

USAF Vulnerability to Limited Ground Attacks

By

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Abstract

During Desert Storm, the United States Air Force demonstrated the lethality of airpower to its potential enemies. Virtually unstoppable in the air, airpower's vulnerability lies on the ground. The threat of limited ground attacks on parked aircraft will increase as the enemy learns that, with a limited investment in manpower and standoff weapons, they can easily destroy part of the shrinking inventory of USAF aircraft, worth billions of dollars.

This paper reviews the capabilities of the current AF Air Base Defense (ABD) Program to match the increased threat. It looks at the threat, the history of air base defense, current ABD procedures and program shortfalls.

What was found was that the current ABD program needs attention. The root cause of the problem is a lack of support between services, within the Air Force and even within the tasked unit -- the Security Police (SP) career field. The shortfall comes from deep within the Air Force psyche -- flying operations get more attention than ground operations. Because of limited AF support, the security police have developed a part-time ABD program. A third of the security police force practice ABD, only a small portion of their time, and look to reserves and other base personnel to augment their operations in war. The SP focus is on peacetime requirements, not wartime mission accomplishment.

Major ABD program problems exist in organization, training, leadership, force integration and deployment planning. Shortfalls in these areas seriously degrade the abilities of defenders to carry out their mission. Minor problems also exist in command and control, communications, combat intelligence, the use of reservists and host nation support. These minor problems interfere with effective operations, frequently requiring workarounds.

This paper evaluates the program's shortfalls and proposes suggestions for a better program. Ultimately, the Air Staff must decide if they are willing to continue the current ABD program and absorb possible aircraft losses, or address the problems and develop an ABD program which can more realistically deter, deny and defeat a potential enemy. Their willingness and capability to absorb losses becomes critical.

About the Author

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND THREAT

We in the Air Force have accepted with pride the acknowledged position of being the first line of offense and the first line of defense of the United States. We must also accept the full responsibility that accompanies the honor of the vanguard position: the responsibility of unceasing vigilance to protect those vital missions against any form of attack that the enemy might bring against them. We must not become so exclusively air-minded that we conclude an enemy can attack us only by air. The most profitable and economical attack the enemy could launch against the Air Force might well be sabotage at home and guerrilla or partisan attacks on our air bases overseas.

*"Air Force War on the Ground," Air University Quarterly Review,
Winter 1953-54*

There is an adage that we always prepare to fight our last war over again. If that is true, the United States needs to look at the lessons our "next enemy" may have learned from our most recent war. Coalition air power (primarily US) was decisive in the Gulf conflict. The Coalition quickly established air superiority, followed by virtual air supremacy, and was free to choose its targets for disruption and destruction. Statistics and gun camera footage impressed the public and distressed potential enemy combatants. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is no single nation now extant which can stop the US Air Force in the air. Further, few, if any, nations have sufficient air defenses to prevent US Air Force from destroying their vital assets. In conventional warfare, such as the Gulf War, US air power demonstrated its virtual invincibility.

One of the few options open to a future enemy is to disrupt American air power through non-traditional methods such as ground-based attacks against vulnerable aircraft on the ground. A study by the Rand Corporation agrees.

Some adversary nations may attempt to challenge US airpower directly, but recent Rand research suggests that the investment necessary to do this is well beyond the financial resources of most countries. Faced with this challenge, we believe that clever adversaries will avoid direct

confrontations with superior US air elements, relying instead on asymmetric approaches that attack areas of relative weakness.¹

This asymmetric or non-standard approach might likely involve ground attacks on parked aircraft. Ground attacks could be highly advantageous to any enemy because the degree to which air operations can be affected is out of proportion with the effort needed to carry out the attacks. The manpower and funding to conduct a ground-based attacks using standoff weapons is minuscule in comparison to the destruction possible. A few men can move a hundred pound mortar and fire enough rounds to destroy several aircraft and damage many others, with subsequent collateral damage as fires spread. Thus limited firepower and few people could impose a serious toll on US air power.

Although this is not a new threat, as will be revealed in Chapter 2, it is one of increasing importance for at least two reasons. First, there are fewer and fewer combat aircraft available to US forces. The US military draw down spawned by the Soviet Union's demise and the need to produce a budgetary "peace" dividend, has led to a thirty percent overall military reduction and the elimination of many air assets. In the last few years the USAF has released over 1000 aircraft from its active inventory.² With fewer assets, each remaining aircraft represents a larger share of the overall aerial combat capability. As a consequence, every aircraft lost to enemy operations (or for any other reason) looms larger in importance.

Second, to further complicate the issue, replacement of lost aircraft has become nearly cost prohibitive.

The price of the typical fighter aircraft in the 1980s was between \$15 and \$30 million...aircraft programmed for the next decade are estimated to cost between \$45 and \$100 million per aircraft. This exponential increase in the price of fighter aircraft is occurring within the fiscal constraints of a decreasing defense budget.³

Fewer aircraft make each aircraft more vital in USAF operations, more difficult to replace and therefore more important to defend.

The Nature of the Threat

Ground attacks on air bases can take at least three forms: interior sabotage, sapper or specialized force attacks, and standoff attacks. Each method can be very effective. Each type of enemy attack requires its own form of defense.

Sabotage is a special concern at nuclear sites. The threat of losing a nuclear device to an infiltrator worries the entire national defense community. Defense against sabotage has received the most interest and effort because of the perceived cost of failure. Weapons in storage and aircraft and crews on nuclear alert have received top security priority in base defense schemes. Even as the defense establishment shrinks, the nuclear security problem will likely continue to get top billing.

Sappers or specialized forces, such as the former Soviet Union's *spetsnaz* forces, present a well-known and difficult challenge. Enemy sappers could be interested in 1) incapacitating or destroying nuclear or chemical warheads, 2) disrupting command, control and communications (C3) including the elimination of leadership, 3) incapacitating early warning, air defense and reconnaissance equipment, 4) capturing or destroying key airfields and ports, and 5) disrupting key industrial targets.⁴ With the general reduction of nuclear warheads since 1987, and the change in the types of enemies we may face in the future, it would appear that air assets and air bases will likely become a much higher priority target for sapper forces.

In addition to the anticipated sapper threat, there is a considerable history of successful standoff attacks on air bases, as will be shown in Chapter 2. Using small surface-to-air missiles, rocket powered grenade launchers, mortars and other such weapons, small enemy units can wreak havoc on crowded air bases.

Thesis Statement

The Air Force is vulnerable to ground-based attacks on its operational air bases. Limited ground attacks on air bases can seriously degrade USAF combat operations. The research question is whether or not the current AF air base ground defense capabilities can provide sufficient defense. The answer, as presented here, is that they cannot.

The heart of the problem is buried deep in the Air Force psyche; simply put--to most flyers, ground operations are not as important as air operations, and flyers command the Air Force. The Air Force leadership, and consequently its staff, focuses much of their energy on flying and related operational matters with much less attention given to support missions, except as they affect flying. Air Base Ground Defense (henceforth called ABD) does not fit well within the operational flying focus. Air base defense resembles infantry operations, not flying.

The traditional Air Force approach--in line with its air minded nature--has been to develop and fund a part time solution to a full time threat. Base defense is the responsibility of the Security Police (SP) whose primary attention in a peacetime environment is on law enforcement and resource protection. As a result, at best, only a third of the SP force is trained for the ABD mission and even that training is less than comprehensive.

Those who must lead the ABD effort found even less time to learn and practice their roles. Less than one-tenth of the current support group commanders have received training in air base defense operations through participation at the Joint Readiness Training Center. The same percentage is expected in the future.

The future of combat intelligence support for ABD is even less bright. The security police select members as part time staff intelligence specialists (S2s). They often go to the field, untrained and unaware of their duties. The AF Office of Special Investigations, the organization judged to be the AF's best intelligence asset in support of

ground defenders, is too busy and unfunded to assist.⁵ Wing intelligence personnel are manned to support the air mission only, so ground threats can go unnoticed.

The part time solution and responsibility problem goes far beyond the AF. In the past, the ground defense mission was shared with the US Army, leading to great debates over who would defend what and where. The AF has not and will not convince the Army of the importance of air base defense while the AF still assigns it a part time priority.

Organization

Chapter 2 will provide a historical synopsis of air base defense development. Chapter 3 will talk of the challenges, opportunities and doctrine inherent in air base defense. Chapter 4 will tell of how the program is currently designed to operate. Chapter 5 will discuss the problems with the current program. Chapter 6 will present recommendations to solve these problems, while Chapter 7 will wrap it up.

Assumptions

Several assumptions guided the direction of this research. First, the AF will be involved in future conflicts overseas. Second, US airpower will be deployed to overseas locations in these conflicts. Third, the enemy will attempt to destroy US air assets on the ground or at least disrupt operations at air bases where US assets are deployed.

Limitations

Time and space limitations have forced restrictions on the presentation of the US Army position on ABD. They have also made it impossible to determine the costs and manpower requirements for the recommended solutions. These areas would be excellent subjects for further research. It was also necessary to limit the investigation and potential solutions to forces deployed overseas only. The protection of US air assets within the United States is a much different subject, conducted under different circumstances, and involving many different agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. This paper also specifically covers only ground base defense versus aerial base defense.

¹ Alan Vick and David Shlapak, "Unconventional Forces as Threats to High-Value Facilities," Rand Corporation Project 3189, estimated completion: Spring 1995.

