADS 1 Jan 60; transferred to Oklahoma City ADS on 15 Sep 60; transferred to 4752nd Air Defense Wing on Sep 61; transferred to Oklahoma City ADS 25 Jun 63; reassigned to 31st Air Division on 1 Apr 66; discontinued on 8 Sep 68.

Facilities on the station are limited, at present; however construction is in progress to increase the number of activities available to squadron personnel. The Special Services section has a library with over 100 books covering a wide variety of subjects. There are facilities and gear available for boating, fishing, hunting, golf, archery, badminton, tennis, horse shoes, shuffleboard, baseball, basketball, pool, and ping pong. The squadron has a small arms range, soft ball field and multi-purpose recreation pad. The planned Community Building, now under construction, will have a multi-purpose room, barber shop, lounge and game room, base exchange, library, handicrafts, projection room, indoor basketball court and handball court. The present site exchange is fully stocked with name brand merchandise and can provide you with most of your needs.

The 687th AC&W Squadron became operational as the West Mesa Air Force Station, New Mexico, on the 22nd of June 1956. As a newly constructed site, the living and working conditions were crude and inadequate. Because of the station's location on a high mesa, extreme wind velocity and consequent erosion posed a problem to both building maintenance and living conditions. The extensive use of rocks and straw formed a sufficient covering to all but eliminate the problem. Through the judicious use of O and M programs and appropriated fund resources, vast improvements have been accomplished in these areas. This has resulted in a greatly increased administrative and operational effectiveness during the period since the station was fully activated.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 16 Jun 2020

Updated:

Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *34th Air Division, Defense. 1956.*