

705 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

705 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

Activated, 8 Dec 1952

Inactivated,

STATIONS

King Salmon, AK

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

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).

705 King Salmon AFS, AK FPS-3 / FPS-20A; FPS-6, CPS-5 (Bkup), FPS-6B FPS-93A; FPS-117 Nov-51 Now termed a Long Range Radar Site (LRRS). The AN/FPS-117 radar was installed at King Salmon in 1982, the first site to get the new radar under SEEK IGLOO. Base first known as Naknek AF Aux Field.

King Salmon Airport began as a satellite field for the Army Air Forces in World War II. Built close to the Naknek River and 15 miles upstream from the village of the same name, the site was named Naknek Army Air Field. Construction began on 1 July 1942 and continued until 22 September 1943 when the physical area of the base was deemed complete. However, the army continued improving the field through 1944 with the inclusion of paved airstrips. Naknek supported operations throughout Alaska, but especially the Alaska-Siberia aircraft ferry route.

The field truly came into its own during the Cold War. It 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 during the early 1950s. The airfield itself was transferred to the Civil Aeronautics Authority (the forerunner of the Federal Aviation Administration) after the war, who in turn transferred it to the State of Alaska following statehood in 1959. The airfield was renamed King Salmon Air Station in 1954. The Alaskan Air Command (later, 11th Air Force) began using King Salmon Airport as a forward operating base in 1948 when F-80s from the 57th Fighter Wing were

deployed there on alert. The F-80s were in turn replaced by F-94s, F-89s, F-102s and F-4Es. The 21st TFW began performing alert with F-15 Eagles in October 1982. This mission was assumed by the 3rd Wing when it transferred to Alaska in December 1991.

As a forward operating base, operations at King Salmon remained brisk throughout the entire Cold War era--the Air Force accomplishing more than 100 intercepts of Soviet aircraft with tracks toward Alaska since 1964. In 1994, as defense cutbacks became the rule, King Salmon was slated to close as an active forward operating location and air station. Third Wing F-15s stood their last full-time alert at King Salmon in April, departing for Elmendorf AFB on 29 April. The airport reverted to a contractor-maintained contingency field on 1 October 1994, all active duty personnel having departed 30 September.

The radar site at King Salmon has an extensive history. The Air Force awarded a contract to construct the King Salmon aircraft control and warning radar site to Gaasland & Company on 12 April 1950. Construction began shortly afterward and was completed the following year at a cost of approximately \$3,667,372.

King Salmon became operational as a ground controlled intercept site in November 1951. It converted to an air defense direction center (later renamed NORAD Control Center) on 4 March 1953, and exercised control over Cape Newenham AFS and Cape Romanzof AFS. Control of the other aircraft control and warning sites in the southern sector was transferred to King Salmon when the Fire Island NORAD Control Center was closed in July 1969.

Initially, the King Salmon aircraft control and warning site was maintained and operated by Detachment F-3, 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group. In 1952, AAC decided to upgrade all the aircraft control and warning detachments to squadrons. The 705th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was activated on 8 December 1952 and assigned to the 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group. Following the Group's inactivation on 13 April 1953, the squadron was assigned to various other headquarters, including AAC. On 15 November 1977, the squadron was reassigned to the 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group when the latter was reactivated at Elmendorf AFB. The Group was redesignated the 11th Tactical Control Group on 1 July 1981.

Communications were initially provided by a high frequency radio system which proved unreliable because of atmospheric disturbances. The Alaskan Air Command, after investigating various options, decided to build the White Alice Communications System, a system of Air Force-owned tropospheric scatter and microwave radio relay sites. The system was completed in 1958. The King Salmon site was activated on 25 May 1957. It was inactivated on 3 August 1979, and replaced by an Alascom owned and operated satellite earth terminal as part of an Air Force plan to divest itself of the obsolete White Alice Communications System and transfer the responsibility to a commercial firm.

On 1 October 1977, AAC, after a trial period, implemented a base support contract with RCA Services as part of an Air Force-wide effort to reduce remote tours. Twenty-eight positions were eliminated. The remaining 63 positions were primarily in operations.

King Salmon was the first radar site to receive a new AN/FPS-117 minimally attended radar under AAC's Seek Igloo program. The unit, a prototype version, was tested at King Salmon in September 1982, then placed in 24-hour operation in December. It was designed to transmit aircraft tracking data via satellite to the Elmendorf Region Operations Control Center, which reached initial operational capability on 15 June 1983. No longer needed, the 705 ACWS was inactivated on 1 November 1983. Because of its proximity to King Salmon Airport, only two contractor maintenance and support personnel were needed to maintain the radar system.

On 27 January 1992, the 11th Air Control Wing (11 ACW) assumed responsibility for the 643d Support Squadron and the base at King Salmon Airport. This remained in effect until the cutbacks of 1994 caused King Salmon's closure--the 11 ACW itself inactivated at Elmendorf on 1 July 1994.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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