

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

**Defending the Nest: A History and Analysis of
Airfield Defence Policy in the
Royal Australian Air Force**

A Dissertation submitted by
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26 June 2020

Certification of Dissertation

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, or material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

It was not long after the invention of aircraft that they became powerful weapons in the third dimension, with unrestricted ability to cross borders, over sea or land, and attack seemingly at will and with great devastation of any enemy target within its range. Aircraft are precision weapons of destruction of any battle and can be the turning point of any war. The majesty and power of these birds of war, and the claim of air power they bring, is an asset to any nation at war. Yet, on the ground these powerful machines become vulnerable, and it is in this form that they broadcast their fragility. They become thin-skinned, soft targets, lacking agility and ease of movement, in short, they become very easy targets themselves. Therefore, an enemy is more likely to recognise that the best way to gain air control is to destroy or at least harass these military machines on the ground. For any military force, especially one with expensive war machines and large areas of land that are key tactical terrain, airfield defence cannot be overlooked. This vulnerability of aircraft, and the network that surrounds them, to ground or air attack has been recognised in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) from as early as 1929. It was at that time that airfield defence first became a RAAF capability.

The evolution of the history of RAAF airfield defence has never before been studied in depth through a robust academic process. An overview of the writings of Australian Air Force historians to date show that there is a focus on aviation, aircraft themselves and pilots. Apart from a few sentences, Australian RAAF histories very rarely acknowledge a key facet of air-operations; the protection of the airfields. This thesis aims to capture a significant area of Australian military history and analyse its development, influences and evolution.

This thesis will investigate all aspects of RAAF airfield defence from 1921 until 1970. This will include an examination of the evolution of security and defence policy, often challenged by global hostilities and subsequent times of peace. This study will uncover debate and inconsistency across the RAAF, since its inception, regarding the need to protect its airfields, and which arm of the Defence Force should be responsible for doing so. The views and influences of key personalities on the development of an Australian airfield defence capability will also be examined. This thesis will demonstrate the impacts of those policies on the ground, on Australian bases and overseas airfields and highlight the activities of airmen performing the role.

Glossary and Abbreviations

Aerodrome Defence Officer (ADO) – RAAF Officer of the Administration and Special Duty Branch which was formed in 1942 to instruct RAAF personnel in weapons and ground defence of airfields and to command the defences of RAAF stations and airfields.

Aerodrome Defence Instructor (ADI) – An airmen mustering created in 1942 to instruct all officers and airmen in the RAAF in airfield defence and weapons.

Aerodrome Defence Scheme (ADS) – Formed on 23 August 1929 to provide AA machine gun and ground defence machine gun defence of RAAF airfields and stations.

Aerodrome/Airfield Defence – The term used by the RAAF to encompass all aspects of combating attacks against the airfield. The term ‘aerodrome defence’ was last used in early 1960, after which the term ‘airfield defence’ was used.

Aerodrome/airfield/air base – For this thesis these terms will be used interchangeably. An air base is a defined area on land (including any buildings, installations and equipment) intended to be used either wholly or in part for the arrival, departure and surface movement of fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft.

Aircraft hand – This mustering was a general mustering that covered all trades from Fitters, Armourers, Fabric Workers and so on.

Aircraft hand/Guard – This was the original mustering name of the airfield defence mustering until mid 1940 when it was changed to Guard.

Aircrew – A generic term describing personnel whose primary duties are conducted within the confines of an aircraft during flight time.

Airfield Defence Guard (ADG) – The new mustering formed in 1966, according to the RAAF it was to be similar the Second World War Guard mustering. These airmen would provide internal airfield defence and security for the RAAF.

Airman/Airmen – It is acknowledged that both men and women served in the RAAF during the years covered in this thesis. However, for the period studied only men were recruited for the roles of security and airfield defence, therefore the masculine terms are used throughout this document.

Anti-Aircraft (AA) – This normally covers light (LAA), medium (MAA) and heavy (HAA) artillery pieces that fire large calibre shells into the air to damage or destroy aircraft at high level.

Australian Flying Corps (AFC) – The Australian air arm of the Australian Army during the First World War.

General Ground Defence – The defence of the external land battlespace that is outside of the area of the air base.

Ground Defence – The term used by the RAAF which encompasses all aspects of combating all ground attacks against the airfield.

Ground defence machine gun – The use of machine guns within a pit or bunker for the defence of airfields from ground attacks.

Ground Defence Officer (GDO) – By the mid 1950s the ADO mustering was removed, and the title of the new Branch of Ground Defence Officer was implemented.

Ground Gunner – Any Aircrafthand or Guard that completed a Ground Gunner course in the Middle East during the Second World War. This mustering title was also used during the National Service Training Scheme (NSTS) in the RAAF during the 1950s.

Guard – A mustering of the RAAF between 1940 and 1960 that provided security and airfield defence.

Guard duty – Any member of the Air Force manning the gates onto an airfield and checking authorisation for entry. This was not always solely the role of airmen of the Guard mustering.

Guard Gunner – From early 1940, any Guard that completed the Aerodrome Defence Scheme training and qualified on machine guns, had their mustering title change to Guard Gunner. This title was removed from the RAAF in 1944 by RAAF Headquarters.

Guard War Dog Handler – From 1942 until late 1953 Guards could train as dog handlers. Once qualified their mustering title was changed to Guard War Dog Handler.

Local ground defence – This is the ground defence of the internal area within the perimeter of a RAAF station.

Low-level anti-aircraft machine gun – This is low-level anti-aircraft defence undertaken by men manning small calibre machine guns firing at low flying or strafing aircraft.

Passive defence – this includes all precautions taken on the airfield to protect airmen and equipment from any attack. The methods can be camouflage, dispersal, protection underground etc.

Technical Airmen – Airmen of mustering that serviced or repaired aircraft.

Non-Technical Airmen – Any other mustering that provided a function for the RAAF. These mustering did not work directly with aircraft e.g. Clerks, Storemen etc.

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I have completed many hours of research within the reading rooms of the National Archives in Canberra, Sydney and in the Brisbane Archives Centre. In addition to these, many hours of research in the Australian War Memorial Research Centre. With a total of over 1000 files opened and investigated over the years of research into RAAF airfield defence, I must thank the efficient and knowledgeable staff of these centres.

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Chapter One - Thesis Aim, Structure and Methodology

‘If systematic study of the past is taken away, only personal experience, hearsay and intuition remain. Military history may be an inadequate tool for commanders to rely on, but a better one has yet to be designed’.

Martin Van Creveld.¹

Anecdote of Airfield Defence

The earliest record of airfield defence in Australian history is from December 1916 when routine orders for No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps (AFC) were issued at Mustabig in Egypt. At this time, airmen, including Joe Bull, were rostered on as guards to man the Anti-Aircraft (AA) machine gun posts.² In Bull’s personal diary he wrote that he and his mate ‘Wattie’ assisted the unit’s armourers to fit a Maxim machine gun onto an axle with an iron wheel.³ He described that one end of the axle was dug into the ground and the wheel allowed the machine gun to be moved around to face any direction for the purpose of AA machine gun defence. Bull explained that the duty of ‘guard lookout’ was to man one of the ground mounted machine guns and, using a telescope, watch for enemy aircraft. If the aerodrome was attacked the guard lookout was to fire a burst as a warning signal and then engage the aircraft.⁴

Orders that demonstrate an airfield defence response are recorded only a few months after Bull’s account. In early 1917, No. 3 Squadron, located at Savy in Hauts-de-France, Northern France, issued routine orders outlining that Guard and Camp Police were required to prevent espionage and protect the squadron airfield.⁵ The orders show that the guard consisted of one Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) and 12 airmen. The NCO was to carry a Colt revolver with four rounds of ammunition, and the airmen were each issued with a rifle and five

¹ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 15.

² Mark Lax, *One Airman’s War*, Maryborough, 1997, p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵ H.H. Storrer, ‘Squadron order No. 1’, Australian War Memorial, 4, 8/6/10 Part 1, (unpaginated).

rounds of ammunition.⁶ These guards were tasked with gate guard duties and internal foot patrols that would ensure the security of the hangars, aircraft and living tents against any intruder.⁷ The guards were also tasked with preventing any theft of bicycles and vehicles, securing the airfield from French or German civilians who might enter or spy on the operations of the squadron, and deterring animals from wandering onto the airfield.⁸

Later that year, these orders were expanded and demonstrate that there had been some consideration of defence from attacks by air. On 19 October 1917, the routine orders of No. 3 Squadron were re-issued with a title of No. 3 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Policy and directed aerodrome defence tasks to include protection against air raids.⁹ The Armament Officers were ordered to arrange for two Vickers-Maxim machine guns to be mounted on a single upright pole in an AA role, which was dug into the ground and secured. During any air raid, four men were to man each gun system, 50 yards apart in an exposed position.¹⁰ These orders were actioned when nine months later, a German aircraft approached the No. 3 Squadron aerodrome. The AA machine guns were then manned, and other airmen armed with rifles took up positions within trenches.¹¹ However, as the aircraft was being escorted by allied aircraft, no shots were fired towards it, and airmen waited for full orders. The incident that followed was recorded by a Major Blake at the time:

A German landed with their engine still ticking over and appeared to be on the point of taking off again, when the situation was saved by the Corporal of the guard, the only armed man in the vicinity, who ran up with his revolver and presented it at the head of the pilot with the order, 'Hands up!'¹²

The NCO of the guard had captured an enemy aircraft with his pistol, the only airman to ever do so. Rather than acknowledgment for this bravery, one month later, orders were received from Australian High Command chastising airmen for slackness during duty and a lack of discipline, along with a direction that only officers could capture enemy aircraft.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ D.V.J. Blake, 'Squadron Order No. 45', 1917, Australian War Memorial, 4, 8/6/10 Part 2, (unpaginated).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Graham O'Brien, *Always There - A History of Air Force Combat Support*, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, 2009, pp. 6-7.

Enlisted men were ordered to inform the Orderly Officer or the most senior officer if the above situation occurred again.¹³

These very early records reveal an infant air-minded arm of the Australian military already considering the need for protection of airfields. Considerations included both general security of the airfield and defence from ground and air attack. The level of creative design required to achieve the aims of defence showed some insight by officers and airmen as to the necessity to protect their aerodrome, personnel and assets on the ground. These attempts to secure airfields as early as 1916, are the beginnings of a long history of airfield defence in Australia.

Introduction

H.R. McMaster, a retired General, has been described as a war veteran, a military leader and teacher, a military man of 33 years' experience and a historian. McMaster highlighted the value of studying military history and what such knowledge can bring to the development of modern military doctrine. He stated:

As one of my favourite military historians, Sir Michael Howard, suggested, you have to study history to get its analytic power in width, in depth, and in context: in width, to see change over time; in depth, by looking at specific campaigns and battles to understand the complex causality of events that created them; and then in the context of politics, policy, and diplomacy. Studying history is invaluable in preparing our officers for their future responsibilities.¹⁴

McMaster then defined military history learning as the thinking and planning for future wars which requires deep reflection about the threat, the enemy, the mission, the technology, existing capabilities and the historical observations and lessons learned from past wars. McMaster continued, ' . . . history can help military leaders ask the right questions . . . History does, however, amplify many of the lessons relearned in recent and ongoing conflicts'. Additionally, he stated:

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ H.R. McMaster, interview by Andrew Erdmann, PDF Article transcript, McKinsey & Company, December 2012, McKinsey & Company Public Sector, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-militaries-learn-and-adapt>, accessed 6 September 2013.

One great feature of the Army is that it gives us the opportunity not only to have very intense formative experiences but also, consistent with the adult-learning model, to reflect on those experiences and prepare for the next level of responsibility. This type of learning is what helps us gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that allows us to adapt to unforeseen challenges and circumstances.¹⁵

In keeping with McMaster's concepts, Milan Vego stated, 'History does not and cannot predict the future . . . [however] it can teach us not to repeat the errors and blunders of our predecessors'.¹⁶ This is supported by Alan Stephens, an Australian Air Force historian, who asserted that the study of military history is but one element of military education and that, ' . . . the past contains just as many dead ends as it does signposts'.¹⁷ Therefore, when studying the past, students of RAAF airfield defence should also be mindful that any learnings need to be incorporated into a contemporary context of global geopolitics and technology. Lessons need to be considered alongside new challenges of protecting air power in a global asymmetrical, hybrid or high-intensity war.

Therefore, this thesis is the study of how the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) provided secure airfields in war and peace for the maintenance of air control, from the inception of the RAAF in 1921 until 1970. The justification of this thesis is that this particular and specific study area is unique in Australia and requires detailed academic investigation. The purpose of this thesis is to set out a detailed chronology of the evolution of airfield defence policy, highlight various positions held by senior Air Force staff and examine how they influenced airfield defence in Australia. The objective is to provide the first recorded institutional memory and analysis of RAAF airfield defence policy and history. This intent is divided into two aims: the primary aim is to analyse RAAF airfield defence policy, and, in particular, reveal the patterns, trends and changing forms of airfield defence policy in both peace and war. The secondary aim is to describe a vivid and lucid history of RAAF airfield defence in action on the ground, which will demonstrate the extreme difficulties in defending the airfields from both air and ground attack. This study of RAAF airfield defence history will represent both positive and negative aspects of the policy development and the impacts on the defence of key Air Force assets. This thesis will only cover the ground defence and airfield

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Milan Vego, 'On Military Theory', *National Defense University Press*, 62, 2011, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/vego_military_theory.pdf.http, accessed 10 December 2017.

¹⁷ Alan Stephens, 'High Noon of Air Power', *Air Power Studies Centre*, 71, 1999, <http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/APDC/media/PDF-Files/Archive%20Working%20Papers/paper-71-high-noon-of-air-power.pdf>, accessed 19 February 2018.

defence aspects; the RAAF policing and security dog history and policy development is outside the scope of this thesis yet provides an opportunity for future research into these specialist areas of military history.

A final by-product of the thesis is its ability to develop a knowledge base of RAAF airfield defence history for RAAF security force personnel which will provide a strong sense of service tradition. The absence of a recorded history is felt keenly by the men and women who have served, and who currently serve their country as RAAF personnel in airfield defence. This is exemplified by the words of retired Airfield Defence Guard (ADG) M. Howell, 'I see that coat of arms and am reminded yet again how Navy has traditions, Army has customs, Air Force has habits. Just another change of habit without any consideration of history or tradition'.¹⁸ In reference to the future knowledge that will be gained from this research, Wing Commander P. Hoare, Commanding Officer of the newly renamed, RAAF No. 1 Security Force Squadron, stated, 'An understanding of our shared history can help promote a better sense of *esprit de corps*, hence I see this as an undeclared force multiplier'.¹⁹ Wing Commander Hoare's force multiplier in this context, refers to a factor that significantly increases the effectiveness of a force, such as morale, and can improve operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The theory of airfield defence is historically linked to a sentence dating from 1921. A General in the Italian Army, Giulio Douhet, inferred that aircraft are easier to destroy on the ground at their airfields than in the sky.²⁰ Douhet's statement forms a mind picture of the weakness and the fragile aspect of aircraft while on the ground. He stated, 'It is easier and more effective to destroy the enemy's aerial power by destroying his nest and eggs on the ground than to hunt his flying birds in the air'.²¹ Douhet's metaphor of the destruction of eggs in a nest, can include bombing and strafing of airfields by enemy aircraft or the use of ground forces. In all forms, ground force attack is a more cost-effective and efficient way of destroying or harassing air forces than fighting them in the air.²²

¹⁸ Mathew Howell to Sean Carwardine, email, 10 April 2015, original in author's possession.

¹⁹ Patrick Hoare to Sean Carwardine, email, 10 March 2016, original in author's possession.

²⁰ Alan Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest*, Santa Monica, 1995, p. xiv.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

The first records of a uniquely Australian consideration of airfield defence can be found in the AFC in 1917. At that time orders were issued for airmen to be armed and man machine gun posts in the event of ground or air attack. Records of the time also reveal concern for general security of airfields with policy and orders being issued in relation to theft and unauthorised entry by civilians. However, a detailed understanding of the vulnerability of aircraft on the ground is first outlined in Flight Lieutenant H.N. Wrigley's 1923 essay on air strategy. In these works Wrigley outlined the advantages aerial warfare has over that on land and sea.²³ He accepted that once aircraft were on the ground they became vulnerable to attack from both the ground and the air.²⁴ However, Wrigley went further than Douhet in that he highlighted that a further disadvantage of aircraft was the limited distance an aircraft could travel. He described that aircraft of the time relied on developed air bases and air routes within safe distances.²⁵ Wrigley claimed that for aircraft to function and operate to their full capability, all of the airbases would be required to be secure from ground and air attack.

While Wrigley's 1923 theories highlighted the need for secure airfields to provide air control, there was no formal policy document within the RAAF in relation to the protection of airbases. It was not until 1929 with the creation of the Aerodrome Defence Scheme (ADS) that an Australian airfield defence capability was formally developed. From that moment on, the records reveal a clear dichotomy of views and objectives within RAAF senior ranks in relation to the theory and application of airfield defence.²⁶ This theme and overall divergence of strong views is witnessed throughout the history. Nevertheless, as early as 1929 airmen were employed to perform airfield defence duties and this was a continuous RAAF capability from that date forward.

The period of the Second World War reveals commanders at RAAF Stations often creatively interpreting or ignoring RAAF policy to develop a response to their own assessed needs in airfield defence. This is a period of exploration of airfield defence in war, often influenced by policy development of the United Kingdom and Imperial ideals. Many airmen serving as Guards performed airfield defence tasks alongside allied nations of the United Kingdom and USAF and served in all theatres of that war. Their experiences were broad, from

²³ H.N. Wrigley, *The Decisive Factor*, Alan Stephens and Brendan O'Loughlin (ed), South Australia, 1990, p. 34-140; Air Vice Marshal Henry Neilson Wrigley, C.B.E., D.F.C., A.F.C., would serve the AFC and the RAAF from 1916 until 1946.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Sean S. Carwardine, 'The Development of the RAAF's Aerodrome Defence Scheme 1929-1939', 2017, LVIII, 1, Sabretache.

gate duty for security purposes, to hand-to-hand jungle fighting in the ground defence of their airfields. These experiences then set the scene for many debates and challenges regarding the full scope of a RAAF airfield defence capability and how it should be developed that followed the Second World War.

Following the end of the Second World War, the RAAF was faced with demobilisation and a reduction in resourcing and funding. Supported by a belief that airfield defence was only a wartime necessity, dilution of airfield defence policy was swift. The scope of RAAF airfield defence in Australia became limited to guard duty, while overseas other services or allied nations were relied on to support RAAF units where ground and air defence was necessary. It would take an asymmetric war in Vietnam to highlight for the RAAF, the need for its own specialist airfield defence capability. Here, the comprehension of the necessity for airfield defence by the RAAF would not be drawn from their own experiences but influenced by the United States Air Force (USAF).

The RAAF airfield defence force has never established a sense of history or tradition. According to Wilkins, Jason Koxvold and Dan Ryan, there is a widely held belief by the civilian community that RAAF officers, pilots, are the only airmen that endured combat, and this has been compounded by historical writings to date. They outline that this folklore or common understanding of Air Forces ignores the thousands of personnel who provide support for Air Force operations.²⁷ Some veterans describe being disbelieved when recounting their RAAF service in infantry-like training and ground fighting during the Second World War and Vietnam. These men attest that they were not only disbelieved by the community but also by other veterans, Returned Services League (RSL) organisations and the Department of Veteran Affairs.²⁸ This thesis will challenge any misunderstanding, and it will detail airmen from within the airfield defence force not only providing defence and protection for the RAAF but engaging the enemy at close range in hand-to-hand and often fatal combat.

²⁷ Peter S. Wilkins, 'If You Ain't a Pilot', *Australian Folklore*, 13, 1998, pp. 239-244; Jason Koxvold and Dan Ryan, 'Part Three of "Reflections on Airpower"', *Strategy Bridge*, September 5, 2017, <https://thestrategybridge.org/>, accessed 10 September 2018.

²⁸ John Canning, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recording, 4 December 2017, held by author; M. Bryson (when he was president of the Airfield Defence Association) also stated that an Anzac Day service the commander of Nui Dat wanted to know why the ADGs had Nui Dat on their unit banner. The Commander denied that ADGs served with Army in Nui Dat.

The Structure of the Paper

This thesis will cover a time period of 54 years. The first two chapters will outline the aim, structure, the research approach for this thesis, and provide a literature review of known works on RAAF airfield defence. The next four chapters will consider the extent of the early footsteps into RAAF airfield defence policy, followed by RAAF aerodrome defence during the Second World War, the post-war period with the Korean War and finally ground defence during the Vietnam War. Chapter seven will provide a conclusion including discussion of further directions for research.

Chapters three to six are divided by time periods, and each chapter will include three sections: the first section details policy at the time, the second section describes the policy in action, and the third section analyses the impacts of ground defence policies during the time period covered. The first section of each chapter will provide a detailed chronological history of the evolution of RAAF airfield defence policy. The discussions, planning, policy and diplomacy of RAAF commands will be discussed and the influence of service boards and Government on policy will be examined. The greater part of this section will rely on primary sources to provide an understanding of the direction of the policy. The second section describes the policy in action, that is the interpretation and implementation of policy by the Commanding Officers at stations or forward airfields for their own airfield defence. This section will also investigate the actions of the individual airmen on the ground, based on recorded oral and written histories. The last section will include an analysis of both the policy, and the policy in action, and will highlight the successes, obstacles and lessons learnt. This section will also indicate further fields of study for future theorists and students of airfield defence.

Methodology

This research is essentially an examination and analysis of records and recollections that attest to witnesses' accounts of events. This body of research is based largely on empirical evidence, that being the records of direct observations and experiences set against written records of orders and policy, which is then analysed qualitatively. Historical research is not just a collection of dates, facts and descriptions of what took place, but an in-depth interrogation of past events, with a view to understanding the implications, personalities and

ideas of the time.²⁹ This qualitative research is distinguished from non-academic articles written to inform and entertain readers, and that may ‘shield readers from faults or unpleasanties’.³⁰ In attempting to set out a robust and accurate portrayal of recorded history, this research will examine the complex faults and myths of the currently accepted airfield defence history, and correct these through evidence. As Sherbrooke-Walker outlined, ‘ . . . in days to come, [those] wishing to know the story of these times, will demand the truth, and, rightly, will be satisfied with nothing less’.³¹ In seeking that truth, this research will challenge the current nostalgic reminiscences of airfield defence, it will question the currently accepted non-academic history, provoke discussion and uncover previously unknown history. This research will examine past key events and seek out evidence to cross check oral history and accepted unit lore. This study will also compare the relationship between the past and present to develop knowledge for future endeavours and challenge future researchers in the subject.

In general, the primary sources used within this thesis were created at the time of the event that is being investigated. The primary sources investigated within this thesis are original artefacts, documents, items and oral history, while secondary sources are accounts from persons who were not eyewitnesses of the event. In parts this research has relied on oral history and writings of veteran’s first-hand accounts. This thesis will integrate the links between the artefacts, records and the oral history to determine the detail of the event that took place. This is a valuable source in understanding the impacts of policy on aerodrome defence development on the ground, being performed by the Guards themselves.

Where oral history is supported by archival evidence, a full and undisputed accurate history of the development of aerodrome defence in Australia can be articulated. At the outset it is understood that any obvious inaccuracies of the oral histories of Guards and veterans are by no means an indictment of an intention to mislead. It is accepted that a number of variables can affect eyewitness testimony and the limitations of memory as an accurate record of detail are well documented.³² Stephen J. Lofgren defines oral history within the military as:

²⁹ Jovita J. Tan, ‘Historical Research: A Qualitative Research Method’, *Academia*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Colonel R Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, London, p. v.

³² Alice M. Hoffman and Howard S. Hoffman, *Reliability and Validity in Oral History: the Case for Memory*, <http://web.uvic.ca/vv/stolo/Hoffman,%20reliability%20and%20validity%20in%20oral%20hist.pdf>, accessed 10th January, 2014; Charles A. Morgan III, Gary Hazlett, Anthony Doran, Stephan Garrett, Gary Hoyt, Paul Thomas, Madelon Barranoski, Steven M. Southwick, *Accuracy of eyewitness memory for person encountered during exposure to highly intense stress*, http://www.nasams.org/forensics/for_lib/Documents/1150823205.44/Article-Intl%20J.%20L.%20Psy.-Accuracy%20of%20eyewitness%20memory...Morgan.pdf, accessed 10th January, 2014.

. . . providing important information for official historians to supplement official records. Oral histories today are used in a variety of ways ranging from informing soldiers and leaders about their predecessors' experiences to bringing to life museum exhibits with the words (and sounds) of participants. The result is a fuller appreciation and understanding of the events.³³

This research is unique in that it covers history in areas that have either been previously unrecorded or, have been articulated by non-scholars for popular history writings. As such a broad net to gather information has been used, and then a finer lens applied to detail, in order to establish an accepted foundation of the topic. Every effort has been made to ensure that evidence validates the history in order to give justice to veteran's recollections, supported by archival records.

In addition, the study of this history is underscored by military theory (land power) and air theory (air power). In 2011, Milan Vego outlined that modern military theories are influenced by *empiricism* and *determinism*.³⁴ Vego described empiricism as the logical process for knowledge of military theory through observation and experiments, while determinism sees events occurring in accordance with fundamental law.³⁵ Vego asserted that deductions can be made and checked by reference to observations of facts or events. The idea of airfield defence as a military theory that can be observed, studied, tested and deduced is a logical academic process. Airfield defence policy, as a product of theory, requires an understanding of military theory and air power theory that is influenced by the social context, political climate and the environment of the time and place.

