Including 45th
Anniversary Updates
October 2006

15 October 1961

THULE TRACKING STATION

Operating Location 5
6594th Test Wing
was established with a
truck-mounted antenna

Photo by Thom Foulks

President Kennedy ordered discontinuation of publicizing military space ventures and all further DoD launches became classified.

To avoid inter-service conflicts and eliminate redundancy, the United States Air Force was selected to control and exercise authority over all military space hardware.

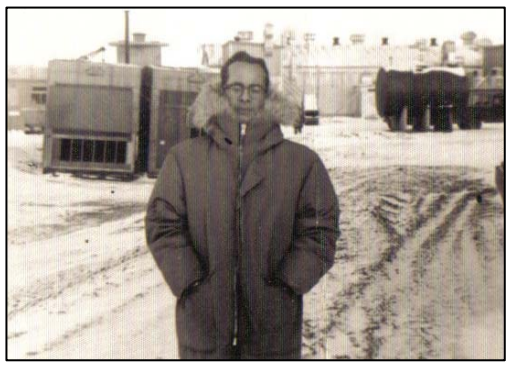
Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) performed its management tasks through Space and Missile Systems Office (SAMSO), headquartered at Los Angeles Air Force Station (LAAFS). The Satellite Test Center (STC) in Sunnyvale placed under SAMSO management.

1961⇨

Radar vans were delivered and installed in an old bomb assembly building. The support structures were completed and the Verlort antenna and the Tri-Helix radar were installed.

A new power transmission line was installed to provide a more reliable power service and to augment the existing diesel generator capability.

⇨



1962 Photo of Bill Herron in front of the tracking station.

1962

30 Mar 1962

Thule Tracking Station declared operational. Operations support began in April.

In 1962 the Air Force Satellite Control Facility (AFSCF) network consisted of seven stations.

Current Data Systems (CDS) comes into use at the control center and the Remote Tracking Stations (RTS).

1963

Story told by Jim Pitts
The door between Rooms 108 and 109 was not originally there. Room 109 was a generator room and during a phase 3 in 1963, the station lost power. They could not go outside to access the generator room. A guy named Harry Bessent said he knew how to fix the problem. He grabbed a fire ax and started chopping a hole through the wall so they could get to the generator to start it. That's how that door came into existence.

1964 - The A-side antenna was built adjacent to the bomb assembly building.

Air Force Satellite Control Facility (AFSCF) established. Commanded by the deputy Director for Satellite Operations, Space Division.

Jan 64 - Multi-Satellite Augmentation Program equipment installed.

Jul-Aug 64 - Van Station Removal completed.

12 Jan 1965

A new access road to TTS was opened for vehicular traffic. The former access road had been more hazardous and was often closed by high winds.

Pre OL-5 Thule

1955 vintage photos donated by Fred Gross

17 Sep 1965

Guam Tracking Station, Mariana Islands, activated.

1964

28 Nov 1964

Administrative and emergency housing addition completed. Facility provided much needed office space, a kitchen, emergency housing, a training classroom, new heating system and flush toilets, plus a three stall garage area.

1965

Facility modifications for the Space-Ground Link Subsystem (SGLS) began at the Vandenberg and Thule Tracking Stations both having been designated “demonstration ground stations”.

1966

Photo taken from Thule Tracking Station towards Thule Air Base and Dundas.

1967

1968 1969 1970 1971

11 Oct 1968

The first Apollo manned flight was launched, three astronauts orbited the earth for 10 days and participated in the first American telecast from space.

21 Dec 1968

The Apollo 8, “Christmas flight”, a six-day mission around the moon was launched.

Photograph Don Fair

29 May 1969

TTS SGLS and Advanced Data System (ADS) equipment installation completed.

Upgrade to TTS included replacement of 4,000 square feet of old wood flooring with new computer floors.

Photograph by Wayne Pearson, TTS ICR from Jun 1972 to New Year's day, 1974 (Mike Manning from SDC)

Photograph by Jack Stephens, GC/AMOW

1972

Sept 1973 – The TTS mission was declassified, simplifying operations considerably.

