# WESTERN AIR DEFENSE SECTOR


**MISSION**

**LINEAGE**
Northwest Air Defense Sector
Western Air Defense Sector

**STATIONS**
McChord AFB, WA

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**COMMANDERS**
Col T.C. Sokol, #1992

**HONORS**
**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**



**MOTTO**

**OPERATIONS**

11/24/2006 With the snip of a fiber-optic ribbon, the Western Air Defense Sector opened its multi-million dollar operations center here Nov. 20. The opening culminated an 18-month effort that now stands WADS as a significant, technically advanced deterrent against asymmetrical threats over a significant portion of America's airspace. "This is an important technological breakthrough that definitely enhances our nation's defense," said Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, Washington State's adjutant general. "By incorporating the latest technologies and infrastructure WADS now protects the airspace over roughly 72 percent of the country. "And we have the capability to cover the National Capitol Region and eastern United States if the call arises," he said. Gone are the green-swept scopes and darkened control rooms reminiscent of the Cold War. The refurbished Sector Operations Control Center enjoins state-of-the-art air defense systems and cutting-edge computer technology to significantly increase surveillance and identification capabilities, and better protect the nation's airways from intrusion and attack. The SOCC also incorporates a newly-developed situational awareness system that gives WADS unprecedented tools and technology to assist state and local responders in dealing with natural disasters. The upgrade included renovation of a 6,300-square-foot WADS operations floor and the installation of more than 22 miles of fiber-optic cable and 10 miles of category 5 copper cables, at a cost of more than $1.8 million. According to General Lowenberg, the installation efforts paralleled the remarkable technology. "This was quite an engineering feat... to make massive changes in a building with 10-inch reinforced concrete floors, supported by 15-inch outside walls and a grid of three-foot square concrete columns," he said. The original facility, built in 1958, housed a node of the nationwide Semi-Automatic Ground Environment, or SAGE, system that revolutionized air defense in the 1960s. According to the Federation of American Scientists, SAGE's automatic data-processing capability replaced manual systems in observing, plotting and transmitting information, and assigning targets for air defense weapons. Its revolutionary integrated radar and computer technology also contributed significantly to the development of civilian air traffic control systems. Today, the SOCC employs 27 NORAD contingency suites, and 31 state-of-the-art Battle Control System-Fixed, or BCS-F, displays. A next-generation air sovereignty system, BCS-F fuses data from airborne, ground and naval elements and civil air traffic sensors into an integrated air picture.

This allows commanders to surveil and monitor the airspace above, beyond and within U.S. and Canadian borders, providing a major component for homeland defense.

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USAF Unit Histories
Created: 27 Feb 2023
Updated:

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