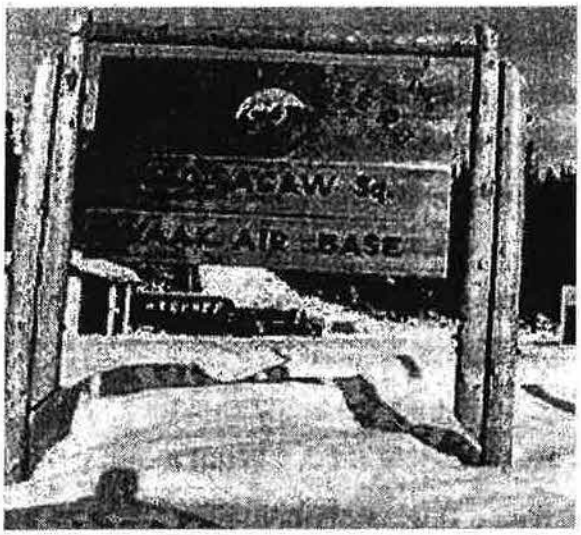
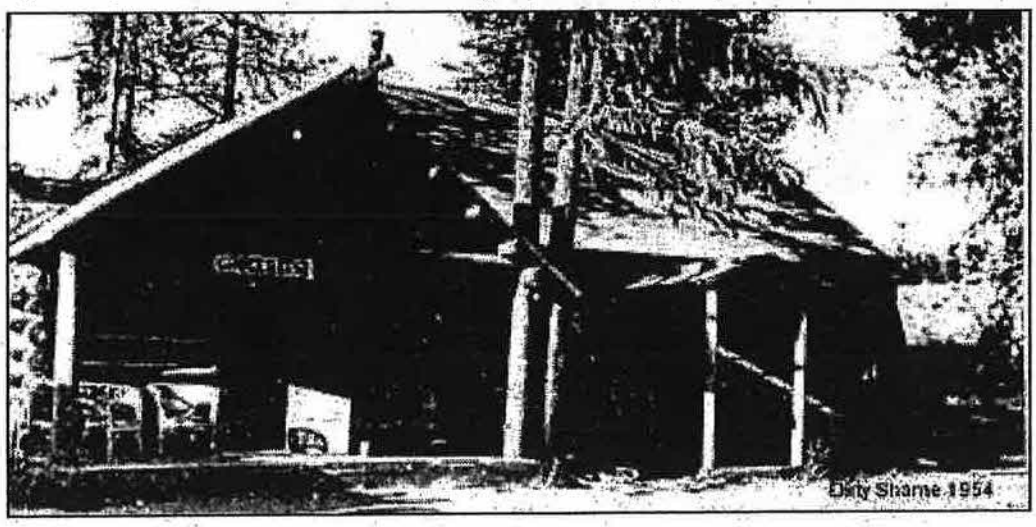