² Lt Col Lawrence R. Lane and Lt Col Albert F. Riggle, *Airfield Defense for Global Reach/Global Power*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1993), p. 20.

³ Maj Charles W. Nystrom, *Air Base Attack: The Promises of Emerging Technology*, (Maxwell, AFB, AL: CADRE, April 1991), p. 26.

⁴ Capt Erin E. Campbell, "The Soviet *Spetsnaz* Threat to NATO," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1988, p. 64.

⁵ Lt Col Michael I. Wheeler, "The Reality of Air Base Defense," (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: US Army War College, 1986), p. 27, and 30 March 1994 interview with Lt Col David Barninger, Joint Readiness Training Center, Coordinator, Little Rock AFB, AR.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Korea

The Korean conflict represented the first serious challenge to US air base ground defense. Operating airfields on the peninsula were swept away in the initial North Korean push southward. Most air support was forced to operate from Japan or US Navy aircraft carriers until General Douglas MacArthur's landing at Inchon and the simultaneous breakout from the Pusan Perimeter. As they forced the North Koreans to retreat, UN forces regained or established new airfields.

The air base defenses faced a formidable threat because at times over 30,000 North Korean guerrillas operated in the south, left behind by rapidly retreating North Korean forces.¹ In December 1950, Air Police forces expanded from 10,000 to 39,000 in an effort to match the threat with dedicated forces for air base defense (ABD).² These troops attempted to procure armored cars, machine guns, recoilless rifles and other infantry weapons.³ The guerrillas chose, however, to ignore air bases as targets. "Not a single Air Force installation was attacked by guerrilla soldiers or saboteurs. No aircraft were lost or even damaged due to sabotage."⁴

This apparent lack of enemy interest made it hard to justify maintaining increased ABD manpower slots in the post-Korean war budget. Was it a lack of interest which prevented attacks or a lack of success? Did the presence of 39,000 defenders discourage the guerrillas? Or was it a political consideration to avoid attacking UN airfields for fear of UN retaliation on vulnerable North Korean or Chinese air bases? The answer to these questions remains unknown.

Inter-Conflict Years

During the budget cutbacks following the Korean conflict, one champion rose to the defense of the ABD mission. Strategic Air Command (SAC) expanded the role of air

base defense because the great security required for nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The nation could ill-afford the loss or destruction of any nuclear device, at any location. SAC's commander-in-chief, General Curtis LeMay, stated "that he was getting most of the defense budget on new jet tankers and bombers, and he recalled ' By God I was going to look after them .'"⁵

But the nuclear security role did not prepare the USAF's security police for their role in Vietnam. In Southeast Asia, serious problems in coordination and manpower allocations led to an abysmal ground defense record and an unacceptable level of death and destruction.

Vietnam

The evolution of air base defense in Southeast Asia mirrored the gradual escalation of US efforts in Vietnam. Initially, air base defense was provided by the South Vietnamese forces. When support proved to be inadequate, the US attempted to shore up its security with Army and Air Force troops. The enemy continued to attack successfully against these limited and uncoordinated defenses.

Between November 1964 and January 1973, Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces attacked ten key airfields 475 times. During these attacks, 100 aircraft were destroyed and 1203 were damaged, three hundred and nine US and Allied troops were killed and 2206 wounded, while the enemy lost 385 personnel and had 45 wounded.⁶ Standoff attacks accounted for 94% of the actions because areas adjacent to airfields were virtually undefended. Sapper attacks and a combination of sapper/standoff attack accounted for the remaining 6%. The success of enemy attacks was due to South Vietnamese ineffectiveness, US Army disinterest in the mission and a lack of USAF funding and manpower allocation.

Initially the AF relied on the Government of Vietnam to protect American assets on Vietnamese air bases. External defense was provided by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and internal security became a Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF)

responsibility. Jealousy and distrust between the Vietnamese air and ground commanders obstructed coordination. Political turmoil led to further degradation in capabilities. "Under weak and unreliable leaders, [the Vietnamese] were as a rule under strength, ill-trained, undisciplined, and poorly motivated."⁷

While there was concern in the military about the effects of the air base attacks, the Army felt it could offer little help. General Throckmorton, Deputy COMUSMACV, made his stand clear when he spoke with Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara on 29 August 1965. "It is true major installations have priority for defense, but only against a strong VC mass attack. There are no plans to tie down US troops to defend US air bases against mortar and sneak attack, it costs too much in troops."⁸ In December 1965, General William Westmoreland reiterated the Army stand. He felt that every US military member, regardless of service, must be prepared to engage the enemy in combat.⁹ As a result, no Army troops were ever completely dedicated to the task.

Because the Army was unable to assist and the Vietnamese were ineffective, the AF was forced to provide its own protection. The security police formed SAFESIDE, a unit dedicated to air base defense, in the summer of 1966. SAFESIDE units were permitted to patrol off-base areas in order to combat the enemy's standoff weapons capability. Serving successfully for only six months, SAFESIDE was disbanded because the AF leadership did not perceive a need for their continued role in external defense of air bases--funding and manpower issues took precedence.

The 1968 Tet Offensive again showed the vulnerability of USAF bases, as entire enemy battalions were formed adjacent to air bases, yet went undetected for lack of off-base patrols.¹⁰ SAFESIDE was reinitiated, although confined once again inside the air base perimeter. As before "manpower requirements proved to be its downfall...as security police squadrons in the United States were left 30-40 percent undermanned."¹¹ Disbanded again in December 1969, SAFESIDE was replaced by Security Police

Elements for Contingencies (SPECs). This program trained personnel in their "off-duty time" and represented "the USAF's main capability to protect its deploying aircraft."¹²

Throughout the Vietnam War, air base defense training suffered from a lack of money and time. Only minimal training was conducted to prepare personnel for deployment. As an example, "weapons training for men slated for SEA stopped at the familiarization level, because of the cost of the extra ammunition required for full-qualification firing. Such firing took place in South Vietnam with bullets rendered even more costly by the shipping charges."¹³

Overall, in Vietnam, no strong, integrated program ever evolved. Many reasons can be cited. First, neither the US Army nor the USAF would assume responsibility for external air base security. Funding and manpower limitations led to priorities other than air base ground defense. Second, the RVNAF did not do a credible job of external defense despite US advisory assistance. Vietnamese political loyalties and interservice squabbles with the ARVN prevented an effective security program. Third, the USAF and RVNAF security forces were unable to successfully coordinate a capable combined base defense effort.¹⁴

Continental US Defenses

Historically, even CONUS defenses are occasionally tested--and sometimes fail. "On December 7, 1993, a 70-year-old antiwar protester, a Washington priest and two other activists jumped the back fence of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, crawled three-quarters of a mile and attacked an F-15E with hammers and baby bottles filled with a red fluid they said was blood."¹⁵ This is not an isolated incident. "Between 1968 and 1982, 26 facilities, 135 vehicles and 11 aircraft have been damaged."¹⁶ And the future does not appear any brighter. "The National Security Affairs Institute, furnishing data for the Air Force 2000 study, anticipates a 20 percent increase in transnational and international terrorist related incidents by the year 2000."¹⁷

Desert Storm

While not well advertised, USAF defenses in Desert Storm were tested as well. "Enemy probing action involved vehicles with one or two personnel approaching defense force perimeter positions...attempts were usually 10 minutes in duration."¹⁸ Shortfalls in Desert Storm/Shield (DS/S) defenses will be covered in Chapter 5.

As these examples demonstrate, "air base defense has been maintained episodically. Each time the Air Force has gone to war, a great deal of emphasis was given to the protection of air bases. However, upon the cessation of hostilities, ABGD quickly lost any serious planning, funding or training."¹⁹

End Notes

¹ Lt Col Lawrence R. Lane and Lt Col Albert F. Riggle, *Airfield Defense for Global Reach/Global Power*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1993), p. 20.

² Lt Col Wayne Purser, *Air Base Ground Defense: An Historical Perspective and Vision for the 1990's*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air War College, 1989), p. 13.

³ Raymond Bell, "To Protect an Air Base," *Airpower Journal*, Fall 1989, p. 9.

⁴ Lt Col Roger P. Fox, *Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961-1973*, (Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1979), p. 6.

⁵ Lt Col Richard A. Coleman, *USAF Air Bases: No Safe Sanctuary*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1990), p. 8.

⁶ Fox, p. 207.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸ Quoted in Fox, p. 26.

⁹ Bell, p. 5.

¹⁰ Purser, p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹³ Fox, p. 154.

¹⁴ Purser, p. 25.

¹⁵ Laurie Goodstein, "N.C. Trial Conjures Up Antiwar Era," *Washington Post*, February 15 1994, p. B1.

¹⁶ Lt Col Dieter H. Heinze, *AFOSI: Meeting Its Protective Security Mission in the Face of Contemporary Terrorism*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: CADRE, 1983) FOUO, p. 7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁸ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned: Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, FOUO, p. 51.

¹⁹ Coleman, p. ii.

CHAPTER 3

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND DOCTRINE

A commander is always faced with the problem of determining not only how much security he needs and how to provide it but also how much he can afford.

Col Donald Shultis, *Air Base Security in a Limited-War Area*

Before launching into further investigation and analysis, this short chapter will outline the inherent challenges that air base defenders face and the capabilities and circumstances upon which the defenders can capitalize. Finally, this chapter concludes with a description of the basic USAF doctrine for ABD. This information sets the stage for the following chapters which describe current air base defense procedures, shortfalls and suggestions for improvements.