Stephen Morillo and Michael Pavkovic, took Vego's statements further, and highlighted that the study of theory, experiences, time, ideas, places and social interaction of a topic evolve into a narrative of investigation using qualitative methodology.³⁶ Morillo and Pavkovic further highlighted that recounting of stories about some point in time or event is not, on its own, an analysis of history.³⁷ This process of recounting stories is a common occurrence within the history of RAAF airfield defence, yet that history has not been analysed or accurately

³³ Stephen J. Lofgren, *U.S. Army Guide to Oral History*, 2006, Centre of Military History, United States Army, Washington, p. iv.

³⁴ Milan Vego, 'On Military Theory', *National Defense University Press*, 62, 2011, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/vego_military_theory.pdf, accessed 10 December 2017, p. 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Stephen Morillo and Michael Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 106-107.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

recorded. Morillo and Pavkovic also propose that an analysis of historical evidence without stories is not history either.³⁸ To accomplish this, the first aspect of this thesis is the presentation of a picture of events within airfield defence policy, during the time periods in which a thematic analysis is used; secondly, the change over time of airfield defence policy is explained.³⁹

Therefore, the proposition of this thesis, firstly, is to understand the policy used by the RAAF in the process of protecting the airfields it operated from; and secondly, bear witness to the application of the policy in both war and peace. The first and overarching aim of this research was to identify the development of the policies of airfield defence from an Australian perspective; and if illustrated, to recognise influencing theories from other nations that provided the RAAF with a policy for protection of airfields. To this end, it became apparent that much of the documentation of RAAF airfield defence policy had never been opened in the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. Thus, it has been necessary to spend time at the archives gaining permission to open files and investigating content of records for reference to RAAF airfield defence policy. The use of primary sources for this thesis is the main focus, as the RAAF Museum, RAAF Directorate of History, RAAF and the Airfield Defence Association of Australia do not hold any policy files on airfield defence.

While the principal emphasis is on the strategic policy of airfield defence, the relevance of the tactical environment in which the policy is applied is another consideration of this thesis. It is one thing to describe a theory on how to protect airfields, from which policy is produced, but it is the direct application of the policy on the ground that provides a greater understanding of the justification of policy and the growth of this RAAF capability. Throughout the entirety of this thesis three questions are answered; questions that combine all information presented to support and extend the aim of the thesis: How did airfield defence evolve from its conception in the RAAF? How effectively was the concept of airfield defence applied in both the Second World War and later insurgency type conflicts? What if any, were the influences from other allied nations?

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Personal Connection with Thesis

This research paper is underscored by personal experience and a sense of passion for the topic due to my military service. I served Australia and the RAAF for 21 years, having joined at 18 years of age in 1986. For the first 15 years I served as an ADG and was posted to the operational Wing and Squadron of RAAF airfield defence, as well as many non-operational units. During this time, I witnessed the policy in paper form, trained within the Army and RAAF, experienced the restraints and effects of reduction of manning and funding and have also applied the policy on the ground in both war and peace. In broad terms, I am still part of the RAAF airfield defence family, being a member of the Airfield Defence Association of Australia and being called upon to present and facilitate discussions of ‘lessons learnt’ to both officers and other ranks in historical or policy contexts.

However, there is, of necessity, a level of professional detachment between my personal history and the time period being researched that allows me to examine this more clinically, and I view this thesis as a grounding of past policy. While this thesis is organised to capture the time period from 1921 until 1970, 16 years before my service began, I do, however support the current notion that RAAF airfield defence capability is integral to the operations of an airbase and the application of air power. To that end though, I describe the various views of past theorists as the field of airfield defence evolved from its infancy, including the successes and failures. I am confident that my experience as a serving member of the RAAF adds value to the research through a greater and deeper knowledge and understanding of the subject area.

Collecting Data

The thesis data collection commenced with a search for what history was already known within the RAAF airfield defence organisation, and this led to a booklet written in 1971 by J.J. Baker.⁴⁰ Parts of this booklet were reprinted in the Airfield Defence Association of Australia newsletter, with the full booklet being located in the National Library of Australia. Information was then sought from the Airfield Defence Association of Australia, however the results of these enquiries only led to another small booklet on the overall history of RAAF

⁴⁰ J. J. Baker, RAAF Ground Defence, Australia – New Guinea – South West Pacific Areas, 1939 – 1940 – 1945 – Korea (Unbound), National Library of Australia, 1971.

airfield defence, authorised by the Association and written by G. Hombsch.⁴¹ With such scant information being located, the greatest collection of data for this thesis is the RAAF and Australian Defence Force files from 1921 to 1970, held at the National Archives of Australia. Qualitative information was also sought from veterans themselves.

Once ethical approval was gained from the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee and the Australian War Memorial guide to oral histories recording was followed and the oral histories of a number of airmen were obtained. The oral history of RAAF airfield defence is the connection between policy and the Air Force personnel on the ground conducting airfield defence duties. The next major achievement in information collection, was the Airfield Defence Association of Australia providing a document containing seven names and addresses of known Guard veterans from the Second World War, which led to only three living Guards.⁴² These airmen were interviewed for my Master of History research at the time and the interviews were, once again, relied on for this thesis. In addition, one of the well-known oral accounts of Guards and RAAF airfield defence is from a veteran of the Second World War and a Guard, Wilf Bowie.⁴³ In addition to Bowie, a number of recordings have been sourced from the Australians at War Film Archives.

In the course of research for my Master of History and this thesis, military files and documents were also collected, photographed and examined from the National Archives of Australia and the Australian War Memorial. Over seven years of research into airfield defence, approximately 900 files have been examined in Queensland, New South Wales and Canberra archives. This has been the largest project to have opened this number of files on RAAF airfield defence.

Challenges of Historical Collection

Alan Ryan warned against the, ' . . . plunder [of] historical narrative for the key facts', rather than seeking a holistic understanding of what 'really' happened, within a 'whole range of

⁴¹ G. N. Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence 1942-1985', unpublished booklet, Queensland, 2012.

⁴² It must be noted at this stage the term Airfield Defence Guard or ADG is used all the time by the Airfield Defence Association of Australia when talking about the Second World War airmen that did airfield defence. However, the correct term is Guard for the Second World War. Airfield Defence Guard would not be used until the new mustering was formed in 1966.

⁴³ Wilf Bowie, *A History of Airfield Defence*, Unley, 2004.

environmental factors'.⁴⁴ Peter Riddick went further and asserted that many historical works are collections of oral testimonies rather than a combined analysis of both oral and archival files and records.⁴⁵ Therefore, a challenge for this history research in RAAF airfield defence was firstly, the limited resources available to build from and then searching those records to support the oral recounts acquired. Many archived files contain reports and records regarding the development, considerations and evolution of airfield defence policy, written contemporaneously as events occurred. However, in attempting to demonstrate the experiences of airmen and officers as a result of those policies, it was necessary to also seek out non-academic written histories and recollections and oral histories recounted in interviews. Therefore, it became crucial to this study to include both avenues of exploration, as described by Ryan and Riddick, to paint a full picture of the topic. This was attempted using veterans' oral and written recollections and applying an analytical process to present an accurate record of informed policy strategy and then the subsequent operational judgments as they occurred in action.

The main task for this research, therefore, was connecting oral histories and accounts written or retold many years after an event with archival records to ensure the validity of the account wherever possible. This method of validation often included reference to personnel records, time frames of recounted events, names of Commanding Officers and other airmen at the time, operational record books of specific squadrons and/or support from more than one oral account of an event. An example is the accounts of J.J. Baker and W. Bowie, both personal historical recounts, written many years after the events described. Checks of archival records were able to either refute or support the historical accounts. Wherever possible, oral and written non-academic histories, specifically those that describe policy in action and the events recorded by veteran's themselves, have been cross-checked with primary evidence. The further challenge for this research was in identifying accounts that could then best demonstrate the impacts of policy on airmen on the ground.

One of the human aspects of this thesis that was realised during the course of gathering information, was the initial lack of willing veteran community participation. Early in the research, after a number of requests to the Airfield Defence Association of Australia, RAAF

⁴⁴ Alan Ryan, 'Thinking Across Time Concurrent Historical Analysis on Military Operations', *Land Warfare Studies Centre*, 114, 2001, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Peter Riddick, *Oral Evidence and Vietnam*, 1995, 22, *History Today*, <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/oral-evidence-and-vietnam>, accessed 12 December 2019.

Association, and other ex-military associations across the nation, only 50 retired members indicated they would participate. Of these, ten returned the initial questionnaire, some decided not to be interviewed and others provided emails containing further information. Ultimately, only two members agreed to be directly interviewed. In addition, it became apparent that there is an aversion by many Vietnam-era veterans within the airfield defence community to take part in research. The main reason cited for this reluctance was general distrust on how airfield defence personnel have been portrayed in the past.⁴⁶ Some also indicated that the history of ADGs in Vietnam described by Chris Coulthard-Clark in 1995 contains some errors and it has become unit lore that the Vietnam-era ADGs were slighted by a misleading and negative portrayal of their words and conduct.⁴⁷ Within this cohort of ex-servicemen, widespread distrust stemming from this experience seems to have caused many to be reluctant, or directly oppositional, to any other forms of historical investigation.⁴⁸ As the years progressed on this research project and trust and rapport developed, some Vietnam veterans became more open, and began to share stories, photographs and memorabilia with the author, many of which are relied on in this research. However, many more have maintained a refusal to participate or be interviewed, claiming the previous alleged mistreatment by academics.⁴⁹

To overcome this, recorded interviews of consenting RAAF ADGs, which had already been conducted by the Australians at War Film Archives, were obtained.⁵⁰ Using the general search parameters of airfield defence, some 571 interviews were located. However, not all interviews were of RAAF airfield defence. The interviews which were RAAF orientated covered every war or peacekeeping mission the RAAF has taken part in. To establish whether the data given by participants was reliable, a cross reference system with RAAF archives and other retired airfield defence personnel was taken into consideration, all of which were corroborated. As outlined, the ability to align oral history with written and archival files is a major consideration within this thesis. A significant difficulty for a study of the subject of airfield defence is that there are no books or articles analysing the history and policy to date. In the next chapter, the literature review will outline and analyse all the historical works that currently record RAAF airfield defence. It will be noted, very quickly, that there are only three works that focus on RAAF airfield defence.

⁴⁶ E & L Resetar to Sean Carwardine, email, 21 April 2017, original in author's possession.

⁴⁷ Michael Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recorder, Redbank Plains, 2018, in author's possession.

⁴⁸ Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, Canberra, 1995; Michael Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recorder, Redbank Plains, 2018, in author's possession.

⁴⁹ Trevor Passmore to Sean Carwardine, message, 28 June 2017, in author's possession.

⁵⁰ Australians at War Film Archives are part of the University of NSW, Canberra. All files are accessible for public use.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

'History is not served by praise or adulation where such are not due. Nor by glossing over faults, if faults there be. Indeed, so to do, is often not only to shield the lethargic and guilty at the expense of the energetic and innocent, but also to be unhelpful to those who, in days to come, wishing to know the story of these times, will demand the truth, and, rightly, will be satisfied with nothing less'.

Colonel Ronald Sherbrooke-Walker T.D., D. L., 1952.
First Director-General of Ground Defence and Commandant of the RAF Regiment.¹

Following an examination of the early official RAAF histories, it is clear that there is minimal reference to airfield defence in Australia. In an attempt to capture that missing history, in 1971 J.J. Baker produced a booklet that became the foundation of the currently known history of RAAF airfield defence.² That one booklet has influenced, not only the understood history of airfield defence, but was incorporated into later official RAAF Manuals.³ The influence of this booklet has lasted for many years and has given structure to following articles purporting to be historical accounts. A search of historical works revealed that a sound study of airfield defence history in Australia had not previously been undertaken and that there has never been an academic or military study into airfield defence by the RAAF. For RAAF airfield defence history, the only currently accepted source has been Baker's booklet, that directly influenced the later articles by Hombsch and Kerr.

Upon a search of previously written material on the topic of RAAF airfield defence, a variety of works examined were examined and reviewed. These included a number of booklets that focused on early official RAAF history commissioned by the Australian War Memorial, some airfield defence journals, books that hold comment or sections on airfield defence and, official histories. Upon reviewing the literature, it became clear that some works repeat, or build upon, previous writings that were erroneous. Therefore, this chapter follows a chronology of the literature and discusses each in turn. Despite the valuable contributions of non-scholarly

¹ Sherbrooke-Walker, Khaki, p. 12.

² Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 1–20.

³ Royal Australian Air Force, Australian Air Publication 1000-D - *The Air Power Manual*, 6th edn, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, 2013, p. 90.

historians, it will become clear that any official history of RAAF airfield defence is scarce, and this opens many opportunities for further studies.

It is widely accepted that official histories provide a good starting platform for historical investigations and any researcher could expect that the content, chronology and detail of the history covered would be of a standard that reflects a holistic study of the topic at hand. For any author attempting such a significant undertaking of writing compendiums of official histories, a logical start for such a study of Australian military history would be the archived records to ascertain fact and evidence. The official history of the RAAF, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945* is a series of four volumes, three of which cover the RAAF and the fourth focussed on air power over Europe. The fourth volume is not reviewed for this thesis as there is no relevance and no mention of Australian airfield defence.

The first in the *Australia in the War of 1939–1945* series is John Herington's *Air War Against Germany and Italy 1939-1943*, published in 1954.⁴ This book follows the operations of a smaller number of RAAF flying squadrons despatched to the Middle East to serve alongside other British and Commonwealth forces fighting the Axis in the Mediterranean theatre. Many of these squadrons had an airfield defence component and airmen serving in ground defence during these years, but none are mentioned.

The second book in the series, written by Douglas Gillison in 1962, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, focussed on the air war during the first three years of the Second World War.⁵ Throughout 32 chapters, it is difficult to locate information about RAAF support staff, aircraft maintainers or combat support staff. There is no information on the defence of airfields, or the establishment of units for that purpose. Chapters 6-15 provide valuable information about enemy aircraft attacking airfields, which demonstrates the vulnerability of airfields during this time, however, does not take the history further by any reference to RAAF ground crew conducting airfield defence duties in response to those attacks. Gillison does make reference to airfield defence when criticising the RAAF, such as slit trenches and air raid defences being poorly conducted or not at all. In review, the major focus of these chapters is on aircrew and aircraft operations.

⁴ John Herington, *Air War Against Germany and Italy 1939-1943*, Canberra, 1954.

⁵ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Adelaide, 1962.

One example in these chapters that does focus on airfield defence is chapter seven. It described matters in the RAF, but not the RAAF. Gillison described RAF Squadron Leader G.R.F. Burlinson's analyses of the defence of airfields in Malaya during 1941 and early 1942, which does show the difficulties encountered in the profession of defending aerodromes.⁶ By chapter 15, there are brief references to Dutch forces in the Netherlands East Indies defending airfields from Japanese paratroopers and brief sentences that cover the Army AA defences of the 2nd AIF defending an airfield.⁷

Only chapter 29 mentions airfield defence by the RAAF; however, there is no supporting information or referencing in the text. Gillison noted that two airmen died on 21 July 1942, during an air raid on the aerodrome at Fall River, Port Moresby, while manning an AA machine gun post.⁸ Gillison does not examine this further, as these two men died in an AA machine gun position, defending their airfield from enemy aircraft, and both were actually RAAF Guards. It can be surmised this official history is designed to reflect the accomplishments of pilots, senior officers and aircraft and does not reflect the men and women on the ground. This trend continued in many Air Force historical books in the years that followed.

The next volume in the series is that by George Odgers, titled *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, published in 1968.⁹ This book covers all aspects of the air campaign, the air battles and the kills and losses of pilots. According to this presentation, one can understand the common perception by the public that an Air Force is made up of only two parts, aircraft and pilots. Within the first 200 pages, there is no mention of the thousands of airmen and women that kept the aircraft and pilots in action. However, Odgers' book does provide valuable insight into chaotic control issues of government interference within the RAAF, poor command structures and internal fighting and wrangling.¹⁰ When compared to the works of Gillison, Odgers covers the internal chaos in the command structure of the RAAF in more detail, which is also reflected throughout this study of airfield defence.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

⁹ George Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, Canberra, 1968.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The invasion of Noemfoor and Morotai during 1945 are not mentioned within these chapters. The battle for Tarakan, during Operation OBOE in 1945, one of the major RAAF airfield defence battles of the Second World War is completely overlooked. Throughout the chapter on Tarakan, no mention is made of the fighting patrols by Guards carried out with the Australian Army, night-time perimeter posts, the challenges of dealing with Japanese snipers, and the repeated assaults by Japanese forces on the airfield at Tarakan. One sentence covers the work of the RAAF airfield construction squadrons, yet the more one reads into this book, the more noticeable it is that the book is a history of RAAF aircraft operations fighting the Japanese. This book does not provide supportive information for any aspect of RAAF airfield defence during the latter years of the Second World War.

The most notable and well-known history of RAAF airfield defence (in airfield defence community) is the booklet written in 1971 by J.J. Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence, Australia – New Guinea – South West Pacific Areas, 1939 – 1940 – 1945 – Korea*. There is no referencing, apart from the end of the booklet, where Baker reveals that the booklet history was written with the support of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook. After reviewing the RAAF's own official histories (above) written and published between 1954 and 1968, it is clear that some of Baker's views regarding the lack of airfield defence prior to 1942 may be a reflection of these histories. At the time, and in the absence of any other detailed written history, Baker's booklet then became the bedrock of RAAF airfield defence history.¹¹ It should also be noted that Baker wrote much of his booklet many years after events had occurred and he appears, at times, to have relied on his own memory. Keeping this in mind, a review of Baker's work still must be vigorous, as key myths had arisen from Baker's writings and were then perpetuated in further writings, many of which will be corrected throughout this thesis.

However, for many of Baker's purported experiences, his personnel RAAF records show that he was not posted into, nor could he have taken part in these operations.¹² For example, Baker claimed, 'In the following month they were joined by Army Sergeants J.J. Baker, G. Dodd'.¹³ This one line within Baker's booklet indicated that Army Sergeants joined RAAF No. 1 Recruit Depot at Shepparton to train the RAAF in infantry skills, and here Baker indicated that he was one of these Army Sergeants. In truth, Baker was never enlisted in the

¹¹ Michael Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recorder, Redbank Plains, 2018, in author's possession.

¹² Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 10-19.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Army and no other Army Sergeant with the name Baker was seconded to the RAAF. Prior to joining the RAAF, he had served for four years in the Australian Naval Reserve. Upon joining the RAAF on 22 April 1940, he was allocated to the Mess Steward mustering, and within three months he was remustered to Aircrafthand/General Duty. During July 1940, he completed an Anti-Gas Instructor course following which, as a Sergeant, he was posted to RAAF Station Richmond as an Anti-Gas Instructor. On 21 January 1942, Baker was posted to No. 1 Recruit Depot, Shepparton Headquarters as an Anti-Gas Instructor. A year later he was posted to the Armament School on course after remustering to Aerodrome Defence Instructor (ADI) (retaining his rank). He would stay at the School until 23 March 1944 when he was posted to No. 1 Embarkation Depot. Baker had no infantry combat skills, was never part of the Australian Army, and the skills he had were based on his training received on the RAAF ADI course.¹⁴

Chapter 1 of Baker's booklet only briefly covers the earliest period of airfield defence history in the RAAF between 1939 and 1940. He described a general lack of airfield defence units within the RAAF, which is reflective of Gillison's work. Baker asserted that there were small numbers of machine guns manned by armament sections.¹⁵ He indicated that the RAAF was 'so far removed' from war that the main role was training pilots and aircrew, again a reflection of the official histories. Baker then went on to state that 'farsighted members of the RAAF and Air Board' understood the situation within the Far East, that if the RAAF moved aircraft forward it would need airfield defence, and this led to the subsequent creation of the mustering of 'Air Force Guard'.¹⁶ Baker provided no time frame for this statement of the Air Board's considerations. Baker then claimed that the template for the formation of these infantrymen came from the RAF Regiment (the RAF Regiment was not formed until February 1942), and that these men would be trained as infantry to take over all defence and guard duties on airfields.¹⁷

Even though Baker indicated the concept of Air Force Guards was a reflection of the RAF Regiment, he also stated that the nucleus for the formation of the RAF Regiment were the RAF armoured car companies formed from 1921. Baker outlined that by this stage of the

¹⁴ J.J. Baker, 'Baker John Joseph: Service Number - 14574 Service Record', 1939, National Archives Australia, A9301, 14574, (unpaginated).

¹⁵ An Armament Section in the RAAF maintains all small arms weapons used for aircraft and on the ground. The airmen that manned these sections are not trained in combat or infantry tactics, but they know the weapons and how to maintain and repair them.

¹⁶ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, p. 2; Air Force Guard is another term that is used within current airfield defence history; however, this term is also incorrect. The mustering title was only Guard.

¹⁷ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 2-3.

war, 1940, the RAF Regiment was at Brigade strength. He then also stated, ‘An Air Force Regiment was beyond the capabilities of the service [RAAF] at that time . . .’, adding the RAAF already had infantry, light anti-aircraft units and engineering units that could have formed a regiment similar to the RAF Regiment.¹⁸ By the end of chapter 1, Baker concluded that the idea of forming RAAF airfield defence units was no longer a consideration. He further asserted that in 1940, with the RAAF focused on pilots and aircrew, the Air Force Guards were ‘absorbed into other musterings’ and ‘many of them applied for discharge or transfer to Australian Infantry Forces’.¹⁹

In chapters 2 and 3, Baker asserted that the RAAF was in ‘panic stations’ and ‘two years too late’ (to develop airfield defence) at the time Japan entered the war in 1941, and that the RAAF had no airfield defence capability and suffered for it.²⁰ Baker further claimed that the turning point for RAAF airfield defence was to be the bombing of Darwin, on 19 February 1942, after which the idea of airfield defence by the RAAF was raised again by the Air Board. Baker indicated that the Minister for Air organised for Lieutenant Colonel H.H. Carr, of 2/22 Infantry Battalion, to be seconded from the Army into the RAAF to train RAAF personnel in airfield defence.²¹ For the next two pages, Baker outlined how the seconded Army personnel established the defence school at Hamilton, Victoria, while at the same time two Army officers were placed in charge of the planning of RAAF defence for Australia and overseas at RAAF Headquarters.²²

Within chapter 4, Baker indicated that the whole airfield defence development in the RAAF was the outcome of an Army officer, Carr, being seconded to the RAAF. He indicated that Carr personally ran ‘training for landing craft mock-ups’ at the ‘Regimental Training Camp’ at No. 1 Recruit Depot at Shepperton.²³ While there was never a Regimental Training Camp at any air base, it is accurate that the training carried out at Shepperton was of a high standard and airmen were then going on Army courses to advance their skills. In addition,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

²¹ Lieutenant Colonel H.H. Carr enlisted in 1921 and by July 1940 was in command of the 2/22nd Battalion. After escaping from Rabaul, where 2/22nd Battalion had been sent as part of Lark Force, he was medically examined and recorded as not fit for duty. By the end of 1942 he had been seconded to the RAAF in the position of Defence Training within the Directorate of Training RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne. By the end of 1943, Carr had been transferred back to the Australian Army.

²² Baker, RAAF Ground Defence, pp. 4-8.

²³ *Ibid.*

photographic and RAAF records show that landing craft mock-up training actually occurred with the RAAF SGU based in the Northern Territory in 1943, but not at Shepparton.

Chapter 5 and 6 cover the period when Baker was posted to No. 80 Wing Headquarters in Darwin. Here, according to Baker a 'RAAF Infantry Regiment' was formed under the direction of Wing Commander Clive Caldwell.²⁴ Once again, Baker credited an Australian Army officer, Lieutenant Colonel W.T. Tolstrup, with the plan for the defence of No. 80 Wing.²⁵ Baker stated that a complete Army doctrine 'took over' and an Army camp was established to train all guards. Baker claimed the 'Regiment' was made up of 92 airmen who trained for six weeks, following which the unit moved to Morotai and completed operational duty there. The evidence in this thesis will show that while there was a pool of Guards at No. 80 Wing Headquarters, once the Guards had completed the training, they were moved back to their original units. In early planning stages, it was suggested that the pool be titled 'RAAF Assault Guard Regiment'; however, this research will show that a RAAF Regiment never formed.²⁶

Chapter 6 of Baker's booklet covers the formation of No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron,²⁷ described as 'another training camp' for the training of guards in the North Western Area.²⁸ This chapter appears disconnected, ranging from training of guards, to performing 'Z Force' special operations, and back to training guards for No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron. Baker asserted that RAAF volunteers from No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron moved to No. 80 Wing to train as 'Special Forces' to engage the Japanese.²⁹ Over the next three chapters, Baker outlined the training of the 'RAAF Infantry Regiment' by the Army, and also

²⁴ Group Captain Clive Caldwell D.S.O., D.F.C., and Bar, Krzyw Walecznych (Poland), Commanding Officer No. 80 Wing, Darwin, in 1944 and then Morotai in 1945.

²⁵ Lieutenant Colonel William Theodore Tolstrup, VX120 was born in 1898 in Castlemaine Victoria. Tolstrup's service records are not open at this stage.

