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THE WEAPONS TRAINING CENTERS:
STATUS AND REQUIREMENTS

Evaluation of the Yuma Center

Following his inspection of the Yuma weapons center in August 1954, the Air Force Inspector General declared that, "The 4750th Training Wing was not capable of supporting the air-to-air training requirements of the Air Defense Command."^{1*} Among the reasons he gave for making this analysis were inadequate tow equipment and lack of suitable chase aircraft. These deficiencies were discussed in detail in Chapter Five. Other reasons which he listed were inadequate maintenance facilities, paucity of skilled maintenance personnel, insufficient fixed base facilities, and a too small rocket impact area for four squadrons.

These conditions were already known to ADC and programmed action or requests for action, if approved, would take care of these deficiencies. Shop and hangar facilities provided for in the Fiscal Year 1956 Public Works Program, plus facilities

* The mission of the 4750th at the time of this inspection was as follows: a. To develop and conduct a weapons training program; b. To administer, train, and equip assigned units and personnel; and c. To develop standard tactics and techniques for full employment of the Air Defense Command weapons system. On 29 October 1954, to the above were added the requirements to assist appropriate agencies in the development of equipment pertinent to ADC and to recommend maintenance procedures and techniques. For source, see reference note number one.

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programmed earlier, were expected to provide adequate maintenance facilities.² On-the-job course outlines for training of maintenance personnel were available to the 4750th Training Wing and renewed emphasis was being placed on the OJT program. The number of skilled aircraft maintenance personnel was below command average, but it was being brought up to the command level. Any manning shortages were to be adjusted in accordance with the latest workload.

The USAF Inspector reported that base facilities were supporting two squadrons and when augmented by programmed construction should be able to support three squadrons, but that more housing than programmed was needed for four squadrons. ADC replied that two additional 133-man dormitories had been included in the Fiscal Year 1956 Public Works Program, but that these had been deleted by USAF because the Air Force program showed only a three squadron mission for Yuma.³ Later, a four squadron mission was accepted by USAF. The requirement for two more dormitories was to be presented again.

As early as August 1953, personnel at Yuma had seen that the range area would be too small.⁴ They sent a request to ADC, which the latter forwarded to USAF, for permission to fly over an adjacent area of Mexico. There was to be no firing over this area, but it was to provide maneuvering room for the interceptors. With this extra space, additional tow ships could be put on the range in the areas which, without the Mexican space, had to be used for positioning the interceptors.

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The Second Weapons Training Center

Four squadrons were the maximum that could be accommodated at the Yuma center. The range and the base could not be expanded further. To reach even the minimum level of combat proficiency, each squadron had to receive one month per year of centralized rocketry training. When the Yuma center reached its full capacity of four squadrons, only forty-eight could train there at the very most. This would be the total if four squadrons went every month. However, interruptions in training caused by lags between units, holidays, exercises, and the annual weapons meet made it impossible to train more than forty squadrons each year. ADC was programmed for sixty-nine squadrons. When this strength was reached, with only the Yuma center, twenty-nine squadrons would be left over each year.

In order to give all squadrons at least one month training each year, the only solution, obviously, was to build another weapons center. A requirement for a new center, to be available by Fixcal Year 1957, was submitted to USAF in June 1954. Air Force Headquarters approved the request and Buckingham Field, Fort Meyers, Florida, was chosen as the location. While the new installation was being built, ADC acquired the use of ATRC's Moody AFB, Georgia, as an interim center. The seventh of February, 1955 was set as the date for the first squadron to begin training from Moody AFB. Only F-94C and F-89D equipped squadrons were going to be sent to Moody AFB, for the distance to the Gulf of Mexico

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ranges was too great for the F-86D.⁹ To operate the base and support the squadrons in training at Moody AFB, ADC activated, as of 7 January 1955, the 4756th Air Defense Group (Weapons)¹⁰ and the 4756th Air Defense Squadron (Weapons).

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