Inherent ABD Problems

The very nature of air bases and their mission present several serious challenges to their defenders. First, air base installations are usually tactically isolated from the front lines of the battlefield. Tactical isolation means that fewer ground defense assets will be available in these rear areas and that the protection of airfields by the Army will require a dispersion of Army ground power.

Second, air base sites are chosen primarily to suit air operational requirements, rather than ground defense requirements. Proximity to cities, flight patterns, terrain and weather affect the choice of location. Airfields are often built away from cities to avoid flying over congested metropolitan areas, for safety and noise abatement purposes. And when airfields are placed near cities more defense problems can occur. For example, fear of fratricide prevented the use of many defensive perimeter security measures near cities during the Gulf War.¹ The use of claymore mines and the plans for return fires were often dropped because of the threat to non-combatants.

Frequently, the distribution of flight activity or patterns is a consideration in airfield location. In addition, terrain may account for site selection; avoiding mountains and marshes. Inclement weather patterns, such as frequent fog, may also dictate construction sites. But the ability to defend the site is almost never a consideration.

Third, primary mission needs and flying operational efficiency often determine the siting of vulnerable components--such as fuel and bomb dumps. Frequently they are built away from other important structures or assets to prevent collateral damage from an accident. Defense of these key dispersed components can be more difficult, because those responsible for ABD must distribute security assets to ensure necessary protection, diluting their effectiveness.

Fourth, the area to be defended is normally too large for effective ground defense by the manpower normally available. With many modern runways in excess of two miles in length, the base perimeter could easily be eight miles in length. An effective external defense would require patrols to extend at least another two miles beyond the fence line, the anticipated distance of some mortar attacks. This amount of land, once again, leads to a dispersion of security forces.

And the final ABD problem is that other than the few troops permanently assigned to ground defense, the personnel on an air base must continue their work on the primary mission as long as possible.² Few base personnel are trained to defend themselves, let alone the base, and untrained personnel can be a detriment to security forces rather than an asset. If the airfield is not under attack, most personnel will be supporting aircrews and launching aircraft. Few will be able to augment the security mission.

These problems are also affected by the geographic location of the base. CONUS air base defenses tend to be more relaxed because of the perception of a reduced threat. Many AF security police personnel believe the only serious stateside peacetime "threat"

is an operational readiness inspection, the security requirements for an air show, or the hoopla surrounding a general's visit.

Security procedures at forward operating (FOB) or "immature" bases fare considerably worse than stateside locations. Immature bases are those where US defenses have not been previously established. A coordination nightmare occurs as AF security units arrive and find that they are unfamiliar with host nation defense procedures and customs, joint plans for area defense and how they should set up support. Coordination also breaks down during the time consuming task of establishing command, control and communication links. Secure facilities for aircraft may be inadequate or unavailable. During this confusion, large gaps in external defenses and internal security can be exploited by an enemy. Further hardship can occur as the lack of communication can frequently lead to fratricide, as AF defenders fire on other AF, Army or host nation personnel.

Opportunities of Time

Problems often determine the effectiveness of a local air base defense program. The key element required to overcome these problems is time. If enough time is available to plan properly, the defender can capitalize on several advantages and opportunities.

First, air base defense planners can reconnoiter and become thoroughly familiar with local terrain and possible avenues of enemy approach. The static nature of an airfield allows security planners to anticipate attack approaches and prepare to defend or counter-attack along these avenues. Positions that offer the enemy advantage, such as overlooking terrain, can be denied to the enemy by minefields or secured in advance. Swamps and other slow approach routes need less attention.

Second, once the terrain has been studied and the overall defense plan drawn up, the range of various defense weapons can be measured out on the terrain and fire plans

can be tested. This provides an enormous advantage in counter-battery fire against stand off weapons.

Third, defenders can prepare and practice their defense. Once plans are drawn up, they can be tested and adjusted, then tested again. Preparation and practice strengthens the coordination between supporting units and builds confidence.

Fourth, the defender can prepare his defense. If done well, these prepared positions can provide supporting fields of fire, coordinated with joint forces in the area. Further, with prepared positions and plans the defender is better able to maintain the advantage of silence.

Finally, the defender has a logistical advantage not related to time. While the enemy must carry his ammunition with him, the defender can stockpile ammunition at various points and use it at a high rate to bring concentrated fire on critical sectors. Longer lines of communication and distance through "enemy" territory can also limit the attacker's capabilities.³

These opportunities and advantages are heavily dependent on the "maturity" of the base or the element of time. Unfortunately, many of today's challenges will likely occur on short-notice, to locations where security does not exist and where plans have not been developed and practiced. This will not only eliminate the opportunities and potential advantages, but will increase the problems.

Air Base Defense Doctrine

Doctrine endeavors to codify the best way of doing things. The Air Force Security Police explain the preferred method of air base defense in AFR 206-2, "Ground Defense of Main Operating Bases, Installations, and Activities." The core concept is to create a main defense area which holds the enemy three to five kilometers outside the base perimeter -- the effective range of mortar attack.⁴

The concept of operation for ground defense of US Air Force air bases is to use a series of widely dispersed, mounted and dismounted small units, deployed laterally and in-depth, on key terrain, on and off base. [The goal is to] move off base with new mobility to hold the enemy away with increased range so as to buy time for critical air and ground operations.⁵

The AF security police define threat levels in terms of enemy activities ranging from small groups attempting to penetrate the air base perimeter (threat level one) to battalion-sized attacks (threat level three.) Security forces apportion their defense assets based on the anticipated threat level at a base or in a region. Threat levels also help define training limits and set up defense acquisition requirements. Significantly different preparations are required if the threat is only a few sappers cutting a fence line versus an assault involving infantry, tanks and artillery. The requirement to cover the full spectrum of threat levels requires more training and defense assets. Luckily, when the Air Force needs help, the Army will assist (if available).

But unfortunately, current joint doctrine is limited or non-existent. An essential part of Air Force ABD doctrine should outline cooperation and coordination with Army units. Air Force defenses should fit seamlessly with Army theater-wide defenses. As joint doctrine is developed it needs to incorporate the "desire" and the ability to cooperate. Each organization has a different mindset, but they must work together to delay and defeat successively increasing levels of threat.

End Notes

¹ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned: Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, FOUO, p. 16.

² "The Air Force War on the Ground," *Air University Quarterly Review*, Winter 1953-54, p. 101. The five advantages and disadvantages are drawn from this article.

³ "The Air Force War on the Ground", p. 101.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ AFR 206-2, Vol I, *Air Base Ground Defense*, p. 10.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT AIR BASE DEFENSE PROCEDURES

The police mission is divided between law enforcement operations and resource protection for bases in CONUS and overseas bases....the secondary mission is base defense. Each CONUS MAJCOM identifies the number of security police available from their primary mission to support the war effort. This is calculated after implementing an expanded security posture and an expanded shift schedule augmented by non-security police wartime readiness personnel...elements available may not match the required numbers in the war plans because this is a secondary mission.

Lt Col Lawrence Lane and Lt Col Albert Riggle,
Airfield Defense for Global Reach/Global Power

The focus in this chapter is on the stateside organization, and training, and the deployed organization of the air base defenders.

Organization

Security Police authorizations for manpower are based on peacetime missions of security and law enforcement. Each base will have its specific requirements for "priority" security, such as high value assets and nuclear security. These requirements will determine the number of SPs assigned to the base.

The primary SP missions of Resource Protection and Law Enforcement take precedence in daily activities and training. Security Police mobility tasking (air base defense) is a secondary mission and less than one third of all SP personnel are organized, trained and equipped for this mission.

Mobility tasking is assigned based on the SPs "left over" once CONUS wartime security is implemented and augmentees are brought in to assist. Air base defenders deploy under a variety of unit tasking codes (UTCs). These could include: a headquarters element, a 44-member defense flight, a military working dog team or a heavy weapons element.

Training

Training for mobility tasking is a constant requirement. After completion of basic training and technical training at Lackland AFB, TX all new security police attend air base ground defense training at Fort Dix, NJ. At Fort Dix the Army teaches them individual and small unit tactics, fieldcraft, tactical employment of weapons and communication systems, and concepts of base defense. Later, junior officers and some NCOs return to Fort Dix and train to be flight leaders, squad or flight sergeants and members of the command and control elements. Selected field grade officers are trained at Lackland AFB to be ground defense force commanders.¹ They are put through a one-day exercise, simulating a command and control environment where they learn to manage the war from the operations room.

Following this initial training, all sustainment training is conducted at the home station at the discretion of the local leadership. It is important that this follow-on training be conducted, because ground combat skills are perishable. AFH 31-30X, the *Security Police Deployment Planning Handbook* warns of the fragilities in training.