²⁶ C. Caldwell, '80 Wing Assault Guard Regiment', 12A, 1944, National Archives Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 PART 2, (unpaginated).

²⁷ This chapter is called 'No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron' and does not indicate that this squadron was originally the Security Guards Unit until the third paragraph. There is no information about any of the activities of the Security Guards Unit, as the whole chapter focuses on No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron. Additionally, the only date Baker provided is 1943 when, according to him, the Security Guards Unit changed its name to No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron. However, it was not until 1945 that the order took place to change the name. This is a clear indication that a lot of what Baker indicated as facts are incorrect.

²⁸ The North Western Area Command was one of five RAAF commands operating from 1942 until 1955. The North Western Area Command comprised the Northern Territory, parts of Queensland, the northern part of Western Australia and the Dutch East Indies. Other commands were the Southern Area, Eastern Area, North-Eastern Area, North Western Area and the Western Area. Additionally, No. 9 Operational Group RAAF was established in 1944 to form the Northern Command. This command included New Guinea, New Britain and Bougainville, and by 1945 had been renamed Northern Area.

²⁹ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 13–14.

the Regiment conducting patrolling with United States Army units during operations on the Philippines Island of Mindoro, on Borneo, in Brunei, and at Tarakan and Balikpapan.³⁰

In 1974, George Odgers released a book called *Mission Vietnam Royal Australian Air Force Operations 1964 - 1972*. Three and a half pages of the 180 pages covers ADGs and their tasking within Vietnam. The main focus for this book, once again, is air operations and there is very little information about tasking and activities of ground staff. Odgers did refer briefly to the activities of ADGs at Vung Tau, their initial tasking of securing the villas through to being allocated to the Army's 1st Australian Reinforcement Unit.³¹ He also made further reference to the ADGs at Phan Rang and their unlimited ability to patrol outside the base. Within the last two paragraphs, the contact between the ADG patrol and Viet Cong is described and provides a valuable insight into the details of events leading to Corporal Power, ADG, being awarded the Military Medal.³² While this book provides some interesting information about helicopter operations by No. 9 Squadron and operations by the Caribou Flight, No. 2 Squadron and No. 1 Operational Support Unit, it provides little further information of RAAF personnel on the ground.

In 1981, Squadron Leader S.D. Kerr's, Ground Defence Officer (GDO), article called *Ground Defence and Security* was published in the *Australian Defence Force Journal*. This article did not focus on RAAF airfield defence but on the RAF Regiment in the United Kingdom.³³ Kerr stated, 'The capabilities of aircraft and the dedication of their crews will matter little in war if the aircraft are destroyed on the ground, and the crews are killed or harassed'.³⁴ Kerr initially provided an overview of an enemy that would have the capacity to attack airfields. He highlighted that even Australia's own military trains to destroy aircraft on the ground, as a cheaper and easier method than destroying them in the air. Kerr then described the RAF's answer to air base defence.³⁵ He outlined the field squadrons that provided ground defence, and the low-level air defence squadrons that provided ground-based air defence in the RAF Regiment.³⁶ This article was used as background and support for what Kerr believed could be achieved in Australia.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–20.

³¹ George Odgers, *Mission Vietnam Royal Australian Air Force Operations 1964 – 1972*, Canberra, 1974, pp. 70–71.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.

³³ S.D. Kerr, 'Ground Defence and Security', *Defence Force Journal*, 27, 1981.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Four years later, S.D. Kerr completed a second short study of RAAF airfield defence history titled, *The History of Ground Defence in the RAAF*, and it was held up as a historical work on airfield defence in the RAAF.³⁷ Kerr detailed the failure of the RAF ground defence in the early 1940s, and the subsequent formation of the RAF Regiment in the United Kingdom, which he accepted as the main reason the RAAF formed the 'Air Force Guards'.³⁸ Kerr, once again replicated Baker's assertions, of airmen being recruited for a specific task, not being provided with adequate training, and being neglected or remustered into other units, all as the war continued. Kerr's writing, in many ways, appears to be a direct duplication of Baker's booklet.

Kerr focussed on airfield defence units, the first being No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron.³⁹ He highlighted the name change from the SGU, the purpose of the unit and that the title of the unit inferred the Guards were security guards.⁴⁰ Kerr then reflected back to Baker's work with the idea of a 'Z Special Task Force', clandestine training and a section of Guards that took part in 'Z Force' operations.⁴¹ However, Kerr's history of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, while still not referenced, appears to hold a greater depth of history and knowledge. His knowledge of ground defence during his career, the reformation of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, its role, tasking and organisation within the Air Force is demonstrated in the article. In addition, Kerr has provided added history of the post Korean War era. The article by Kerr, together with Baker's work, has been accepted by the airfield defence community as an accurate representation of the history of airfield defence.

Then in 1995, the RAAF Historical Section, Canberra, produced *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History - Ancillary Units Volume 9*, which is one book of a series of texts focusing on RAAF units.⁴² This book has a minimal amount of information on airfield defence, out of a total of 255 pages, the volume provides two pages on the history of the Airfield Defence Squadrons, from 1942 until 1994. The book claims that Airfield Defence

³⁷ S.D. Kerr, 'History of Ground Defence in the RAAF', *Defence Force Journal*, 51, 1985.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; A reflection of Baker's works and terminology, Kerr calls the Guard mustering of the Second World War 'Air Force Guards'.

³⁹ Kerr uses the modern naming of the unit for Airfield Defence squadron in both the Second World War and post-Vietnam. This is an issue when official naming of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron during the Second World War was No. 2 AD Sqn, while post-Vietnam it is No. 2 AFDS.

⁴⁰ S.D. Kerr, 'Ground Defence in the RAAF'.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Baker, 'RAAF Ground Defence', pp. 10-19; 'Z' Force was a joint Allied special force unit formed in 1942 to carry out operations behind Japanese lines.

⁴² RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History - Ancillary Units*, Vol 9, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1995, pp. 162-164.

Squadrons commenced as SGUs, which would only be correct if the history focused on the SGU and its renaming to No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron in 1945. Many inaccuracies can be immediately identified, such as the claim that the SGU provided training for guards of the Defence Pool at Noemfoor in Dutch New Guinea in 1945, or the relationship, cited in this book, that the SGU and the Defence Pool shared. This volume of the RAAF's own published history stated the incorrect title of 'Air Defence Guards' rather than Airfield Defence Guards when re-formed in 1966. Almost 30 years of unit history is not only overlooked by the RAAF official history but is then incorrectly cited. As such, this history falls short of being a reliable and accurate reference.

The next modern official history is that by Chris Coulthard-Clark. The book *The RAAF in Vietnam* is a well written and informative book produced in 1995.⁴³ From the outset, this volume covers many aspects of RAAF ground operations in Vietnam and includes a complete chapter dedicated to ADGs. Coulthard-Clark wrote on many aspects of the duties, patrols and other activities of the ADGs in Vietnam, all supported by personnel who were interviewed for this publication. However, from the point of view of many of the ADG cohort who served in Vietnam, a dark cloud covers this chapter as some hold the view that their words were misrepresented and their mustering and duties having been inaccurately presented.⁴⁴ Many ADGs believe that Coulthard-Clark 'cherry-picked' quotes and disregarded others to portray the conduct of ADGs in Vietnam in a poor light. Most of Coulthard-Clark's chapter on ADGs is taken directly from interviews with senior officers or from letters and newspaper articles. Despite the criticism of some veterans, Coulthard-Clark has provided a valuable reference to policy and the planning by RAAF command with regards to airfield defence in this theatre.

At the 1998 RAAF History Conference a number of historians produced papers on different aspects of the RAAF operations in Vietnam. One such historian, David Wilson, provided a paper called *C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters*, on the topic of support operations of the RAAF in Vietnam.⁴⁵ This paper is a cursory look at the support elements of the RAAF during the Vietnam War. Wilson's overview of airfield defence in Vietnam is not written with a broad

⁴³ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF In Vietnam*, 1995.

⁴⁴ Michael Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recorder, Redbank Plains, 2018, in author's possession. M. Bryson was the first President of the Airfield Defence Association of Australia from 1987 to 2004 and was one of the retired ADGs interviewed for Coulthard-Clark's book.

⁴⁵ David Wilson, 'C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters', in *The RAAF in the War in Vietnam*, John Mordike (ed.), Air Power Studies Centre, 1999.

brush, but with a fine brush, in that it specifically focused on ADGs and did not investigate the requirements or policies of RAAF ground defence at the time. However, within the first paragraph, Wilson incorrectly referred to the mustering as 'Air Defence Guards', rather than Airfield Defence Guards. Within only two pages he covered the operational aspect and the overall understanding of the role of the ADGs during Vietnam War.

Wilson's article does provide some insight as he is the first author to highlight a common problem that has existed in the RAAF airfield defence history since its inception, that the guards were individually attached to aviation squadrons rather than belonging to a specialist unit.⁴⁶ In contrast, in the United Kingdom guards were trained and administered as part of the RAF Regiment in which airmen belonged to RAF Regiment Squadrons, training together specifically on airfield defence tactics, and employed on airfields as an operational unit in support of flying squadrons. In Australia, individual RAAF guards and defence officers were posted to a specific flying unit, as this was thought to be more economical. This arrangement was noted to cause inconsistency in airfield defence training and differences in operational tasking across units and bases. Wilson also observed that this resulted in lower morale for airfield defence personnel and produced an 'us and them' dynamic between airfield defence personnel and aircrew and technical staff.⁴⁷ In his paper, Wilson was able to provide a brief yet informative overview of airfield defence.

One of the first studies in Australia on the survivability of air bases from all types of attacks was written by Sal Sidoti. His paper, *A History of Attacks on Airbases*, published in 1999, is an attempt to outline the ability of enemy forces to attack air bases.⁴⁸ The paper is an overview of enemy attacks on airfields of the RAF and United States Army Air Force (USAAF) and evidences that, 'those airfields defended with a large number of guns were better able to weather the attacks and were often able to inflict heavy casualties on the attackers'.⁴⁹ Sidoti goes on to show that many airfields were badly damaged even with strong defences in place, demonstrating the difficult task of protectors of air power.

In this paper, Sidoti outlined all the air base attacks that had occurred, from the First World War up to the United Nations operations in Serbia in 1999. Sidoti noted that air bases

⁴⁶ Wilson, 'C130 Operations', p. 87.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁸ Sal Sidoti, *A History of Attacks on Airbases*, 1999.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

were valuable targets and as such required protection, and that even though an air base itself was such a large target it had a greater chance of being successfully attacked than being fully protected.⁵⁰ As Sidoti stated, ‘. . . in few other fields of military endeavour would one be expected to defend at all costs such a seemingly indefensible target’, which identifies in blunt terms the enormity of the tasking that RAAF airfield defence forces face. This paper is one of the most relevant academic studies of air base defence, and it can be stated that, at that time it was the only one.⁵¹ Sidoti did provide an overall study of air base defence; however, he did not go on to include the aspects of the process or application of airfield defence in Australia.

Wilf Bowie’s booklet, *A History of Airfield Defence (1940-45) as seen by 26032 Sgt. W.T. Bowie*, written in 2004, is a personal account of an airman actively conducting airfield defence in the RAAF.⁵² Bowie was an airman who served in the Second World War as a Guard and ADI. Upon meeting Wilf Bowie, and having discussed many aspects of the Second World War, he gave the author of this thesis a copy of his booklet.⁵³ This is Bowie’s history of his service, in which he explained every aspect of his service life from recruitment to the time of his discharge at the end of the war. This booklet does not rely on any information other than what Bowie did and saw as a firsthand witness and, as opposed to Baker, there are no secondary references to units or activities with which Bowie had no interaction. This booklet provides a balanced narrative on the history of RAAF airfield defence from one airman’s perspective. This is a more fluid chronological history, taking the reader from Bowie’s earliest memories as one of the first Guards in the RAAF in 1940 to a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) in a Company from No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron on OBOE operations in Borneo in 1945.⁵⁴

Bowie’s content within the booklet included his feelings about situations at the time and, in retrospect, some 62 years later. This booklet provides a witness account of the gradual construction of a ready combat force tasked with protection of airfields. What is different from Baker’s work, is that Bowie reflected on his recruitment as an Aircraftman/Guard in early 1940, while Baker’s own experiences in airfield defence start at the end of 1942 with his remuster from Aircraftman/General Duty to ADI. The two-year gap is significant, as Bowie demonstrated the duties and continual use of Guards throughout this period, while Baker

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Wilf Bowie, *A History of Airfield Defence (1940-1945) as seen by 26032 Sgt W.T. Bowie*, Unley, 2004.

⁵³ The author met Wilf Bowie at an Anzac Day march in the early 1990s.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

asserted that Guards recruited in 1940 were discharged, remustered or transferred to the Army. This booklet provides a more in-depth insight into the daily workings of RAAF airfield defence and of the Guards during the Second World War.

In 2008, S. Kainkara and B. Richardson published, *Air Bases: The Foundation of Versatile Air Power* as an Occasional Paper for the Chief of Air Force.⁵⁵ Kainkara and Richardson assert that to maintain air power an air base needs to be considered as the heart of the RAAF. They outlined that the air base is a complex system of interlocking elements, which are fragile, and all require protection. Their paper follows the time line from the formation of the AFC in 1916, to the RAAF of 1921 and beyond, and refers to the importance of a related balance of air power on air bases with a complete section dedicated to air base protection.⁵⁶ This concept is, in itself, supportive of the importance of airfield defence, however, there are components in the paper that fail on historical terms. There is, once again, the reoccurring argument of protecting the air base being a joint responsibility between the Army and the Air Force. This is interesting, because by 2008, air base protection was already a long-established RAAF responsibility and the earlier arguments over whether Army or Air Force should be responsible had already been put to rest decades earlier.

Kainkara and Richardson noted that the RAAF maintained an organic force protection capability, one which avoided over burdening the land forces with static defence.⁵⁷ However, once again this article focuses on the 'Airfield Defence Guards' of the Second World War, when historically there were none, as the mustering of ADGs was not formed until 1966. The authors indicated that with the bombing of Darwin there was the break in the 'Army and Air Force nexus' that forced the RAAF to create a mustering of 'Aerodrome Defence Guards', again historically inaccurate, and repetitive of the previous misconceptions of Baker.⁵⁸ This paper again has inaccuracies about RAAF airfield defence history and there is no referencing to indicate where the information was sourced. According to the authors, 'ADGs of World War Two', were trained in the use of AA guns and in infantry tactics and provided the RAAF with the ability to protect their airfields. The authors asserted that after the war, these ADGs and their units were disbanded, and it was not until 1966 that ADGs were reformed.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Sanu Kainkara and Bob Richardson, 'Air Bases: The Foundation of versatile Air Power', Chief of Air Force Occasional Papers, 3, 2008.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

By 2009, RAAF combat support units had supported RAAF operations for many years, and G. O'Brien produced a book that provided a historical account of these types of ground operations by the RAAF. His book, *Always There: A History of Air Force Combat Support*, is not a book that solely investigated RAAF airfield defence; however, O'Brien asserted that for RAAF fighter jets to provide air power, other Air Force personnel work behind the scenes, thus making up RAAF combat support. The fine details, archival investigation and referencing also provide a reliable historical account of RAAF support operations. This work appears to achieve its aim by highlighting the varying successes of decisions of RAAF command, and also describes situations when the air base was undermanned and ill-prepared for attack.⁶⁰ This book provides a descriptive analysis of combat support which highlights the slow progress of the development of airfield defence in the RAAF. By chronological organisation and supported by references, O'Brien drew on official operational records to support his writing and encompassed all aspects of the RAAF combat support on operations. The concept of 'combat support' is developed through O'Brien's work and he has argued that for air power to succeed, ground support and therefore airfield defence as one component within a whole of Air Force approach is required.⁶¹

The detailed nature of O'Brien's book, utilising both published references and oral history, provides validity for his research. However, it is not intended to be a record or a complete history of airfield defence in the RAAF. What this book does for airfield defence, however, is acknowledge that there is a long history that pre-dates 1942. O'Brien appears successful in illustrating the clear need for ground staff in air power and challenges the silence of the RAAF's official history and current RAAF policy manuals on airfield defence and combat support, if ever so lightly. Within this book, O'Brien has some success where the volumes of the RAAF official history fail, which was to recognise the existence of a broader RAAF history outside of aircraft operations.⁶² What is at odds with the common belief of the airfield defence community, is that O'Brien clearly shows that an airfield defence capability existed long before 1942, as purported by Baker. What is also clear is that his writings on earlier airfield defence were not considered in Hombsch's later booklet of 2012.

⁶⁰ Graham O'Brien, *Always There - A History of Air Force Combat Support*, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, 2009.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

In 2012, the Airfield Defence Association of Australia commissioned the production of a booklet for newly graduated airmen of the ADG mustering. This booklet is titled *An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence 1942-1985*, and was written by Glenn Hombsch, a retired RAAF Wing Commander and GDO.⁶³ The booklet follows closely in the footsteps of Baker and, without any critical analysis or consideration of later works such as O'Brien's, claims the work as historical truth. Hombsch stated that his booklet did not aim to replace the material written earlier, but to enhance and to provide a greater understanding of airfield defence for the younger generation serving in airfield defence.⁶⁴ However, lacking any archival research and analysis, this booklet can only be described as a reflection of prior works.

Hombsch appears to embellish some of the events that were claimed to have occurred during the Second World War. For example, he stated, 'Warrant Officer Baker records that courses included training on the rifle, .50 inch Browning, Thompson, Owen and Austen submachine guns and fieldcraft'.⁶⁵ What Baker actually outlined in his history is that the RAAF gained Thompson machine guns when the Army replaced them with the new Owen submachine gun. Baker also stated, 'We too, wanted the Owen gun but stocks were not available'.⁶⁶ Additionally, Hombsch expanded on Baker's writings by inferring that there was training on the 50 calibre Browning machine gun, however, Baker made no mention of this weapon within the training environment. Likewise, evidence shows there were no Austen submachine guns in the RAAF at that time. In Hombsch's writings there are, on occasions, events which are not mentioned in any of Baker's history, that are not supported by reference or supporting evidence.

While there are valid criticisms of Hombsch's work, some of his writing regarding post Second World War activities, and into the early 1960s has been of use for this thesis. Hombsch has provided the voices of airmen that have passed on, but there seems to be no record of any oral or historical interviews.⁶⁷ While this is valuable information, it needs to be examined

⁶³ Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished booklet, Queensland, 2012; Wing Commander Glenister Noel Hombsch's service records detail that he enlisted in the Australian Army in 1954 and was discharged in 1960. He joined the CMF while working as a schoolteacher. Hombsch enlisted in 1962 as an ADI in the RAAF until he gained his commission in 1964 as a Ground Defence Officer. Hombsch would complete many Army courses during his service in the RAAF and participated in hands-on training on National Service Scheme. He would also perform many duties in the RAAF, such as Defence Officer Training 1965, Officer Training School, Airfield Defence Guard instructor and would do a flying visit to Vietnam for discussions on security of the RAAF on operations and observations and discussions with the USAF Air Police.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 4-8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-27.

against a historical context and available evidence. It can be asserted that Hombsch's booklet is a valiant attempt, of a non-academic nature, to capture a proud history that was generally unknown outside the airfield defence community, and at a time where little written information could be located.

In summary, this chapter describes and analyses the known history of RAAF airfield defence, through booklets, journal articles and books. It is fair to state that the historical context currently known and accepted by the Australian Government, the RAAF itself, the airfield defence community and the public at large, requires further detailed research. As stated in a message to RAAF Headquarters, by the War Historian Warrant Officer H.S. Silk in 1945 of the 1st Tactical Air Force, 'For purpose of official war history, it is imperative that such an episode as this [No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron landing at Tarakan] be reported with 100% accuracy'.⁶⁸ Despite this, the battle of Tarakan and the role of Guards in it were then promptly overlooked by historians in the official histories and those that followed. What has been revealed in this literature review, is that what is held out to be the official Australian military history of the RAAF, is an official history that has discounted its own airfield defence and other ground support units that have enabled air power to be applied. There have been various attempts by those within the airfield defence community to grasp some sense of history for themselves and their units, but without any body of writings or official recognition to draw on, the men and women serving in RAAF airfield defence have had to rely on informal and inaccurate accounts, to the detriment of morale and *esprit de corps*, and the loss of a holistic unit memory.

In the absence of an accurate official history of RAAF airfield defence, stories, rumours and myths had formed and taken root to become an unofficial yet accepted history. These official oversights could also provide an explanation that for some Second World War airfield defence veterans, they were disbelieved or directly challenged, about the authenticity of their service during these years. This is summed up by Second World War Guard, Ernest O'Meara, who in 2014 stated, 'They [Australian airfield defence community] think airfield defence started in 1966 with the formation of ADGs, it did not, it started with us'.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ H.S. Silk, 'Tarakan Operation', 5A, 1945, National Archives Australia, A11389, 7/1/AIR, (unpaginated); Warrant Officer H.S. Silk was attached to Delta Company, No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, for the full operation on Tarakan, reporting and documenting all of the attacks and battles in which Guards of Delta Company fought. His work reflects the praise and supporting evidence of Lieutenant Colonel N.P.H. Neal, M.C., M.M., who was attached to the 1st Tactical Air Force Delta Company, No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron.

⁶⁹ Ernest O'Meara, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recorder, Brisbane, 2014, in author's possession.

Chapter Three - Early Footsteps in RAAF Local Aerodrome Defence 1921 – 1939

‘ . . . the public still seems to think that a man in the Air Force is a man who flies, not realizing that for every aviator there are dozens of ground staff behind him ’.

Colonel R. Sherbrooke-Walker T.D., D. L.
Director-General of Ground Defence (RAF), 1952.

Section 1 – Policy

The Ideas of Air Force Commanders

At the conclusion of the First World War, Australian military aviation could not be considered expeditionary or indeed ready for major operations.¹ The view at the time was that post-war circumstances in Australia and globally, could allow for only a very small Air Force operating purely in the defence of the homeland.² During these post-war years, the Air Force struggled for self-direction and control in the development of a separate and independent RAAF.³ The Defence Minister at the time, George Pearce, outlined to Prime Minister W. Hughes’ National Party Government, a policy developed by Wing Commander Richard Williams for the new Air Force. It was proposed that the RAAF would reflect the AFC in structure, a force consisting of a headquarters, an aircraft depot, flying school, a depot for non-technical training and six flying squadrons, which would be divided between NSW and Victoria.⁴ Ultimately, in 1921, the Australian Government approved Williams’ proposed policy for a small, economically reasonable Air Force. ⁵ This chapter will cover the first 18 years of the development of airfield defence following the inception of the RAAF. The chapter is divided into three sections: Policy, Policy in Action and Analysis. This chapter will provide an understanding of the dynamic and changing environment of Air Force policy on protecting its

¹ H.G. Chauvel, J. Monash, J.W. McCay, J.J.T. Hobbs, C.B.B. White, ‘Report of the Conference of Senior Military Officers. Constituted by The Minister for Defence on 22/1/20, To Advise upon the Military Defence of Australia’, 1920, National Archives of Australia, B197, 1855/1/42, (unpaginated); W. Nunn, S.J. Goble, T.A. Blamey, R. Williams, ‘Air Policy’, 1920, NAA: A5954, 1209/3; National Archives of Australia, A5954, 1138/1, (unpaginated).

² Stephen Edgeley, ‘Out of Joint’: Independent Air Forces in Democratic Cultures, Air Power Centre, Canberra, 2010, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28; C.D. Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1991, pp. 26-31.

⁴ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 31; Later Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, KBE, CB, DSO (3 Aug 1890 – 7 Feb 1980). Williams was the CAS, from October 1922 until December 1922, 1925 until 1932 and again 1934 until 1939.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

airfields and stations during the early years and in the lead up to the Second World War. In addition, this chapter will demonstrate the struggle between competing ideologies; on the one hand, of the need for airfield defence to achieve air control, and on the other, the view that RAAF would focus its budget and policy on aircraft acquisition and maintenance.

In his speech for the development of the RAAF, Defence Minister G. Pearce, outlined that the youngest service (RAAF) would only have a total strength of about 1500 officers and airmen.⁶ This force would be divided between the Permanent Air Force (PAF) (150 officers and 1000 other ranks), and Citizen Air Force (CAF) (36 officers and 300 other ranks).⁷ Pearce outlined that future squadrons would only be formed using CAF airmen, which would expand into PAF squadrons in war.⁸ Consequently for airfield defence history and the development of RAAF policy of airfield defence, this structure would lead to a struggle to activate any form of airfield defence other than a rostered gate guard system from 1921. For this reason, the political restraint on the size of the RAAF would direct the needs for airfield defence during these early years.

The RAAF's size was a result of an 'economy of force'. The Air Staff of the RAF in London 'commented warmly' on the structure of the RAAF and outlined that Australia would have 'ample warning of serious attack'.⁹ This indicates that the RAAF's policy development and vision at that time was directly linked to Imperial policy for air operations.¹⁰ The idea of 'economy of force' and its link to Imperial defence comes directly from the RAF 1922 Operations Manual and archived files.¹¹ This RAF policy would be used as an Imperial guide to air warfare for the RAAF and other dominions.¹² The manual focused on a RAF squadron deploying forward from its station, or within its own stations, in support of the Army, providing its own internal airfield defence and low-level AA machine gun defence. At this time, the policy considered air attacks by enemy aircraft which were likely to strafe or drop bombs onto the airfield. This is clearly a direct reflection of the First World War experience, however, this

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225; Defence Minister George Pearce K.C.V.O., was born in Mount Barker in South Australia in 1870 and learned a trade in carpentry. Pearce would be Minister of Defence from 1914 until 1921 in the Labor, National Labor and Nationalist parties. William Morris Hughes, C.H., K.C., was born in 1862 in London. Hughes served in a number of government parties throughout the First and Second World War.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*; One constant issue with this type of policy is that there was a lack of equipment for the new CAF squadrons. The PAF would be using all current equipment, therefore new equipment would have to be gained from the United Kingdom or other nations.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁰ Edgeley, 'Out of Joint', pp. 28-29.

