

781 RADAR SQUADRON (SAGE)



MISSION

LINEAGE

781 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron
Redesignated 781 Radar Squadron (SAGE)

STATIONS

Custer AFS, MI

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

781 Custer AFS, MI FPS-3/-20/-66; CPS-4; FPS-4; FPS-6; FPS-6A FPS-66; FPS-6; FPS-6A; FPS-26A Apr-52 25-Jun-65 Site located just north of Fort Custer, on "Fort Custer Hill." Cantonment and housing areas shared with HQ Detroit ADS (Fort Custer, SAGE DC-6).

History of Custer AFS, MI

This site began as a "Lashup-Permanent" radar site operating an AN/TPS-1B in 1951. The AN/TPS-1B was installed 17 May 1951, and was declared operational on 30 Nov 1951. The 781st AC&W Squadron began operating AN/FPS-3 (installed on 7 Dec 1951) and AN/CPS-4 radars at this site as of April 1952. An AN/FPS-4 replaced the AN/CPS-4 in 1956, and an AN/FPS-6 superseded this unit two years later. Also in 1958 an AN/FPS-20 replaced the AN/FPS-3 search radar. This radar was upgraded to an AN/FPS-66 in 1961. A second height-finder radar, AN/FPS-6A, was installed in 1959. Also in 1959, Custer AFS joined the SAGE system. An AN/FPS-26A height-finder radar was installed in mid 1963. The Air Force deactivated the 781st Radar Squadron (SAGE) on 25 June 1965.

781st Radar Sq (SAGE): activated 16 Apr 51 at Ft. Custer, MI, assigned to 541st AC&W Gp; transferred to 30th AD 6 Feb 52; transferred to 4706th Def Wg 16 Feb 53; transferred to 4708th Def Wg in Nov 53; transferred to 30th AD 8 Jul 56; site redesignated to Custer AFS, MI in Summer 56; transferred to Detroit ADS 1 Apr 59; redesignated from ACF4W Sq to 781st Radar Sq (SAGE) 1 Sep 59; discontinued 25 Jun 65.

On Washington's birthday 1951, one officer and ten airmen were sent to Fort Custer on detached duty from the 30th AD (D), Selfridge AFB, MI. Their mission was to make ready for occupancy two barracks and an orderly room in the 1600 (across from post HQ).

During the months that followed, AF personnel arrived from Selfridge AFB in almost a continuous stream. As the small organization grew, personnel were assigned specific duties and the multiple function of an ACWS began taking form.

Meanwhile civilian construction teams were busily preparing the site for operation. To anyone except those members of the small Air Force detachment their purpose was closely guarded secret.

Then on 17 Apr 1951 the organizational was officially designated as the 781 ACWS and was placed the command of Cpt Edward H. Mooring who had been project officer during the planning stages.

The squadron underwent rapid expansion during the months that followed. Additional barracks were procured for housing personnel, a day room was organized and the dining hall was completely renovated. The site was soon in operation and the squadron settle down to a rugged round the clock work day utilizing a complex but effective system of crew rotation.

On 22 Oct 1951, LTC Lauren A. Howard assumed command of the squadron. Overseas quota began taking many of the original squadron personnel, necessitating a stopped up on the job

training program both in administration and technical fields to fill the many vacancies.

Despite such difficulties the mission of the squadron was sustained without interruption and the airmen even found time enough to participate in an extensive sport program.

Major Eldor H. Schueler our present commanding officer was elevated to that position on 23 Jun 1952. He was immediately faced with the difficulty of relocating the squadron area since the Army Separation center required the 1600 block for further expansion.

Our present area, located in the extreme eastern portion of the fort was finally selected and during the summer and early fall of 1952, the squadron made the necessary preparations to move. On 26 Nov newly painted administrative offices and barracks were ready for occupancy and the squadron officially transferred to its present residence.

MICHIGAN

LP-67/P -67/Z-67 - Fort Custer/Custer

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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