Peacetime operations can detract from the important preparation for preparing for combat. Almost all our security police forces receive individual training....Not all individuals will have the opportunity to train as a unit. However, with attendance at the Joint Readiness Training Center or MAJCOM training every 3 years at a minimum, most security police individuals should have the basic concepts of base defense.²

Ideally, MAJCOM training occurs every 18 months, not three years. This is conducted at Nellis AFB, NV by Air Combat Command (Silver Flag Alpha) and at Little Rock AFB, AR by Air Mobility Command (Phoenix Ace). Following participation at these regional training centers, a unit may be selected to participate at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), FT Polk, LA. This Army training, held quarterly for the AF "is the premier joint training area now available for USAF Security Police evaluations. It

provides the unit with the most stressful, realistic environment possible--short of actual combat."³

There are two major areas that are assessed during every JRTC rotation. First, how effectively a unit deploys to this 'immature theater', adapts to existing conditions, and sets up to conduct initial combat operations. Second, how they develop and institutionalize effective procedures for sustaining combat operations.⁴

FOB Organization

Trained units can be called on to deploy anytime. Once deployed, they will either stand alone or form up with local or other deployed elements. The Army or host nation has overall responsibility for theater ground defense. The AF must fit into this overall scheme and ensure its specific needs are met. To coordinate this C3 activity, the Army establishes a Rear Area Operations Center (RAOC) while the AF sets up their own Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC). Liaison officers and leadership should provide the coordinating link between units.

Until recently, two 1984 joint memorandums of agreement between the Army and AF ensured the Army would provide external defense of air bases and initial training support. With the recent demise of the agreements, the AF is seeking new ways to meet its needs, while continuing to cooperate with Army and host nation defenders.⁵

USAF defenders can also team up with host nation defense forces. The benefits of host nation (HN) support center on their familiarity with language and local customs, facilities and equipment. They can also reduce US logistics requirements. But there is a trade-off between support and risk in mission accomplishment, based on HN capability, dependability, willingness, reliability and availability. Other US problems include soldier morale, treaty requirements, and command and control interface.⁶

Because of the importance of host nation support, the US has reached agreements with some allies that clarify responsibilities for air base defense. "The Royal Air Force Regiment will provide air defense protection for US bases in Britain, and a similar

agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany will apply to our bases there."⁷ But host nation support is a fragile thing. Desert Shield/Storm after-action reports recommend some techniques to promote harmony. "Officers and NCOs must be trained to respect the sovereignty of the host nations, while at the same time, must work hard to build trust and relationships that will allow effective combined operations in the defense of the air bases...anticipate the cultural and communication problems...establish mutual participation training programs."⁸

End Notes

¹ Lt Col Lawrence R. Lane and Lt Col Albert F. Riggle, *Airfield Defense for Global Reach/Global Power*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1993), p. 15-16.

² Air Force Handbook 31-30X, *Security Police Deployment Planning Handbook*, 1994, Draft, FOUO, p. 6.

³ Lane and Riggle, p. 37-38.

⁴ Joint Readiness Training Center, Take Home Package, *Training After-Action Report for Rotation 94-4*, Draft, FT. Polk, LA, FOUO, p. 10.

⁵ Air Force Handbook 31-303, *Security Police Basic Combat Skills Handbook*, 1994, Draft, p. 6.

⁶ Maj Donald T. Knowles, *The 1985 US Army-US Air Force Joint Service Agreement for Base Defense and its Impact on Air Base Ground Defense*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), p. 39-40.

⁷ Lt Col Price T. Bingham, "Fighting From the Air Base," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1987, p. 36.

⁸ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned: Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, FOUO, p. 15.

CHAPTER 5

AIR BASE DEFENSE SHORTFALLS

There is a tendency towards tunnel vision that results when units focus on their own missions and experience.

Captain John W. Ellis, *Preparing the CSS Base for Rear Battle*

It's not necessarily true that we train the way we fight...it is true, however, that we fight the way we've trained.

Lt Col David Barninger, Joint Readiness Training Center, Coordinator

This chapter will explain why the Security Police are presently an ineffective force in terms of ABD. Each of the following problem areas is documented in exercise and contingency after-action reports, including major discrepancies in organization, training, leadership, force integration and deployment planning. Shortfalls in these areas seriously degrade the abilities of defenders to carry out their mission. Minor problem areas also exist in command and control (C2), communications, combat intelligence, the use of reservists and host nation support. Shortfalls in these areas interfere with effective operations, frequently requiring workarounds.

Organization

The security police manpower authorizations are based on the requirements for the SP's primary peacetime mission of law enforcement and resource protection. Despite the statement from the *Security Police Basic Combat Skills Handbook*, that "we are organized for wartime effectiveness rather than peacetime efficiency," the opposite is more likely to be true.¹ Wartime organization, on the other hand, is a convoluted mixture of available personnel filling jobs for others. Non-security police personnel are selected to augment CONUS base security when security police deploy. Because the threat stateside is considered to be lower, these minimally trained personnel and Individual

Mobilization Augmentees are expected to provide a cost effective alternative for deployed professionals.

Professional air base defenders deploy to perform full-time a job they've prepared for part-time. They arrive with no plan for organization, and unsure of their responsibilities and the threat. In Desert Storm "while expecting to form into a fighting base defense force, it was found necessary at several deployment sites to instead configure normal peacetime day-to-day aircraft security operations."² The reason was two-fold: law enforcement needs and wing commander expectations. The requirement to manage traffic and distribute identification cards took precedence over anticipated base defense requirements. The base defenders arrived unprepared and unequipped for this duty.

This problem was compounded by commanders who expected normal security police employment activities. The "wing commanders were uncomfortable unless they saw entry control points."³ But in wartime base defenders' greater focus is on external defenses, and not on restricted areas and control points. The need to train the way we fight is once again evident. Although air base defenders attempted to persuade base commanders that they needed to change their execution methods in war, they were often unable to convince skeptical commanders.⁴

Training

An air force's bias against the infantry role of the ground defender runs throughout the training program. "A serious indictment of the entire Air Force basic training program is that the trainee spends more time on administrative details than he spends in weapons training."⁵ Also, the training listed "on the books" and unit proficiency levels just don't match. The mismatch usually occurs between formal training sessions. "Deficiencies center on the demands placed on security police units in performing their peacetime missions and the inability to focus enough effort developing and sustaining perishable individual and group ground combat skills."⁶ "Unlike most US

Army units who train daily for their wartime role, Air Force security police forces are not manned for their ABGD duties...Normally, only nine to twelve hours a month is allotted for training in all aspects of security police duties at each location"⁷ Despite the "requirement" to conduct it, Desert Shield/Storm after-action reports noted that "the majority of home-base units designated as ABD UTCs do not have sustainment training programs established."⁸

Because this sustainment training is slighted, defenders are usually unprepared when they deploy to regional training centers. Problems that surface at these training areas vary, but generally reflect deficiencies caused by a lack of home-station training. Instead of gaining valuable unit training, many members are embarrassed by their decline in basic ground combat skills. Instructors must reteach the basics before they can move on. The need for this building block approach costs time, which costs money.

AF personnel are further embarrassed when they deploy to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). The Army takes this training exercise very seriously. The careers of many Army officers depend on the report cards they bring back. They come to win--not just learn.⁹ For the AF this is not the case. There is no accountability for performance. Desert Storm officials recognized this. "A core standard/evaluation process does not exist to evaluate individuals or units on ABD capabilities...This does not allow for consistency in ABD operations when forces from different MAJCOMs are deployed to the same location."¹⁰

Leadership

Leadership at all levels can benefit from increased training and experience. There are too few opportunities to practice combat support operations. Those commanders that do get a chance to deploy to the JRTC usually arrive untrained and unprepared. All too typical is the following excerpt from a JRTC after-action report:

The support group commander was not trained in ground defense or support group operations. He arrived with no staff and chose not to use personnel from the GDFC's [ground defense force commander's] staff to augment his own. The result was that most decisions fell to the GDFC, who became the de facto support group commander. As a result, Army and support group personnel were unsure where to look for support and leadership.¹¹

Unfortunately, the lack of proper leadership costs everyone. Without direction, people are unsure of what to do or they charge off in different directions. JRTC personnel recommended a solution, which continues to be ignored.

Designated JRTC support group commanders should be required to attend the Support Group Commander's Course at Maxwell AFB, AL, prior to participation in JRTC rotations. Until this occurs, support group commander candidates should deploy early to Little Rock AFB to receive a short course from the 34th CATS on expected problems, issues, and possible solutions, to include an understanding of how support group elements (e.g., ALCE, ABGD, EOD, Combat Camera, PERSCO, PRIME RIBS/BEEF/FARE, etc.) perform their tasked functions in the field.¹²

Unfortunately, the Support Group Commander's Course only allocates a two-hour block for discussions about all security police issues, a time block that can barely touch on base defense issues. While students spend a day at Air Combat Command's Silver Flag Alpha, an SP air base defense exercise, it provides only a cursory look at ABD. Still, any previous experience or training a combat support commander can bring to the JRTC is vital to the unit's total performance.

Those who need the training most do not avail themselves when the opportunity arises. The after-action remarks from Desert Shield/Storm stated it well:

Only a small percentage of experienced ABD leadership was deployed to ODS/S [Operation Desert Shield/Storm]. Many of the officers and NCOs who did deploy lacked both the training and experience necessary to be fully effective within the theater...Quotas are available for formal training and major exercise participation;... however, many of these leaders see

themselves as being critical to peacetime responsibilities at their home base and often send substitutes (deputies/assistants) to attend formal training. Unfortunately, when the unit deploys to a contingency/wartime mission, the untrained leader deploys with the unit.¹³

At present there is almost unanimous agreement among Army and Air Force ABGD planners that almost all US Air Force wing commanders, senior tactical commanders, and air base group commanders lack the experience, background, and training requisite to the effective exercise of OPCON [operational control] of ground forces engaged in actions [internal and] external to US Air Force installations.¹⁴

Lack of experience shows up when it is time to bring the support team together. Reports from DS/S consistently show leaders hindering rather than helping effective air base defense efforts.