¹¹ AIR 5/299, Printing and Publication of C.D. 22 dated 7/1922 – Operations Manual R.A.F; C.D. 22 Operations Manual RAF.

¹² H. N. Wrigley, *The Decisive Factor*, Brendan O'Loughlin and Alan Stephens (ed.), Canberra 1990, p. 43.

policy also considered sabotage attacks by ‘untrained civilians’ against a forward squadron within the land forces area of operations.¹³

The RAF manual outlined the need for self-governing dominion countries to take responsibility for the war strength of their Air Force, for use on Imperial duties, or directly by the RAF as required. This was not what the senior command of the RAAF intended as the future of the RAAF.¹⁴ Contrary to the Imperial vision, Wing Commander R. Williams, then CAS, did understand the Imperial link and the need to maintain it, but he also believed in a greater independent Air Force, one suitable to defend Australia and for deploying overseas to defend Australia’s trade routes.¹⁵ By late 1922, forward-thinking airmen, such as Williams, foresaw that there would be Australian differences to the RAF policies and traditions.¹⁶ Williams’ ideas of ‘Australizm’ of the RAAF was then challenged by the Australian Government and the RAF.¹⁷ Due to Williams’ belief in an Australian Air Force for Australian purposes, Williams was seen by many within the RAF and RAAF as ‘stiff-necked and autocratic’, with no experience in command or leadership.¹⁸ However, Williams was also recorded as being a thinker who challenged traditional wisdom and had a clear idea of the direction for the RAAF and his idea of ‘Australizm’ would find support with other RAAF senior officers.¹⁹

While these discussions were occurring, Flight Lieutenant H.N. Wrigley,²⁰ Directorate of Training RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne, outlined in an essay his theories on air power which he acknowledged were drawn from those of Air Commodore R. Ludlow-Hewitt, Commandant of RAF Staff College.²¹ Wrigley summarised many advantages of air warfare over land and sea warfare, however noted that a clear disadvantage was the limited distance an aircraft could travel from its aerodrome.²² This then, according to Wrigley, showed that the

¹³ AIR 5/299, Printing and Publication of C.D. 22 dated 7/1922 – Operations Manual R.A.F, p. 4; It can also be stated the airfield defence policy of the C.D. 22 was being implemented at San Stefano aerodrome near Constantinople in Turkey in September 1922. Here RAF airmen manning machine gun posts worked with Royal Marines and the Coldstream Guards in defence of the station from Turkish insurgents. The RAF Squadron had three Lewis and four Spandau machine guns within a defended position and intermixed in the positions were 75 airmen riflemen.

¹⁴ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 31; C.D. 22 Operations Manual RAF.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 82.

¹⁷ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 31; The term ‘Australizm’ is a term used by Wing Commander R. Williams.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Mark Lax, *A Hint of things To Come – Leadership in the Australian Flying Corps*, 1999, Air Power Centre, Canberra, p.34.

²⁰ Henry Neilson Wrigley would be forced to retire in 1946 from the RAAF as Air Vice Marshal H. N. Wrigley, CBE, DFC, AFC; The essays which Wrigley wrote cover the period from 1915 until 1928. The essay used for this thesis is from the period just after the formation of the RAAF, thus in 1923.

²¹ Wrigley, *The Decisive Factor*, p. 32.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

aircraft needed developed air bases and air routes forward from the home aerodrome nearer the front, all of which needed to be secured.²³ Wrigley then outlined a clear strategic disadvantage of aircraft, that being that once aircraft are on the ground they were vulnerable to attack from both ground and the air.²⁴

Wrigley provided an analogy between the three powers of warfare and found that unlike land power, air and sea power require a direct link with the base from which they deploy.²⁵ The need to resupply, refuel, rearm, and thus the necessity of naval and air bases to be secure would be vital for operations to continue. The freedom of operations that aircraft bring to war was restricted by the ability to remain in the air.²⁶ In particular, for RAAF theories on air power/control, Wrigley's theory was the first within the RAAF. Yet, the history shows, that the next six-year period would be silent on RAAF airfield defence, until another visionary stepped forward. This was then a catalyst for an avalanche of ideas, theories and debates from 1929, regarding the need for secure airfields to maintain protection from air and ground attack and how best that could be achieved.

Aerodrome Defence Scheme Policy

During August 1929, Flight Lieutenant J.P.J. McCauley, Deputy Director of Training (Armament Training),²⁷ produced a policy proposal that would shadow in a small part the RAF's first theory of operations, and encompass what he had learnt at the RAF Staff College.²⁸ McCauley's proposal would have an Australian focus in the formation of an Aerodrome Defence Scheme, and ideas for future expansion, while still maintaining air control as a key focus. McCauley outlined a scheme for the RAAF to provide its own local and ground defence of airfields or stations within Australia. This would include machine guns located around the airfield and mounted in secure posts for low-level AA defence.²⁹ This plan would include a stronghold or forward airfield, surrounded by barbed wire with machine guns of interlocking fire to protect the airfield, aircraft and aircrew. For the AA machine gun and ground defence

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Air Marshal Sir John Patrick Joseph McCauley, K.B.E., C.B., joined the Australian Army in 1916 when he entered the Royal Military College at Duntroon in Canberra ACT. In 1924 he transferred to the RAAF, serving throughout the Second World War. Staying in the RAAF post-war, he served in the Home Command and later as CAS.

²⁸ Sean S. Carwardine, 'The Development of the RAAF's Aerodrome Defence Scheme 1929-1939', 2017, LVIII, 1, Sabretache, p. 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

machine gun roles, airmen would be mustered into aerodrome defence flights at nominated stations and would be trained on both the Vickers and Lewis machine guns.³⁰ At the same time, the plan would allow for continued air operations from the station. McCauley forwarded his policy proposal and recommended training package to Squadron Leader T. Thompson, Director of Operations and Intelligence at RAAF Headquarters, who supported the complete package, stating, 'I can see no objections'.³¹

With this preliminary agreement for McCauley's proposal, further considerations were made as to the manning of the scheme. The Director of Training, Wing Commander H. Smart, sought confirmation from Group Captain S. Goble, Air Member for Personnel, on the manning of the nominated stations for the purposes of aerodrome defence. Goble responded that the ADS could be appropriately manned, and he considered aerodrome defence a RAAF responsibility.³² Subsequently, the policies released show that aerodrome defence was now considered a RAAF responsibility and documented as Air Force policy (Appendix A).³³ Smart then implemented McCauley's ADS on 23 August 1929 (Appendix B).³⁴ Within five days of the scheme being implemented, No. 1 Flying Training School and No. 1 Squadron, located at Point Cook and No. 3 Squadron located at Richmond, had prepared and allocated airmen and equipment.³⁵

The policy detailed the defence of aerodromes by Aerodrome Defence Sections and included the training of aerodrome defence flight personnel to maintain air operations.³⁶ The original basic structural unit was called an 'aerodrome defence flight', which contained two sections, one of low-level AA and the other ground defence. McCauley later confirmed that Commanding Officers were to form, and train, two fully maintained aerodrome defence sections, one manned from CAF (to be called on when required) and another from PAF (permanently manned on the base).³⁷ Any flying squadron, while housed on a RAAF station,

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³² *Ibid.*; Air Vice Marshal S.J. Goble, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C., served in the Australian Flying Corps and the RAAF. Goble served 3 terms as CAS, from December 1922 to February 1925, from December 1932 to June 1934, and from February 1939 to January 1940. He retired in January 1946.

³³ Air Force Confidential Order's 25/C/11 – Citizen Air Force Training Methods of Training, 2/A/3 – Local Defence of Aerodromes, 24/D/6 – Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections with Appendix A – Aerodrome Defence Flight Organization, Appendix B – Training of A.A. Lewis Gun Section, Appendix C – Training of Vickers Gun Section.

³⁴ J.P.J. McCauley, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 4, 1929, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Orders 2/A/18-2/A/27 Organization and Administration General – Local Defence of Aerodromes [sic].

³⁵ R. Williams, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 7, 1929, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

³⁶ P.J. McCauley, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 4, 1929, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

did not require their own aerodrome defence flights as both the CAF and PAF aerodrome defence sections were attached to the station itself. However, at this time, when the squadron moved forward from the RAAF Station on operations, it did not have a mobile aerodrome defence section that could move with it and, therefore was required to form its own.³⁸

Within a month the CAS, Air Commodore R. Williams, restated his support for aerodrome defence as a RAAF responsibility and the requirement for stations and squadrons to maintain both CAF and PAF aerodrome defence flights. As outlined within the ADS files, Williams stated, 'I agree to the necessity for such training . . .'³⁹ Williams added to the policy drafted by McCauley, requiring that all airmen not directly connected with aircraft maintenance and operations will man the aerodrome defence flights, with airmen of the CAF as backup. Thompson then directed that Aircrafthands should man the defence flights and at least one armourer should also be allocated to the section of a station. Even though, at this stage, McCauley had gained assurances that the required equipment was at each of the stations, by October 1929 there were shortages in equipment needed for the flights. Throughout this period, the ADS files indicate that at no stage were the squadron headquarters lacking enough airmen for these airfield defence sections.⁴⁰

Despite the ADS being underway, for the whole of 1930 the RAAF faced resourcing problems including a lack of funding and a high turnover of airmen through stations and units.⁴¹ On 15 April 1930, McCauley signalled that the ADS should not fully commence until the necessary equipment was issued to RAAF Armament Sections from the Army, as both services were experiencing shortages of equipment and funding at that time. Throughout the remainder of 1930, McCauley obtained enough machine guns for each of the nominated units and by late 1930, despite the delay, the Commanding Officers of the nominated stations had commenced the scheme. From early March 1931, the new Director of Training Squadron Leader W.D. Bostock, supported the recommendations by McCauley, who outlined larger, fully structured, aerodrome defence flights, with the division between both PAF and CAF members, and the training requirements to be followed.⁴² A policy for 'local airfield defence' was initiated in the

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ R. Williams, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 7, 1929, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); R. Williams also amended the title Aerodrome Defence Section, back to Aerodrome Defence Flights.

⁴⁰ Carwardine, 'Aerodrome Defence Scheme', p. 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴² W.D. Bostock, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 17, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); Air Vice Marshal W.D. Bostock, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., served in the Australian Imperial Force and the Royal Flying Corps Special Reserve. After

RAAF, allowing not only stations to have local defence, but with the capability for squadrons to deploy forward in support of the land forces.⁴³ Despite the continued lack of resources, Nos. 1 and 3 Squadrons and No. 1 Flying Training School had implemented the ADS and had established aerodrome defence flights in the PAF and CAF for both RAAF Stations and individual squadrons.⁴⁴

The policy for local defence of aerodromes led to the establishment of aerodrome defence flights on the three main units within the RAAF at the time. The policy set out that the Commanding Officers of stations ‘. . . shall form and train aerodrome defence personnel for defence against air and ground attacks’.⁴⁵ Within these flights, airmen were trained in the use of Lewis and Vickers machine guns, in both ground defence machine gun and AA machine gun defence. Most importantly, the policy relied on Aircrafthand/General Duty personnel to take up positions, and if there were insufficient numbers, then other musterings were to be made available. The policy set out that a number of machine guns would be grouped together around parked aircraft in their dispersal point, that each machine gun team would provide mutual support and interlocking arcs of fire, while the ground defence section would have a fixed position of their guns covering the likely approach of the enemy. The policy laid down that one full time aerodrome defence flight was to be maintained at each unit, unless the unit had both CAF and PAF in which they would form two flights.⁴⁶

McCauley gained the support of many within the Air Board and senior officers within RAAF Headquarters, and by 1931 the policy was fully integrated into the RAAF at the nominated units. However, in early 1931 divergent views were beginning to arise on the necessity for aerodrome defence flights. On 20 March 1931, the Directorate of Organisation and Staff Duties, Wing Commander A. Swinbourne, indicated ‘. . . there is no need for Aerodrome Defence Flights at home . . . it would put additional strain on the training activities of the units, extra equipment and extra returns each month’.⁴⁷ Swinbourne’s view did not alter the direction of the policy as the long-time supporter for RAAF theory on air power, Wrigley,

the First World War he joined the RAF before returning to Australia. Bostock joined the RAAF in 1921 and would serve in the RAAF until he was forced retired by G. Jones as being ‘old wood’.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ W.D. Bostock, ‘Aerodrome Defence Training’, 21, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated);

⁴⁵ W.D. Bostock, ‘Royal Australian Air Force Minute Paper Extract 1679 of 15th June 1931 and new AFO 2/A/3 and 24/D/6 published’, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Orders 2/A/18-2/A/27 Organization and Administration General – Local Defence of Aerodromes [sic].

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ A. Swinbourne, ‘Aerodrome Defence Training’, 18, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

now a Squadron Leader, responded that ‘ . . . it is advisable to get the defence scheme started’.⁴⁸ Supporting this, CAS, Air Commodore Williams, in a concise statement, directed all commanders to arrange and man the ADS. He added that fixed RAAF establishments and RAAF service units were to also have aerodrome defence flights.⁴⁹

The view held by Swinbourne in 1931 regarding the added strain that manning aerodrome defence flights was causing to station operations, did gain some support from other senior staff officers. In 1932 Wing Commander Jones was the Director of Training and he altered the direction of training of the RAAF more towards meeting Air Force requirements which, in his view, were the support of ‘aircraft and aircrews’.⁵⁰ On 17 May 1933, Jones noted his assessment of the ADS at RAAF Station Laverton:

The organisation and training of Aerodrome Defence Sections . . . requires that 3 separate defence sections should be maintained at RAAF Station, Laverton. It is considered that to have 3 sections for one station is superfluous and that the training of the permanent section in No. 1 Squadron should be discontinued.⁵¹

This above statement suggests that Jones, while not supportive of squadron aerodrome defence flights, may have been supportive of the maintenance of both CAF and PAF flights attached to the Station itself. However, a year later in 1934, while still appointed as the Director of Training, Jones amended all Air Force Orders with the effect of cancelling aerodrome defence training for CAF airmen.⁵² Jones then issued his own new local defence of aerodromes policy on 5 March 1934.⁵³ In his policy, Jones directed that CAF aerodrome defence flights should be withdrawn from the CAF structure, and CAF Aircrafthands, according to Jones, were, ‘ . . . no longer possible to be provided for this purpose’.⁵⁴ Jones further stated, ‘ . . . [for] the Citizen Air Force the number of Aircrafthands Generals [sic] have been reduced to six in

⁴⁸ Carwardine, ‘Aerodrome Defence Scheme’, p. 43.

⁴⁹ R. Williams, ‘This requires some consideration’, 20, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

⁵⁰ Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, Greenhouse Publications, Victoria, 1988, p. 53; Jones autobiography highlighted that from 1932 as Director of Training he focused on aircraft training for all aircrews, training other officers in engineering, armament, signals and photography. He also stated, ‘I also organised and controlled a number of air displays’. By now a senior Staff Officer, Jones’ focus was still on flying and he indicated that he spent a lot of his time as Director of Training undertaking geological surveys. Air Marshal Sir G. Jones, K.B.E., C.B., D.F.C., served in the 29th Light Horse Regiment from 1912 and the Australian Imperial Force 9th Light Horse Regiment in 1915. Jones joined the Australian Flying Corps in 1916 and then the RAAF in 1921. He retired in 1952.

⁵¹ G. Jones, ‘Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections’, 1933, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

⁵² G. Jones, ‘Aerodrome Defence Sections’, 1934, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/770, (unpaginated).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Jones, ‘Aerodrome Defence Sections’, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Orders 2/A/18-2/A/27 Organization and Administration General – Local Defence of Aerodromes [sic].

each Squadron, and it is anticipated that this number will be employed wholly in mess duties'.⁵⁵ Additionally, in reference to RAAF aerodrome defence flights of deployable squadrons, Jones stated, 'Further, it is considered that one Aerodrome Defence Section per Station, is all that is now required'.⁵⁶ As a result, CAF aerodrome defence flights would have been disbanded, leaving only PAF aerodrome defence flights for stations and squadrons. However, the evidence shows that Jones' directions were largely ignored.

Despite Jones' amendments to the training of CAF personnel, McCauley's original ADS was still active and continued to be utilised by Commanding Officers. McCauley, still Deputy Director of Training, was now under the command of Jones in the Directorate of Training. On 1 October 1935, McCauley responded to Jones' amendment orders by releasing a minute paper to the CAS and all Commanding Officers of stations with a suggestion that Commanding Officers develop their own Local Defence Schemes (LDS) and CAF and PAF aerodrome defence flights. McCauley requested that the LDS developed be submitted to him for consideration.⁵⁷ This allowed local Commanding Officers to use some creativity in activating their own aerodrome defence responses. There is no indication on the files that this correspondence was seen or supported by Jones.

All of the nominated Commanding Officers submitted LDS over the coming months. One of the first to submit their LDS on 14 October 1935 was Wing Commander Bostock, Commanding Officer of No. 3 Squadron at RAAF Station Richmond. His LDS used both his CAF and PAF aerodrome defence flights manning four machine gun post for low level AA defence and additionally sought support from local Army units in the ground defence of the airfield.⁵⁸ On 28 October 1935, Wing Commander F.H. McNamara, Commanding Officer of No. 1 Aircraft Depot at Point Cook, Victoria submitted his LDS. McNamara explained that his LDS was based on the mobilisation scheme he designed while he was in a post within the Air Ministry in the United Kingdom.⁵⁹ McNamara also stated that for his LDS to function 'properly in war', he recommended that in peace there should be an establishment of PAF Aircraft hands for the sole purpose of airfield defence. This was the first recommendation for a fully trained and focussed specialist airfield defence capability of the RAAF.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ J.P.J. McCauley, 'Defence Scheme – RAAF Station, Laverton', 1935, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/45, (unpaginated).

⁵⁸ W.D. Bostock, 'Local Defence Scheme', 1935, National Archives of Australia, A705, 56/1/214, (unpaginated).

⁵⁹ F.H. McNamara, 'Defence Scheme – RAAF Station, Laverton', 1935, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/45, (unpaginated); Air Chief Marshal Sir F.H. McNamara, K.B.E., A.O., A.F.C., A.E., served from 1941 until 1984.

The records show that all LDSs from local Commanding Officers utilised the aerodrome defence flights and Aircrafthand airmen manning low-level AA machine gun and ground defence machine gun posts around the aerodromes. Some LDS documents demonstrate how machine gun posts should be constructed, while others suggested mounting machine guns on trucks and providing a mobile force of armed airmen to meet ground attacks.⁶⁰ In 1938, three years after McCauley suggested LDSs station defence, CAS Williams stated that the question of adapting the initial ADS and LDSs for airfield defence was under consideration by the Air Board, and a 'definite policy' would be determined at an upcoming conference.⁶¹

The ADS and the aerodrome defence flights, both of the PAF and CAF, continued throughout 1938. Individual squadrons could now deploy forward, away from the station, while both were being protected by aerodrome defence flights, including low-level AA and ground defence. In an attempt to determine what the United Kingdom's military policies were in relation to aerodrome defence, Squadron Leader F.R.W. Scherger, now Director of Training, requested RAF and Royal Artillery standing instructions or orders on defence against low-level aircraft attacks.⁶² The RAF and Royal Artillery both responded, forwarding detailed information regarding the use of Maxim Pom Pom Cannons and other machine gun artillery for aerodrome defence.⁶³ This period of relative freedom for local Commanding Officers to develop unique local airfield defence schemes, together with the detailed information from the United Kingdom policies, would lead to the drafting of the 1939 aerodrome defence policy, *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence*.

Leading up to the formal implementation of the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence*, the formation of a dedicated RAAF ground defence force was raised with a minute addressed to CAS Goble, by Assistant CAS, Wing Commander T. Swinbourne, on 7 March 1939.⁶⁴ This was intended to be a force of airmen trained full-time to conduct airfield defence, as opposed to airmen deployed from other trades. In the *Provision of Guard* file, Swinbourne outlined that discussions had taken place between senior members (Bostock, Scherger, McCauley, McNamara and Wing Commander F.M. Bladin).⁶⁵ These discussions resulted in all aerodrome defence policies being incorporated into the new *Air Board Memorandum No. 5*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ T. Swinbourne, 'Station Defence Schemes', 1A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁶² Air Chief Marshal Sir F.R.W. Scherger, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., A.F.C., served in the RAAF from 1925 until 1966.

⁶³ A.W. Clarke, 'Weapons for Defence against Low-Flying Attack', 1936, National Archives of Australia, A5954, 1713/11, (unpaginated).

⁶⁴ T. Swinbourne, 'Station Defence Schemes', 1A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Station Defence and the creation of a mustering for the sole purpose of low-level AA and ground defence by machine guns from the aerodrome defence sections.⁶⁶

In order to formulate the detail of the policy, a Staff Officer Committee for the defence of RAAF airfields was formed with members including the Chairman, Group Captain Wrigley, Wing Commanders Bostock and Swinbourne and Squadron Leaders Scherger and Waters.⁶⁷ On 17 March 1939, the Secretary of the Air Board directed RAAF Headquarters to expand the aerodrome defence organisation. This included an increase in the size of aerodrome defence flights, and implementing them into other RAAF units with a larger number of additional gun systems allocated per station or squadron.⁶⁸ The Committee recommended that the aerodrome defence flights be manned by CAF, trained in peace for war operations and called up when necessary. These airmen would be of the Aircrafthand/General Duty mustering enlisted under the policy for 'airfield defence', not as security guards.⁶⁹ Six days later, the Committee Chairman, Group Captain Wrigley, released to the CAS the recommendations from the Station Defence meeting. Wrigley stated, '... if the Air Board approves, the Air Board Memorandum [*Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence*] needs to be issued as soon as possible'.⁷⁰

By 26 June 1939, the ADS, LDS and aerodrome defence flights' structure were now part of the new policy.⁷¹ The Secretary of the Air Board, P.E. Coleman, signed the release of the policy allowing for the RAAF to provide defence for its own stations.⁷² The new policy was the product of McCauley's and the other officers' work, and formed a major part of station defence.⁷³ The policy issued did not exclude any of the original orders, including those that Jones attempted to cancel in 1934, yet added further detail regarding the specific areas of a RAAF station that is the responsibility of the RAAF to protect.⁷⁴ The memorandum noted that

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*; Air Vice Marshal F.M. Bladin, C.B., C.B.E., served in at the Royal Military College, Duntroon and in the Australian Army until joining the RAAF in 1923. He served until 1953.

⁶⁷ J. Waters, 'Station Defence Schemes', 3A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); All the mentioned officers had played a part in the formation, structure and implementation of the Aerodrome Defence Scheme that had been created by McCauley.

⁶⁸ P.E. Coleman, 'Royal Australian Air Force Head-Quarters Routine Orders 1939, Aerodrome Defence', 1939, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5 Station Defence (Appendix B).

⁷² P.E. Coleman, 'Royal Australian Air Force Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5', 17A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); P.E. Coleman was the Secretary of both the Air Board and the Air Council from 1921, by November 1939 Coleman was appointed the Secretary of the Air Board when the Government split the positions. Coleman held the post for just two weeks when the post was given to M.C. Langslow. Coleman was made the Assistant-Secretary.

⁷³ Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5 Station Defence (Appendix B).

⁷⁴ H.N. Wrigley, W.D. Bostock, T.A. Swinbourne, F.R.W. Scherger, J. Waters, 'Station Defence Schemes Report of Committee', 11A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

the local defence of the internal area of the station up to and not beyond the perimeter fence, rested solely with the Air Force. Therefore, the station commander would be the sole airman responsible for the establishment and upkeep of the station defence scheme, the defence of the station and the measures taken to counter all forms of attack.

According to the new policy, defence of a RAAF station was now to be conducted in two parts; passive defence and active defence.⁷⁵ Passive defence measures included the protection of personnel, buildings and installations, and aircraft. Active defence encompassed all aggressive capabilities, including low-level AA and ground defence machine guns, to deny capture or destruction of an airbase by the enemy. The detail of passive defence plans highlighted certain key areas that were to be protected to allow the station to continue operations whilst under attack. These areas included the operations room, signal station, sick quarters, de-contamination centre, and low-level AA machine gun posts. The memorandum instructed station commanders to establish high sandbag walls around the areas required for operations, personnel not staffed in the areas of operations were to move to protective trenches, and families living on the station were to be moved to prescribed locations away from the station.⁷⁶ To add confusion, the Air Board had assessed that an attack on any RAAF station would likely be made by carrier-based aircraft, but using chemical gas, therefore commanders were advised to make appropriate arrangements for the protection of personnel.⁷⁷ At the same time, the *Air Board Memorandum* indicated that the RAAF did not have enough gas masks or chemical clothing for all airmen. The policy stated, ‘. . . arrangements are being made to equip all personnel on the war establishment of a station with gas masks’.⁷⁸ Stations were also required to carry out blackout measures, to lay extra communication lines around the station, and create an air-raid warning system.⁷⁹ This warning system included look-outs, either from the AA machine gun crews or other personnel.⁸⁰ It is of interest, that at a time of impending war, extra or emergency power supply was to be made available ‘in the near future’ to maintain air operations on the airfield if mains power was destroyed. In addition, camouflaging of the

⁷⁵ J. Waters, ‘Air Board Memorandum Station Defence’, 19A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ P.E. Coleman, ‘Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5 Station Defence 26th June 1939’, 18A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁷⁹ Anon., ‘Black out paper 9th December 1940’, 22A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); The RAAF ordered all the blackout paper from Kraft in Melbourne, however, there was only enough to provide some blackout for windows in Darwin. What is interesting is this is the only time this material was mentioned and additionally ordered. There is no record in any of the Second World War airfield defence files of more orders.