1973

Photograph by Poul Norgaard

1974

15 Nov 1974

A satellite link was established between TTS and Point Reyes, CA, permitting the deactivation of the Thule submarine cable facility in February 1975.

1975

Photograph by Andy Anderson

21 Oct 1976
Dedicated Data Link Terminal antenna became operational.
Photo taken by TSgt Cheung, Airman magazine

Acquisition of the Consolidated Space Operations Center (CSOC), Colorado Springs, CO authorized.

1976

1977

Photo by Thom Foulks

1978

Telemetry and Command Tracking Station (TCS), Oakhanger, England, brought into AFSCF inventory as a shared U.S./British resource. The station remained under Royal Aerospace Established (RAE) control.

1979

1 Oct 79

Several organizational changes occurred within the AFSCF, including formation of a Directorate of Logistics. Most remote tracking stations dropped “instrumentation squadron” designations and became AFSCF detachments and the parent command, Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO), was re-designated as the Space Division (SD).

Story by Jim Pitts

When we were building the 46 foot antenna, the TDY people were in bldg 731, which was a TDY barracks. We had a refrigerator, but no stove. I went to Frank Repko, the station manager and asked about getting one. He said no, TDY people didn't get stoves. Frank was an avid woodworker, so I asked him to come with me. I took him outside and showed him all this good looking Norwegian Pine that the radome was delivered in. I told him I was going have a barbecue built and use the wood to cook with. Needless to say, before the day was over, we had a stove and he had his pine.

1 Sep 82

Air Force Space Command activated, headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO

1980

In 1980, the B-side 46 foot antenna was built.

Contract awarded to IAM for the Data Systems Modernization (DSM) acquisition to replace CDS.

The Honorable Verne Orr, Secretary of the Air Force, and his wife visited the site.

1981

1982

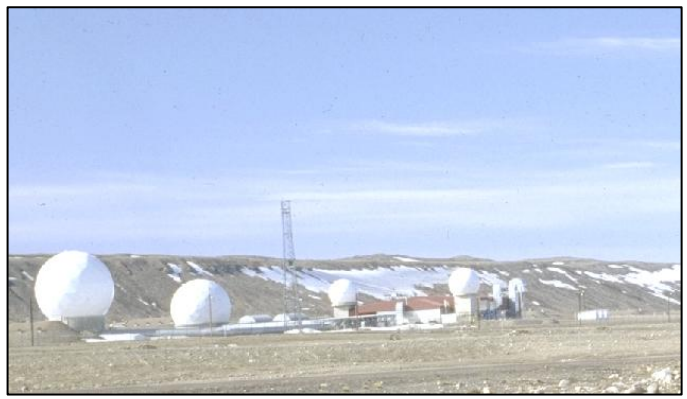


Photo by Thom Foulks

1983

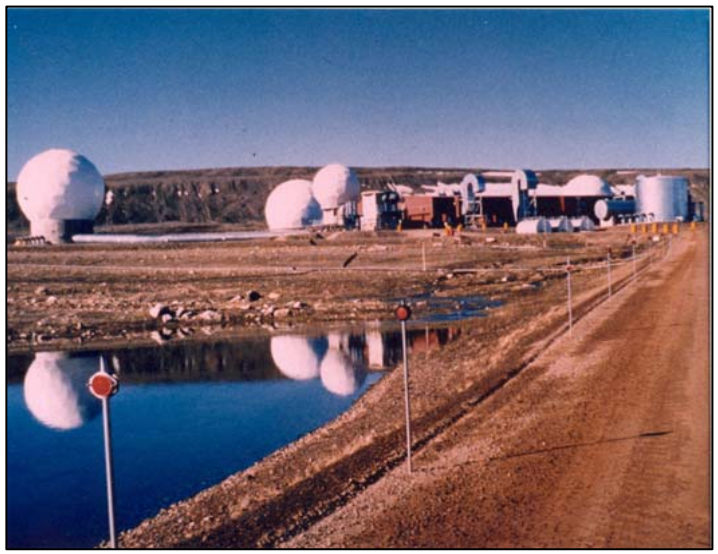
8 Jul 85
2d Space Wing, AFSPACECOM activated to manage satellite operations; headquartered at Peterson AFB, CO.