. . .The lack of confidence by US base-level senior commanders in the ability of SP forces to establish, maintain and utilize . . . base-wide operational camouflage, cover and deception plans, and operations" [made it] difficult to achieve. . . .

Considering the limited parking space for aircraft at some locations, assets had to be parked wingtip-to-wingtip. On the other hand, several unit reports stated "adequate space was available for dispersal parking, but (commanders) chose to mass park them." . . .

The wing commander would not allow SPs to construct DFP [defensive fighting positions] within the area surrounding the site's "Tent City"--the rationale (commander and first sergeant) provided, "DFPs would detract from the appearance of 'Tent City,' possibly affecting the morale of the occupants."¹⁵

Air Base Defense cannot be successful when untrained and inexperienced combat leaders work at cross purposes. In addition to the responsibilities that leaders hold within the AF mission, a key role in combat support is coordination with other service elements.

Force Integration

People prefer to quit coordinating rather than learn each other's language.¹⁶ Technical jargon and foreign procedures push away "outsiders." People and units have to

work hard to break through these differences to coordinate their efforts. *A Client Report from JRTC* points out these shortfalls.

Joint operations were degraded by a lack of a clear understanding for each others' mission, capabilities, and organization. Worst of all, once the battlefield became a busy place, units from both services became increasingly parochial at a time when joint C2 was most critical. It is particularly clear that Army units did not have an appreciation for the capabilities and mission of AF Air Base Defense.¹⁷

Unfortunately, air base defenders tend to fight the way they train, and these same mistakes were repeated in the Gulf War.

During the first 4 months of the SHIELD phase, ground defense force commanders were unable to establish consistent joint rear area support to include establishing joint command and control channels and reaction force assistance for AF installations. The majority of deployed ABD units would not have been capable of singularly defending their installations against Level 2 or 3 attacks.¹⁸

Nor did the situation improve in Somalia. A Joint Universal Lessons Learned (JULLS) report from 16 February 1993 points out the ongoing problem with joint coordination.

There is no overall joint defensive plan to integrate ARFOR, MARFOR, and coalition forces' defensive plans for security of base/base clusters or for the development of ...plans to cover: internal C2, internal defensive responsibilities, internal defensive response, use of fire support, reaction/response forces, and coordination with adjacent bases/base clusters to maximize mutual support and prevent fratricide... Unity of command is critical to successfully plan and control base/base cluster defense in a joint operation. Coordination and integration of plans is essential.¹⁹

Fratricide

Fratricide

The unfortunate result of poor coordination is frequently the needless loss of friendly life. While the following two excerpts come from training (JRTC), it is important to remember that units will fight in war the way they train.

Fratricide stemmed from lack of training for supervisors and subordinates. They did not establish procedures for coordinating with adjacent sectors and for identifying friendly versus enemy air activity. Inexperienced mortar teams were ineffective at conducting indirect fire support. This is due to the lack of previous realistic training.²⁰ Most support personnel believed the ABGD forces were responsible for their protection and therefore, were not integrated into the centralized plan designed to incorporate all forces. On at least one occasion, this resulted in fratricide as the perimeter security forces collapsed inwards during an attack.²¹

Command and Control (C2)

Force integration requires a clear chain of command and guidance to carry out actions deconflicting various units. Almost every recent exercise pointed out problems in this area. One report demonstrates the negative impact C2 can have on overall operations.

The lack of command and control by BDOC, sector commanders and flight commanders resulted in: a) resupply not being provided, b) disjointed implementation of the base defense plan, c) flights operating autonomously, independent of the BDOC or each other, and d) unapproved convoys searching for water, which resulted in the loss of numerous vehicles and personnel, even though the AF [liaison officer] had provided the exact location of a water supply to BDOC.²²

Desert Storm was no exception as territorial disputes developed from a lack of clear organizational structure. "Planning actions and coordination efforts continued as an impaired process. Some units were 'caught in the middle' of wing commanders at the same site attempting to establish defined lineage of command, control and communications."²³

Communications

Frequently command and control problems are related to poor communication. This is due to equipment shortages or incompatibility. During exercises, communication procedures improved when the AF introduced its new Saber III non-tactical radio. The problem is that the radio is not compatible with the Army SINCGAR system.²⁴ This problem had already been identified after Desert Storm. "Tactical and base station repeaters were not available, tactical platoon radios were incompatible with joint and combined forces, command centers and other SPs assigned to the same installation."²⁵ At this writing, there is no ongoing or projected program to increase compatibility.

Close Air Support

It is ironic that the AF has no plan to employ aircraft in the ground defense of their air bases. However, the personnel who wrote AFH 31-30X, *Security Police Deployment Planning Handbook*, don't appear to know that. The handbook states, "The senior installation commander will be closely involved in the requests for and control of CAS aircraft in emergency situations where they are available and required. Security police must plan for this possibility and conduct preliminary training and coordination so that if CAS aircraft are called upon to assist in the defense of an air base it can be effectively employed."²⁶ There is little or no training to conduct this difficult coordination, again illustrated in Desert Storm. "Some units had direct fire support aircraft available for employment; however, very few UTCs were trained to effectively request support from these aircraft."²⁷

Combat Intelligence

Ground intelligence, like the rest of the air base defense mission, suffers from a lack of manpower and training. But it is vital. Threat level I and II enemy forces can shut down a base's operating ability particularly if they are allowed to operate unchecked. While everyone knows that information about the enemy is essential, no one has stepped forward to accept responsibility for improving the situation. This meant the Security Police had to adapt, as always. In his book on air base defense in Vietnam, Lt Col Roger

P. Fox relates the SP's experience from a 1970 evaluation by the Seventh Air Force Director of Intelligence. "The security police were plunged into the intelligence business in Vietnam, not out of the desire to build empires, but because the mission made it absolutely necessary."²⁸

The Air Force's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) would seem a logical organization to accept responsibility. The OSI's participation in the Salty Demo exercise (1985) brought rave reviews from participants, but also an OSI "responsibility" rejection. "The OSI would tie into the All-Source intelligence net, use host nation sources and whatever else was available to them to form the picture of the battlefield...[but the] OSI formally declined to take the mission citing budgetary and personnel shortfalls, and that they were not trained to do the mission."²⁹

Today's part time solution to the ground intelligence function is ineffective. The SPs have designated "additional duty" staff intelligence specialists (S2s), untrained in intelligence functions and unskilled in joint cooperation. As a result, S2s often fail to: ask the right questions, establish formal and informal links with other S2s, and keep commanders informed.³⁰ Air Force intelligence people seem to have little interest in the ground intelligence function. Even the ground defender's handbook states that the focus of AF intelligence is on "providing air threat intelligence for flying operations."³¹

A secondary problem is the need to rely on human intelligence (HUMINT) collection. While gathering HUMINT is a time intensive operation, it is judged as the best source for accurate information. However, trained counter intelligence agents and linguists must be available to assist. Once again, few want the responsibility and funding is limited. Joint Universal Lessons Learned (JULLS) reports from Somalia reaffirm this. "Counter intelligence teams should be integrated into the intelligence gathering operations of military police teams"³² "The Somalian mission was a classic example of an easily identifiable, HUMINT-intensive environment."³³

Reserves

Once again, the Air Force pursued a part time solution by relying on reservists to fill the air base defense role. Untrained reservists reduced overall proficiency and increased deployment time. Desert Shield/Storm reports verify this. "Several MAJCOMs did not allow for IMAs [Individual Mobilization Augmentees] to be recalled to active duty, some IMAs were deployed to theater operations instead of filling CONUS home base positions."³⁴

Air reserve components deployed with untrained personnel and without the weapons and equipment to provide the proper level of defense. In many instances CENTCOM had to replace them with other CONUS assets.³⁵

For this reason and many others, members of the regular Air Force treat reservists as "step children." They are shunned, because "they are untrained and don't fit in."³⁶ This reservist bias must be overcome to properly integrate the actions of the combined forces, because it appears that the requirement to rely on reservists is a growing reality.

Host Nation Support

Occasionally, host nation support is a drawback rather than a help for several reasons. The first is language difficulties. Most after-action reports from the Gulf War and Somalia document the unanticipated requirement for more translators to work with friendly forces.³⁷ Past focus has been on the need for linguists for the interrogation of prisoners. Increasingly, linguists are needed instead to provide coordination with our allies. Unfortunately, many of the language specialists reside with the reserve forces.

Second, base defenders are frequently skeptical of the internal security provided by the host nation. In the Gulf War there was a problem with internal security checks because "several combined operation bases had civilian employees of the host nation whose citizenship was that of a nation considered to be "not friendly" to the US and its allies."³⁸ It is hard enough to worry about the threat across the fence. The security police now had to watch their backs on base as well.

A third problem centers on cooperation. For example, in an effort to strengthen the perimeter, air base defenders would normally incorporate land mines, defensive fighting positions, and plans to return mortar fire. But in the Gulf War "because of host-nation agreements and Geneva Convention provisions, several sites could not be ringed with lethal base defense devices--claymore mines or booby traps."³⁹

Deployment Planning

All other problems are moot when poor planning puts the wrong people in the wrong job at the wrong location. "Hindsight planning" required the shuffling of personnel in-theater to cover unforecasted shortfalls in Desert Shield/Storm. Some of the fault was in the existing theater war plans. Planners "underestimated the number of air bases that would be required to conduct operations...the total number of operational bases exceeded initial plan requirements by 93 percent"⁴⁰ Frequently air base defenders were sent to mature bases (Diego Garcia, RAF Mildenhall, Moron AB) when they could better have been employed elsewhere.⁴¹ Mature bases had a greater need for law enforcement augmentees than air base defenders.

