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Subject:
Abstract: 310 BOMBARDMENT WING (BMW) PARTICIPATED IN SWAN DIVE EXERCISE. 301 BMW AND 376 BMW FLEW BIG WIND MISSIONS. 97 BMW DEPLOYED TO ROYAL AIR FORCE (RAF) LAKENHEATH, ENGLAND. 509 BMW DEPARTED RAF UPPER HEYFORD AFTER TEMPORARY DUTY (TDY). ON 16 MAY 56, A B-47 AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO THE 97 BMW CRASHED IN THE ATLANTIC. 55 STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE WING (SRW) DEPLOYED TO RAF MILDENHALL, ENGLAND.
DateRcvd: IRISRef: P0395
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AccNotes: OldAcc: 3-4804-1A **AccsnrID: DateAccs: Reel:** 11142 **Frame:** 4 **FrameLast:** 375
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History of the 7th Air Division

APO 125, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

(Strategic Air Command-United Kingdom)

1 January - 30 June 1956

3909th Air Base Group
3910th Air Base Group
3911th Air Base Group
3918th Air Base Group
3920th Air Base Group
3928th Air Base Group
3913th Air Base Sq.
3914th Air Base Sq.
3919th Air Base Sq.
1st Avn. Dep. Sq.
2nd Avn. Dep. Sq.
4th Avn. Dep. Sq.
8th Avn. Dep. Sq.
3921st Recon. Tech. Sq.
485th Comm. Squadron Div.

Prepared by:

Kenneth Sams

Mr. KENNETH SAMS
Command Historian

J H Walsh

JAMES H. WALSH
Brigadier General, USAF
Commander

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and refueling personnel are authorized for normal or emergency operation, there is considerable doubt whether this number, considered adequate under emergency conditions, would be considered acceptable under simulated emergency conditions. If the schedule of arrivals had been maintained during this operation, the working hours of maintenance and refueling personnel would have been continuous for approximately 40 hours. This can be introduced as a "fatigue factor". That question may be asked; "At what point is it unprofitable to continue maximum operation during a simulated emergency exercise?" It should be noted that all of these personnel work out in the elements. Rain or snow, cold and freezing weather, cause a man to fatigue very quickly. Certainly a man is not efficient after over 12 hours of work under these conditions. During the next operation, it is expected that little or no sleep will be possible for these people for a period of 40 hours. An error or accident which could be attributed to fatigue could be embarrassing... In order to avoid this, it is recommended that the aircraft be spaced at longer intervals, or that the post strike time requirements be lifted at a point where fatigue would become a potentially dangerous factor....

BIG WIND - 4th Air Division

The second post-strike exercise of 1956 was also flown to Lakenheath, this time by 73 aircraft of the 4th Air Division which moved to the UK on the 21st and 22nd of March. These aircraft which came from the 301st and 376th Bomb Wings, launched strikes from Barksdale AFB, air refueled in the Northeast area and landed for post-strike support at Lakenheath. The usual theater support facilities were alerted for the exercise.[46]

46. Secret TWX, COMAF 2 to COMAIRDIV 4, DODD 11737, 4 Nov 1955, 7AD OIH

In this test, the 3910th Air Base Group was brought up to 100% manning for the period of the exercise by the loan of authorized skills from other 7th AD bases. In this way, it would be possible to determine the capability of the 3910th Field Maintenance Squadron to perform its post-strike maintenance by providing one crew chief and one radio mechanic for every three aircraft. The aircraft would be turned over to 4th AD personnel upon completion of servicing and post-strike maintenance or five hours after the aircraft landed whichever was sooner.[47]

In a report on the reception of the incoming aircraft, the 7th AD Directorate of Operations commented on the control procedures. It noted that on the first increment arrival of 26 aircraft, two were diverted to Upper Heyford because of missed approaches. The third increment of 15 aircraft, which included one aircraft with three missed approaches had an average landing interval of 5.5 minutes. For all three increments, the landing interval would have been about four minutes if all missed. Some difficulties with GCA operations were pointed out, but apart from these GCA support for the exercise was viewed with complete satisfaction. The landing interval on this and previous exercises, as well as normal

