

# Highlights

Initial plans called for Navy personnel strength to increase by April 1973, but wrangling in Washington slowed the finalization of take-over plans until the eve of the transfer. The influx, however, failed to meet the earlier requirements for manpower needed to operate the base at an acceptable level. Gradually Armymen from ASA and STRATCOM began leaving Asmara and, on June 30, 1973, the Navy assumed full responsibility for Kagnew Station.

When the Navy accepted responsibility for Kagnew Station, the complex consisted of seven sites. Tract B, two miles west of the city, housed the Defense Communication System receivers and Detachment Three of the Army's Communications Service Group. Fifteen miles southwest of Asmara was Tract D with its Defense Communication and National Command Authority transmitters. On Tract F, the Navy operated a tactical receiver site.

Because of its location 80 miles south of Asmara, Tract H at Gura featured personnel billeting facilities in addition to its primary function as a tactical transmitter base. On the north side of the city, the Navy rendered support for the Department of Defense deep space research station at Stonehouse. The remaining two tracts, A and E, served as dependent housing and the main headquarters areas.

No sooner had the Navy taken control than the dismantling process began. First to close was Tract F, at Gura. In December, the dependent families were moved from Tract A into housing on Tract E and the original Radio Marina site was returned to Ethiopian authorities.

Slowly the line of containers of outgoing equipment at the transportation holding area grew. Phase by phase, operations were reduced and after the first of the year the influx of Navy men had been reversed.

The U.S. military presence in Eritrea dating back to 1941 drew to an end and the last organized military command at Asmara would be the U.S. Naval Communication Station. Started as a six-man detachment 26 years earlier, it seemed destined to end much the same way - a small detachment of Navy men remaining behind to padlock the main gate to Tract E, turning the key over to a representative of the Ethiopian government before the brief drive to Johannes IV Airport and the final flight from Eritrea.