

663 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

663 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

Discontinued, 1 Jun 1961

STATIONS

McGhee Tyson Airport, TN

Marysville, TN, Nov 1951

Cross Mountain, (later Lake City AFS) TN, Mar 1952

ASSIGNMENTS

541st Fighter Group

30th Air Division, 6 Feb 1952

35th Air Division, 5 Aug 1952

58th Air Division, 1 Mar 1968

35th Air Division, 1 Sep 1958

32nd Air Division, 15 Nov 1958

COMMANDERS

Maj Israel D Siegel, #1957

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 663d Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, at Lake City Air Force Station, is located seven miles from Lake City, Tenn., and thirty miles from Knoxville.

This is a "split-site" with the administrative section at the base of the mountain and the operations area atop Cross Mountain. But this arrangement becomes extremely unique in the entire ADC since operations personnel must be transported by means of a cable tram-car which operates between the two areas. Very few people can make claim to a 22 minute mountain cable car ride which is their transportation to and from work.

Because of its strategic location near the heart of the Atomic Energy Commission at Oak Ridge, and approximate to Norris Dam, the largest in TVA, the mission of the site becomes even more vital.

Lake City AFS, TN

Latitude: 36-11-54 N, Longitude: 084-13-50 W

Call Sign(s): Twig, Sweet Sue

P-42 663 Lake City AFS, TN AN/CPS-6B; FPS-10 (2); FPS-6 Jun-
52 01-Jun-61 Radar site was located on the summit of Cross Mountain, west of town
of Lake City, near Briceville. A tramway was used to reach the mountain top.

In June 1952 the 663rd AC&W Squadron began operating a pair of AN/CPS-6B and AN/FPS-10 radars from this peak, allowing for the deactivation of L-47 at McGhee Tyson Airport. An AN/FPS-6 height-finder radar was added in 1958. One AN/FPS-10 was removed in 1959. This site ceased operations on 1 June 1961 due to budget constraints.

In the late 1940's, the Federal government decided that an early warning station was needed in case of enemy attack on Oak Ridge. A radar station was built on top of Cross Mountain. U.S. Air Force barracks were built at the base of Cross Mountain. A 10,000-foot long tramway was built to

move men from the barracks to the radar station.

Cross Mountain Summit. After the radar station opened in 1951, the area suffered a drought and some folks blamed it on the new radar station. Military cutbacks closed the radar station because it was found to be too high in elevation (3500 feet) to detect low flying aircraft.

Construction began in 1950 and in 1951, the 663rd Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron moved into new military installation on Cross Mountain above Briceville.

The base was designed to accommodate many more than the 365 men living on the main base. The radar installation sitting atop the mountain was nearly 1000 feet higher in elevation. Men moved to and from the installation by way of a 10,000 foot tramway.

The 663rd had an effect on the area economy. A number of jobs were made available during the construction. Area merchants benefited from the 365 men spending their pay in Briceville and Lake City. To prove this point, the base would occasionally pay the men with two dollar bills.

After a rocky start, even blaming such things as a drought on the radar, the base was finally accepted. A number of the servicemen found brides among the local girls. A few returned to this area to live after they left the air force.

The radar was doomed from the start. It was too high to pick up low flying aircraft, and lower units picked up too much "ground clutter" from surrounding mountains to be effective.

During the 1950's cutbacks in military spending caused the closing of a number of small, limited value bases around the country, including the one at Briceville. The unit evacuated Cross Mountain, the base was dismantled and the land sold.

663rd AW41 Squadron: assigned 1 Jan 51 at McGhee-Tyson Airport, TN as the 541st Group; moved to National Guard Armory, Marysville, TN in Nov 51; transferred to 30th Air Division 6 Feb 52; moved to permanent site on Cross Mtn, TN in Mar 52; transferred to 35th Air Division 5 Aug 52; site redesignated to Lake City AFS, TN 1 Dec 53; transferred to 58th Air Division 1 Mar 56; transferred to 35th Air Division 1 Sep 58; transferred to 32nd Air Division 15 Nov 58; discontinued 1 Jun 61.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *58 Air Division (Defense) Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH. 1957.*