

ALMADEN AFS, CALIFORNIA
(PIN AFSA, AFSC, AFSE, AFUX)

HISTORY

The 682nd Radar Squadron was assigned an operational location at Almaden Air Force Station, New Almaden, California on 24 July 1957. The squadron was officially transferred to Almaden Air Force Station on the peak of 3,500 foot Mt. Umunhum in the Santa Cruz Mountains, on 7 October 1957 and became operational on 21 March 1958 as part of the San Francisco Air Defense Sector. The necessary land was acquired by Fee purchase, leasing agreement and perpetual easement. The initial mission equipment consisted of the FPS-20 search and MPS-14 height finder radar. In May 1958, the MPS-14 was moved to a more suitable location and the FPS-90 height finder radar was added. An air-to-ground radio transmitter-receiver facility was added in May 1962 and the FPS-20 tower was moved in November of that year. The FPS-24 search radar was installed at this time. A digital data computer, AN/FST-2B, was installed in 1961. After operating as a North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Ground Control Intercept site in 1963, the 682nd Radar Squadron reverted to a Long Range Radar (LRR) squadron in April 1966 and became part of the 26th Air Division headquartered at Adair Air Force Station, Oregon under the 4th Air Force, Hamilton Air Force Base, California. On 1 July 1968, the squadron was incorporated into the Back-Up Intercept Control (BUIC) Configuration. The squadron's mission again reverted to LRR in March 1969; and on 15 September 1969, the squadron went under the operational control of the 27th Air Division, Luke AFB, Arizona. A reconfiguration of NORAD on 14 November 1969 changed the designation of the parent Air Division to the 26th Air Division, as well as the 26th NORAD Region. An FYQ-47 replaced the AN/FST-2B May 1972. On 1 July 1973, the support base was changed to 60th ABG, Travis Air Force Base, California. On 1 October 1979, the MAJCOM was changed from ADCOM to ADTAC.

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ALMADEN AIR FORCE STATION, CALIFORNIA

3. Location: Almaden Air Force Station, including Ground Air Transmitter Receiver (GATR) site, is located about 13 miles south of the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, California. Appendix A includes location maps and a site map of the installation.

4. Site History:

a. General: The 682nd Radar Squadron was assigned an operational location at Almaden Air Force Station, New Almaden, California on 24 Jul 1957. The squadron was officially transferred to Almaden Air Force Station on 07 Oct 1957 and became operational on 21 Mar 1958 as part of the San Francisco Air Defense Sector. The necessary land was acquired by fee purchase, lease agreements and perpetual easements. The initial mission equipment consisted of the FPS-20 search and MPS-14 height finder radar. In May 1958, the MPS-14 was moved to a more suitable location and the FPS-90 height finder radar was added. An air-to-ground radio transmitter-receiver facility was added in May 1962 and the FPS-20 tower was moved on November of that year. The FPS-24 search radar was installed at this time. A digital data computer, AN/FST-2B, was installed in 1961. After operating as a North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Ground control Intercept site in 1963, the 682nd Radar Squadron reverted to a Long Range Radar (LRR) squadron in April 1966 and became part of the 26th Air Division headquartered at Adair Air Force Station, Oregon under the 4th Air Force, Hamilton Air Force Base, California. On July 1968, the squadron was incorporated into the Back-Up Intercept Control (BUIC) Configuration. The squadron's mission again reverted to LRR in March 1969, and on 15 September 1969 the squadron went under the operational control of the 27th Air Division, Luke AFB, Arizona. A reconfiguration of NORAD on 14 November 1969 changed the designation of the parent Air Division to the 26th Air Division, as well as the 26th NORAD Region. AFYQ-47 replaced the AN/FST-2B in May 1972. On 01 July 1973, the support base was changed to

60th ABG, Travis Air Force Base, California. On 01 October 1979, the MAJCOM was changed from ADCOM to ADTAC.

b. Real Estate:

The property for the Almadan Air Force Station was acquired as 48.02 acres by fee simple title, easements over 43.72 acres of land, and leases over 10.66 acres. Approximately 36.08 acres were purchased in 1957 for construction of the main site along with easements over 37.13 acres and leases on 2.31 acres. Additionally, approximately 11.94 acres were purchased in 1962 for the construction of the GATR facility on the Mt. Thayer location along with 6.59 acres of easements and leases of 8.35 acres.