Defenders, more often than not, failed to find timely transportation. Some units were delayed up to three weeks.⁴² This occurred even as "entire fighter wings deployed before the departure of ABD forces."⁴³ Security Police from the Strategic Air Command (SAC) were so frustrated with the deployment priorities, they coordinated their own organic transportation with SAC tankers. 1400 of the 1500 SAC security personnel deployed using this method.⁴⁴ Post war criticism rose, however, about SAC going outside the normal transportation system because accountability was lost for deployed ABD equipment. Some of it remains lost.⁴⁵

Not only did ABD personnel get a low priority in deployment, but their equipment, in some circumstances, didn't arrive until after the conclusion of the STORM phase. Instead of armored vehicles, they were provided generic civilian vehicles, "including pizza vans at a FOL [follow-on location]."⁴⁶

Conclusion

Overall, the common problem is the peacetime mentality that permeates the air base defense program. It insidiously steals training time and manpower. Security Police leaders frequently go to the bank to withdraw ABD assets for other projects never knowing the true balance in the account. Eventually the savings run out.

This chapter has been more than a laundry list of petty shortcomings. C2, communications, combat intelligence and the use of reservists and host nation support all represent minor areas that deserve attention to provide a better working defense force. The major areas of peacetime organization and training, leadership, force integration and deployment planning can destroy a unit's air base defense program. Because of their importance, they will be further evaluated and solutions proposed in the following chapter.

End Notes

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² *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned: Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, FOUO, p. 47.

³ Major Tom Plutt, USAF Security Police ABD specialist, interview on 4 March 1994.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lt Col Richard A. Coleman, *USAF Air Bases: No Safe Sanctuary*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1990), p. 16.

⁶ Plutt, 4 March 1994 interview.

⁷ Maj C. Edward Herron and Maj Robert D. Reider, *History of Air Base Ground Defense Training*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1987), p. 29.

⁸ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned: Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, p. 16.

⁹ Lt Col David Barninger, JRTC Coordinator, Little Rock AFB, AR, 30 March 1994 interview.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹ Joint Readiness Training Center, Take-Home Package, *Training After-Action Report for Rotation 94-1*, Ft. Polk, LA, FOUO, p. 4.

¹² Joint Readiness Training Center, Take-Home Package, *Training After-Action Report for Rotation 93-4*, Ft. Polk, LA, FOUO, p. 7.

¹³ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned . . .* p. 16.

¹⁴ Lt Col Wayne Purser, *Air Base Ground Defense: An Historical Perspective and Vision for the 1990's*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air War College, 1989), p. 56.

¹⁵ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned . . .* pp. 49-50.

¹⁶ Barninger interview.

¹⁷ Joint Readiness Training Center, *Client Update, Semi-Annual Report*, June 1994, Draft, Ft. Polk, LA.

¹⁸ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned . . .* p. 14.

¹⁹ JULLS Number 11577-46076, submitted by USAMPs, Maj R.J. Miller, p. 1.

²⁰ Joint Readiness Training Center, Take-Home Package, *Training After-Action Report for Rotation 94-4*, Draft, Ft. Polk, LA, FOUO, p. 21.

²¹ JRTC 94-1, p. 2.

²² JRTC 92-7, p. 8.

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- ²³ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned* . . . p. 47.
- ²⁴ JRTC 94-1, p. 13.
- ²⁵ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned* . . . p. 12.
- ²⁶ AFH 31-30X, p. 6.
- ²⁷ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned* . . . p. 52.
- ²⁸ Lt Col Roger P. Fox, *Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961-1973*, (Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1979), p. 145.
- ²⁹ Lt Col Michael I. Wheeler, *The Reality of Air Base Ground Defense*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1986), p. 27.
- ³⁰ JRTC 93-4, p. 9.
- ³¹ AFH 31-30X, *Security Police Deployment Planning Handbook*, 1994, p. 6.
- ³² JULLS Number: 12927-36234, submitted by USAMPS, Maj R.J. Miller, p. 146.
- ³³ JULLS Number: 11270-75941, submitted by G2, Lt Col Joyce, p. 131.
- ³⁴ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned*... p. 10.
- ³⁵ Plutt, 4 Mar 94 interview.
- ³⁶ Barninger, 30 March 1994 interview, Impressions he has received from participants at JRTC.
- ³⁷ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned*... p. 48.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- ⁴¹ Plutt, 4 March 1994 interview.
- ⁴² *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned*... p. 44.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ⁴⁴ Plutt, 4 March 1994 interview.
- ⁴⁵ Barninger, 30 March 1994 interview.
- ⁴⁶ *USAF Security Police Lessons Learned*... p. 11.

CHAPTER 6

SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER ABD PROGRAM

The major problem areas from Chapter Five, addressed sequentially here are: organization, training and force integration with leadership's impact, and deployment planning. Within each area a number of potentially effective corrective actions will be addressed. These potential actions are derived from both the author's analysis in the preceding chapters, and from the opinions of the experts cited.

Organization

It seems very clear that the security police need to recognize ABD as a primary mission and dedicate a full time force to pursue it. During combat operations ABD is at least equal in importance to law enforcement and resource protection, the other primary missions of the security police. Ideally there should be a unit formed whose sole purpose is air base defense. They could be the experts, on-call for deployment wherever a contingency required them; a rapid response defense force. This specialized unit could stand alone in small conflicts or could form the core of defense specialists who would lead additional defense teams in a larger conflict. They could be augmented by other SPs with basic skills, reservists or selectively armed and trained base personnel. Further, this specialized unit could form mobile instructor teams for use at regional training centers and joint exercises. This common base of instruction would help standardize defense skills and tactics throughout the AF versus the current compartmentalized MAJCOM training now present. The specialist force should incorporate the reserves as well, because reserves form half of the total security police field resources.

The end product of this organizational change is a unit which is more capable. They will have more confidence in their abilities and their increased capability will boost the confidence of support group commanders and joint defenders.

There is a well known precedent for this type unit. The RAF Regiment has been frequently touted by security specialists as the unit to imitate. "The RAF Regiment, an integral part of the Royal Air Force, was formed in 1942 primarily to provide local ground defense for airfields and other air installations...the Regiment is deployed for the most part at air bases overseas as the core around which the air base personnel must be diverted from their primary job to take up" the defense.¹ The Regiment consists of three types of specialized units: 1) the Ground Defense Squadron, which is a mobile unit using light armor (soon to be replaced by Land Rovers), 2) the Rapier Air Defense Unit, which now uses an updated and more capable missile system (though the US has canceled its support due to the increased cost), and 3) the Regiment Section, which is responsible for teaching members to defend themselves through small arms training, chemical and biological defense, and fire-fighting.²

The RAF, like the USAF, is facing a 30 percent reduction in its capabilities. Because the RAF Regiment took no hostile fire in Desert Storm, the RAF leadership assumed they faced no threat. The Regiment, therefore, has been given a lower priority in a tight budget where air-minded leaders prefer to preserve aircraft inventories over support personnel and missions. While they continue to be deployed to Belize, Cypress and the Falklands, the threat in Northern Ireland ensures the Regiment's future existence.³

If the RAF Regiment is so successful, why hasn't the USAF adopted it as a security model? The AF's top security leaders explain it in a word--funding.⁴ Instead, they have sought to adapt the current or projected resources realistically. Given this "realistic" approach the SPs need to change three areas within their organization: manning, equipping and mission requirements.

Manpower Authorizations

One of the best ways to improve the ABD organization is to reexamine the peacetime versus wartime manning authorizations. Currently, security personnel "overages" at stateside bases are used to form deployment packages. This peacetime

security police manning requirement puts the cart before the horse. Rather than build backwards to get "leftover" personnel for wartime missions, the AF should instead conduct a realistic assessment of the wartime security manpower needs and then determine if "overages" are required for peacetime. The previously proposed development of a specialized ABD unit can establish this building block for wartime manning.

Equipment

Air base defense doctrine needs to be used more effectively in the acquisition process. The purchase of unnecessary or incompatible equipment wastes limited funding and reduces defense capabilities. Previous acquisition decisions are being second-guessed by operators in the field.

Chapter Five discussed the 80 million dollar purchase of a radio system which is not interoperable with the Army. While many AF defenders praise the security police's tactical radio system, the Saber III, they see it as only a partial solution until a secure, compatible link is established with cooperating Army and host nation elements.

Money is being pumped into the ABD program but the lack of clear direction and desirability may be diverting the precious funds unnecessarily. Joint and combined requirements should be incorporated early in the process. This should be included in doctrine, which should then guide acquisition priorities.

Mission Requirements

It is also important that realistic requirements for, or expectations of, ABD capabilities be established by air base defense doctrine. By setting expectations too high, excess security resources will be wasted. For example, AFR 206-2 states that the AF base defenders must be capable of stopping a Level III attack.⁵ Currently the AF security police are not able to do so and probably will not be able to do this in the future. The requirement for the AF security police to stop a battalion sized force would entail the ability to stop tanks and armored personnel carriers. This would mean training and

equipping comparably, which would create a serious drain on resources on the slim chance that an enemy battalion could get through the friendly theater defenses before the Army could assist or the base could be evacuated. Intelligence should have adequate warning if a ground force of battalion size were to threaten a base.