23 September 1985
United States Space Command established in Colorado Springs, CO with AFSPACECOM as one component of this unified command.

1 October 1985
Falcon Air Force Base, CO declared operational.

Photo Andy Anderson

1984 **1985** **1986** **1987**



Sunnyvale AFS renamed Onizuka Air Force Base (OAFB), honoring the late Lt. Col. Ellison Onizuka, Mission Specialist on the 1986 Challenger shuttle mission.

Joint AFSCF-AFSPACECOM Transition Plan implemented with all assets to AFSPACECOM.

2d Satellite Tracking Group (2STG), established at OAFB and assumes control of Remote Tracking Stations (RTS).

Most AFSCF assets dedicated to support newly established Air Force Satellite Control Network (AFSCN).

In 1987 and early 1988, the first Automated Remote Tracking Station (ARTS) systems in the AFSCN were installed and activated in February 1988.

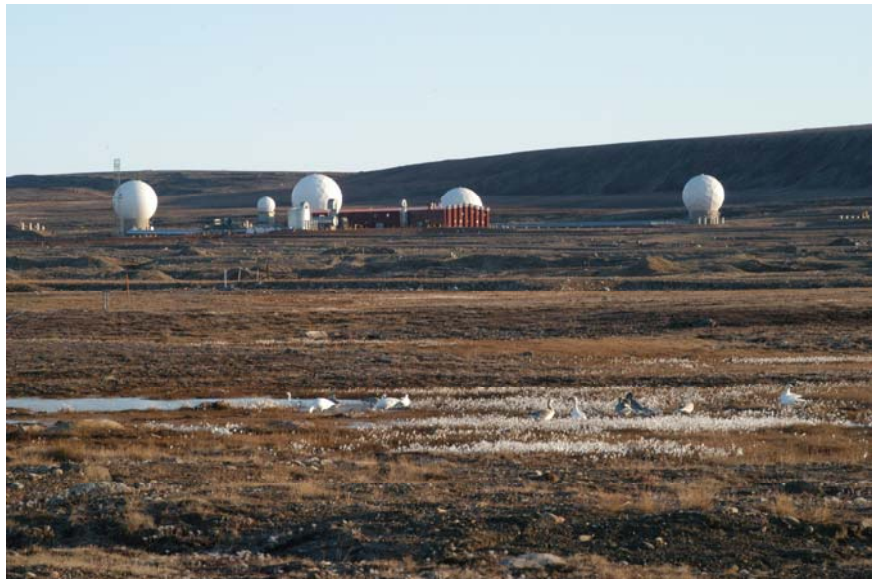
When the TTS C-Side was installed the original plan was to shut down the A-Side but operations tempo kept the A-Side active.

July 1989

Construction completed on the current 18,000 square foot facility consolidated mission support and operations activities in one area.

The first fiber optic cable was installed from the tracking station across the tundra to J-Site.

ARTS formally accepted by Air Force Space Command.



Snow Geese near Det 3 Photo Lars Iversen

1988

April 1988

Testing Completed on ARTS.

AFSCF officially deactivated.

1989

The A-Side 14 foot Antenna was replaced by the 23 foot Antenna.

1990

Loral purchased Ford Aerospace Corporation

1991

April 1991

ARTS II installation began, TTS-B Antenna upgraded to ARTS Configuration. Installation completed in Aug 1991.

In 1993, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) chose POGO as the site for an antenna dedicated to the Total Ozone Mapping Spectrometer (TOMS).

The NASA TOMS antenna was removed from POGO in 1999.

1992

Major reorganization of AFSPACECOM completed. Four composite wings and a Space Group established. 2d Space Wing re-designated as the 50th Space Wing.

2d Satellite Tracking Group at OAFB re-designated the 750th Space Group.