Outgrants of some of the property were made to several parties for installation of equipment and utility rights of way including leases to The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, Civil Air Patrol California Wing, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District during the period of ownership by the Air Force.

On 30 December 1980 AF/LEER forwarded Final Disposal Directive for Almaden Air Force Station, CA to COE/DAEN-REM-C. On 28 June 1982 GSA forwarded GSA Form 1432, Determination of Surplus to USAED, Sacramento (this is GSA formal acceptance of the property for sale). On 01 Oct 1984 funding for protection and maintenance of property was accepted by GSA. On 27 Jan 1986 award of the property was made to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District with closing date set for 28 April 1986.

Escrow closed on 24 April 1986 with property being transferred to Midpeninsula via quitclaim deed.

c. Use: Permanent facilities at the main site were constructed in 1957 for radar equipment along with facilities to support the radar. Facilities included radar tower buildings, operations buildings, electrical power generation facility, fire house, administrative buildings, sewer treatment plant, water pumping facilities, dining facilities, medical facility, automotive and transportation equipment facilities, storage buildings, and family housing units. In 1962 the GATR facilities were added near the summit of Mt. Thayer.

5. Physical Conditions:

The site is an abandoned ADCOM Long Range radar installation with the 26th NORAD Region. It consists of two separate segments: the Almaden Air Force Station (AAFS) atop Mt. Umunhum and the Ground Air Transmitter Receiver (GATR) site, located one mile to the east of the summit of Mt. Thayer. The main installation (36.08 acres) and GATR (11.94 acres) total 48.02 acres on Mt. Umunhum Road, a paved two-lane road providing access from Hicks Road to the summit of Mt. Umunhum. Mt Umunhum Road passes through the center of the Main Installation and branches up to the radar site and down to the family housing area.

The Main Installation is improved with 57 buildings. The radar area accounts for 45 of these buildings, typical of a military radar site with ancillary recreational facilities. The largest building, a five story radar tower, dominates the summit. The total square footage of all the buildings is 72,274.

The Family Housing Area designation occupies 4.3 acres of land, improved with 12 buildings, eight of which are housing structures containing a total of 27 living units with carports. These housing units are in fair, ready to use condition except for utilities and deferred maintenance. Both the housing area and the main installation have related sidewalks, roads, parking, inoperative utility system, and some personal property items such as refrigerators and stoves.

Access to the site is via Mt. Umunhum Road, a paved, two-lane road which was acquired, constructed and maintained by the Federal Government to access the air base site. From the mid-sixties to 1980, the road accommodated the passage of the 100+ employees and residents of the base, as well as supplies and materials to support the base population and operation.

This region of the Santa Cruz Mountains, known as the Sierra Azul Range, is high and rugged, supporting a near wilderness environment within 30 minutes of either downtown Los Gatos or San Jose. The summits of Mt. Umunhum and Mt. Thayer measure 3486 and 3483 feet, respectively.

The site itself has been so heavily developed that little original vegetation remains. The Lexington Reservoir fire of July 1985 burned to the border of the building area on the southwest. The surrounding ridges to the east are covered with a manzanita chaparral community, interspersed with Digger and Knobcone pines. The lower slopes contain pockets of bay trees and madrone in moist gullies. These habitats are attractive to mountain lion, bobcat, fox, coyote, feral pig, deer, rabbit, racoon, rattlesnake, and numerous species of birds.

Water for the site has in the past come from natural springs in the Austrian Gulch, under a lease arrangement with San Jose Water Works. In addition, at the present time, electrical services are disconnected to all but one of the buildings. Services to the remaining buildings were disconnected at the main fuse box several years ago. The sewage disposal system was last inspected in 1981 and is currently considered inoperable. When the system was last inspected, the County Environmental Health Services Department concluded that the system could accommodate a population of up to 225 persons.

The watershed slopes easterly to Guadalupe Creek, northerly to Ricon Creek, and southerly and westerly to Lake Elzman via Hooker Gulch and Austrian Gulch. Some 3000 acres of watershed lands in the Los Gatos Creek area, managed by the San Jose Water Works Company, lie in close proximity to the southwest. The Los Gatos and Maymen soil type is found in the 50% and 75% slopes. The ridge top location is underlain by some of the most stable bedrock in Santa Clara County.