⁸⁰ P.E. Coleman, ‘Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5 Station Defence 26th June 1939’, 18A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

station, aerodrome, buildings and roads was listed as 'desirable but not essential'.⁸¹ The protection of the aircraft was to be achieved by either dispersal around the aerodrome, the use of satellite aerodromes or with camouflage.⁸²

Active defence was divided into two further areas; ground attack and air attack against the station. The Air Board asserted that RAAF stations would not be in any danger of attack by enemy ground forces.⁸³ According to the Air Board, protection against ground attack was to be undertaken by the Army at the site of the landing by an enemy ground force. The Air Board believed that the only ground threat to a station would be from rioters, 'ill-disposed' persons, saboteurs or enemy agents. Therefore, in response to this assessment, the station commander was directed to provide guards for protection of internal facilities and at the entrance of the base.⁸⁴ During an emergency, guards were to be armed and carry small arms ammunition in their webbing.⁸⁵ Machine gun defence was to be arranged so the machine gun posts could be used in AA or ground firing mode.⁸⁶ The Air Board outlined that machine guns should only be used against civilian mobs attacking the station as a last resort and no aircraft were to be used.⁸⁷ In relation to active defence against air attack of the station, this was to be undertaken via AA machine gun sites in which CAF airmen would be enlisted purely for this duty.⁸⁸ The memorandum was clear that the defence of the station by aircraft would not normally happen unless the aircraft were already in the sky.⁸⁹ The aerodrome defence flights of McCauley's original plan would now have airmen trained and enlisted for each section.

Three months after the implementation of the RAAF's new and expanded aerodrome defence policy, on 3 September 1939 Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies announced Australia would join the Second World War. By this date, the RAAF had formed 14 aerodrome defence flights both in the PAF and CAF for Nos. 1, 3 and 23 Squadrons, No. 1 Flying Training School, No. 1 Aircraft Depot, and RAAF Stations Laverton and Richmond. These flights were

⁸¹ *Ibid.*; The idea of Australia not being threatened was widely seen within the airfield defence files at this early stage of war. According to the RAAF, many of the issues or lack of equipment will be made available when needed and a fine example of this poor planning will be seen in January 1942 in Darwin when the threat to RAAF stations from Japanese attack became a reality.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; The full extent of the Guards duty would be as gate guards, guarding bombs, ammunition, weapons, fuel, signal installations, stores, workshops, motor transport vehicles hangars, aircraft and dispersal areas for aircraft, deserted airfields, chemical warehouses, docks, inland fuel storage areas, troop trains, top secret document escort, prisons, runways, as well as runway clearance and refuelling aircraft, as well as protecting radar and the towers, and participating in coast watch operations.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

manned by Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen of the Station Headquarters trained in aerodrome defence duties as a secondary duty.

The commencement of war escalated the creation of a separate Guard mustering in 1939 to relieve the Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen from the secondary duty of airfield defence. This was initiated by officers citing a paragraph in the policy allowing Commanding Officers to recruit airfield defence airmen for AA duty 'in times of war'.⁹⁰ Under the *Air Board Memorandum*, upon war commencing, CAF could be enlisted to fill the aerodrome defence flight positions rather than using technical airmen or relying on Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen from station headquarters.⁹¹ Wing Commander R.J. Brownell, Commanding Officer RAAF Station Pearce, sent the first urgent (Flash and Secret) communication to the Secretary of the Air Board in Melbourne on 5 September 1939, requesting permission for him to recruit and enlist airmen specifically for airfield defence duty.⁹²

RAAF Headquarters and the Air Board appeared to have been caught off guard by the request. The archives reveal that the Air Board, along with the RAAF Headquarters, had sent messages out to all stations requesting information on the number of machine gun posts they required or had already setup for war and the number of airmen needed.⁹³ RAAF Headquarters was not prepared for the influx of messages requesting airfield defence specialists. On 30 October 1939, Wing Commander C. Eaton, Commanding Officer No. 12 Squadron in Darwin sent a second message demanding CAF airfield defence airmen be recruited to man machine gun posts.⁹⁴ Brownell and Eaton had thrown a stone into the lake and the ripple was spreading with requests for resources and trained men for unit's aerodrome defence flights continuing, all quoting the *Air Board Memorandum*.

Within the *Provision of Guard* file archives, inconsistencies in the support for airfield defence by senior staff within RAAF Headquarters are apparent. On 8 November 1939, Flight Lieutenant J.R. Paget, a Staff Officer of Air Member for Personnel, released a message on behalf of Group Captain Jones in which Jones stated, '... this seems to me to be a matter of establishment. Surely the provision of aerodrome defence is a matter of training [all] personnel

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Air Board Memorandum Issue No. 5 Station Defence (Appendix B).

⁹¹ R.J. Brownell, 'Station Defence', 1A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/3, (unpaginated); Brownell joined the Australian Field Artillery in 1912, landed in Alexandria, and in July 1915 re-joined his unit in Gallipoli. He was selected for the Royal Flying Corps as a pilot and flew on operations over the Western Front.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ J.P.J. McCauley, 'Royal Australian Air Force Copy of Outwards Wireless Message 3/10', 2A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/3, (unpaginated).

⁹⁴ C. Eaton, 'Station Defence', 1A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/3, (unpaginated).

of the squadron. It seems unusual to enlist men especially for aerodrome defence duties'.⁹⁵ However, at this early stage of the war the RAAF wanted airmen to complete the Recruit Course at Recruit Depots with a focus only on the skills to, ' . . . qualify them to take their places in the ranks'.⁹⁶ Recruit training did not include an aerodrome defence component, yet airmen would be trained in foot drill movements with and without the rifle.⁹⁷ Officers and aircrew underwent different recruit training courses, and would have no drill or physical training allocated unless it was required.⁹⁸ The sole training for Aircrafthands undertaking any form of aerodrome defence was conducted by members of the aerodrome defence flights at each RAAF station. This meant that there was no consistency in training across stations, and no other airmen, other than Aircrafthands, were trained in aerodrome defence.

Finally, on 20 December 1939, the CAS, Air Vice Marshal S. Goble directed Wing Commander McCauley to prepare a letter called *Provision of Guards and the Manning of Aerodrome Defence Sections* to all Commanding Officers (Richmond, Laverton, Rathmines, and Pearce) and Squadrons 6, 11, 12, 23, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Flying Training Schools, No. 1 Armament Training School and No. 1 Equipment Depot. The letter, held in archives, shows handwritten notes of support from senior officers such as Bostock, Scherger, McNamara, Bladin and Wing Commander H.F. De La Rue.⁹⁹ This letter set out the provision for a mustering of Guards and the manning of AA and ground defence machine gun posts of the aerodrome defence flights. The letter also outlined that the recruitment of the specialist Guard mustering would be implemented in the New Year 1940. Goble and McCauley's correspondence connected the new mustering of Guard to the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence* for the overall aerodrome defence policy for the RAAF.¹⁰⁰

Section 2 – Policy in Action

'It is intended that the aerodrome defence flights should consist of personnel whose normal duties would keep them employed on the ground during war operations'.

Flight Lieutenant J. P. J. McCauley, 1929.

⁹⁵ J.R. Paget, 'Station Defence', 3A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/3, (unpaginated).

⁹⁶ Anon., '24/E. Training. Short Courses', 1939, National Archives of Australia, A705, 150/3/310, (Unpaginated); AFO 24/E/11 Recruits' Drill Course.

⁹⁷ AFO 24/A/22 Annual Training in Drill for All Units.

⁹⁸ AFO 24/A/19 Selection of Officers for Administrative Duties.

⁹⁹ J.P.J. McCauley, 'Provision of Guards and Manning of Aerodrome Defence Sections', 25A, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/3, (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; Air Commodore H.F. De La Rue, C.B.E., D.F.C., served in the Royal Naval Air Service from 1916 until 1918 and commanded No. 223 Squadron RAF and later No. 270 Squadron RAF in Egypt. He joined the RAAF in 1921 and served until 1946.

Aerodrome Defence Flights, State of Readiness

What constituted RAAF airfield defence for the first 18 years in Australia? In the early stages of the RAAF it was comprised of gate guards and security provided by any airman on the station. After 1929, the RAAF had its own original airfield defence flights for machine gun defence of stations and aerodromes. As described previously, a number of *Air Force Confidential Orders* from 1929 would explain the training, structure, weapons and equipment, and local and motor transport defence requirements. The internal discussions included a dichotomy of views, on one side those that held that the RAAF required specialist airfield defence forces essential for the function of the RAAF, while on the other, those that believed that aerodrome defence duties should not take up flying time, personnel or funds. The latter being underscored by the now infamous view by Jones, as Director of Training, that CAF personnel earmarked to be trained for aerodrome defence duties should be fully employed on more essential training such as ‘wholly mess duties’ and that primary training should solely focus on aircraft and pilots.¹⁰¹ However, despite this view, a RAAF aerodrome defence capability continued to gain support, and local Commanding Officers creatively adapted early policies to ensure that defence of their airfields was maintained. Towards the end of the decade it was Australia’s engagement in the Second World War, that fast-tracked the establishment of a specialised ‘Guard’ mustering. This section will examine how the policies impacted on the ground, the operational plans of Commanding Officers and the tasking of airmen performing the role.

At the inception of the RAAF in 1921, airfield defence more or less comprised what it had been in the First World War, where the AFC used airmen to provide front gate guard duty. There was no policy *per se*, Commanding Officers understood that their station needed guards to ensure entry of appropriate persons, however, with a PAF of only 1150 all ranks it was a difficult task to maintain. Just two years after the formation of the RAAF, all activities, operational tasking and routine duty ceased at all RAAF units in Victoria. The RAAF units were placed on notice to support Army operations in Melbourne due to the Victorian Police strike of November 1923.¹⁰² This would become the first occasion that RAAF personnel were

¹⁰¹ G. Jones, ‘Aerodrome Defence Sections’, 1934, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/770, (unpaginated).

¹⁰² Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 47.

utilised by the Australian Government to aid the civil power in a time of crisis.¹⁰³ Personnel of all musterings from the RAAF were employed as guards, transport drivers and local security personnel in Victorian towns and, as the Australian Army still relied on horse-drawn vehicles rather than motorised transport, many RAAF vehicles (modern for their time) were loaned to the Australian Army.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, until 1929, the RAAF's major tasking consisted of air displays, survey and mapping activities, bush fire spotting and combat air training.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, during these 18 years, the gate guard by RAAF personnel provided the only form of security believed to be required on fixed air stations.

Airfield defence as a developing RAAF capability was generated by McCauley with his plan for mobile air operations within the ADS. In August 1929, when aerodrome defence policy was raised by McCauley, units were notified to create aerodrome defence flights within their Headquarters. Many stations and units commenced their aerodrome defence flights however, in the initial stages, miscommunication, lack of machine guns and other equipment led to delays in the implementation of the ADS until all equipment arrived. In January 1931, PAF and CAF Aircraft and General Duty airmen allocated to the aerodrome defence section of each nominated unit commenced training. The RAAF would have aerodrome defence flights at No. 1 Flying Training School and No. 1 and 3 Squadrons. In 1931 Bostock wrote in the ADS file:

The aerodrome defence flights are to be maintained and fully trained at each RAAF unit except where a unit comprises of permanent and civilian personnel, then the unit will have a complete complement of both Permanent and Citizen Air Force personnel as aerodrome defence staff.¹⁰⁶

The training of personnel in local defence of airfields followed the policy, which provided a measure of local defence against low-level air and ground attacks for each station.¹⁰⁷ This training, which was not intended to interfere with the operations of aircraft, was to be spread over 12 months and sequenced so that all members of both AA machine gun and ground

¹⁰³ Anon., 'Point Cook Aerodrome', *Argus*, Melbourne, 11 January 1922, p. 13; Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ W.D. Bostock, 'Aerodrome Defence Training and handwritten notes', 17, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); An interesting point was that from October 1930, G. Jones was the Commanding Officer of No. 1 FTS. The unit had two Aerodrome Defence Sections, one for the Permanent Air Force and one for the Citizen Air Force. In Jones autobiography, no mention is made of any other activities at No. 1 FTS other than aircraft and flying.

¹⁰⁷ Air Force Confidential Order 24/D/6.

defence roles could be multi-skilled to carry out either duty, allowing for interchange of airmen from one course to another. An annual training camp was also held, where the aerodrome defence section set up their machine guns in defence of the station and provided measures for local defence against ground and air attack.¹⁰⁸ As outlined in training policy for the aerodrome defence flights, a yearly report was to be submitted to RAAF Headquarters on 30 June each year, in which the Commanding Officers of each station were to certify the annual training and indicate the standard of efficiency attained. Even though some within RAAF Headquarters were concerned about a lack of airmen and the possible increase of returns and equipment to store, the ADS was running, and airmen were being trained.¹⁰⁹

For the remainder of 1931 units trained and completed their report returns. For instance, at No. 1 Squadron the Commanding Officer drafted the manning and allocation of equipment per section of his squadron and detailed that machine guns and all equipment for the aerodrome defence flight had been allocated. These were to be held and then issued at units' stores and kept separately from general stores as according to McCauley, '... this needs to be quickly issued'. Maintenance was entirely up to the Armament Section, and alarms and assembly posts for aerodrome defence staff would be issued by the Commanding Officers in routine orders. By early July 1931, the Aerodrome Defence Section of No. 1 Squadron had carried out training manoeuvres with the 8th Field Artillery Brigade, Royal Australian Artillery, and during the same year No. 3 Squadron participated in a field exercise with Army units.¹¹⁰

The Commanding Officer of No. 3 Squadron, Squadron Leader A.H. Cobby, sent a minute to the Secretary of the Air Board on 12 July 1931 about his trial of specific AA gun sights (obtained from the Army) for the RAAF's AA machine guns (Appendix C).¹¹¹ On 21 July 1931, McCauley acknowledged Cobby's minute and his knowledge of the sights for low-level AA guns to be used by the aerodrome defence sections.¹¹² However, McCauley outlined that he was unable to agree with this proposal as the AA gun sights were unavailable for issue

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ W.D. Bostock, 'Royal Australian Air Force Minute Paper Extract 1679 of 15th June 1931 and new AFO 2/A/3 and 24/D/6 published', 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁰ Carwardine, 'Aerodrome Defence Scheme', p. 46.

¹¹¹ A.H. Cobby, 'A.A. Gun Sights', 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); Air Commodore Arthur Henry Cobby, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C. and two bars, G.M., was an officer of the Australian Flying Corps and the RAAF. Cobby outlined the types of AA gun sights in Australian service and recommended the ring and bead sight system, which is one sighting system for AA, as used by the Army and that it should be introduced for aerodrome defence sections. Cobby articulates that in the event of an aircraft diving and zooming attack, the amount of deflection that is needed by normal sights to correctly fire at an aircraft would be problematic. While the ring and bead sight allows for all angles of approach with allowances so the gunner can fire correctly at the aircraft.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

to the RAAF (removed from RAAF stores and inventories), and the Army did not have enough to issue to the RAAF. Therefore, the RAAF and aerodrome defence flights were to use the basic iron sights used in standard machine gun training and on operations.¹¹³

By early 1932, the state of NSW was facing civic collapse and semi-fascist threats.¹¹⁴ The 'New Guard' and their rise reached its culmination at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 19 March 1932, when New Guardsman Francis De Groot, wearing military uniform, on horseback and brandishing a cavalry sabre, cut the ceremonial ribbon before the Premier Jack Lang could do so. One supporter of the New Guard wrote, 'The time has come when 'fascism', with modification, should take an active form in Australia'.¹¹⁵ According to Richard Evans, the New Guard could take power from the State Government of NSW through campaigns combining violence, populist politics and sheer bluff.¹¹⁶ Formed by former Army officers, the New Guard was organised along military lines and Evans indicated that the New Guard sought to abolish party 'machine politics' and 'suppress any disloyal or immoral elements in government, industry and society'.¹¹⁷

Colonel E. Campbell, the founder and leader of the New Guard at the time, was very close to mounting a *coup d'état* against the State Government of NSW.¹¹⁸ For the RAAF, concerning information provided by Defence Intelligence reported that the New Guard might attempt to steal weaponry from RAAF Station Richmond.¹¹⁹ This, according to the information gained by Defence Intelligence, was due to the low or poor security at RAAF Station Richmond. Then in May 1932, the State Labor Government of NSW was dismissed, and their subsequent electoral defeat pre-empted the New Guard threat to seize power.¹²⁰ The residents of Richmond had however, witnessed an increase in defensive activities at RAAF Station Richmond aerodrome and it was reported by some that vehicles had been fitted with machine guns, barbed wire had been erected around the perimeter, machine gun pits dug, and airmen were observed training on machine guns.¹²¹

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Richard Evans, 'A menace to this Realm: The New Guard and the New South Wales Police 1931-32', *History Australia*, 5, 3, 2008.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Andrew Moore, 'Labour History', 89, 2005.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 136.

That same month, the Commanding Officer RAAF Station Richmond, Wing Commander W.D. Bostock, advised his men that representatives of the Prime Minister had expressed concern about the political situation in NSW at a recent conference of senior service commanders. Bostock advised that there were strong and justified concerns that the semi-fascist New Guard had become a threat to the State Government and NSW could face civic collapse.¹²² Further, Bostock indicated that the RAAF may need to take up a policing role in NSW.¹²³ Bostock continued:

Extra guards were mounted for the security of the station itself . . . We had only 1- and 3-ton lorries to give us motorised mobility on the ground. Their canvas hoods were stripped off and replaced by a steel mesh to protect crews from sticks, stones, bottles, etc. and on each vehicle a machine-gun was mounted with live ammunition.¹²⁴

In June 1932, Bostock issued the annual report on the training undertaken by RAAF Richmond Aerodrome Defence Flights for 1931/1932. He outlined that both the PAF and CAF aerodrome defence flights within his squadron were ready for any situation and covered the establishment and the training that had been completed. Bostock also noted that some disruption of training had occurred, mainly due to the threat from the New Guard, when he had activated the local defence plan of his station and had allocated the aerodrome defence flights with guns into their local defence picquet posts around the aerodrome. He emphasised that both the PAF and CAF aerodrome defence flights were handicapped to some extent during the year through the posting cycle of members of the unit, discharges and remusters.¹²⁵

Over 1932 and 1933, Commanding Officers of all units with aerodrome defence flights issued their annual returns outlining their activities.¹²⁶ All units indicated that their aerodrome defence flights had completed training and qualified on both Lewis AA and Vickers ground defence machine gun post systems. In addition, elementary instruction had been completed and members of teams had covered standard testing in every position using machine guns,

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Dismissal of a Premier, <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/nswconstitution/html/dismissal/bgr/impact.html>, accessed on 12 November 2017.

¹²⁴ Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 136.

¹²⁵ W.D. Bostock, 'No. 3 Squadron RAAF Richmond Annual Report of Aerodrome Defence Sections 1931/32', 1932, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹²⁶ F. McNamara, 'Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Section During Year 1931/32 – AFO 24/D/5 (5)', 1932, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated); A. Cole, 'Report on Aerodrome Defence for Year ending 30/6/32 – Section No. 1 A.D. – AFO 24D6 (5)', 1932, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

stoppages, gun detachment training and visual camera gun training. Some of the training was identified as difficult, in that some units did not have a guns and tripod system.¹²⁷ Additionally, a number of joint RAAF aerodrome defence flights took part in Army exercises (particularly with artillery units).¹²⁸

At this time, one Commanding Officer demonstrated his support for recognition of Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen who specialised on air and ground defence training. On 13 July 1933, Wing Commander H.F. De La Rue of No. 1 Flying Training School, suggested all members of the ADS be given some form of official metal badge when they qualified as 'Ground Gunners'.¹²⁹ De La Rue's suggestion was not to change the musterings title, but when the airmen qualified as gunners they should be issued a badge in a similar manner to the type given to aircrew Air Gunners, and that this would aid morale and *esprit de corps*.¹³⁰ This minute arrived on the Director of Training, now Squadron Leader Jones' desk.¹³¹ On 3 August 1933, Jones replied to De La Rue's recommendation by stating:

With reference to the proposal that a special badge be issued to members of the section, it is considered undesirable to increase the number of types of badges issued to airmen, particularly where the qualification concerned is not directly connected with the principal aims of service training.¹³²

The yearly returns from 1933 to 1939 on aerodrome defence flights from units around Australia outline a continuous deployment of airmen trained in airfield defence. The return for No. 1 Aircraft Depot indicated the standard for gun drills was quite satisfactory, but the range practices were described only as 'fair'. The ground defence machine gun teams were reported to have had one NCO and two-gun teams of three airmen that had received 30 hours of training. The AA machine gun section required more men yet received similar hours of training, the sections included two NCOs and two teams of three airmen, who had received 33 hours of

¹²⁷ G.J.W. Mackinolt, 'Aerodrome Defence Section – Equipment for', 1932, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹²⁸ Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 212.

¹²⁹ H.F. De La Rue, 'Annual Report of Aerodrome Defence Section Training', 1933, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² G. Jones, 'Annual Report of Aerodrome Defence Section Training', 1933, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

machine gun training.¹³³ Within the training for 1937, 13 vehicles and a number of aircraft, with 65 airmen of No. 3 Squadron, deployed from RAAF Station Richmond to Scone Aerodrome for a month-long field exercise. Within this exercise was the setup and defence of the aerodrome by No. 3 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Flight.¹³⁴ In a demonstration of support for RAAF airfield defence, on 18 November 1937, CAS, Air Vice-Marshal Williams, arrived at Scone for an inspection of No. 3 Squadron of the forward deployment exercise, its operational efficiency and the aerodrome defence flights protecting the unit.¹³⁵ Then on 28 July 1938, Group Captain De La Rue, outlined that he had started to prepare aerodrome defence flights that could deploy to satellite aerodromes to provide defence and he also drew up defence schemes for all these satellites.¹³⁶ By November 1938, all ten of the RAAF Stations across NSW, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Western Australia and New Guinea had aerodrome defence flights armed with between four and 13 machine gun posts at each station.¹³⁷

¹³³ R.H. Chester, 'No. 1 Aircraft Depot Report of Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Section for Year Ending 30-6-1934 – AFO 24/D/6', 1934, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹³⁴ No. 3 (Army Co-Operation) Squadron 1937, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ H.F. De La Rue, 'Aerodrome Defence Section – Training for Year 1937/38', 1938, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

¹³⁷ J. Waters, 'Aerodrome Defence', 1938, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/49, (unpaginated).

Section 3 – Analysis of the Policy

‘History repeats itself, the first as tragedy, then as farce’.

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, 1852.

Evidence of RAAF Airfield Defence

As mentioned in the literature review, the study by J.J. Baker, being the first amateur history of RAAF airfield defence, outlined that in late 1939, the RAAF had no trained ground defence units on any airfield. Baker stated, ‘. . . with the exception of a small number of Vickers or Lewis machine-gun posts manned usually by members of the various armament sections’.¹³⁸ Firstly, the findings of the period immediately after 1921 highlight the size of the RAAF as a restraint on the development and implementation of airfield defence policy. For instance, Point Cook in 1922 had 39 PAF officers, 155 airmen, and a resident flying squadron for full time operations of the RAAF Station.¹³⁹ These airmen were supplemented with CAF personnel. The complexity of financial and manning restraints during this period placed the Commanding Officer of the station in a position where he would find it difficult to provide added security and gate guards for his air base.¹⁴⁰

In contrast to Baker’s writings, the date of establishment of formal RAAF airfield defence policy is clear. It is now undeniable that RAAF airfield defence began in 1929, eight years after the creation of the RAAF, and some ten years before the beginning of the Second World War. The policy designed by McCauley was in many ways distinctly Australian; however, it still retained influences and had its roots in ideas developed by the RAF. The RAF policy, *CD 22*, had only two sentences that are reflected in McCauley’s ADS. These sentences indicate that low-level AA defence machine guns would be grouped together around the living accommodation of the airmen, with that being the huts on a permanent station or tents on mobile operations.

From 1922, RAAF officers seconded from the Army and Navy, many with First World War operational experience, were in senior posts.¹⁴¹ These men, with modern military

¹³⁸ Baker, *Ground Defence*, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Coulthard-Clark, *Third Brother*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

knowledge, understood that if RAAF pilots and aircraft could attack enemy airfields then their adversary could do the same. Thus, the need for secure airfields was imperative, if the RAAF was to gain and retain control of the air. McCauley understood this and when he presented his policy, he appears to have had the support of influential senior RAAF officers such as Wrigley, Thompson, Goble, Williams, Bostock, McNamara and Scherger. What McCauley created would continue throughout the Second World War and into the post-war RAAF.