47. Secret TWX, COMAIRDIV 7 to COMAIRDIV 4, MDLE 7-1037, 12 March 56, 7AD OIH.

rotations, established that Lakenheath had a satisfactory capability.[48]

In exercise BIG WIND, the average time from landing till completion of refueling was 1:46 hours, compared with 2:07 hours in exercise SWAN DIVE. The shortest time from landing until refueling was completed was 46 minutes, performed by F-6 units. The second best time was 47 minutes, performed by the hydrants. The average time from landing until all service was completed on both days of the exercise is given below:[49]

21 March 1956	(PM)	20 Aircraft	2:36
22 March 1956	(AM)	16 Aircraft	2:14
22 March 1956	(PM)	15 Aircraft	1:27
Mean Average			2:06

Prior to the exercise, the 3910th placed special emphasis on worker participation in planning in the belief that much greater interest in the overall result would be generated if the airmen had an opportunity to create the method of operation. In a report on the exercise, it described this practice:[50]

> ... One of the most difficult phases of an operation involving large numbers of aircraft is parking aircraft as they are received and parking them in such a way as to insure rapid servicing. The planning

48. Conf TWX, COMAIRDIV 7 to CINCSAC , OD 7-2036, 11 May 1956, Appendix B-24
49. Conf Ltr Hq, 3910th ABGp to Cmdr 7AD, "Aircraft Maintenance Report", (date unknown) Appendix V to History 3910th ABGp, March 1956, 7AD OIH
50. Ibid.

for this was accomplished by round table discussion with flight chiefs and assistant flight chiefs. By moving small aircraft on a base map, these men came up with a plan to receive the aircraft which included refueling; prepositioning power units; prepositioning towing equipment; prepositioning ground wires, fire extinguishers; maintenance stands, etc. When the phase of the planning had been completed, each of these men had contributed his knowledge to the problem and had an excellent over-all knowledge of what would occur. This headquarters intends to expand this discussion group to include all personnel in each flight.

The results of the test of the current manning documents was also mentioned in the 3910th's report. According to the report, results indicated that no major problems resulted from shortages of personnel. It added:

...During operation "BIG WIND" it became apparent that the Field Maintenance Squadron manning requirements could be proportional to the refueling capability of this station. If the refueling capability of the station is eight aircraft per hour, then the Flight line section of the Field Maintenance Squadron should be manned to handle this number times four. It has been found that the average aircraft is completed (refueling and maintenance) in about four hours time. Therefore if the capability to refuel aircraft is eight per hour, the total flight line personnel required should be thirty-two (32).

The input of aircraft to a station over a given period of time is also important. A steady flow of aircraft over a short period overtaxes facilities and requires excess movement of aircraft by the maintenance teams. If aircraft are landed at favorable intervals, a much larger force could be handled by the same team.

It is the opinion of this headquarters that the present manning table for the Field Maintenance Squadron is adequate to support its EWP mission...

This is based on the assumption that no de-arming and re-arming of the aircraft is required. Should de-arming of this force be required, an additional ten turret systems mechanics will be required. In addition, it is mandatory that all field maintenance personnel, regardless of AFSC, be required to attend the B-47 MTD. This enables the Chief of Maintenance to mobilize his complete potential and permits skilled personnel to handle aircraft which require minor servicing.

... It is the conclusion of this headquarters that the maintenance squadron authorization is sufficient to complete the maintenance portion of the post-strike. However, sufficient support of personnel must be available to permit these personnel to work at the job for which they were assigned. The value of a maintenance squadron is questionable if the refueling and other support capability does not match it.