1993

1994

1995

Snow removal in preparation for the New A-Side

In 1996 the old A-side antenna was scheduled to be replaced, but the 1995-96 storm season turned out to be one of the worst on record and pushed the project back a year.


Photo Rick Evans

1 June 1997
Det 3 came under the control of 22 SOPS

In the summer of 1998 the project finally started in earnest, but storms destroyed part of the new antenna and radome on two occasions.

In 1999 installation of the new A-side antenna was finally completed, after the unsuccessful attempts each of the previous two years.

1996

1997

1998

1999

2 June 1999
22 SOPS was realigned under the 50th Operations Group

1 Oct 2000

Harris Technical Services Corporation won the Operational Space Services and Support Contract.

In 2001 the site had four active antenna, with one (the old A-side antenna) held in reserve for use during replacement and modernization of the other antenna systems.

Storm Photo by Phil Eddy, GC/AMOW

2000 **2001** **2002** **2003**

WANIU & Archival installation completed

Operational Switch Replacement upgrade

TSgt Cheung, Airman magazine

View of Det 3 from the Airport Tower
Photograph by Lars Iversen

ALPS was installed in the Radome that had earlier housed the NASA Toms antenna.

Air Force Satellite Control Network (**A**FSCN)

Link **P**rotection **S**ystem **(ALPS)**

2003 ⇨ **2004**

Removal of the 23 Foot A-Side Antenna and Radome June 2003

An October harvest Moon over Det 3
Photograph by Lars Iversen

March 2005 DLT deactivation ceremony as Jared Murrell flips the switch for the last time.

Honeywell's Depot Maintenance Team disassembling the DLT Antenna

Sept/Oct 2006

DLT Antenna Removal

The Radome is still in place and will be removed in the future

The DLT was activated in Oct 1976 and officially deactivated in March 2005. The DLT averaged over 600 satellite contacts annually; a total of over 20,000 satellite supports in its nearly three decades of operation

2005 ⇨ **2006** ⇨

ARTS Console

Thule's Christmas Tree

Radome Maintenance Team Visit
Sept & Oct. 2006

Thanks to everyone who responded to our e-mails and to those who provided historical information for our **40th Anniversary Timeline & the 45th Anniversary Update**

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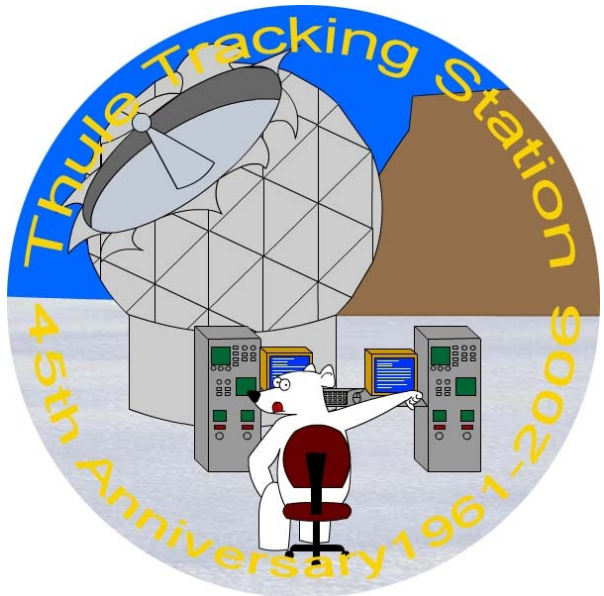
Jim Anderson
Jack Stephens
Mike Cunningham
TSgt John M Baker 50 SW/HO
TSgt Cheung, Airman Magazine



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Scott McElvain
Steffan Winther
Steve Gurican
Storrs Warinner
Walter Hrab
Wayne Pearson
Willie Lagarde
Jared Murrell
Saundra White
Jennifer Tribble
The Blond Female Drummer from the 1977 band “Fame & Fortune”

HARRIS

Timeline prepared by Susan Iversen, TTS Quality Manager

Information included in this timeline has not been verified for accuracy.