

648 RADAR SQUADRON (SAGE)



MISSION

LINEAGE

648 Aircraft Control And Warning Squadron
Redesignated 648 Radar Squadron (SAGE)

STATIONS

Benton AFS, PA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Stanley R. Tierce

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

In 1949 the 648th ACWRON was activated some 120 miles southwest of its present location at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

A slow but constant trickle of men were sent up to Red Rock, the present location of the squadron, to start manning the new site on top of the mountain. The personnel who first arrived really had to pioneer at the base that was accidently dubbed "Mud Pond" at the time.

For some time the squadron was separated with elements of it being stationed at the "Gap" and on "Red Rock". The final consolidation was made on 21 September 1951 when the last of the base personnel moved permanently up to Benton Air Force Station.

The squadron that was once addressed as "Mud Pond" has come a long way from that time and title. Under the supervision of eight different commanders and countless other personnel, the site on top of Red Rock is today a neat and trim, smoothly operating AC&W Squadron.

The 648th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron Air Force Station, located on Mount Lemmon, Arizona, is probably the world's highest radar station. The summit of Mount Lemmon is nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, and, from the tower supporting the prime search set, personnel can survey, with the naked eye, an area of 100 miles in any direction.

The 16 buildings of Mount Lemmon AFS are set in an unusual meadow-like area that comprises the top of Mount Lemmon. The buildings are arranged to blend with the natural surroundings and only trees interfering with mission of the station were removed.

Natural conditions which hampered the construction process are those which make Mount Lemmon a popular resort area. Bear Wallow Ski Run and Coronado National Forest combine with scenic beauty and climatic contrasts to afford the vacationer or resident a pleasant stay.

The 648th AC&W Squadron activated a pair of AN/CPS-6B radars at this site starting in October 1951. The AN/CPS-6B search radars remained active until 1961. In 1958 a pair of AN/FPS-6B radars replaced the AN/FPS-6B height-finder radar. In late 1958 Bentonville began providing data for the SAGE system. In 1961 this site received an AN/FPS-35 search radar, but difficulties prevented it from becoming operational in 1961. It became operational in 1962. This radar and another located in Manassas, Virginia, was used in 1962 as part of a missile detection test. The results revealed that the AN/FPS-35 had marginal value for detecting submarine-launched ballistic missiles. In 1963 the search radar was complemented by AN/FPS-26A and an AN/FPS-6 height-finder radar. By the end of 1963 this was a joint-use site. The 648th was deactivated in June 1975.

648th Radar Sq (SAGE): assigned 1 Jan 51 at Mud Pond, PA, assigned to the 503rd AC&W Gp; transferred to the 26th AD 6 Feb 52; moved to Ricketts Glen State Park, PA by 1 Feb 52; transferred to 4710th Def Wg 16 Feb 53; transferred to 4709th Def Wg 30 Jun 53; site redesignated Benton AFS, PA 1 Dec 53; transferred to the 4707th AD Wg 8 Jul 56; transferred to 4622nd AD Wg 18 Oct 56; transferred to Boston ADS 8 Jan 57; transferred to Syracuse ADS ca. 15 Aug 58; redesignated from ACETW Sq to 648th Radar Sq (SAGE) Feb 59; transferred to Boston ADS 4 Sep 63; transferred to 35th AD 1 Apr 66; re-assigned to 21st AD 19 Nov 69; redesignated 648th Radar Sq 1 Feb 74; inactivated 30 Jun 75.

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.