Headquarters
680th AC & W Squadron
Yaak Air Base

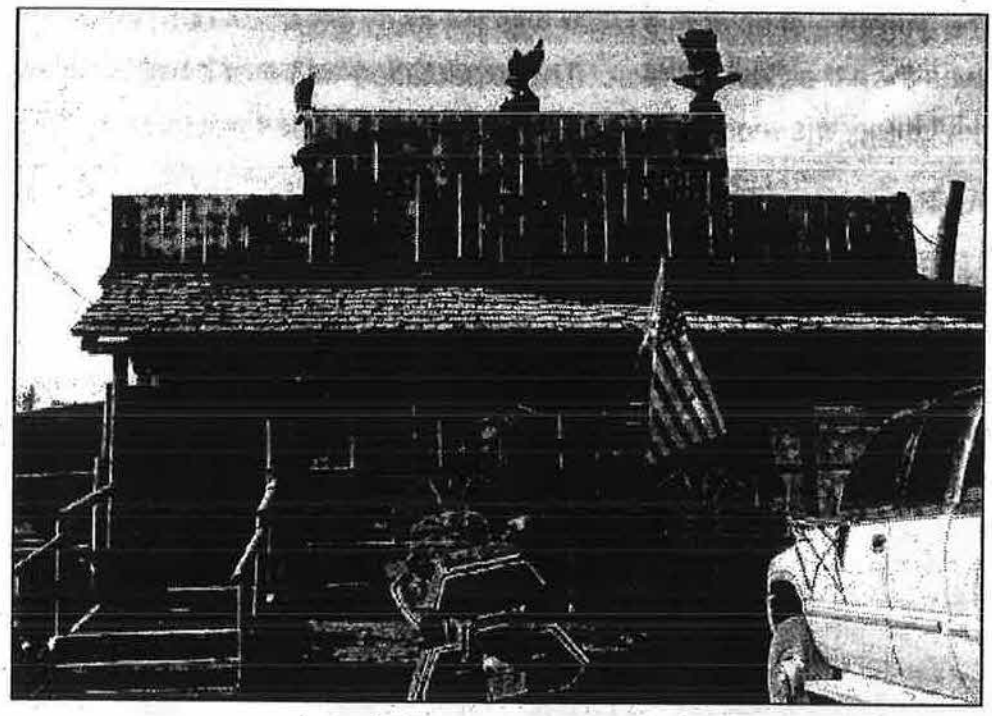
The 680th was first activated in the Spring of 1951. It was the the easternmost site of the 9th Air Division. Primarily, their mission was, "to maintain radar surveillance for the purpose of providing early warning and continuous intelligence of air activity detected to conduct ground controlled interceptions as assigned by the ADDC, and to train continuously for the effective accomplishment of these missions." This site was one of many in a huge network encircling the Continental United States and performing the Air Defense mission. This station was part of the "Dew Line." The purpose of all of this radar was the early detection of bombers launched from what was then the Soviet Union. The expectation was that if bombers were launched by the Soviet Union, the most likely route to the United States would be over the North Pole.

The Yaak Air Base was open from April of 1952 to July 1, 1960, and was located near the junction of South Fork Road 68 and Yaak Highway 508 or better known by locals as the Dirty Shame. The Dirty Shame was the only business in that area during the era of the air base. It was not the same building as today, but was a larger log structure that sold gasoline had a small grocery store and barber chair, restaurant and a tavern.



Dirty Shame 1954

Around 1950 a Mr. (b)(6) bought the land the Dirty Shame resides on from (b)(6) (b)(6) A year after this purchase a crew came in and started construction on the base. It was assumed that Mr. (b)(6) had advance information about the radar base coming. Shortly after construction began, Mr (b)(6) opened the first bar in the Yaak. It was a small log building that was on the property and his bar consisted of two saw horses with some planks placed on them. It seated about 6-8 people and required all customers to check guns and knives. His stock of liquor was very limited and soon depleted. There are two stories on how it got its name, the Dirty Shame. One is that a worker came down from the base after work for a drink and the liquor was all gone. He said, " What a dirty shame." The other is that one of the longtime residents said, "What a dirty shame we have to have a bar up here." Mr. (b)(6) didn't run the bar for long. He sold to (b)(6) (b)(6) from Libby, and they built a nice building and ran it most of the time the base was there. They sold to (b)(6) from California and a year or so after he bought it, it burned down. The base had moved out by then and business had slowed down, so he obtained a small trailer and called it the Dirty Shame Jr. The current building was built from a rumored, "five small structures jammed together," following that fire.



