

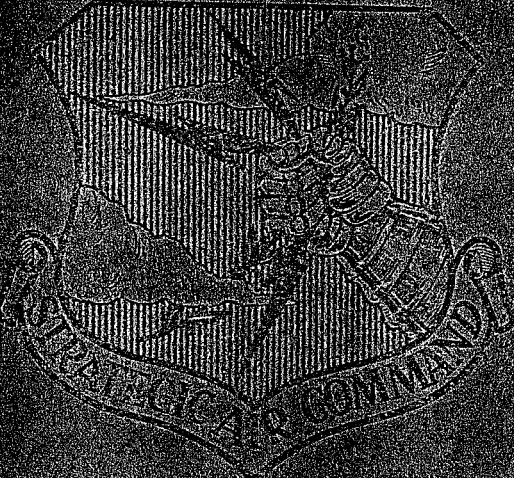
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HISTORY

820TH STRATEGIC AIR FORCE DIVISION (SAD) (C-0)
1 November 1962 - 30 November 1962
(Unclassified Title)
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CLASSIFIED BY
EXEMPT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTED BY
EXEMPTION CODE
DATE 1970



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19 MAY 1980

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19 MAY 1980

Director
Aerospace Studies Inst
AFTRM Archives Branch
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

RETURN TO:

Nov 1962
← Div - 820-H1

820TH STRATEGIC AEROSPACE DIVISION (SAC)

1 November 1962 - 30 November 1962

(Unclassified Title)

50431

P.R.C.

Prepared by
A2C Kenneth S. Evans
Historian

Office of Information

820TH STRATEGIC AEROSPACE DIVISION (SAC)

Plattsburgh Air Force Base, New York

CLASSIFIED BY _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, 1970

Approved by:

WINSTON R. CLOSE
Brigadier General, USAF
Commander

Eighth Air Force, Strategic Air Command

United States Air Force

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DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS
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CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS

During the time of the SAC alert at Plattsburgh, the division directorate of operations was pressed with the task of monitoring the activities of the two tactical wings, the missile squadron and the support units under alert conditions. (U)

By 1 November 1962, the general situation of the division under the increased alert posture was as follows: 1) eight of the twelve missile sites surrounding the base had been increased to an alert configuration; 2) eight B-47 bombers had been dispersed to Burlington Municipal Airport and 10 were remaining on reflex at Brize-Norton, England; 3) two KC-97 tankers had been dispersed to Goose Air Base, Labrador; 4) the remaining aircraft and aircrews were on alert at Plattsburgh and 5) support personnel were working around the clock in support of the alert condition. (S)

The division established maximum travel limitations for all personnel on 5 November 1962 which were to last until the

1. History of the 820th Strategic Aerospace Division, Oct 1963, Chapter III.

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termination of the Cuban emergency. For aircrews on duty, red alert limitations were established for the primary alert force and normal alert limitations were placed on non-alert force personnel. In addition, key personnel which were designated by the major unit commander, were restricted to telephone alert status on duty or in quarters. A 30 minute telephone alert status was placed on all other personnel. The limitation implied a 30 minute maximum travel distance from the base.² (U)

At the beginning of the alert in October, the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron and the Site Activation Task Force combined their efforts to bring all 12 Atlas missile sites up to an alert configuration. At the time, the Air Force only owned two of the missile sites and the final missile turnover was not to occur until mid-December.³ (S)

However, through the combined efforts of the two units in coordination with the Ballistic Systems Division (BSD), 10 missiles had been generated to an alert status by 3 November. Site 12, Mooers, New York, reached that status on 2 November, followed by Site 1, Champlain, New York, on 3 November.⁴ (S)

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2. Ltr, C to 380C, et al, "Control of Personnel," 5 Nov 1962. Exhibit 20.
 3. Interview, A2C Ken S. Evans, historian, with Lt. Col. Ziba Ogden, 556 DO, 16 Nov 1962.
 4. Report, 556 SMS to 8AF, "Daily Unit Capability Report," on File, 556 DO.
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On 3 November, in addition to a follow-up order on 5 November, the missile squadron was notified by Strategic Air Command to return the unaccepted sites to BSD so that training and installation and checkout tasks could be completed in line with the normal turnover process. ⁵ Seven sites were returned to BSD, one per day, from 4 to 10 November, in the following sequence: Site 1, Champlain, New York; Site 10, Brainardsville, New York; Site 4, Willsboro, New York; Site 5, Lewis, New York; Site 6, Ausable, New York; Site 9, Dannemora, New York, and Site 12, Mooers, New York. ⁶ (S)

According to a division report to Eighth Air Force, emergency combat capability was operationally successful and presented no specific problems for the missile unit. Cooperation among all missile agencies to achieve the posture was highly effective. ⁷ (C)

In accordance with a directive by the SAC commander in chief, Eighth Air Force requested that the division prepare a report to identify problem areas associated with the increased

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5. Msg, 8AF to 38OBW, DMM2 11-072, 3 Nov 1962, Exhibit 21; Msg, SAC to ALPHA II, DM 8828, 5 Nov 1962, Exhibit 22.
 6. Report, 556 SMS to 8AF, "Daily Unit Capability Report," on file, 556 DO.
 7. Report, C to 8AF (DPL), "Problems Associated with Current DEFCON Posture," 23 Nov 1962. Exhibit 26.

