

794 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

794 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron
Activated, 8 Dec 1952

STATIONS

Cape Newenham, AK

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The radar sites were operated and maintained by aircraft control and warning squadrons. The 626th (Fire Island) was activated 17 November 1950. It was followed by the activation of the following squadrons on 8 December 1952: 705th (King Salmon), 708th (Indian Mountain), 710th (Tin City), 711th (Cape Lisburne), 712th (Northeast Cape), 717th (Tatalina), 719th (Spar-revohn), 794th (Cape Newenham), and 795th (Cape Romanzof). The 743rd (Campion) and 744th (Murphy Dome) were activated 1 February 1953. They replaced two National Guard units—the 142nd and 143rd Aircraft Control and Warning Squadrons.

Other aircraft control and warning squadrons were activated to maintain and operate the radar sites that came on line after the initial 12. The 720th (Middleton Island) was activated 8 September 1955, the 748th (Kotzebue) and 709th (Fort Yukon) on 8 January 1957, the 713th (Bethel) and 793rd (Ohlson Mountain) on 8 February, and the 718th (Unalakleet) in April 1957.

794 Cape Newenham AFS, AK FPS-3 / FPS-20A; FPS-87A FPS-93; FPS-117 Apr-
54 Now termed a Long-Range Radar Site (LRRS). In 1984, the AN/FPS-117
minimally attended radar was installed

794th AC&W Sq., Cape Newenham. Cape Newenham AFS, home of the 794th AC&W Sq., is on a point of land in southwestern Alaska overlooking the Bering Sea. Rain and fog dominate the summer weather picture, but mild winters balance these conditions. The record low on the Cape is 15 below zero; however, the winds occasionally reach 100 miles per hour.

Boating and hiking are the most popular summer activities, fishing is good during the summer salmon runs, and the site also keeps a campground. Mail usually arrives twice a week.

Cape Newenham Air Force Station is located on the south Bering Sea coast 385 miles southwest of Elmendorf AFB. The 2,359-acre site was one of the ten original aircraft control and warning sites constructed as part of the establishment of a permanent air defense system in Alaska. It is named after the point of land on which it is located.

A contract to build the coastal radar surveillance site was awarded to Haddock Engineers, Ltd., on 13 June 1950. The contractor, who began work on 12 September, experienced construction difficulties. The site became operational in April 1954, two years behind schedule. A new riblet type tramway was installed in 1962.

Construction of a composite building was begun in late 1975. The \$11.7 million facility was accepted by the Alaska District Corps of Engineers in October 1980. However, occupancy was delayed until July 1981 because of safety deficiencies and changes in design.

Cape Newenham AFS was originally equipped with an AN/FPS-3 Search Radar which was later modified as the AN/FPS-93A Search Radar. An AN/FYQ-9 Semiautomatic Data Processing and Display System was installed and became operational in July 1965, eliminating the need to pass track data manually.

Cape Newenham was initially maintained by Detachment F-5, 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group. In 1952, AAC decided to upgrade the detachments to squadrons. The 794th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was activated on 8 December 1952 with 107 military personnel authorized. However, due to delays in construction, the squadron operated at limited manning until the site became operational. Following the inactivation of the 531st on 13 April 1953, the squadron was assigned to various headquarters, including AAC. On 15 October 1977, the squadron was reassigned from Headquarters, AAC to the 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group upon the reactivation of the latter. The Group was redesignated the 11th Tactical Control Group on 1 July 1981.

Cape Newenham AFS has been resupplied annually since 1950 by sealift. Bulk cargo is delivered across the beach in landing craft, while fuel is pumped ashore to storage tanks. It is part of the annual Cool Barge remote resupply operations originally known as Mona Lisa. The name was changed to Cool Barge in 1967. A runway was built in 1952 to facilitate the transportation of personnel and critical cargo.

Initially, communications were provided by a high frequency radio system which proved unreliable because of atmospheric disturbances. Various other means were explored, and AAC decided to construct the White Alice Communications System, a system of Air Force-owned tropospheric scatter and microwave radio relay sites. The Cape Newenham site became operational in December 1957. It was inactivated on 30 March 1979 and replaced with an Alascom-owned satellite earth terminal as part of an overall Air Force plan to divest itself of the obsolete White Alice System and replace it with a commercial satellite communications system.

On 1 October 1977, AAC, after a trial period, implemented a site support contract with RCA Services as part of an Air Force-wide effort to reduce remote tours. Eighty military positions were deleted. The remaining 14 were primarily in operations.

Several programs to modernize the Alaskan radar systems have affected Cape Newenham. Installation of Joint Surveillance System equipment was completed in 1982, enabling radar and beacon data to be transmitted via satellite to the Elmendorf Region Operations Control Center (ROCC). The ROCC achieved initial operational capability on 15 June 1983, and the 794th ACWS was inactivated on 1 November 1983. At this time Cape Newenham was redesignated as a Long Range Radar Site. This left only contractor personnel to maintain the site radar. Reduction of military personnel, through attrition, had begun in March 1983. The composite building was modified to house personnel and equipment, and the other facilities were disposed of. After an AN/FPS-117 Minimally Attended Radar (MAR) became operational on 16 October 1984, Cape Newenham required only a few contractor maintenance personnel for continued operation.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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