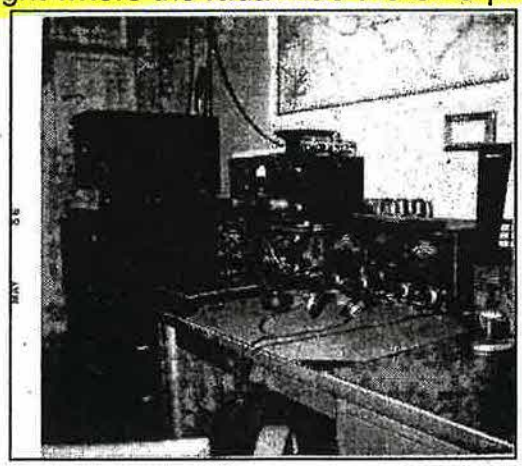
Dirty Shame 2004

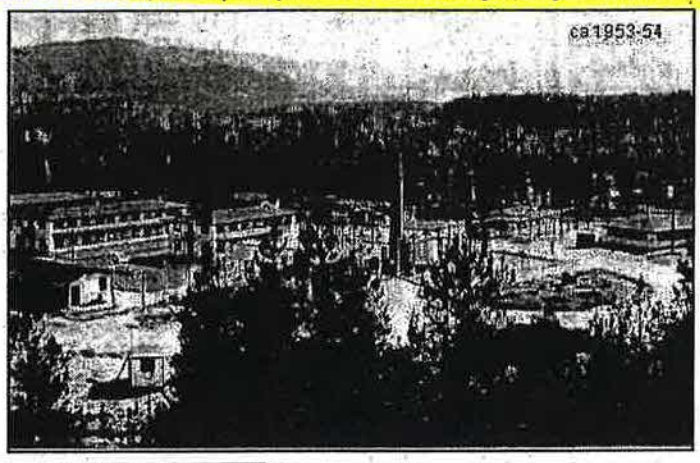
When the base opened in 1951. There were about two to three hundred servicemen and about twenty-five civilian employees. The primary mission of the site was to provide early warning of all air traffic. To do this required men trained as radar operators. To keep the radar operating required men trained in radar maintenance. To communicate the air traffic to Air Force locations where defense decisions could be made required radio equipment and land-lines. Communication equipment required men trained in radio maintenance. Moving the

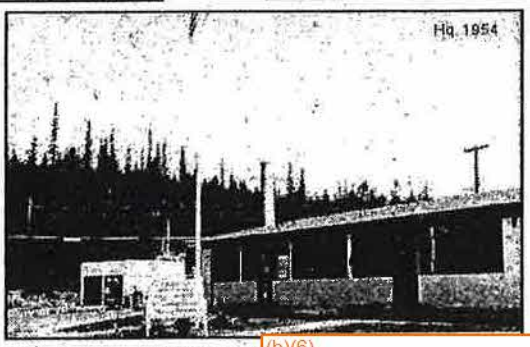
crews from the lower to the upper site and back required a motor pool with drivers and mechanics. All of these people had to eat, which required a mess hall and cooks. Supplies were needed to run all of this, which required trained supply mechanics. Security was an important function and required trained security personnel. To keep track of the entire operation required administration with a commanding officer, first sergeant and administrative technicians. There were many buildings, barracks, a motor pool, supply, mess hall, NCO club and gymnasium, all of which required men trained in building maintenance. There were even medics. The call sign of this remote station was Frosty.

The Yaak Air Base was made up of two locations; a lower site just above the Dirty Shame, and the upper site where the radar was located. Radar crews traveled from the lower site by truck or weapon carriers to the upper site via a switchback road of five miles. Upper site was located at the top of Hensley Mountain and it was here that a radome housed search radar and height finder radar. From South Fork Yaak Rd 68, the radome looked like a huge mushroom.

The Yaak Radar Station also had its share of mystery, on Sept. 1, 1952, Yaak, Montana. 4:45 a.m: Two USAF enlisted men, and three men using AN/FPS-3 radar set. Report visually sighting two small, varicolored lights becoming black silhouettes at dawn, and flying erratically for one hour. The crew at the radar station saw a, "dark, cigar shaped object," right where the radar had the UFO pinpointed. What these people saw is a mystery to this day.