Training

At the 1983 Corona South Conference, General Thomas M. Ryan, Jr., the Air Training Command Commander-in-Chief, asserted his support for the air base defense program. "Be assured we see adequate training of air base ground defenders as the single most important element in the entire base defense program. We will leave no effort undone on the Air Staff to help you produce the defender we must have to successfully meet the threat against our bases."⁶

Following this call for action, cooperation increased with the Army. The Army accepted the responsibility for initial ground combat skills training for AF personnel, for the external defense of air bases and for increased participation in joint exercises.⁷ The training has been effective, with 7000 new AF security personnel attending each year. But because of funding cuts, the Army now believes that the defense of AF bases is no longer a responsibility the Army can afford. In January 1995 the Air Force will resume the initial ground combat skills training mission. The external defense of air bases will also be left to the Air Force. AF defenders are currently rethinking ways to handle the new requirements.

Because of the training problems cited in Chapter Five several recommendations seem appropriate for primary units, SP augmentees, base augmentees and for specialized training.

Primary Unit Training

As mentioned earlier, a new, specialized ABD unit must be organized, equipped and trained. Their training focus should be on individual, group and joint skills. Because of their status as the elite of air base defenders, this unit's currency and capability rates

need to be the highest. Because this unit does not currently exist this would be a new requirement for training.

This unit could not stand alone as the only AF base defense assets. Major regional contingencies would require more security assets than this core unit would have available. Instead, these professional air base defenders would be supplemented by security police augmentees.

Security Police Augmentee Training

Security police augmentees would fill out defense units in a contingency. Their requirements could be less stringent than for the specialist force. Augmentees could receive training at the familiarization level in dealing with the equipment, tactics and mission of ABD. After initial ground combat skills training they could conduct quarterly local refresher training and attend a regional training center (RTC) exercise annually. This standardized training differs from the current program, where local training is at the commander's discretion and RTC participation is required every three years.

Another important element in the indoctrination of security police ABD augmentees is the use of members from the specialized unit to train them. The core unit could assist the staff at the regional training courses and at home stations. There are three advantages to using the specialized unit as a mobile instructor team. First, they would provide a credible instructor cadre. Second, participation augmentee training prepares the specialized unit for a contingency as they accept the arrival of augmentees and integrate them into the defense mission. Third, the exposure of the specialized unit will serve to familiarize all elements of the defense team with each other's abilities and shortfalls. This integration of security police is vital. Before they can fit in with the joint and combined combat support mission, they must fit in with themselves.

Base Augmentee Training

Possibly the most controversial ABD topic is the role of other base personnel in their own defense. Just how much should non-security police personnel be responsible for defending themselves? This is a question still unanswered by the Air Force.

" Winston Churchill's advice [was] to make the theater air base the "stronghold of fighting air-groundsmen, and not the abode of uniformed civilians in the prime of life protected by detachments of soldiers."⁸ While this advice is noble, it may be impractical in today's Air Force.

Is it worth the cost to train so many Air Force personnel for such a problematical situation as defending an airfield? An even more potentially dangerous situation would be the inability to coordinate properly all the firepower thus generated. Might it be better to have a few [SPs] who are well armed and trained to fight properly than have everyone shooting at everyone else, thereby jeopardizing the successful defense of the base?⁹

Different proposals for defense responsibility have come and gone. The security police shelved the concept of arming every airman because of the cost in equipping and training. Instead, the concept was cut back and became a program to incorporate base augmentees. Based on the assumption that during combat emergencies some jobs are less important than others, "non-essential" non-security police personnel are identified and given limited defense training. Then, in a contingency they are issued a gun and augment base security forces. The end product of this approach may not be worth the effort or expense. "Selective arming is presently the highest cost recommendation."¹⁰ "It is estimated that the 187,750 augmentees would be equipped with M16s for a one-time cost of \$22 million, with an additional \$77 million per year needed in training costs."¹¹

The use of security augmentees is unnecessary and, because of the increased possibilities of fratricide, it is dangerous. It is more effective to take these precious funds and train all base personnel to perform basic air base survivability tasks such as fire

fighting, first aid and self-defense tactics. General Ellis in his article "More Hands for Base Defense," highlights the importance of air base survivability after attack.¹² These basic skills can do more to aid the Air Force mission than augmenting the manning of outposts and other such ABD missions. Training at the familiarization level in fire fighting, first aid and self-defense will enable all personnel to either assist the experts or understand how they fit in with restoring a base after air or ground attack. This emphasis on team participation was highlighted in air base survivability exercises in Europe.

USAFE conducted monthly Salty Nation exercises which helped all base personnel understand the confusion created during and after a simulated attack. The real value was in being able to recover after attack by aiding the injured; identifying and notifying other people of unexploded ordinance; and continuing, where possible, with the launching of aircraft. Most often this occurred under simulated chemical attack conditions. This "base recovery after attack training" provided valuable experience, which led to a significant increase in the confidence of all players. This is the real value in training everyone.

The bottom line with augmentees is that non-security police personnel should not directly augment the SP mission. The necessary security police force manpower required to delay and defeat level one and two threats should be authorized, organized and trained in that mission.

Specialized Training

Another area of training not currently offered by the Air Force is combat support leadership and ground intelligence training. Significant shortfalls in both these areas were discussed in Chapter 5. Currently, the only suitable training is offered in Army programs, of which, the AF is failing to take advantage.

The AF coordinator for the Joint Readiness Training Center, a five year veteran, has seen a lot of leadership mistakes at the exercise site.

There is little training and few tools for leaders. Alone and unarmed, leaders have no quick references or experience to rely on. [Experienced commanders] knew what to do, but with rapid changes of personnel, some type of guidance is required. Joint handbooks are filled with platitudes and broad sweeping statements. How does a leader execute this doctrine?¹³

Support group commanders must understand combat operations before the first bullet flies. ABD is part of combat support. Leadership training for commanders currently focuses on the requirements of how to run a well established base in peacetime (legal, environmental, public relations, etc.). War changes that focus. Commanders need to prepare for this role and practice it.

Support group commanders need to attend combat support operations training which highlights the difference between peace and war. In addition, they need to know how to fit in with their Army combat service support counterparts. By attending the three week ABD command course the Army runs for its commanders, AF support group commanders would be prepared to assume the combat support leadership role now sadly lacking.¹⁴ In addition to serving the AF better, their common learning base will help integrate joint forces with a better understanding of both roles.

Similarly, training in the ground intelligence function can be found in the Army. The Army has a 14 week intelligence course which the AF security police S2s could attend. The knowledge they gain will help integrate joint intelligence operations. They can bring that experience back to the AF team and use all DoD intelligence resources more effectively. This is a small investment in the few people that would require the training.

Standardization

One of training's most serious shortfalls is the lack of commonalty between unit programs. The real value of training across joint boundaries is the standardization this joint training brings to operations. At present, there is no standardization. Bases train to different standards and at different currency rates. Some MAJCOMs sponsor their own

regional training centers where topic emphasis varies. The Army does not understand the Air Force ABD organization or doctrine at all. When host nation support is added base defense resembles a jumble of security activities, with each element going its own way. The key is to standardize training requirements and then exercise to discover and work out the differences.

A second method of standardization is the cross flow of lessons learned. This is not a new concept. Because operational readiness inspections are a commander's report card, lessons learned in one ORI are passed quickly to similar units to prevent the same errors and to capitalize on successes. Similarly, the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) is used to pass along lessons to interested units. But it is not user friendly for events such as mission specific exercises. Lessons from ABD exercises are carefully prepared by JRTC personnel and then shelved by the MAJCOMs for historical purposes. They are unavailable to units preparing to participate in RTC and JRTC exercises.¹⁵ This means that units restart the learning curve with each event--a poor method of education and a waste of available resources. Modern computer technology can make this wealth of information accessible almost instantly to interested units (once sanitized to protect the guilty).

Evaluation

After units are standardized, they can be evaluated on a level playing field. Each unit should be tested on their abilities to fulfill their roles. The specialized ABD unit could be tested on its ability to deploy, to integrate SP augmentees into its defense force and to coordinate with Army and Host Nation support effectively. SP augmentees would be tested on their individual combat skills. Upgrade and promotion would be contingent on evaluation results, making members accountable for their performance.

In addition, criteria used in tactical evaluations and readiness inspections should reflect an increased emphasis on defense capabilities. Frequently, evaluation rules have prevented simulated defense problems from affecting sortie generation rates. Because

these inspection report cards are held in high esteem, all elements that can affect the grade should be evaluated.

Evaluation results should provide feedback which must be incorporated in the ABD program. Carrots and sticks should be used judiciously to provide the proper incentive for improvement. All too often, mistakes are highlighted but no follow through is required because accountability is lacking. Support Group Commanders, unfamiliar with the defender's role, do not press for improvements or assign blame in a secondary mission. With priorities directed away from ABD, identified shortfalls go unattended.

The key is accountability. A specialized unit whose upgrade and promotion would be contingent on performing the ABD mission effectively, will put meat into the program. The overall performance of SP augmentees will, as a byproduct, reflect the specialized training as well.