To date, there has been a common theme within the quasi-historical field of RAAF airfield defence, that there were no airmen conducting airfield defence prior to 1942.¹⁴² This concept does not align with the research of this thesis, that local Commanding Officers had implemented airfield defence within their own stations and squadrons. This research also highlights the economic and manning struggles and the attempts by commanders to work around these obstacles in the RAAF during these ten years. In addition to funding and manning difficulties, there is evidence that some officers were not convinced that airfield defence was a required service need for the RAAF. These more broader issues made the implementation of a wide-spread airfield defence capability difficult.

The most important feature of this period, however, is that this was the first time the RAAF had given thought to its own policy or provided written doctrine for airfield defence. Was McCauley going against his superiors or was he challenging the officers of the future Air Force to understand that for air power to exist a secure aerodrome is crucial? This was the same idea that Wrigley had emphasised in his essay in 1923, some 12 years earlier. However, it is important to note that despite Jones' view and his role as the Director of Training, neither the *Air Force Confidential Orders* nor policy on airfield defence for the RAAF were altered. The ADS training had continued at all nominated stations and units. Airmen, both PAF and CAF, would also be put through defensive training in exercises with the Australian Army. Complete squadrons were deployed forward from their home stations on exercise, mobilising and performing indigenous airfield defence. Furthermore, individual squadrons would place their aerodrome defence flights on an operational footing to counter potential civilian unrest. In fact, this provides the only example of RAAF airfield defence airmen taking up arms in the protection of an airfield prior to 1939. As the Commanding Officer of No. 3 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Flights, Bostock had Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen identified and

¹⁴² Baker, 'Ground Defence'; Kerr, 'Ground Defence in the RAAF'; Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished.

trained in airfield defence and he applied that policy across RAAF Station Richmond. This was happening on all the RAAF stations and was a great achievement in both written policy and action on the ground.

The evidence further shows that for the whole of G. Jones' career, he maintained a view that aircraft and pilots were the primary focus of the RAAF, while minimising the need for modern operational airfield defence in forward areas supporting the Army. Jones appears to support the idea that Air Force squadrons would operate from a static station rather than moving forward in support of Army operations, and this view could be based on the outdated tactics of the First World War. In all RAAF files investigated on aerodrome defence of this time period, G. Jones' persistently viewed airfield defence as a distraction to utilising personnel on duties he assessed they were better tasked to do. He is recorded as holding a view that he preferred airmen to be conducting duties and training more aligned with projection of air power, though his case is somewhat weakened with his recommendation that a more useful occupation than airfield defence is employment on mess duties.

In addition, Jones, during his time as Director of Training, attempted to make significant changes to the policy of aerodrome defence for the RAAF. These changes would have removed a squadron's aerodrome defence flight and all equipment while it was stationed on the airfield, leaving only PAF aerodrome defence flights attached to station headquarters. According to Peter Helson, Jones demonstrated a singular focus on aircraft, the displaying of aircraft within air shows and he is referred to as an 'exhibitionist'.¹⁴³ During his career, Jones was assessed as an outstanding pilot, but an average officer when it came to handling policy or airmen.¹⁴⁴ Helson stated, 'What appears to have let him [Jones] down was his inability to deal with service personnel' and 'he did not relate very well with other people'. Throughout the ADS files, Jones appeared unwilling to acknowledge that RAAF airfield defence was a crucial capability that allowed air power to function on a broader scale, despite the support of a large body of his senior and fellow officers and the direction of the airfield defence field in allied countries. Jones' statements regarding airfield defence, such as, '. . . squadron defence flights are superfluous' and '. . . only station flights were needed' were contrary to the evidence that was arising during this timeframe.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Peter Helson, *The Private Air Marshal*, 2010, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, pp. 109-112.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

With the stroke of a pen, in 1934 Jones amended the *Air Force Confidential Orders* structure of the aerodrome defence flights to have only station flights of permanent airmen, ‘... if available’.¹⁴⁶ What is interesting, is that following Jones’ amendments regarding RAAF aerodrome defence, many senior officers such as Bostock, Scherger, De La Rue, Goble, McNamara and McCauley, who were commanding stations and squadrons at the time, appear to have actively ignored his attempts to reduce the numbers of airmen for the ADS. ADS files detail that these officers were completing yearly returns of training for both CAF and PAF in the ADS. The returns on file show signed indications that they had been read by Staff Officers, however there are no indications in any training return for aerodrome defence sections that Jones had read them, or that they had passed his desk.

In summary, the first aerodrome defence policy by the RAAF demonstrated an understanding of the need for, and importance of, defence and security of aerodromes during war and peace. This was understood by the officers and men on the stations and squadrons. Ideas that developed during the First World War in relation to aerodrome defence and security, fell to the wayside during post-war considerations of budgets, training and manning levels for peacetime, and the development of an independent RAAF. The post-First World War period shows the tangible struggle for existence for the RAAF. One that, in the view of some, did not need airfield defence bar a few airmen posted at the front gate of each RAAF station. During this early period, there was no aerodrome defence policy, as guard duty could be carried out by any member of the new service as a secondary duty, and this was the maximum level of security for the RAAF. The only problem was that the manning levels of the PAF were so low that front gate guard duty was not always done, which was an accepted risk during peacetime. What can be definitely understood from the interwar period is that senior officers, from the CAS down, understood the need for aerodrome defence and applied it during peacetime and during a potential period of civil unrest. It can also be stated that despite the long-held belief in the RAAF that ground defence doctrine and practice did not exist during this period there was a static airfield defence force structure and there were trained airmen to man it.

These current findings add to the previously written booklets and journals by completing the unknown or mis-represented history of airfield defence in the RAAF. This chapter demonstrates that the current belief that there were some ‘armament officers’ with a

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

‘few machine guns’ for the RAAF, is incorrect.¹⁴⁷ The current study has only evaluated the subject within limitations; however, future research can expand this study into previously unexplored avenues such as direct links with Army units on exercise with the aerodrome defence flights prior to the Second World War. In addition, from a strategic point of view, much more can be explored in relation to the effect of attacks against airfields since 1916 until now. Throughout this history of local aerodrome defence, a significant number of senior officers demonstrated and advocated for the need for its application; Wrigley outlined the need based on the weakness of aircraft, at that stage being the lack of range and the fragile state of aircraft on the ground. Finally, to correct the RAAF airfield defence history, there were airfield defence units, with flights of airmen trained as machine gunners, on stations and squadrons around Australia prior to 1942. By the beginning of 1939, the RAAF had a total of 61 machine gun posts on ten RAAF Stations with 20 aerodrome defence flights. It also can be stated that J.P.J. McCauley was the true creator and father of RAAF airfield defence policy. It is clear from the material in RAAF archives that there has been a tradition of airfield defence dating from 1929.

This chapter was concerned with the time period from the creation of the RAAF in 1921 to the outbreak of the Second World War and explains how RAAF airfield defence evolved during this period of extreme financial and manpower constraint and institutional development. During the early 1920s, the RAAF was in a continual struggle for recognition as the third service. The story of RAAF airfield defence policy over the first 18 years is one of creation, setbacks, training, exercises and operational duty, and would provide the template for operations and successes in the looming Second World War.

¹⁴⁷ Baker, *Ground Defence*, p. 2.

Chapter Four - RAAF Aerodrome Defence in the Second World War 1940 – 1945

'I think we must realise, as the Air Ministry have realised, that the local defence of our aerodromes must be faced'.

Air Vice Marshal W. Bostock, January 1942.

Section 1 - Policy

The Continuation of Policy

Defence of any airfield, Air Force station or radar station is a fundamental tactical consideration in preparation for and engagement in war. The Second World War would challenge and redesign airfield defence in Australia and highlight key concepts behind airfield defence. The concepts include, not only the protection of personnel and assets, but also control of the air battlespace as support for land battles.¹ This chapter will firstly demonstrate and discuss the implementation and application of airfield defence during the Second World War from 1940-45 and will draw on archival airfield defence files and the voices of veterans themselves for this period. Through the primary resources of the time, the emerging airfield defence policy from the start of the Second World War takes shape, building on the structure of pre-war policies and the introduction of the specialist arm of Guards for RAAF airfield defence. This chapter will then examine the developing vision of senior officers within RAAF Headquarters regarding 'station defence squadrons' for the proposed but elusive 'RAAF Regiment'. In addition, this chapter will demonstrate consequences for airfield defence policy due to the division of the RAAF command structure, which would see often contradictory orders and policy being issued from three separate commands; the Air Board, RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command. Lastly, this chapter will examine the influences on policy by senior RAAF officers and the varying views of successive Chiefs of the Air Staff.

¹ 'Australian Air Publication 1000-D', *The Air Power Manual*, 6th edn, Canberra, Air Power Development Centre, 2013, p. 90; Baker, 'RAAF Ground Defence', pp. 2-3; Kerr, 'Ground Defence', p.28; Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished, p.3.

Only four months after the start of the Second World War, early in January 1940, the Department of Defence and the War Cabinet released a policy highlighting that the Army was to protect coastal defences and ‘vulnerable points’.² The RAAF considered airfields as vulnerable points and in need of protection, therefore RAAF Headquarters insisted the Army should undertake both internal security and external protection of all RAAF establishments. This was occurring at the same time as Guards were being recruited for internal defence and training had commenced. On 25 January 1940, Secretary of the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council, F.R. Sinclair, issued a statement that in essence provided that the RAAF should consult State Police for protection of airfields.³

The suggestion that Army provide security and defence for RAAF aerodromes met with some resistance. On 12 May 1940, the Secretary of the Military Board, J.T. Fitzgerald indicated that, given the RAAF controlled the aerodrome or station, it should be the role of the RAAF to guard and protect them, not the Army. In one heated letter Fitzgerald stated, ‘The question of protection of aerodromes by the Army seems to be a matter which the RAAF, with their local knowledge and personal contacts, could more successfully implement than by the Army’.⁴ Fitzgerald then ended his communication with, ‘Military [Army] forces are not available for such duties’.

The correspondence from Fitzgerald appears to have sparked a controversy with some Senior Officers. Following an Air Board meeting in July 1940, M.C. Langslow, Secretary of the Air Board, forwarded a list of aerodromes that required Army protection to the Military Board (Army) (Appendix D).⁵ One month later, Langslow replied to Fitzgerald directly and stated, ‘The issue raised is the problem of denying the enemy the use of existing air bases. The suggestion of the RAAF doing this job would involve the RAAF raising and training a land force’.⁶ To complicate matters, over the next two months an abundance of evidence exists in the form of letters between Langslow and Fitzgerald, arguing as to whether Army or RAAF

² Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Canberra, 1962, p. 77; G.A. Street, ‘Cabinet Agenda Australia’s War Effort Basis of Preparation by the Services Defence No. 6/1939, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A2671, 6/1939, (unpaginated); War Cabinet Defence Policy No. 6/1939 Basis of Preparations by the Services.

³ F.R. Sinclair, ‘Guards on Vulnerable Points’, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A816, 22/301/13, (unpaginated).

⁴ J.T. Fitzgerald, ‘Security of Aerodromes’, 2A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated).

⁵ M.C. Langslow, ‘Security of Aerodromes’, 1A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated).

⁶ M.C. Langslow, ‘Security of Aerodromes’, 3A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated); By January 1940 the RAAF had some 10 years of well-tested policy for airfield defence i.e. Air Force Confidential Orders 25/C/11 Citizen Air Force Training, 2/A/3 Local Defence of Aerodromes, 24/D/6 Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections, 2/A/18-2/A/27 Organization and Administration General – Local Defence of Aerodromes, 11/B/1 Anti-Aircraft Defence of M.T. Convoys, Air Board Order N.153 Anti-Aircraft Sights, and Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence.

should be responsible for airfield defence and, to demonstrate this point, the Army subsequently removed infantry and Volunteer Defence Corps personnel from aerodrome defence. Langslow did not support this action as he was insistent that the Army fully fund and undertake airfield defence duties for RAAF and civilian aviation bases.⁷ Throughout the correspondence there is no mention of the RAAF already training PAF Guards for low-level AA and ground defence through station and squadron aerodrome defence flights.

While joint agreements outlined that the Australian Army provided defence of coastal areas, the Air Board and Langslow desired some assurance from the Army for the commitment for defence of air bases. Following a RAAF investigation into aerodromes with inadequate security in all RAAF Commands, a list of these was forwarded to Fitzgerald to reinforce that protection was required (Appendix E).⁸ On 3 May 1941 Fitzgerald responded, 'It should be made clear that it will not be possible to detach troops from the field forces in an emergency for the tactical defence of aerodromes'.⁹ This is not an entirely unique Australian debate, however, it is in direct contrast to that occurring in the United Kingdom that had already established that the RAF would have ground defence and low-level AA machine gun defence on all airfields. This dichotomy of views in Australia was to continue for the next two years.

While the debate continued between the Air Board and the Military Board, on 12 May 1941, new Air Force Orders for RAAF training were released. These orders covered the tasking for recruit drill courses, anti-gas instructors and respirator maintenance, which all linked for the first time into the airfield defence policy. The airmen recruitment training course policy once again contained no requirement for ground combat training at all for RAAF personnel, however, some Recruiting Depots around Australia undertook some 'living under canvas' (tents) and rifle shooting.¹⁰ The anti-gas training was a two-week course to train airmen or

⁷ J.T. Fitzgerald, 'Security of Aerodromes', 2A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated); M.C. Langslow, 'Security of Aerodromes', 3A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated); M.C. Langslow, 'Defence of Air Bases Against Land Attack', 4A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated); Melville Cecil Langslow enlisted in 1914 in the Australian Imperial Force as part of the Pay Corps and served in Cairo and London, moving through the ranks to Major in 1920. In 1922, his commission was terminated, and he joined the Finance Branch of the Department of Defence. He encouraged many to call him Major Langslow, when he was appointed to be Secretary of the Department of Air. He remained in this post until 1951.

Langslow's focus was on the economical expenditure of public funds by the Air Force. However, uniformed members of the RAAF were more interested in obtaining the best available equipment and logistic support. Strong hostility from those RAAF personnel ensured Langslow would be unpopular with many in the RAAF mainly due to his divergent concerns and priorities.

⁸ M.C. Langslow, 'Defence of Air Bases Against Land Attack', 4A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated); Langslow within the file outlines that if the Army cannot protect and secure RAAF airfields then, 'organisations such as the Returned Soldiers League, rifle clubs, fire brigades, and councils, could be utilised to provide emergency defensive measures'

⁹ J.T. Fitzgerald, 'Defence of Air Bases Against Land Attack', 4A-4B, 1941, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated).

¹⁰ Air Force Order 24/E/9 Initial Course for Unit Anti-gas; AFO 24/E/11 Recruits' Drill Course policy.

officers to become anti-gas instructors, but at no stage did this training lead to automatic promotion to Corporal as detailed by J.J. Baker.¹¹

Then on 21 July 1941, the Air Board and RAAF Headquarters released the updated *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence* (1941) amendment to the policy, incorporating the Air Force Orders as outlined above (Appendix F).¹² In addition, the new *Air Board Memorandum* included that RAAF establishments, within 50 miles of the coast, were now required to have a Station Defence Scheme which covered every aspect of defence of the RAAF establishment. In addition, the memorandum made RAAF Area Commanding Officers responsible for ensuring that all RAAF stations and establishments had current Station Defence Schemes. Prior to this amendment being introduced, the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* incorporated the LDS that was made up of aerodrome defence flights. With the amendment, the idea of a 'Station Defence Scheme' was essentially a renaming of the original LDS proposed originally by McCauley in 1934. In addition, RAAF senior officers who were investigating the RAF airfield defence, found that the RAF defence schemes consisted of multiple flights of AA and ground defence machine guns and infantry trained 'Ground Gunner' airmen. This led to the idea of forming 'Station Defence Squadrons', incorporating numerous aerodrome defence flights, for RAAF stations in Australia.

By the end of that year, the idea of 'Station Defence Squadrons' was gaining support. This addition to the Station Defence Scheme was being raised by Squadron Leader I. Hamilton-Smith from the Directorate of Operations (Armament), detailing that every RAAF station will have a Station Defence Squadron (Appendix H).¹³ Wing Commander I.D. McLachlan, Commanding Officer RAAF Station Canberra outlined that he supported this idea. On 10 January 1942, a meeting took place between CAS Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles S. Burnett, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS) Air Vice Marshal Bostock, the Assistant CAS Air Commodore Bladin, and the Director of Operations Group Captain Hely.¹⁴ Group Captain Hely

¹¹ Anon, 'Extract from Weekly Orders Issue No. 563 Dated 12th May 1941 24. Training', 1941, National Archives of Australia, A705, 150/3/310, (Unpaginated).

¹² F.J. Mulroney, 'Royal Australian Air Force Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence 21 July 1941, 29A, 1941, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1.

¹³ I. Hamilton-Smith, 'Extract from File – 36/501/235 16', 65A, 1941, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁴ W.L. Hely, 'Aerodrome Defence', 68A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Stuart Burnett, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., served in the Second Boer War, and saw action in the West African Frontier Force in Nigeria. As a qualified pilot he served in the Royal Flying Corps and at the end of the First World War the newly formed RAF and was by then Officer Commanding RAF Palestine Forces. During this time, he understood, and knew of, the RAF Armoured Car Companies and took charge of the operations of the 'Carserve Column' in southern Iraq. As a consequence, Burnett understood airfield

outlined that each Defence Squadron would have AA Machine Gun Flights manned by over 30 Guard Gunners.¹⁵ In addition to this, a Defence Squadron Headquarters would command the Squadron which was to include a number of Rifle Flights manned by Guards and other airmen not linked to air operations.¹⁶ Burnett, Hely, Bladin, Bostock, and now Group Captain J.R. Bell, Staff Officer RAAF Headquarters, agreed to the formation of Station Defence Squadrons.

The outcome of the meeting was the development of the Station Defence Squadrons, formulated in policy.¹⁷ Air Vice Marshal Bostock sent a folio note to Burnett, outlining that the RAF had also formed Aerodrome Defence Flights, which according to Bostock did not fully work, and that the formation of Station Defence Squadrons would be more effective.¹⁸ Bostock then stated, ‘. . . [I] do not think that the RAAF should follow the RAF and form a RAAF Regiment at this moment, but it has to be formed in the next year or so’.¹⁹ Within a week of that meeting, plans for the formation of RAAF Defence Squadrons at every RAAF station had been completed. The CAS, Burnett, then added, ‘I agree with this, action should be taken to provide RAAF men for local defence of stations’, and on 15 January 1942, he had signed directions for the planning and formation of Station Defence Squadrons.²⁰ Burnett indicated that the expansion of the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* would have provisions for additional personnel (Guards) for Defence Squadrons, a Headquarters, a number of Rifle Flights and a LAA Flight. The establishment tables were drawn up by 28 January 1942 and signed off by Burnett.²¹ The RAAF now had a Station Defence Squadron policy approved on paper.

During this period, while the process of implementing the Station Defence Squadrons was underway, the bombing of Darwin occurred in February 1942 which had an impact on

defence by the Air Force. Throughout the post-war period he occupied a number of RAF staff positions and by the outbreak of the Second World War was Inspector-General of the RAF. In 1940 he was appointed as CAS of the RAAF.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Hely also outlined that a new Branch of the Administration and Special Duties Branch of officers, called Aerodrome Defence Officers (ADOs), should be formed to command these squadrons. These officers would provide the CO of establishments with the point of knowledge on defending airfields. Within a year some experienced officers from the Australian Army would transfer to the RAAF as ADOs. ¹⁷ Anon., ‘MD-5/38 O.R. 700 28.1.1942, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence 1941; Bostock noted that the AA machine gun flights formed under the RAF Ground Defence Scheme, which were similar to the Aerodrome Defence Flights of the RAAF did not work for the RAF in France. What Bostock wanted was for each RAAF Station to have a Station Defence Squadron made up of Guard Gunner AA Flights and Guard Rifle Flights, which, it was intended at a later stage, would form into the RAAF Regiment.

¹⁸ W. Bostock, ‘Extract from File – 36/501/235 17’, 65A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁹ C.S. Burnett, ‘Extract from File – 36/501/235 18’, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Anon., ‘Royal Australian Air Force Provisional War Establishment of a Station Defence Squadron’, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated);

policy development. In March 1942 a significant change was made by the Air Board to the grading for risk of air attack on RAAF stations. This change was based on consideration of the capability of enemy aircraft and the location of stations and aerodromes from the coast. On 9 March 1942, RAAF Headquarters released an amendment that the previous 50-mile area of risk had been expanded to 100 miles.²² This led to stations that were outside the 50-mile area, now being required to provide Station Defence Schemes and AA machine gun posts.²³ In addition, perhaps as a response to the Darwin bombing and experiences in the Far East, RAAF Headquarters issued a policy outlining that all members of the RAAF were to annually fire their weapons.²⁴ What is interesting is that this order is crossed out by hand, with no indication of who was responsible or why this was done.²⁵

On 19 April 1942, an updated 'Issue 1' of an *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* was signed off by Secretary of Air, Langslow and released. This was a 24-page document that incorporated all the orders relating to the Station Defence Squadrons and amendments to the grading of airfield, and anti-gas training as outlined above. With the support of CAS Burnett, the following day, Bostock released a ten-page update in relation to the implementation of the Station Defence Squadrons.²⁶ Bostock set out details of the portable radio sets needed for each squadron, the number of hand grenades, the personnel establishment for all airmen, the allocations of .50 inch and 20 mm cannon for AA Machine Gun Flights, the Vickers or Lewis machine gun requirements for Rifle Flights, tracked vehicles, and mortars.

Only a few weeks later, on 5 May 1942, Air Commodore Jones was promoted to CAS, replacing Burnett.²⁷ Despite CAS Burnett's initial support and the implementation of the Station Defence Squadrons, towards to the end of May 1942, Jones as newly appointed CAS, released 'Issue 2' of the *Air Board Memorandum*. Issue 2, back dated to 19 April 1942, was a

²² Amendment List No. 11 to Air Board Memorandum No. 5.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Air Force Order 24/A/13A Annual Musketry Practices.

²⁵ Anon., '24 Training', 1942, National Archives of Australia, A705, 150/3/310, (unpaginated).

²⁶ W. Bostock, 'Defence of RAAF Establishments and Landing Grounds – Recommended Revisions to Existing Policy, 96A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁷ As Director of the Directorate of Training, Jones fully supported the Empire Air Training Scheme policy of the Australian Government and was sent overseas to formalise this scheme for Australia. Jones service records show that on 1 December 1939 he was temporary Group Captain, by 21 February 1941 he was Acting Air Commodore, and less than a year later he was promoted to Air Vice Marshal. At no stage were any of these ranks substantive and this rapid rise would not have happened to many airmen; as shown in service records of Guards that would reach the rank of Temporary Sergeant in the Second World War and post-war would then be reduced to Leading Aircraftman. It can be said, based on Jones service records, that he was a good pilot who understood the mechanical requirements for these machines, however his experience in a modern war was non-existent apart from the staff duties he performed within RAAF Headquarters. Prior to his retirement CAS Burnett had been advocating for DCAS Bostock to replace him as CAS, Jones was promoted over Bostock to the position.

9-page document and did not contain any mention of Bostock and Burnett's Station Defence Squadrons and removed all policy in relation to the implementation and establishment of the Squadrons.²⁸ In contrast with the last *Air Board Memorandum No. 5*, 'Issue 2' indicated that all airmen were to be fully trained to perform the duties allotted to them in the defence of the aerodrome, while areas adjacent to Air Force establishments and outside the perimeter would be the responsibility of the Army.²⁹ Furthermore, Commanding Officers were to ensure their defence scheme was to provide any airmen for tasking under their command in defence of the aerodrome.³⁰

By this time, Air Vice Marshal Bostock had been transferred to take up the role of Commander of RAAF Command in Allied Air Forces Headquarters South-West Pacific Area, located in Brisbane. Group Captain Scherger, as Director of Defence, and other RAAF officers, were also in Staff Officer positions within the joint command alongside Bostock in Allied Air Forces Headquarters.³¹ The Allied Air Forces Headquarters commanded multiple allied nations, and as the RAAF Commander, Bostock managed operational requirements for all RAAF Stations and establishments. This was a separate entity to RAAF Headquarters in Australia, commanded by Jones, which managed all administrative matters for RAAF Stations and establishments. Following the change of CAS there was no further correspondence regarding support for RAAF airfield defence and the formation of the Station Defence Squadrons. The change of CAS altered the direction of the drafting of the new policy.³²

Now under a separate command with an operational focus, Bostock and Scherger released new Aerodrome Defence Orders on 8 July 1942.³³ These orders covered all aspects of the previous aerodrome defence schemes. The orders also made it clear that stated, 'if these orders differ in any way from previous orders or instructions, then they supersede the earlier orders or instructions'.³⁴ The orders were issued by Allied Air Forces Headquarters to all Area Operational Commands and Training Groups, bypassing RAAF Headquarters and CAS Jones.

²⁸ F.J. Mulrone, 'Royal Australian Air Force Air Board Memorandum No. 5. Issue No. 2', 98A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ F.J. Mulrone, 'Royal Australian Air Force Air Board Memorandum No. 5. Issue No. 2', 98A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³² Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Ground Defence Issue No. 2 (1942).