Air Rescue Exercises

Both the 509th and 98th Bomb Wings participated in air rescue exercises during their tours in the UK. On 12-14 January, crews of the 98th participated in MOSS BED, which was held in the Lakenheath area and on 1 through 15 March, crews of the 509th took part in exercise WALKING CANE. Since the March exercise, no further air rescue training exercises were conducted. Plans were to deploy an air rescue squadron to the theater for a 30 day period once each calendar year at which time 7th AD would be required to provide 15 to 30 B-47 crews for a training exercise.[51] This would

51. Hist, Dir/Ops, 7AD Apr-June 1956, Appendix B-19

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7TH AIR DIVISION

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APPENDIX I

STRATEGEC AIR COMMAND

UNITED KINGDOM

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APPENDIX I

TO

HISTORICAL DATA, 7TH AIR DIVISION

APO 125 c/o POSTMASTER, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

(Strategic Air Command - United Kingdom)

1 January - 30 June 1956

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IAW par 3.b.b. AFR 205-1, 8 Jan 1956

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CONFIDENTIAL

Z MAY 1956

FROM: COMAIRDIV 7 (SAC) SO RUISLIP ENGLAND

TO: CINCSAC OFFUTT AFB NEBRASKA

INFO: COMAF 2 BARKSDALE AFB LA

CONFIDENTIAL/OD 7-2036. Reference your message DOOPF 395/ dated 11 May 56, Uncl. This message in four parts. PART I. Your attention invited to the 301/376 BombWg Comdrs B-27 report for exercise "Big Wing". No remarks indicate a sub-standard condition either personnel or equipment-wise that affected the operation in any way. It is assumed that Commander considered the recovery and landing of post-strike aircraft an important and integral part of the mission and would comment on any such discrepancies. To insure positive control of this exercise, the following 7AD and Task Force personnel were positioned as follows: A. Brize Norton REPCON - Chief Current Ops Division: B. Lancer Control - D/Ops; C. Lakenheath RAPCON/GCA - Deputy D/Ops; D. Lakenheath Tower - Task Force Commander. All above personnel were in position throughout aircraft arrival period. Procedures and plans for Lakenheath RAPCON/GCA and Tower Control were as mutually agreed between Deputy D/Ops and Task Force Commander. Providing flow of traffic was such as to permit, a maximum three minute landing interval was desired, with a minimum of one minute. PART II. A. On first increment arrival of 26 aircraft, two aircraft were diverted to Upper Heyford. One aircraft had complete UHF failure, and had to be worked

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exclusively on HF. As previously agreed, missed approaches would be diverted rather than interrupt the "free flow" pattern, and one aircraft was diverted for this reason. Average landing interval for this increment (24 aircraft) was four point six minutes. This included a 16 minute gap between third and fourth arriving aircraft. B. On second increment arrival of twenty one aircraft, three aircraft were diverted to Upper Heyford because of missed approaches. Several other aircraft which landed Lakenheath had missed prior approaches, but were worked back into the landing pattern. During landing period, direct crosswind of up to 25 knots existed at all ATC bases. Average landing interval for the eighteen aircraft arriving Lakenheath was four point nine minutes. C. On third increment arrival of fifteen aircraft, one aircraft made three missed approaches and finally landed on fourth approach. Landing interval on this wave averaged five point five minutes. For all three increments, if all missed approaches had landed, the landing interval would be approximately four minutes. This Hq is not satisfied with the landing interval; further comments are contained in my Zippo 3-203, B-28 report, dated 30 Mar 56. PART III. Some of the problem areas noted by this Hq were as follows: A. Since VFR conditions existed on arrival of first increment, GCA personnel indicated tendency to not be as particular as they normally would under IFR conditions. This was immediately rectified and did not occur on subsequent waves. B.

On second increment, there was serious radio interference on RAPCON feeder frequency with Sculthorpe and Shepherds Grove. At the time of exercise, this was only frequency available. It has subsequently been changed. C. Since RAPCON/GCA at Lakenheath is same CPN-4 unit, no turn-around capability is possible at present. One one increment, PPI approaches had to be utilized, but caused no difficulty. PART IV. Deputy D/Ops this Hq discussed overall GCA/RAPCON operation with Task Force Commander and two Wing Commanders concerned. Other than items noted in PART III, complete satisfaction was indicated in GCA support for exercise. Landing interval on this and previous exercises, as well as normal rotations, has established that Lakenheath has a satisfactory capability. If 2AF desires to furnish this Hq with any other specific items or discrepancies that occurred during "BIG WIND" they will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken.

ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION BY PRECEDENCE INDICATED IS ESSENTIAL

COLONEL DAVID I. LIEBMAN