

639 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

639 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

36 Radar - Lowther (ON) CFS Lowther traces its lineage back to the USAF's 639th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron. The 639th AC&W Squadron was originally formed on 9 August 1956 at Truax Field, Madison, Wisconsin for service and eventually moved to the newly constructed radar site at Lowther, Ontario. This site was designated site M-1 19 since it was considered to be a "mobile" radar unit. This was later changed to C-119.

On 28 May 1957, the 639th AC&W Sqn moved to Lowther and by 15 July, they had installed the radars. When the 639th became operational in 1958, they operated the AN/MPS-7 Search radar and the AN/MPS-14 Height Finder radar. In 1960, the Squadron received the new AN/FPS-26 Height Finder and AN/FPS-27 Search radars.

The RCAF took over the station on 1 July 1963 and renamed the unit 26 Radar Squadron, RCAF Station Lowther, Ontario. Happily for the RCAF personnel, the 639th had become SAGE-operational in March 1963, so they were spared the majority of the testing required at each site as the system was brought on-line. Also, just prior to the hand-over, the station began to report to North Bay with the Long Range Radar providing data on the airspace north of the Great Lakes. This was carried out in conjunction with Lowther's sister radar squadrons located at Sioux Lookout and Falconbridge. Prior to sending data to North Bay, the squadron had transmitted their data to the Sault Ste. Marie Air Defence Sector, later renamed 23rd NORAD Region, at Duluth, Minnesota.

On 5 October 1967, 36 Radar Squadron was renamed as CFS Lowther. The radars ceased to be operational on 31 March 1987 and CFS Lowther was closed out in August of that same year.

CFS Lowther Ontario (Site C-119) was located on Highway 11, almost halfway between the towns of Kapuskasing and Hearst in the James Bay region, District of Cochrane. The station was built by the Americans in 1957 and was home to the 639th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron. The station was SAGE-capable in March 1963, and turned over the RCAF on 1 July of the same year. Now known as RCAF Station Lowther, 36 Radar Squadron began to provide continuous radar coverage as part of the 23rd NORAD Region. Lowther assumed new responsibilities as of January 1964, when it took on a Back Up Interceptor Control (BUIC) role.

As a result of the unification of Canada's three branches of the military 36 Radar Squadron Lowther became CFS Lowther effective August 1967. The long range radar unit fell under control of the Canadian NORAD Region's Canada East ROCC, which became operational by August 1984. CFS Lowther ceased operations on 1 April 1987.

Lowther AS, ON, CN

M-119 C-119 R-12 639 Lowther AS, ON, CN MPS-7; FPS-4, MPS-14 FPS-27; FPS-6B, FPS-26A Jul-58 1 Jul 63*. 1 Apr 87 Originally activated 8 Dec 1956 at Truax Field, WI;

USAF site, transferred to RCAF in July 1963; final Pinetree Line site to be transferred

639th ACFW Squadron: activated in Dec 56 at Truax Field, WI, as the 37th Air Division; moved to Lowther A.S., Ontario, Canada in Summer 57; transferred to 64th Air Division ca.

15 Nov 58; transferred to 30th Air Division ca. 1 Apr 59; transferred to Sault Ste Marie ADS on 1 Apr 60; discontinued 1 Jul 63.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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