³³ W. Bostock, 'Circular Memorandum No. 75-1 Defence – Standing Aerodrome Defence Orders', 114A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated); Circular Memorandum 75-1 Defence - Standard Aerodrome Defence Orders.

³⁴ The orders incorporated topics such as passive and active defence, air attack including air raid alerts, shelter and trench designs, ground and gas attack responses, anti-sabotage defence, firefighting and medical defence tasks.

Within days of these orders, Bostock released a number of recommendations, including that the equipment needed (as previously proposed in April 1942) for aerodrome defence should be requisitioned from the Army. He also recommended that a RAAF Aerodrome Defence Officer (ADO) be appointed to the Directorate of Training for supervision of aerodrome defence training, thus removing the Australian Army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Carr.³⁵

Under the new CAS, the policy continued that required all airmen to be trained to undertake tasks in the defence of the aerodrome, and that Army was to protect the external adjacent areas. In addition, in August 1942, some six months after the Japanese air attack on Darwin, Squadron Leader Mocatta, of RAAF Headquarters and under CAS Jones, released the RAAF's first policy setting out evacuation procedures of airfields under attack.³⁶ This policy noted that no evacuation would commence unless ordered by RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne. Any evacuation would be a two-phase movement. The first was a 'precautionary phase' where aircraft was to be refuelled and armed and aircrew equipment packed into aircraft. Any other equipment was to be packed on to trucks and equipment not required to be destroyed. In this phase the ADO was to ensure the aerodrome would continue to be defended, while planning for the protection of the unit's personnel and of the convoy. Phase two was to be an 'action phase'. This would commence after the order to evacuate, where aircraft would leave the base, the ADO was to ensure the convoy was protected, and he was also to command all Guards. The Guards were to remain at their post at the airfield until ordered by Unit Commander or ADO to leave.

In contrast, a month prior to RAAF Headquarters policy release, the RAF aerodrome defence policy was issued.³⁷ In this plan, the RAF Commander of each air base must decide when an attack on his airfield was such that operations must cease. He would also decide if and when to abandon the airfield, but this would only include the evaluation of aircraft and essential personnel to maintain the aircraft at a new airfield. Ten days later, the RAF policy was updated to insert Categories of evacuation. Category One included forward airfields only, and these were able to be evacuated at short notice due to their close proximity to the coast. Upon evacuation of aircraft, defending troops (RAF Regiment and Army) were to defend long enough to destroy the airfield before leaving. Category Two included main airfields that are

³⁵ W. Bostock, 'Aerodrome Defence, 118A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³⁶ G.H. Mocatta, 'Defence – Standard Orders for Emergency Move', 2A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 36/501/332, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Order 233 Defence – Model Order for Emergency Movement.

³⁷ Anon., 'Defence of Aerodromes', 5, 1942, The National Archives, 3TAF/s/151/5/AIR, Air 23/2044, (unpaginated).

some distance from the coast and classed as ‘strongholds’. The policy stated that these must be held until the last possible moment, and all troops (RAF Regiment, Army and all other RAAF personnel) must defend the airfield. Category Three airfields were those where there was no foreseeable threat, the defence troops for the airfields will be minimal in strength and these airfields would ‘not be surrendered’.³⁸

These concepts in the RAF policy reflect a statement by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1941:

Every man in Air Force uniform ought to be armed with something – a rifle, a tommy gun, a pistol, a pike, or a mace . . . it must be understood by all ranks that they are expected to fight and die in the defence of their airfields. Every building which fits in with the scheme of defence should be prepared, so that each has to be conquered one by one by the enemy’s parachute or glider troops . . . this is to be a slow and expensive process for him.³⁹

RAAF Security Guards and New Memorandum No. 5

While discussions, proposals and orders were being considered and released, airmen of the Guard mustering continued to be recruited and trained. For two months following the release of their policy for airfield defence in July 1942, Bostock and Scherger at RAAF Command had been requesting clarity from CAS Jones and the Air Board as to the exact duties of the Guard mustering, but the records show there was no response from RAAF Headquarters.⁴⁰ Then in late December 1942, RAAF Headquarters released a policy for the future of the Guard mustering.⁴¹ Key items set out in this policy include the name of the mustering being changed from ‘Guard’ to ‘Security Guard’ and their tasking was also changed with their duties now restricted to security against sabotage and pilfering only.⁴² In effect, this change removed low level AA and ground defence machine gun defences as a primary duty

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ ‘Aerodrome Defence’, *War Cabinet United Kingdom*, W.P. (41) 186, August 1941, The National Archives, Cab 66/18 Original Reference 178 (41)-227 (41) 24 Jul-21 Sep, pp. 1-3, <http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/large/cab-66-18.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2013.

⁴⁰ Air Board Memorandum No. 5 (1942).

⁴¹ F.J. Mulroney, ‘Air Force Confidential Orders 288 – Security Guards 25/501/16 – 3.10.42’, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Order 288 Security Guards.

⁴² The Security Guard name was never official in the RAAF as a mustering name, it only appeared in airfield defence policy. The airmen enlisted as Guards; this title of a mustering never changed and was in place until the mustering was disbanded in late 1950s.

from the Guard mustering and it was proposed that any trained airmen (of any trade) would now undertake this task.

The policy set out that new Security Guards would man by day and night, the entrances to RAAF installations, provide 'roving guards' at night at the dispersal points of aircraft, bomb dumps and fuel dumps, and be trained to assist machine gun sections in ground attack or air raids.⁴³ Ground-based machine gun sections on operational bases in combat areas were to have six extra Security Guards, while operational bases in other areas were to have three extra Guards and all aerodromes within 100 miles of the coast were to have two extra Guards on top of current manning structures of units. Stations and Flying Schools were to have 60 Security Guards, while the RAAF establishments were to have 12 Security Guards, aircraft depots 30 Security Guards and radio stations would have a minimum of five to a maximum of 20 Security Guards. In addition, the idea of 'pooling' Security Guards into large groups was prohibited, except in emergencies as directed by the Area Operational Command.⁴⁴

Confusion then ensued as to the strength of Security Guards on stations and squadrons which had lost half of their established Guard manpower following previous policies.⁴⁵ Only four months after of the release of RAAF Headquarters evacuation policies and now the new Security Guard structure (reduction in manning), updated Emergency Movement Orders were released from RAAF Command. These orders detailed actions to be taken to evacuate a base, in which the Guards were to form a line of defence to protect other personnel and equipment while they evacuated. A turbulent policy driven atmosphere engulfed Headquarters North Western Area and Headquarters North Eastern Area, as both were under RAAF Headquarters command for administration matters, but under RAAF Command for operational matters.⁴⁶ Both Area Commanders released very long discussion papers on aerodrome defence to RAAF

⁴³ F.J. Mulroney, 'Air Force Confidential Orders 288 – Security Guards 25/501/16 – 3.10.42', 1942, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁴⁴ The idea of 'Pooling' airmen was witnessed during the Second World War. The main purpose was to have enough airmen of a Squadron in an area prior to the aircraft arriving, however for the Guard mustering it was taken a little further. The pooling of Guards was necessary to form them into a local fighting force to be used by the local commander, trained to an equal standard. There is evidence of pooling of Guards in the Southern Areas of Australia prior to the most well-known pooling in airfield defence history. The Security Guards Unit was formed by Bladin, by pooling of all the Guards in the North Western Area, to train and fight as a single unit along Army lines. The idea of pooling Guards would be stopped by G. Jones once he became CAS, however this would be ignored by many senior officers.

⁴⁵ W.L. Hely, 'Aerodrome Defence', 36a, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated); No. 23 Squadron while at RAAF Station Richmond had some 20 Guards to carry out security and airfield defence for the Squadron. Upon No. 23 Squadron's move to Archerfield airfield in Queensland, security and protection was provided by 120 soldiers of the Australian Army. When No. 23 Squadron arrived, and RAAF Station Archerfield was established, the Army still maintained security of the airfield. The Army immediately withdrew all its men from Archerfield and the RAAF, following direction from the Secretary of the Air Board, directed the Commanding Officer of Archerfield that he only needed 60 Guards to secure the airfield.

⁴⁶ Air Force Confidential Order 233 Defence – Model Order for Emergency Movement.

Command, seeking clarification of policy. The first issue raised was the confusion generated by the RAAF Headquarters *Air Force Confidential Orders* and *Air Board Memorandum No. 5*, each contradicting the other, resulting in a recommendation by Bladin, North Western Area Commander, that all the directives be formatted into one Air Force Airfield Defence manual.⁴⁷

In January 1943, the Defence Committee discussed the defence of aerodromes and stations in Australia.⁴⁸ The CAS, Jones, was the only RAAF member at this meeting and one of the signatories of the *Agendum No. 10/1943*. This document bears witness to the divide on policy:

Consideration of this Agendum was deferred pending an appreciation to be furnished by the Defence Committee regarding the organisation adopted or to be adopted for the defence of aerodromes and stations in Australia, and the requirements of weapons, ammunition and equipment.⁴⁹

The Agendum indicated that in the United Kingdom airfield defence was a major consideration for the projection of air power and the reason why the RAF had formed the RAF Regiment the year prior. The document then outlined that, ‘The problem of aerodrome protection in England [sic] is far more acute than here [Australia]’ and points out that no aircraft had the range to attack Australian airfields.⁵⁰ With Jones being the only Air Force member at the meeting who could speak with authority on the flight ranges of modern enemy aircraft, it can be assumed this information may have come from him. Next, the evidence highlights that Jones outlined his beliefs concerning RAAF airfield defence:

Our problem is similar to that of the RAF but smaller in magnitude, and it was for consideration whether we should copy the RAF and create a separate aerodrome defence regiment or rely on existing RAAF units to protect . . . As it is imperative to economise in manpower, it was decided to adopt the second course.⁵¹

⁴⁷ A RAAF Airfield Defence Manual was not written until late 1957.

⁴⁸ D.I. Menzie, ‘Minute of the Defence Committee at Meeting Held on Saturday, 9th January 1943, No. 10/1943 – Defence of Aerodromes and Stations in Australia’, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated); The Defence Committee was comprised of both Government Officials and Defence Commanders from all three services.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

One year after 'Issue 2' of the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* (1942) effectively cancelled the implementation of Bostock's Station Defence Squadrons, Bostock again raised a proposal that they be formed. On 21 April 1943, Bostock and Scherger, now of RAAF Command, forwarded to RAAF Headquarters their own fully drafted further edition *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Aerodrome Defence Policy (Re-Issue)* incorporating the ideas of Station Defence Squadrons (renamed as 'Security Guards Units') and what they assessed was required in the field.⁵² It was noted that RAAF Headquarters had previously supported the development of SGUs in the North Western Area. Bostock then demanded that if additions or subtractions were to be made, the proposed amendments should be sent to RAAF Command for final agreement.⁵³ Bostock stated, 'It is understood that there are some additions which will have to be made to both documents. These additions are known to RAAF Headquarters and have not been communicated to this Headquarters'.⁵⁴ The draft *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* by RAAF Command was 17 pages long, covering all aspects of airfield defence and incorporating (as earlier recommended by Bladin) all previous Air Force confidential orders.⁵⁵

A month later, Squadron Leader Mocatta, now Director of Defence RAAF Command, released a proposal for a rewrite of RAAF Headquarters previous policy which reverted the Guard mustering to Security Guards.⁵⁶ Mocatta explained, 'It is requested that the existing policy relating to Security Guards should be reviewed'. Bostock signed this new proposal as it was formulated following an investigation within the North Western Area of the SGU.⁵⁷ Mocatta recommended that more SGUs should be formed in every RAAF area of command and within operational units, and that they were to move forward into the tactical environment. Mocatta also outlined that the Guard mustering should be more than security guards. He then stated, 'For a considerable time the guard strength of units in the operational areas have been below establishments'. He continued, 'There has been a shortage of ground defence weapons . . . shortage of personnel and weapons call for economy of efforts'. Finally, Mocatta stated,

⁵² W.D. Bostock, 'Aerodrome Defence - Policy REF. 686.3A1', 153A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ W.D. Bostock, 'Aerodrome Defence - Policy A.B.M. No. 5 (Re-Issue) Ref 686.3A1', 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ W.D. Bostock and G.H. Mocatta, 'Aerodrome Defence - Policy Ref 686.3A1', 67A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Order 288 Security Guards; Prior to joining the RAAF, G.H. Mocatta was a member of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, serving as a Lieutenant on HMASs Cerberus and Sydney. Mocatta enlisted in the RAAF as a Flying Officer in the Administrative and Special Duties Branch on 4 November 1940. He served as Intelligence Officer for No. 11 Squadron, Station Headquarters Far East, and Operations Officer Headquarters Southern Area. He was posted to RAAF Command as Staff Officer Defence and completed a tour of the Far East and the United Kingdom researching RAF Ground Defence policy and the RAF Regiment.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

‘... the guard establishment for operational units should be detached from the operational unit and become part of the Guard Unit establishment’.⁵⁸ Unfortunately for Bostock, he understood how his version of the Guard mustering would operate, but this would not be accepted by RAAF Headquarters and CAS Jones.⁵⁹ In his covering letter, Bostock stated:

It is known that other submissions of a like nature have been made from time to time and have been rejected, but operational experience in the circumstances which we obtain in our operational areas seems to have established that the Guard Units provide the best means of meeting ground defence and security requirements.⁶⁰

Additionally, at this time Squadron Leader D.R. Williams (RAAF Recruitment Staff Officer – Ground) suggested that the Guard mustering have a name change due to the ‘unattractive sound’ of the title and the duties did not give the airmen opportunities for development.⁶¹ D.R. Williams suggested the title ‘RAAF Rifles’, and the Minister of Air A.S. Drakeford suggested the title ‘Guardsmen’. The Air Board outlined that ‘As the Board is unable to make further suggestions for the improvement [of] ... mustering ‘Guard’ ... no action will be taken’.⁶²

The records show that five months of discussion in RAAF Headquarters followed Mocatta and Bostock’s proposal. During this time, frustrated commanders of RAAF stations and other facilities appeared to be perplexed with the tardiness of RAAF Headquarters to make decisions about the proposal for SGUs.⁶³ Then in October 1943, Mocatta sent a blunt one-line message to RAAF Headquarters, ‘What has happened to our recommendation for Security Guards Units?’⁶⁴ While the frustration of Commanding Officers continued, in the meantime and unbeknownst to Bostock and Mocatta, the Air Board was overseeing the drafting of a new *Air Board Memorandum No. 5*. This further reduced the tasking of the Guard mustering away from the intention of the mustering at inception and rendered the Guard position as a Security Guard, similar to that of a civilian peace officer.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; Air Force Confidential Order 288 Security Guards.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; Bostock knew the proposals he would put forward on airfield defence would not be supported at RAAF Headquarters. His written statement within the letter/proposal highlighted the rift between Jones and Bostock.

⁶¹ D.R. Williams, ‘Guard – Suggested Change of Name’, 1A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/10/354, (unpaginated).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ G.H. Mocatta, ‘OPS 4’, 91A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

While the drafting of this new *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* was in progress, on 29 October 1943, RAAF Headquarters released a new policy covering the Guard mustering tasking, a two and a half page policy which noted that the primary function of Security Guards was to protect RAAF buildings and materiel, to stop sabotage and pilfering and to control the entry of all RAAF establishments. In addition, all Commanding Officers were responsible for the effective protection of all under their command. The policy noted that where Security Guards were to be used in the defence of the establishment, they should be fully trained in all small arms and machine guns, but not trained as infantry. It was further noted that when an establishment was attacked by the enemy, not all Security Guards were to be removed from their primary duty at the front gate.⁶⁶ Any mustering was able to man the low-level machine guns post and some Security Guards would assist the Aerodrome Defence Flights manning the low-level machine guns. Also, from as early as 1941 any Guard who was part of the Aerodrome Defence Flight of a station headquarters who qualified on Vickers or Lewis machine guns, had gained the service title of 'Guard Gunner'.⁶⁷ However, under this new policy, the sub-classification of Guard Gunner was to be removed from all RAAF records and this mustering title was not used from this point forward as it was not the mustering's main tasking. Even though Guards may have qualified on AA machine guns, the organisation of Guards were not to be formed into SGUs due to manpower limitations, and the airmen of the Guard mustering would be fully trained in the handling and use of the 'pass system' for entry onto and off the base.⁶⁸

By 11 November 1943, RAAF Command had received a rejection from RAAF Headquarters of Bostock and Mocatta's original proposals made in April 1943, with a refusal for extra SGUs. The rationale for the refusal was the need to economise on Security Guard numbers.⁶⁹ On the same day, Mocatta released a message to Bostock stating, 'Our recommendations for the formation of Security Guards Units have been rejected'.⁷⁰ RAAF Headquarters specified, '... the only Security Guards Unit in the RAAF will be in the North Western Area as well as its unofficial equivalent in the North Eastern Area'.⁷¹ However,

⁶⁶ Air Force Confidential Orders A.97 Security Guards.

⁶⁷ The title 'Guard Gunner' was only for Guards that qualified on machine guns during the period of 1940-1942 within the low-level AA machine gun section or qualification as part of the RAF Middle East Training Schools for RAF Ground Defence/RAF Regiment. This being the original enlistment tasking in accordance with ABM No. 5 of June 1939.

⁶⁸ F.J. Mulroney, 'Air Force Confidential Orders Series "A" A.F.C.O. A.97 – Security Guards', 91A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ G.H. Mocatta, 'Subject:', 92A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Mocatta did highlight, 'Para 13 of A.F.C.O. A. 97, permits the use of the posting organisation to carry out our recommendations to some extent'. According to Mocatta and Bostock, this left the option open for commanders to form their own Guard units within the pooling process by giving them the power to transfer Guards to another unit under their command for 'specific purposes'.⁷²

The new *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Ground Defence*, which RAAF Headquarters had been developing, was released in December 1943 to the wider Air Force.⁷³ This document, compared to RAAF Command and Bostock's draft of 17 pages, was reduced to five pages and included very little information on how the RAAF should conduct airfield defence. It outlined that the Army had accepted responsibility for the defence of aerodromes and that it would provide all AA artillery, while the RAAF only had to defend against sabotage and pilfering in emergencies.⁷⁴ Three years after the Guard mustering was created for the purpose of manning low-level machine guns, the latest *Air Board Memorandum* made no reference to Guards performing any form of infantry type ground defence or AA machine gun defence.⁷⁵

In addition, and in the same month as the above memorandum, a new Air Force confidential order in relation to defence and security of all RAAF Units was released by RAAF Headquarters.⁷⁶ This third policy document contained the changes Bostock had requested originally in 1942. The purpose of this policy was to 'clarify' and 'amplify' active and passive defence procedures in the RAAF.⁷⁷ The policy was divided into a number of headings, these reflecting the headings that were originally set out in Bostock's draft.⁷⁸ The most significant change in this policy was the dispersal and protection of aircraft in relation to grades of stations and aerodromes risk of attack. Previously, areas from the coast to 100 miles were classed as Grade A, although this policy also classified the North Western Area, North Eastern Area and the Western Area as Grade A up to 150 miles from the coast.⁷⁹ All other stations or aerodromes were Grade B, with no distance given.⁸⁰ Grade A dispersed aircraft were not to be located any

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ F.J. Mulroney, 'Royal Australian Air Force Air Board Memorandum No. 5 (Issue No. 3)', 96A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ F.J. Mulroney, 'Air Force Confidential Orders Series "A" A.F.C.O. A. 103/43 Defence and Security of All RAAF Units', 95A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated); AFCO A. 103/43 Defence and Security of all RAAF Units.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Air Force Confidential Order A. 103/43 Defence and Security of all RAAF Units.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

closer to each other than 100 yards, all low-level machine gun posts were to be sited to give full protection of these aircraft and natural cover and camouflage was to be used.⁸¹

For the remainder of 1944 and into 1945, no new policies were promulgated, however over 12 amendments to the above Air Force Orders were released by RAAF Headquarters.⁸² These amendments ranged from correction of basic mistakes in signalling of hostile attacks on airfields through to alignment of the policy being used by RAAF and USAAF units in the operational South West Pacific Area.⁸³

During these years, RAAF Command in North Western and North Eastern Areas had been developing their own SGUs and Squadrons for operational purposes. On 1 March 1945, Bostock from RAAF Command, released Mocatta's first proposal for the formation of a RAAF Regiment. Within this proposal, Mocatta foresaw all air defence coming under RAAF command, within a RAAF Regiment. Additionally, the RAAF Regiment would have infantry squadrons, AA squadrons, airfield construction squadrons and explosive ordinance disposal squadrons. It was proposed that all Guards (5,198), Aircraftman/General Duty (2,682) and General Hands (6,513) musters would be integrated to form the RAAF Regiment. Surprisingly, on 20 April 1945 CAS Air Vice-Marshal Jones, signed this 23-page document supporting the formation of the RAAF Regiment. This was short-lived as by the end of that month he again recorded that he did not support the formation of the RAAF Regiment or any specialist unit like it.⁸⁴ There is nothing in the records to indicate the reason for Jones' brief support of the RAAF Regiment or his subsequent change of position. However, for many years Jones had opposed, and actively disputed, any notion that the RAAF had a role in developing specialist airfield defence capabilities. His long-held opposition was driven by budget constraints, a threat assessment that it was not broadly required, a focus on Air Force conducting air operations and Army conducting infantry ground and air defence operations. It appears on the evidence, that in 1945, Jones was still firmly of that view.

In July 1945, Wing Commander Mocatta, Director of Defence of RAAF Command, arrived back in Australia from a fact-finding trip to the United Kingdom, Middle East and

⁸¹ F.J. Mulroney, 'Air Force Confidential Orders Series "A" A.F.C.O. A. 103/43 Defence and Security of All RAAF Units Appendix "A" Dispersal and Protection', 95A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ G. Jones, 'Air Defence – Re-Organisation of Responsibilities A.M.F. & R.A.A.F.', 4A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/282, (unpaginated).

Burma, which had investigated RAF airfield defence and the RAF Regiment.⁸⁵ Upon return Mocatta produced a detailed report supporting the formation of a RAAF Regiment post-war. In a covering letter to the Secretary of the Air Board, Bostock fully supported Mocatta's proposal and recommendations that a RAAF Regiment Headquarters be formed in Australia with Wings in the North Western Area, 1st Tactical Air Force, Northern Command and No. 11 Group. He added that within each Wing, six squadrons of Guards should be formed from the current Guard numbers with 1500 spare Guards in the Southern Areas of Australia. In relation to the 1st Tactical Air Force, the RAAF Regiment should contain two Airfield Defence Wings with four Airfield Defence Companies/Squadrons in each Wing, while the Northern Command, already staffed with 720 Guards, should form an Airfield Defence Wing with five Squadrons, and the North Western Area, with the remaining 570 Guards of No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron, should form a Wing and five Squadrons.⁸⁶

While the RAAF already had well over the required number of Guards that Mocatta had proposed in just the operational areas, and with an extra 2508 Guards in the southern areas, it can be argued that the RAAF already had a Regiment in numbers, but not yet in name.⁸⁷ The file also holds documents from others who supported the formation of a RAAF Regiment, with Bladin stating, 'There is no doubt in my mind', Scherger noting, '... [I] support Guards in one Force', and Bostock adding, 'I agree that the operational requirement will be more efficiently and economically met by the formation of a RAAF Regiment'.⁸⁸ All Officers Commanding RAAF Areas and senior staff officers supported this formation under a war footing and in post-war restructures. However, in late August 1945, CAS Jones stated, 'I am not prepared to agree to any more of these specialised units'.⁸⁹ There are no other documented proposals for any new airfield defence policies or modifications throughout the last months of the War.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ G.H. Mocatta, 'Paper for Formation of RAAF Regiment', 1A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; Mocatta also pointed out that the formation of a RAAF Regiment would not conflict with any of the current policies relating to airfield defence in Australia and the agreements between the Army and RAAF. Mocatta also infers that, based on RAF Regiment establishment numbers (a squadron of the RAF Regiment had around 130 airmen), No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron of the 1st TAF (with 1042 Guards), was actually two Wings, not a single squadron as detailed by RAAF Headquarters.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ G. Jones, 'Guard Units', 1, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2, (unpaginated).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Section Two - Policy in Action

'Sepinggang [airfield on Balikpapan], well, we didn't stay right on the strip, the strip was out, maybe to look after it, you know, what I mean, like protect'.

Wilf Bowie interview 2004.

Aerodrome Defence or Security or Both?

By January 1940, the new provision for Guards had been implemented and stations all over Australia started to receive airmen for low-level AA machine gun defence. The number of Aircrafthands/Guards allocated were: Headquarters RAAF Station Laverton (48), Cressy No. 1 Armament Training Station (7), Point Cook No. 1 Flying Training School (32), RAAF Station Richmond Headquarters (48), RAAF Station Rathmines Headquarters (16), RAAF Station Pearce Headquarters (30), Canberra No. 8 Squadron (14), Archerfield No. 23 Squadron (17), Port Moresby (14), Darwin No. 12 Squadron (16), Parafield No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School (14). The archives show two Aircrafthand/Guards were promoted to Sergeant and 12 Aircrafthand/Guards were promoted to Corporal from the first recruitment of Guards in early 1940. Commanding Officers started to request Aircrafthand/Guards for guarding their squadron hangars and aircraft.⁹¹ By May 1940, No. 10 Squadron RAAF, which was stationed at RAF Station Mount Batten in the United Kingdom, had airmen allocated into either the Rifle Party or Machine Gun Party of No. 10 Squadron Station Defence Section, to supplement the RAF Station Defence Squadron.⁹²

In contrast, on 31 January 1940, Wing Commander J. Waters, Commanding Officer of No. 23 Squadron, at Archerfield, was at a conference at Victoria Barracks that discussed the RAAF provision of Guards at vulnerable points. The Army Headquarters had indicated they would be reducing the number of soldiers they provided to the RAAF for guarding duty, and on 11 March 1940, the Army Garrison Battalion removed all its soldiers and No. 23 Squadron Guards took over, with one Sergeant, one Corporal and 15 airmen.⁹³ By April 1940, No. 8 Squadron at Canberra airfield had received ten Guards for security duty, while in June 1940, RAAF Base Amberley Headquarters had one officer in-charge of Guards with only nine

⁹¹ J.R. Bell, 'Following discussion, establishment amendment action as under had been taken to provide guards at the following stations –', 30A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/49, (unpaginated).

