

31 SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON



MISSION

The 31 Security Forces Squadron maintains installation force protection during peacetime and wartime operations at eight separate base areas. It safeguards Protection Level one, two, three and four resources to include 46 assigned aircraft and provides law enforcement services to a community of almost 10,000. The squadron prepares 117 primary mobility personnel, maintains organic air base defense capabilities and provides staff assistance/security oversight to eight Geographically Separated Units

More than 450 active duty, reserve, guard, and civilian members are assigned to the 31 SFS. The unit consists of five staff functions: Commander's Support; Investigations and Anti-terrorism; Operations and Training; Mobility and Resources; and Plans and Administration.

LINEAGE

Squadron B, 31 Airdrome Group designated, 6 Nov 1947
Organized, 20 Nov 1947
Discontinued, 25 Aug 1948

31 Air Police Squadron, Fighter, Jet, constituted, 15 Jun 1948
Activated, 22 Aug 1948
Redesignated 31 Air Police Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1952
Activated, 25 Sep 1957

Inactivated, 1 Jan 1959

Redesignated 31 Security Police Squadron and activated, 9 Jun 1967

Organized, 15 Jul 1967

Squadron B, 31 Airdrome Group and 31 Security Police Squadron consolidated, 12 Oct 1984 and designated 31 Security Police Squadron

Inactivated, 1 Apr 1994

Activated, 1 Apr 1994

Redesignated 31 Security Forces Squadron, 1 Jul 1997

STATIONS

Turner Field (later Turner, AFB), GA, 20 Nov 1947-1 Jul 1952

Turner AFB, GA, 25 Sep 1957-1 Jan 1959

Tuy Hoa AB, South Vietnam, 15 Jul 1967-15 Oct 1970

Homestead AFB, FL, 15 Oct 1970-1 Apr 1994

Aviano AB, Italy, 1 Apr 1994

ASSIGNMENTS

31 Airdrome (later, 31 Air Base) Group, 20 Nov 1947-1 Jul 1952

31 Air Base Group, 25 Sep 1957-1 Jan 1959

Pacific Air Forces, 9 Jun 1967

31 Combat Support Group, 8 Jul 1967

31 Combat Support (later 31 Support) Group, 15 Oct 1970-1 Apr 1994

31 Support (later 31 Mission Support) Group, 1 Apr 1994

COMMANDERS

Maj William C. McClure, #1957

LTC John B. Welch

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Vietnam

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III

Vietnam Air / Ground Offensive

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV

Tet 69/Counteroffensive

Vietnam Summer/Fall

Vietnam Winter-Spring

Sanctuary Counteroffensive

Southwest Monsoon

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation

1 May-31 Dec 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

15 Jul 1967-30 Apr 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award:

1 Apr 1994-1 Apr 1996

2 Apr 1996-1 Apr 1998

24 Mar 1998-10 Jun 1999

24 Mar-10 Jun 1999

1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2002

2 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

1 Jun 2009-31 May 2011

1 Jan 2012-31 Dec 2013.

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jan 1968-19 May 1969

EMBLEM



On a blue disc edged yellow between three white mullets of eight points in chief and three white stylized waves in base, an oriental dragon (yellow with brown details, head, underbody, feet, tail and scales red, eyes, talons and teeth white, pupil of eye black) emitting three red tongues of flame. The emblem is symbolic of the Squadron and The Air Force colors, golden yellow and

ultramarine blue, are used. Ultramarine blue denotes the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations, and yellow the sun and excellence of personnel in assigned duties. The primary element, the dragon, represents the fire power of the combined forces of the squadron which are vital for its mission of defense regardless of location. The three stars symbolize bravery, alertness, and devotion to duty; these attributes are essential to the security policeman in the accomplishment of his duties. The three waves in base depict the squadron's combat capability to defend USAF personnel and resources across any ocean, in any part of the world. The National Colors also are used in the design.



MOTTO

DEFEND WITH HONOR

OPERATIONS

On 29 July 1968 the base came under attack by two hostile sapper units. It appears they penetrated before Tiger Flight guard mount and lay between the runways for 2 to 4 hours. The first knowledge of their presence was when an aircraft exploded on the flight line at 0137. Calling a Red Alert the squadron raced to the area and quickly engaged the withdrawing hostile forces. A 4 hour gun fight ensued as the hostiles attempted to extract themselves from the base. When the fight was over 9 enemy lay dead and their weapons captured. The squadron suffered no casualties.

August was marked by an increased vigilance and upgrading of security by completion and initiation of emplacements improvements. The squadron went to a 7 day work week with no time off for any assigned personnel. In addition, 5 dog handlers from Binh Thuy AB were sent TDY to us to assist in our manning problem.

September resulted in continued surveillance and a 7 day work week. This is the second month of no time off for the squadron. The K-9 section has started to come back up to strength which has allowed us to utilize our dogs in a more efficient manner.

On 9 September we received approval from 7th AF and COMUS MACV in instituting a sanitized

zone for 100 meters around our entire perimeter between 2100 and 0400. The Squadron passed out hand bills to all villages around us warning them of this and large signs were placed approximately 100 meters around the perimeter with the same warning. Between these hours (2100-0400) any person in the zone will receive warning shots and if he does not vacate the area will be the subject of gunfire aimed to kill. This has improved our Base Defense immeasurably.