Force Integration

The AF Security Police need to incorporate air base defense as a primary mission. As the sole proprietor of the base's defense they can be given the resources to do the job and then be held accountable for shortfalls in the program. Second, the SPs must integrate themselves with the base's combat support team. They must understand the role of other organizations, and see how their security support is only one part of a team effort. There is a tendency on the part of the SPs to expect others to build around them (non-essential augmentees.)¹⁶ This elitist attitude can be detrimental overall. While unit morale is a multiplier, SP "elitism" is a force divider. The SPs must realistically find ways to join other support teams on base.

Support group commanders are equally responsible for getting the most from their security experts. By ignoring advice from the experts, commanders increase their risks and create rifts between supporting elements (see chapter five for Desert Shield/Storm examples.) Unlimited individual training will not resolve the inability of a team to pull together and execute the mission.

The lack of coordination is compounded at the next level--AF contingency operations. Because of training differences (addressed earlier) several units can deploy to the same air base and face serious conflicts in their C3 and tactical operations. Increased standardization efforts and a common lead unit can decrease these integration challenges. This is important because joining hands at the next level is tougher yet.

The Army does not understand the AF air base defense mission. It does not match an Army mission. "Because military police and security police have seldom worked together to any great extent, they are not attuned to each other's normal modus operandi."¹⁷ The Army is astounded by the Air Force's piecemeal employment/deployment. They see the AF as more of a liability than an asset.¹⁸ Fear of fratricide causes anxiety in both forces as they struggle to work together. The solution is two-fold. One, increase the awareness of these differences and two, require more frequent interplay to find and build on common areas. This is done by developing joint doctrine and then practicing it.

Host nation support is the toughest integration challenge. The only possibility may be to minimize differences in culture and operations . Two specific solutions exist. One, increase the number of language trained security personnel and two, increase the number of intelligence specialists. Linguists will improve coordination and early intelligence warnings will help protect AF resources from shortfalls in the host nation's support.

Deployment Planning

The final recommendation concerns deployment planning. The AF sees itself as a reaction force in the "new world order." While the deliberate planning process helps build a budget and force structure, the crisis action planning process is the way business is conducted. Air base defense is reaction dependent as well. AF mobility plans account for this by using UTCs as building blocks to form necessary teams. Defenders are formed into nine, thirteen and 44 member units, specializing as HQ elements, military

working dog teams, defense flights, etc. When a theater commander needs support, UTCs are selected to deploy.

There is no continuity within this system. UTCs are usually from different bases or commands, In addition, the equipment these units need to fight with is usually not mated with the defenders during deployment. Frequently the logistics detachment (LOGDET) packaging is done incorrectly, leaving items out or specifying the wrong equipment.

Another frequent complaint about deployment planning is the transportation of material and people. Time Phased Force Deployment Lists (TPFDLs) are designed to prioritize unit tasking codes (UTCs) with available transportation. But when the war orders come, "priorities" change, usually based on the needs of the theater commander. When he says "Send me fighters," he gets fighters. But unfortunately, there is a disconnect in coordinating the support required for those fighters. ABD is part of that support. The fighters arrive virtually overnight. But they wait weeks for their support to show up. Transportation plans are turbulent because fast lift is limited and everyone thinks they should have the first priority. This is especially true for the AF because airmen forget that aircraft are joint transportation assets. This frequently leads to the pirating of lift to meet the threats of the loudest AF commander.

Two ABD improvements are possible. First, after the development of an ABD specialized unit, prioritize it to an early deployment line. Second, deploy as a unit. If a wing sends its aircraft overseas, the base defenders should go with their unit.

Sending the specialized ABD unit first ensures the best security option and allows them to prepare for the arrival of follow-on defense augmentees, if required. The other possibility, separately or in conjunction with the previous suggestion, is to deploy a unit as one package, with the necessary levels of support imbedded. Unit loyalty and familiarization will smooth the transition to wartime operations. While not a new concept, it needs to be incorporated with ABD more often.

Lastly, entry doctrine, at the joint level, must be developed to ease the transition to a previously undefended air base. The first few weeks of the deployment, and in some cases months, are extremely confusing, until units learn to cooperate with each other. The "must haves" such as communication, command and control plans need to be agreed upon and practiced with all the possible players prior to deployment. This is where joint doctrine development and exercises can earn their stripes. Getting past the coordination and setup of initial defenses at an immature base is most likely the largest hurdle ABD will face. Therefore the greatest focus should be directed at that phase of combat operations.

End Notes

¹ "The Air Force War on the Ground," *Air University Quarterly Review*, Winter 1953-54, p. 100.

² Wing Commander Charles Hyde, Senior RAF Regiment Officer in the US, 11 April 1994 interview.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Air Base Defense Conference, Kirtland AFB, NM. AF Security Police Agency, 21 Mar 94.

⁵ AFR 206-2 Vol 1, *Ground Defense of Main Operating Bases, Installations, and Activities*, 22 September 1983, p. 10.

⁶ Maj C. Edward Herron and Maj Robert D. Reider, *History of Air Base Ground Defense Training*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1987), p. 17.

⁷ Ibid., 23. A memorandum of agreement was signed on 22 May 1984. Joint Army-AF Initiative 8 called for "Army units to provide air base defense outside the base perimeter" and Joint Initiative 9 read "The Army and Air Force will execute a Joint Service Agreement for the Army to provide initial and follow-on training for Air Force on-site security flights."

⁸ Lt Col Price T. Bingham, "Fighting From the Air Base," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1987, p. 39.

⁹ Raymond Bell, "To Protect an Air Base," *Airpower Journal*, Fall 1989, p. 12.

¹⁰ Lt Col Wayne Purser, *Air Base Ground Defense: An Historical Perspective and Vision for the 1990's*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air War College, 1989), p. 61.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 61.

¹² Maj Gen George E. Ellis, "More Hands for Base Defense," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1988, pp. 68-70.

¹³ Lt Col David Barninger, AF Coordinator for JRTC, Little Rock AFB, AR, 30 March 1994 interview.

¹⁴ Purser, p. 60.

¹⁵ Barninger interview.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bell, p. 17.

¹⁸ Barninger interview.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The solution to the air base survivability problem, then, is not simply more resources but a strategy that employs our resources in a mode more sensitive to the realities of an environment characterized by a more lethal threat and a dynamic technology.

Col Harry Gregory, "Air Base Survivability: A Question of Strategy"

Summary

The United States Air Force does not properly support Air Base Defense (ABD), leaving vulnerable aircraft exposed on the ground. The cause of this problem is the lack of support between services, within the AF and even within the tasked unit--the Security Police career field. Despite its position as the United States' true ground defense specialists, the US Army believes the Air Force should be responsible for its own ground defense, because the Army is not manned or funded to assume the ABD burden. The Air Force's traditional position regarding ABD has been a lack of interest in the ground defense mission, preferring air missions to the "ground pounder's" role assumed by base defenders. Even the AF Security Police treat ABD as an additional duty, with all the associated negative connotations and results.

The answer to this problem is better ABD organization, training and planning in peacetime for wartime activities. ABD needs dedicated ground defense specialists, who are better trained and integrated with other defenders. Realistic mission requirements should be levied against the specialists, leaving the Level III threat (battalion-sized unit) to the Army. Air Force defenders can then equip and train for the more likely lower threat levels. ABD requires joint force integration. Leaders must get past the uncomfortable stage in joint relations and coordinate joint action.

The inevitable incorporation of reservists to the mission will call for the revising of ABD training and planning. The authors of air base defense doctrine and future planners must look at the necessity to increase reserve deployment timing and the

possible effect of initially reduced combat capabilities. Where this is not feasible, regulars must be assigned to the mission.

"Non-essential" base personnel should be removed from their current security police augmentee role. The ground-based threat is real and requires properly trained personnel to confront it.

The right people need to attend the right training. Combat Support group commanders must no longer hinder the ABD mission because they do not understand the nature of combat security requirements. All base defenders need to get the right amount of training, commensurate with their readiness status, and a chance to practice it. Training develops confidence and tests doctrine which increases the chance of mission effectiveness. Joint training also helps standardize operations across different units -- the key to a mission requiring cooperation for success. Realistic evaluations should assign accountability to failing units so that solutions can be found. By ignoring shortfalls, units are condemned to restart the learning curve.

Many ABD support functions still require attention. Interoperable command, control and communications procedures and equipment are a must. Further, the formation of a ground intelligence specialty should be studied for feasibility. Air Force close air support for ABD must be looked at realistically in terms of the degree and authority of control and then, if required, develop and assign training.

Unified Command deployment planners should carefully determine the role of ground defenders in the preparation of time phased force deployment lists. While everyone cannot be on the first jet, security forces ensure the survivability of follow-on forces and assets. Greater focus also needs to be made in determining exactly how the ABD forces will be employed in an immature security environment. This "entry doctrine" should be developed and practiced jointly.

Conclusion

As the IRA sensationally demonstrated in a series of mortar attacks at Heathrow Airport, London in March 1994, a few men with standoff weapons can create chaos and possible carnage. The Air Force has not seriously addressed this threat. The Air Staff must decide if they are willing to continue the current ABD program and absorb possible aircraft losses, or address the shortfalls and develop an ABD program which can more realistically deter, delay or defeat a potential enemy. The willingness and capability to absorb losses becomes critical as the cost of aircraft increases and their availability decreases.

Experience has shown that a short-sighted, reactive air base defense program has not worked in past conflicts and it will not deter future ground attacks. A sound ABD program can provide necessary insurance because the potential for loss is greater today than ever.

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