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readiness posture from its beginning through the modified DEFCON 2 effective 15 November. Problem areas to be expounded upon were adequacy of plans; airborne alert; generation rates, procedures and timing in relation to progressive defense conditions; dispersal concept; command control at dispersal sites; rotation of crews and aircraft during extended dispersal; adequacy of resources; personnel; comments on posturing the force for the future; emergency combat capabilities for missile units and adequacy of support. (S)

The division felt that current war orders and support plans were prepared without guidance toward extended posturing of the force. Plattsburgh's war support plan was adequate to posture the dispersal force initially, but it became necessary to continue to modify support and operational areas on an extended basis. It was thought that a SAC wide general guidance framework should be outlined to cover reflex, home alert, dispersal and support sorties. Individual units could then modify the guidance dependent upon local requirements and contingencies. (S)

The airborne alert was not applicable to the base, and

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8. Msg, 8AF to Uniform, C41109, 31 Oct 1962, Exhibit 24; Msg, 8AF to Uniform, CS29285, 16 Nov 1962, Exhibit 25.
 9. Report, C to 8AF (DPL), "Problems Associated with Current DEFCON Posture, " 23 Nov 1962, Exhibit 26.

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no problem areas were encountered with the generation of aircraft, nor with procedures and timing in relation to progressive defense conditions. ¹⁰ (U)

Several problems were noted during the extended alert in regard to dispersal operations and the division recommended several suggestions toward solving the problem areas. (U)

Since the dispersal base for the bomb wing was only a short distance away, it was felt that the wing had the capability to upgrade second cycle sorties to first cycle sorties by actual time of arrival of the last dispersed aircraft plus five hours. The division recommended that dispersal plans incorporate this capability and combat mission folders be developed accordingly. ¹¹ (S)

For safety purposes, it was suggested that tactical aircraft disperse with empty assist take-off (ATO) racks, i.e., less bottles. Arrangements were made at the dispersal base for an adequate storage facility. Periodic inspections would be made by the 40th Munitions Maintenance Squadron ¹² to assure ATO bottle reliability. (C)

In regard to the effects of local radar emissions on ATO squibs, confusion existed because of the relative location of facilities at Burlington in relation to the safe

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.

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separation distances recommended in AFM 32-6. Intra-line distance from a one-megawatt radar transmitter to the parking location for the wing's ATO-loaded aircraft was 600-800 feet. The chart in the manual was the sole reference in the field and it suggested a distance of 7,000 feet for transmitters in the 50-kilowatt range. The situation was resolved through a telephone call from the wing commander and Headquarters Eighth Air Force. For further operations, the division requested clarification of the provisions of the manual and its application to dispersal operations.¹³ (C)

The support coverage anticipated from Plattsburgh's dispersal plan was considered inadequate because the Air National Guard (ANG) was not federalized and hence the support expected was not provided. Deficiencies were apparent in housing, messing, transportation, communications, and coordination between SAC and the ANG. The division recommended that priorities for SAC dispersal forces be established with the ANG by prior coordination and that requirements be outlined for future operations.¹⁴ (C)

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

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In relation to command control at dispersal sites, it was felt that better coordination of Broken Arrow procedures should be effected between Headquarters SAC and other major air commands. Air Defense Command fighters at Burlington had nuclear equipped aircraft but no Broken Arrow plans. It was thought that an accident involving one of their aircraft could constitute a serious hazard to SAC aircraft, and, therefore, close coordination would be a necessity. Coordination was attained by the base commander with some reluctance since ADC pilots had no guidance from their headquarters. ¹⁵ (C)

Two problems developed in the adequacy of resources area. First, the number of IF-10 rations on the Consolidated Materiel Distribution Objective (CMDO) were considered inadequate to support an extended operation. It was recommended that higher headquarters resolve the problem by providing for funding, authorization and storage of emergency rations. ¹⁶ (U)

In addition, a need developed suddenly to billet numerous combat crews and several TDY missile crews in addition to providing additional bedding for dispersal operations. Adequate bedding would not have been available had it not been for a supply of new beds ordered months before for normal replacement purposes. The division suggested emergency EWO bedding be funded and included in the CMDO. ¹⁷ (U)