Many projects have been undertaken to improve Base Defense capabilities. A perimeter lighting project is approximately 70% complete providing all of the western perimeter fence, 1/2 of the northern perimeter and 1/3 of the southern perimeter with continuous lighting making penetration most difficult. New bunkers have been constructed in the vicinity of Oscar 8, Oscar 6 and southwest of Post 1. These are all multiple man bunkers and offer increased fire power in critical areas. Oscar 8 has been moved and raised to provide increased visibility. The entire perimeter fence is being reinforced by adding another 4 strand fence inside and then doing the MACV weave in it. This is progressing rapidly and is approximately 25% complete. Two below surface mortar positions have been constructed replete with trenches to bunkers which may be used by the mortar men for cover if the position is shelled. By virtue of their strategic locations 90% of the base can be covered. The protection of the out of reach spots is afforded by a mortar tube mounted in the rear of a weapons carrier. All tubes are 81MM and ammunition is illumination and high explosive.

One problem continues to plague the squadron; that of being undermanned. We are currently authorized 395 enlisted personnel and 7 officers. Our present on board strength is 367 enlisted and 6 officers. Additionally, all of our Key Noncommissioned Officers will rotate at approximately the same time which will cause a break in our combat experienced troops. This will take a short period of time to cover after arrival of our new Key Personnel. We are currently the only Security Police Squadron not authorized a Major as Operations officer. We have asked for relief from Personnel in our manning problems and authorizations.

During October the threat to the airbase heightened and a large majority of the nights were spent in a grey or yellow alert status. The squadron continued to work 7 days a week without time off. This was the third month of no time off for the squadron and the grind began to exact toll. A request was made for a section of 801st Combat Security Policeman (Safeside) to augment us as we were considerably below strength. All rotating personnel were held to the end of their DEROS month, but the help was negligible as it took every man we had plus 18-30 Augmentees per night to man our posts. The Day Security flights were shortened to bare necessity of personnel in order to back up Tiger Flight. Sniper fire at night was a constant problem and occurred frequently. Intelligence indicates the enemy conducted detailed reconnaissance of the base and time guardmounts and changes of posting procedures. This report was received on 31 October.

Guardmounts times remained unchanged, however part of Tiger night flight now posts at 1930 to increase security on the perimeter, Approval was received on 7 November for deployment of a section of Safeside Combat Security Police. This will be 33 men and 1 officer and will arrive on 9 November. Parts have been received for a Quad .50 caliber gun mount and a 5-ton truck has been procured. This mobile fire power will be added to our Arsenal of weapons when the turret has

been mounted on the truck as the .50 caliber machine guns were already on hand. The base was subject to 2 Typhoon type storms which made the men's work quite difficult. An upgrading program of Observation Towers has begun. Observation Tower #3 has been turned into a Fortress at ground level with a permanent .50 caliber and 2 M-60 machine gun positions. The area between the floor of the tower and the bunker below is screened to deflect thrown charges. There is a 1500 watt lamp installed that may be turned on in the gun bunker or the tower. This approach will be continued with other towers. Permanent lighting is being installed all around the north, east and west sides of the flight line which will bathe an intruder in light before he can reach before he can reach the aircraft and make him an easy target.

Guardmount times were changed for the entire squadron. The new times now permit manning of all positions by the day flight and an expanded Early Tiger flight. A portion of Tiger Flight comes on duty at 1830 to man all positions not manned by the day flight on duty. At 2200 the remainder of Tiger Flight relieves the day flight and also double mans all positions. Permanent light on the north and Westside of the ramp is now in place and lights up all possible approaches available to a sapper squad in trying to reach the Wing's aircraft. The Safeside Section did not depart as originally planned, but will remain attached to us indefinitely. This manpower addition has assisted immeasurably in providing tighter security for the base. Three Armored Cars arrived this month and 3 more are expected in January. The mobility and mountable fire power these vehicles provide has provided the security forces with an extra punch which could be decisive in a battle. The Christmas Truce came and passed uneventfully. All days off were cancelled during the week of Christmas and the week following to provide expanded Aircraft Security for a larger than usual number of Alert Aircraft. The squadron received four new barracks and moved in immediately which has allowed us to now have 28 men per hootch for the first time since 1 June. From 1 June until now we have had 36-38 men per barracks because of lack of barracks space.

The entire land perimeter of the base is now lighted, as are all open approach to the flight line. One-third of the beach is now fenced by triple standard concertina wire and one-half of the entire land perimeter is mined.

Our manning situation is now very good except in the Sentry Dog Section where we are 3 dogs and 7 handlers short. This is expected to be temporary as programmed input of personnel should alleviate this situation.

Our most pressing problem is now vehicles. 5 of our machine gun jeeps have been pulled from us because they are category A. The replacements have not been received. In addition, one Armored Car is deadline or parts as it arrived with a defective starter which burned up after a week's use. We are attempting to locate a starter in the Philippines Islands as these vehicles are so new in country that there are not parts for them.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *Turner AFB, GA, 31 Fighter Bomber Wing, 1957*. Army and Navy Publishing Co Inc. Baton Rouge, LA. 1957.