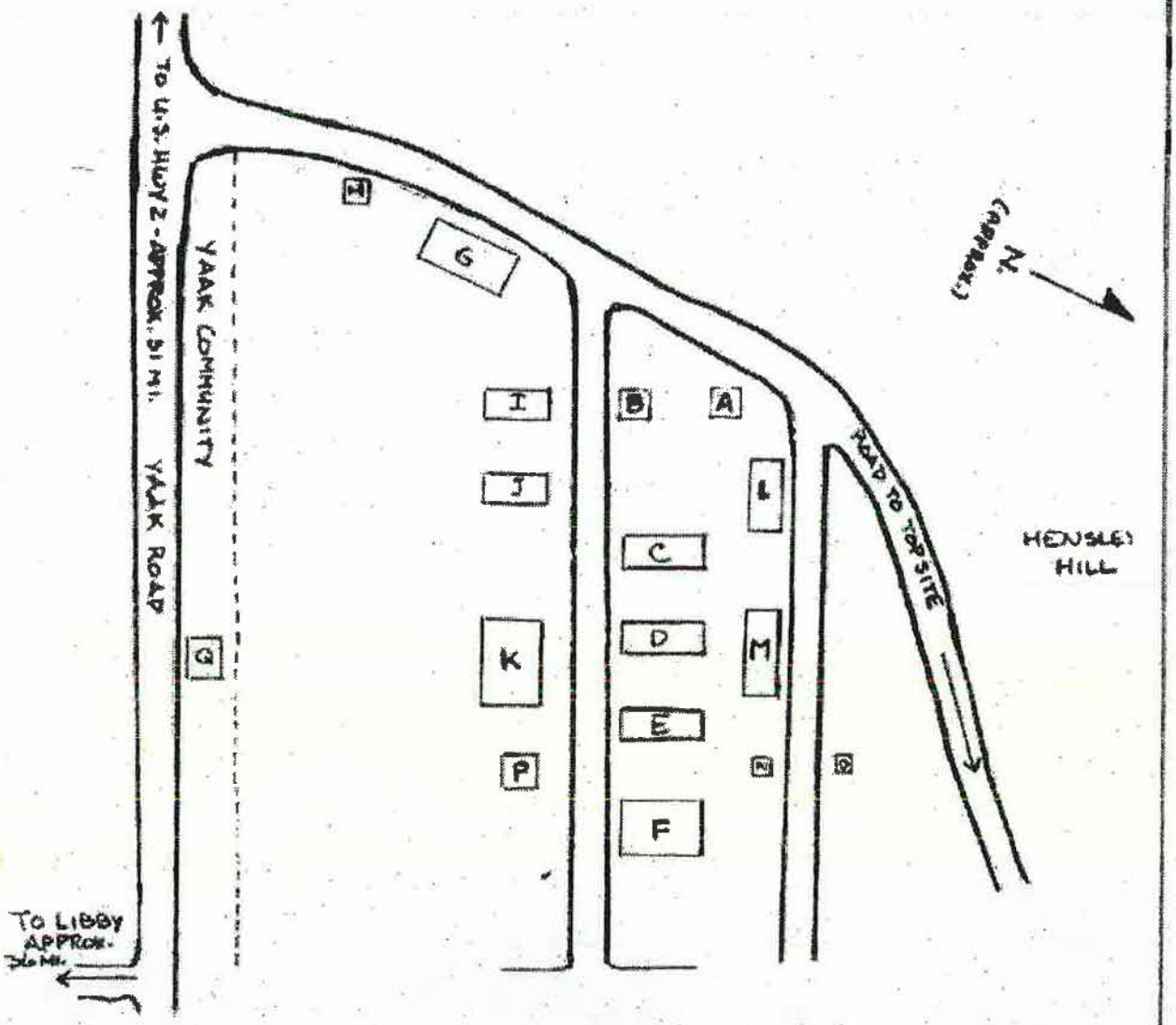




Information collected from memoirs of (b)(6)

(b)(6) and a handbook given to all the new arrivals to the Yaak Air Base.

Websites: www.feldenzer.com, www.radomes.com



A. Motor Pool
B. Steam Plant
C. Bachelor Airman Qtrs. 1
D. Bachelor Airmen Qtrs. 2
E. Bachelor Airmen Qtrs. 3
F. Base Exchange & Rec. Room
G. Administration Building
H. Main Gate - Air Police Shack
I. Bachelor Officer Qtrs. 1
J. Bachelor Officer Qtrs. 2
K. Mess Hall
L. Squadron Supply
M. Install ation Engineer's Ofice
N. MARS Radio Shack
O. Paint Storage
P. Non-Commisioned Officers Club
Q. "The Dirty Shame" bar

Drawing Contributed by Lee Dexter