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

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Finally, the security force encountered no problems during the initial phases of the progressive defense conditions. However, personnel strength problems continued to multiply with the additional requirements generated. Critical areas were the security of the activated missile sites, point guards on B-47's, dispersal, and augmentation at Goose Air Base. With SAC's permission to use augmentees and uncleared personnel, the security mission was successful. It was recommended that higher headquarters formulate a resolution concerning combat defense strength and augmentation procedures. ¹⁸ (C)

However, augmentation, in this area, as well as food service, caused a major taxing on the 820th Combat Support Group, mainly since the group was required to continue its normal support in such activities as personnel and finance. The division felt that a thorough review of logistical support in all areas would aid in minimizing this problem. ¹⁹ (C)

Both wings and the support group reported the same amount of aircraft during November as there were in October. The 380th Bomb Wing had 51 B-47 bombers assigned and the 4108th Air Refueling Wing reported 44 KC-97 tankers. Two C-47's, three C-123's,

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

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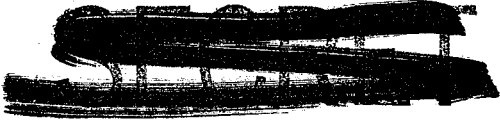
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one T-33 and two H-19 helicopters were assigned to the support group. Because of the SAC alert conditions, the home alert force was not exercised during the month. ²⁰ (S)

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20. Report, 820 STRATAD DO, "Report of Activities," 4 Dec 1962, on file, 820 STRATAD historical archives. Msg, 820 STRATAD to SAC, 4108 DCOTR 648-2, 28 Nov 1962. Exhibit 27.

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CHAPTER IV

MATERIEL

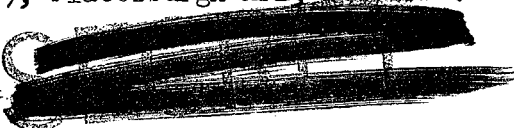
The month of November was probably in more ways than one the most active periods that the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron had ever encountered before. The upgrading and downgrading of the missiles during the Cuban crisis, the completion of many of the construction phases, and a general close-out of pre-operational activities accounted for a busy month. (U)

As of 30 November, most activity, especially in the construction and equipage areas, had been completed. (U)

Progress highlights of the month were numerous. For the first time, the squadron had its full complement of Atlas missiles. Of the 13 missiles on hand, 12 had been installed on the launchers. As of 30 November, four of the 12 complexes had achieved initial alert capability. (S)

In addition, the 40th Munitions Maintenance Squadron had under its jurisdiction all of its necessary missile equipment, namely, 13 each of arming and fusing shelves, nose and flare sections, access doors, separation mechanisms and center

1. "Progress Report #16, 8AF Supplement to SAC Programming Plan 8-61, SM-65 (ATLAS), Plattburgh AFB, New York." 20 Nov 1962. Exhibit 29.



sections. The unit's training ~~was~~ finished and completely operational.² (U)

Other highlights of the month included the technical approval demonstration at six of the 12 sites and at the missile assembly and maintenance shop, the completion of Phases I, II, and III of installation and check-out, and the termination of Phase II of two instructor crews, giving the squadron its first combat ready crews.³ (U)

During the month, four snow plows were prepositioned at selected sites, with each assigned to plow three complexes. After completing its own complex, the plow would proceed to the other two sites. In addition, farm tractors with snow plowing blades would be prepositioned at all sites to augment the four regular plows. Three tractors were put in place and the remaining nine complexes would have their tractors as soon as plowing blades were received.⁴ (U)

Training programs in fire prevention and protection were established on a continuing basis. Engineering personnel attended special training courses as required and upon return from school, conducted in-shop training.⁵ (U)

2. "Progress Report #17, 8AF Supplement to SAC Programming Plan 8-61, SM-65 (ATLAS), Plattsburgh AFB, New York," 14 Dec 1962. Exhibit 30.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

In a report to the base commander on 1962 civil engineering ratings, Col. Roland H. Cipolla, Eighth Air Force director of divil engineering, said that while there was a general overall improvement, there was still room for progress. He also said that the rating standards for 1963, then being prepared, would be much more difficult. (U)

A combined 1962 rating of facility inspection and civil engineering effectiveness showed that Plattsburgh received an outstanding rating of 91.4 as compared to an 88.9 satisfactory rating in 1961. The 1962 rating was the second highest rating in Eighth Air Force for 1962. All areas rated in 1962 received either an outstanding rating or satisfactory rating, except for fire protection operations which was rated marginal. (U)

6. Ltr. 8AF DE to BC, "Staff Visit Ratings," 23 November 1962, with four attachments: 1) Compliance and Effectiveness Rating, 2) Facility Inspection Rating (Go-No-Go), 3) Combined Facility Inspection and CE Effectiveness Rating, 4) Comparative Ratings for BDCE. Exhibit 31.

7. Ibid.