⁹² Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 18; C.W. Pearce, 'Station Defence Force', 5A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A11279, 1/12/AIR, (unpaginated).

⁹³ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 23 Squadron.

Guards on strength. By the end of the 1941, RAAF stations had formed their own station defence forces.

RAAF Station Richmond, for example, had an Air Defence (Ground) Flight consisting of two sections, the first was the AA Machine Gun Section (four machine gun posts manned by 16 Guards) and the second section titled Anti-Parachute Force (12 machine gun posts manned by 32 Guards). Additionally, the station also had a Ground Defence Flight with two sections, the first manned by three Drill Instructors (DI) and 30 airmen with 15 Guards used as anti-parachute troops and the other section called 'Alarms' (Picture 1).⁹⁴ Stations all over Australia and into New Guinea had implemented Station Defence Schemes with AA machine gun flights and anti-paratrooper flights with Guards, supplemented by other airmen.⁹⁵



Picture 1: RAAF Guard guarding four Lockheed Hudson aircraft at Sydney during 1940. (AWM 000794)

⁹⁴ H.F. De La Rue, 'RAAF Station – Richmond NSW Aerodrome Defence Scheme, Copy No. 4', 1940, National Archives of Australia, A11065, 6/4/8, (unpaginated).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

However, there is evidence of the continued conflict between Fitzgerald, Secretary of Military, and Langslow, Secretary of Air. From early 1940 until late 1944, the need for soldiers at some 20 civilian aerodromes was discussed between the two Secretaries, and it was noted that the policy of the Army providing soldiers for guarding vulnerable aerodromes was far from what was actually happening. Only two RAAF Corporals and 14 airmen Guards were allocated to No. 23 Squadron when the unit was stationed at RAAF Station Richmond, and the Unit had then moved to the Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield aerodrome, soon renamed RAAF Station Archerfield.⁹⁶ Once the RAAF Squadron was established at Archerfield, the Army Company was withdrawn from their guard and airfield defence duties due to the requirement by the Army for men in operational theatres.⁹⁷ The establishment of 16 Guards for No. 23 Squadron had not changed from RAAF Station Richmond, which was insufficient for the full scope of airfield defence and security to be met. Airmen of other trades were required to assist and subsequently, Langslow is recorded on file stating, 'It will be appreciated that employment of skilled tradesmen on guard duties is most uneconomical'.⁹⁸ Langslow continued:

If the Air Force is to undertake guard duties at the civil aerodromes where Air Force training is being carried out by Aero Clubs, then a number of men will have to be specially enlisted for the purpose.⁹⁹

A further example is provided by No. 25 Operational Base, located in Cairns. The RAAF Guard mustering personnel allocated to the unit were under strength. The Guards were not only manning the guard points around the airfield but manning the seven machine gun posts for airfield defence (Appendix G).¹⁰⁰ The RAAF component of the Essendon Airport in Cairns had implemented the Station Defence Scheme in 1943. The internal security was being undertaken by 42 infantry soldiers from the 12th Battalion Citizen Military Force, and as this airfield had a mix of civilian and military aircraft operating from it, all civilians were allowed onto the airport. Of additional concern was that only 50 per cent of trenches for the base personnel were prepared, there were no gas masks nor steel helmets, the preparation for camouflaging of buildings was slow. The Commanding Officer at Essendon assessed that 100

⁹⁶ M.C. Langslow, 'Vulnerable Point Guards on Archerfield and Maylands Aerodromes', 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1, (unpaginated).

⁹⁷ J. Waters, 'Guards – Archerfield', 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1, (unpaginated).

⁹⁸ M.C. Langslow, 'Provision of Guards at Civil Aerodromes', 190B, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1, (unpaginated).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ J.A. Forrest, 'Guards – No. 25 Operational Base Cairns', 1943, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1, (unpaginated).

men would be required to conduct effective security at the base in its current arrangements, however, under the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* he believed that once the RAAF took over the entire airfield, the station would only require one officer and 34 Guards.¹⁰¹

The airmen enlisted into the RAAF as Aircrafthand/Guard completed only a recruit drill course, the same as every other airman, and would then learn their trade by carrying out 'on-the-job' training, at the front gate and on foot patrols.¹⁰² Tasking of Guards and 'on the job' training consisted of Guards carrying a .303 rifle with up to five rounds in their pockets and guard duty. One account of guard duty was described by a Guard from 1940, Wilf Bowie, who stated:

During the daylight hours we manned the main gate and did escort duties of various kinds. We were often on the tarmac at 6 am and required to assist in starting Avro-Anson aircraft . . . The rest of our time we marched and drilled on the parade ground.¹⁰³

Furthermore, another Guard James Flemming stated:

so, they [RAAF] made me a guard. So, I got sent over to Tocumwal in west NSW... So, I'm in the guard, they give me a rifle. I'll never forget this day. They gave me two rounds of ammunition, two 303 rounds of ammunition, and I had to sign a piece of paper for them to accept it and I had to sign a thing stating I was not to fire them without permission from the Warrant Officer.¹⁰⁴

In relation to Guard training, a question arose from Flight Lieutenant J.P. Campbell, Commanding Officer of No. 2 School of Technical Training at Kingston in the Australian Capital Territory. On 17 February 1942, Campbell forwarded an enquiry to the Air Board asking if there were any manuals, textbooks and instructions on the subject of airfield defence and the protection of airfields from paratroopers. He also outlined his belief that Guards should

¹⁰¹ M.C. Langslow, 'Safeguarding Hangers at Essendon Aerodrome', 1943, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁰² The booklet by Baker and journal article by Kerr indicate airmen of the Guard mustering started to remuster (change jobs) at this time. It can be argued with archival evidence that no Guard remustered until late 1941. The first went from Guard to aircrew, not to the Army or discharged.

¹⁰³ Wilf Bowie, *A History of Airfield Defence (1940-1945)* as seen by 26032 Sgt. W.T. Bowie, p. 2; Wilf Bowie was an Aircrafthand/Guard who enlisted on 18 February 1940.

¹⁰⁴ James Flemming, transcript of interview, 31 March 2004, UNSW Canberra, Archive Number 1703.

be trained in all techniques to protect airfields, including infantry training.¹⁰⁵ In response, Group Captain F.A. McNeill, in a covering letter to the Secretary of Air and the Air Board, outlined that the RAAF did not have any knowledge in manuals or books about defending airfields.¹⁰⁶ Despite the current policy that Guards were only to do 'on the job' training, some RAAF units had them training in infantry tactics, taught by local Army units or ex-Army DIs. It seems from the archives and the oral histories that from mid-1942, Guards were still not being trained as infantrymen, as outlined by Bowie:

Six months later [after the bombing of Darwin] . . . I was posted to 12 Squadron. . . This unit had an Aerodrome Defence Officer. . . and was keen to see every airman trained in the use of at least a rifle, no matter what his mustering. The Guards did the usual duties of maintaining security and training in Vickers for both ground and ack-ack [AA] works. Guards, if lucky, would be placed on Army courses training in section and platoon commander's positions, using for the first time, the Bren gun and bazooka, Bangalore torpedoes and Molotov Cocktails and training as infantrymen.¹⁰⁷

In addition to Guards patrolling the airfield, RAAF Headquarters foresaw that a cost-effective method of guarding aircraft would include the use of guard dogs. Initially, a trial of the use of unsupervised dogs at night failed as the dogs ate the dope used to paint the aircraft, causing damage. Therefore, an expansion of the Guard role followed, and by late 1942 RAAF Guards were being trained to use dogs as part of their security procedures. This training was conducted by the Army at the Army War Dog Training and Reception Depot at Plumpton in NSW. Over the next three years, 70 Guards qualified as 'Guard-War Dog Handler' with 109 war dogs in RAAF service.¹⁰⁸ Any airman that was not already of the Guard mustering, that requested training as a War Dog Handler was remustered to Guard after completion of the course. RAAF units were now employing Guards with war dogs to guard Repair and Salvage Units, Replenishing Centres, Stores Depots, Central Reserves, Inland Aircraft Fuel Depots, Radio Installations and Maintenance Units, Transportation and Movement Offices and Aircraft Depots.

¹⁰⁵ J.P. Campbell, 'Training Defence Against Paratroops', 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁶ F.A. McNeill, 'Station Defence', 84A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁷ Bowie, *A History of Airfield Defence*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ S. de B. Griffith, 'Screening of Personnel Trained as Dog Handlers', 5A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/96 PART 1, (unpaginated); The Guard-War Dog Handler would be used throughout the remainder of the war, mainly in the southern Australia bases. A Guard-War Dog Handler would eventually be posted to the War Dog School as a trainer and veterinarian.

The use of dogs by Guards was a success and by August 1943, three Corporal Guards were trained as Dog Trainers, bringing the training of war dogs and Guards over to the RAAF. There was also a proposal for Guard - War Dog Handlers, to be posted to operational units to support the guarding of airfields by other Guards. At this stage the Army Command informed the RAAF Headquarters that the Army was not continuing with the Army War Dog Reception and Training Depot and the entire capability would be transferred to the RAAF. On 3 August 1943, Air Commodore T.R. Marsden, Air Officer Commanding No. 5 (Maintenance) Group, proposed the formation of a RAAF War Dog Replenishing and Training Depot at Mount Druitt, NSW, with one SNCO and four Corporal Guards to manage and be trainers.¹⁰⁹

There was some creative use of war dogs for guarding. A report on 31 May 1944 by Flight Lieutenant R.C. Taylor, No. 1 (Training) Group Security Officer, stated, ‘. . . dogs are advantageously used in conjunction with roving patrols, preferably mounted on horseback’.¹¹⁰ Taylor indicated in his report that since 1943, Guards at RAAF Base Pearce had been using horses to patrol around the airfield at night with their war dogs on long leashes and this was also a benefit to the morale of the Guards, which was seen as very high.¹¹¹ Additionally, a number of Depots experimented with Guards riding horses for internal patrols, with these Guards qualified as ‘Guard-Horsemen’.¹¹²

Even though the Guard mustering was expanding with roles and tasking, the arguments regarding division of responsibility for protection of airfields was still an issue. For example, over a period of five months in 1942, the Advanced Operational Base Rockhampton, had the Volunteer Defence Force allocated to the defence of the base and the United States Army 41st Division manning 12 .50 calibre AA machine guns. Unfortunately, however, by mid-1942 both had been removed.¹¹³ By late 1942, airmen of the Guard mustering had been tasked with building AA machine gun posts for their Vickers and Lewis guns, with the abandoned machine gun posts of the USAAF being used once .50 inch machine guns had arrived.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the

¹⁰⁹ T.R. Marsden, ‘Proposal for Formation of War Dog Replenishment and Training Depot’, 18A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/96 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁰ R.C. Taylor, ‘Report of Group Security Officer, No. 1 (Training) Group on Visit to Headquarters No. 5 (Maintenance) Group and No. 5 (Maintenance) Group Units to Inspect Watchdogs used by No. 5 (Maintenance) Group 24th – 27th May 1944’, File: 6/3/67, 1944, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/96 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² AWM61, 414/2/845, [Aviation – Royal Australian Air Force – Provision of horses and equipment for mounted guards, RAAF], Minute from Headquarters No. 2 Aircraft Park to RAAF Headquarters, 24 August 1943, (unpaginated).

¹¹³ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records 21 Operational Base Unit (Rockhampton); The archives detail no reason or orders for the removal of the USAAF personnel from Rockhampton.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

defence and security of the base went from a company of infantry (around 150 men) and 12 .50 inch machine gun posts, to 20 Guards, with ‘. . . a few .303 machine gun posts’.¹¹⁵ By this time the training of the Guard mustering had started to take on a broader aspect, one that incorporated infantry training and widened the scope of defence of airfields from only focussing on guard duty.

The records show that the first official fully standardised Guard course would be provided at the SGU in the North Western Area in November 1942.¹¹⁶ Training of Guards was also undertaken by units such as No. 1 Reserve Personnel Pool, based in Aitkenvale, Queensland, where, in December 1942, Pilot Officer V.P. Scully arrived as ADO and began running Aerodrome Defence Courses for over 100 Guards before they deployed to other units.¹¹⁷ At the same time, Scully was attempting to implement a standardised infantry-type Guard course. The following year, the Defence Section at No. 1 Recruit Depot, Shepparton, developed for the purpose of standardising infantry training for Guards, would run its first Guard course.¹¹⁸ The last airfield defence courses to be run during the Second World War would be No. 93 Guard Course (with six Guards), at No. 9 Advanced ADI Course, No. 31 ADI Course and No. 53 ADOs Course.¹¹⁹ The Defence Training Section at Shepparton, was transferred to No. 2 Recruit Depot at Cootamundra, NSW, around late 1945 and then completed No. 10 Advanced ADI, Nos. 94, 95, 96 Guard courses.¹²⁰ Even though this training was occurring, there were some Guards that enlisted between 1940-1942 who never actually had the opportunity to undertake a standardised Guard infantry based course, and only completed a recruit drill course.

Trainers and Leaders of RAAF Airfield Defence

With the planned Station Defence Squadrons, Group Captain Hely sent a message to Air Vice-Marshal Wrigley on 4 February 1942, indicating that a total of 118 officers, known

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ G.C. Degenhardt, ‘Personnel Occurrence Report – Part “B” (Airmen) Security Guards Unit Serial No. 2/1942’, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 76/4, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁷ F.A. Martyn, ‘Operations Record Book No. 1 Reserve Personnel Pool RAAF Form A.50’, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 364, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁸ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 1 Recruit Depot Shepparton; F.C. MacKillop, ‘Personnel Occurrence Report – Part “B” (Airmen) No. 1 Recruit Depot Shepparton Serial No. 48/43’, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 764/1, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 2 Recruit Depot Shepparton.

as 'Aerodrome Defence Officers', would be required to lead the Station Defence Squadrons.¹²¹ At the same time, the Secretary of the Air Board, M.C. Langslow, requested the secondment of Australian Army officers to train the RAAF in airfield defence. The ADO course was to follow the RAF Ground Gunner training syllabus, and the first course had commenced by 2 March 1942.¹²² Flight Lieutenant Trewin (Armament Officer) became the Officer-in-Charge of ADO training at the Armament School in March 1942.¹²³ The first officer nominated for No. 1 ADO Course was a staff officer, Flight Lieutenant W.J. Ahearn, from the Directorate of Training at RAAF Headquarters.¹²⁴ A total of nine officers started the course, however, while training, one officer was killed in an aircraft accident.¹²⁵

In the same month that CAS Jones was developing Issue 2 of the *Air Board Memorandum*, on 11 May 1942, Wing Commander D.C. Harding outlined in a minute that two Army officers had been seconded to the RAAF to take up training positions, and a number of Army officers had also requested transfer to the RAAF as ADOs.¹²⁶ By June 1942, No. 1 Armament School had completed four ADO courses under the training leadership of Ahearn. On 9 July 1942, Lieutenant Colonel H.H. Carr was posted to RAAF Headquarters Directorate of Training, with responsibility for Defence (Training).¹²⁷ The archives show correspondence from Scherger over a period of four months requesting that aerodrome defence training be moved to No. 1 Recruit Depot, and to form two sections, (Aerodrome Defence Section and a Gas Instructional Section) under the Depot command.¹²⁸ By the time this happened, 11 ADO courses had already been completed at No. 1 Armament School. Now, with Carr at RAAF Headquarters supporting the requests from McCauley and Scherger, these two new sections were established in August 1942, at No. 1 Recruit Depot.¹²⁹ For another seven months Scherger and Carr strove to move all Guard training to this Depot as part of the Aerodrome Defence Section and a Gas Instructional Section, and by mid-March 1943, the first course of Guards

Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 2 Recruit Depot Shepparton.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Anon., 'Operations Record Book Armament School, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 385, (unpaginated).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*; W.J. Ahearn started his military career in 1913 as a machine gunner with the NSW Lancers. In 1914 he was posted to the 1st Light Horse Regiment in the Machine Gun Section. Ahearn would serve on the Gallipoli Peninsula (9 May-10 November 1915), and then at Alexandria and Cairo and in the battles at Romani, Gamli, Marakeb, Esani, Beersheba and Wadi Auja and would reach the rank of Lieutenant.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; Flight Lieutenant W. J. Ahearn was directed to complete the training and then remain at the Armament School under posting as the ADO to continue training for the next cohorts of officers.

¹²⁶ D.C. Harding, 'Aerodrome Defence, 1942, National Archives of Australian, A705, 208/1/1957, (unpaginated).

¹²⁷ Anon., 'Officer's Record of Service', National Archives of Australia, B883, VX41567, (unpaginated).

¹²⁸ J. McCauley, 'Armament School – Hamilton', 52A, 1943, National Archives of Australian, A705, 208/1/1957, (unpaginated).

¹²⁹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Armament School Point Cook.

had commenced at this location and would finish early April 1943 (there are no official dates recorded for No. 1 Guard Course at RAAF Shepparton).¹³⁰

In August 1942, after many months of wrangling, Scherger and Mocatta had convinced RAAF Headquarters and the Air Board to create a new mustering of 'Aerodrome Defence Instructor' for the purpose of training RAAF airmen in airfield defence.¹³¹ Scherger and Group Captain N. Brearley, Deputy Director of Training, insisted that 50% of the ADI mustering should be recruited from senior Guards as they already came with the skills in airfield defence. By October 1942, the first ADI course had been completed at No. 1 Armament School.¹³² By the end of 1943, there would be 377 ADOs trained in the RAAF and McCauley would release a statement, 'The policy is to fill the establishments of area defence officers with RAAF officers. . . That time, in my opinion, has now arrived'.¹³³

Crete and the Far East – A lesson not learned

By late October 1940, Crete, in the Mediterranean theatre of operations, had been garrisoned by British forces. By the beginning of May 1941, the Allies had withdrawn to Crete, following the failure of the campaign in Greece, and were preparing for an expected German invasion.¹³⁴ On 20 May 1941, German airborne troops landed near Maleme airfield and after 13 days of bitter fighting the allied force was evacuated from the island. For some 21 months prior to the airborne invasion, Colonel J.R.J. McNamara, MP for Chelmsford, had been arguing in the House of Commons for the formation of a specialist airfield defence force for the RAF, yet this was opposed by 'strident voices'.¹³⁵ By the spring of 1941, in the United Kingdom, and following the experiences on Crete, there was a realisation that the RAF needed a specialist ground defence capability.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Anon., 'Personnel Occurrence Report – Part "B" No. 1 Recruit Depot Shepparton, 48/43, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 764/1, (unpaginated).

¹³¹ F.J. Mulrooney, 'Introduction of Mustering of Aerodrome Defence Instructor (Group III)', 43A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1198, (unpaginated).

¹³² Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Armament School Point Cook.

¹³³ J. McCauley, 'Extract from file 208/1/2102 Minute 66', 85A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1198, (unpaginated).

¹³⁴ Alan Clark, *The Fall of Crete*, 2004, London, p. 22; Kingsley M Oliver, *Through Adversity*, 1997, Northamptonshire, p. 42.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Kingsley M. Oliver, *Through Adversity*, 1997, Northamptonshire, p. 42.

By early 1941, the RAAF had forward deployed aircraft to South-East Asia as part of the British Imperial Defence Policy. The Commander-in-Chief Far East Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham's despatches on operations outlined deep concerns for the defence of aerodromes.¹³⁷ Brooke-Popham made scathing remarks on airfield designs that had been built for peace time operations with no consideration for war and always situated close to the coast, thus making them easy targets.¹³⁸ By March 1941, the RAF had applied war conditions to RAF Station Sembawang, Singapore. These orders directed all airmen to carry gas masks and helmets but no rifles, and aircraft were not to be dispersed.¹³⁹ This, according to No. 1 Squadron RAAF was the first airfield defence action to be carried out since arrival at the airfield.¹⁴⁰ In addition, infantrymen of 5/2nd Punjab Regiment under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Haddaway, had implemented anti-sabotage precautions and had been deployed around the airfield for aerodrome defence.¹⁴¹

The RAAF had taken command of RAF Station Sembawang in mid-1941 and immediately directed all Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen to be trained as Ground Gunners under RAF doctrine.¹⁴² Upon return from training, the Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen were put through a rehearsal of the ADS alongside Army troops.¹⁴³ By late 1941, part of RAAF No. 1 Squadron had moved north to Kota Bharu, Malaya.¹⁴⁴ Just after midnight on 8 December 1941, Japanese forces launched their assault on Malaya, with Kota Bharu airfield being attacked from the air a few hours later at 0900 hours by Mitsubishi A6M (Zero) and Nakajima Army Type 97 Fighter aircraft.¹⁴⁵ According to Flying Officer J. Wright, the Japanese pilots made it clear that the airmen machine gunners in the low-level AA machine gun posts were key targets, as all the posts were attacked, followed then by personnel and aircraft.¹⁴⁶ Once the Japanese land forces had taken the beach and moved inland, Japanese snipers close to the

¹³⁷ John Grehan & Martin Mace, *Disaster in the Far East 1940-1942*, 2015, Pen & Sword Military, South Yorkshire, p. 66.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Station Headquarters RAF Station Sembawang 1941.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Station Headquarters RAF Station Sembawang 1941.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*; Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, 1962, Adelaide, pp. 215-217.

¹⁴³ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Station Headquarters RAF Station Sembawang 1941.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operations Record Book Number 1 Squadron 1941; None of the RAAF Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen trained as Ground Gunners moved with the component of No. 1 Squadron to Kota Bharu.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ John Wright, interview by The Australian at War Film Archives, digital recording, 4 February 2004, The Australian at War Film Archives; Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 29.

perimeter of the airfield started engaging airmen.¹⁴⁷ RAAF airmen were now fighting on the ground for the airfields and their lives.¹⁴⁸

As this was taking place other RAAF airmen were manning the defences of airfields across the theatre, which included the Advance Operational Base and airfield at Noumea in New Caledonia.¹⁴⁹ In comparison, No. 2 Squadron RAAF detachment at Koepang airfield in Dutch Timor, had a skeleton staff of three officers and three airmen who were not Guards, with no AA defence, no camouflage nettings or paint, no shelters or dispersal areas.¹⁵⁰ In addition, there was a force of some 500 Dutch and native troops and an Australian Army independent company of 240 troops occupying the aerodrome at Dili, Portuguese Timor.¹⁵¹ On 11 January 1942, 27 heavy bombers and fighter escorts attacked Laha aerodrome on Ambon, (Appendix K), and approximately 300 bombs fell on the airstrip. Leading Aircraftman Coldham-Fussell (Flight Mechanic), Aircraftman Trim (Instrument Maker) and Aircraftman Francis (Armourer) manned the low-level AA machine guns and engaged the aircraft that came within range.¹⁵²

As the Japanese forces moved down through Malaya towards Singapore, the RAF and RAAF units withdrew, with some being sent to Palembang in Sumatra (Appendix K).¹⁵³ On 16 January 1942, airmen and aircraft of the RAF arrived in Sumatra and moved onto the main modern civilian airport known as P1, at Palembang township, while RAAF airmen and aircraft moved onto the jungle airfield some 40 miles south west of Palembang township, known as P2. The latter were under the command of Group Captain J. McCauley. A RAAF Supply Officer, J. Wright explained:

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 215-217; Douglas Gillison also highlights that the RAF Far East Command noted that the anti-aircraft guns, both heavy and light, were insufficient in combatting aircraft. It must also be noted that many of the Army forces that defended airfields at this stage in Malaya were either Dutch, Indian or Malayan.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247; Douglas Gillison recorded that at Luzon, in the Philippines, airmen had been formed into infantry reserve forces.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 190; The Air Board also indicated that the defence of the Advance Operational Base at Noumea would be secured by RAAF; however, the three other airfields were to be protected by the New Caledonian Government. It is also interesting that the Government of New Caledonia (French) wanted machine guns supplied from Australia for the defence of the other airfields.

¹⁵⁰ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 2 Squadron 1941; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 2 Squadron 1942.

¹⁵¹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 2 Squadron 1942.

¹⁵² F.M. Bladin, 'Honours and Awards Commendations for Bravery in Action', 2A, National Archives of Australia, A705, 55/1/420, (unpaginated); All three airmen were nominated for Mentioned in Despatches by RAAF Station Darwin Headquarters for their action manning the low-level AA machine gun post within the sight of the enemy.

¹⁵³ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 382-400.

Most of one squadron arrived by boat from Singapore to the wharf of Palembang. Travelled by train and then ferry to P2 at night and found some huts on the aerodrome to sleep in. Next day the aircraft started arriving. It did not look like an aerodrome.¹⁵⁴

The local Dutch militia of 150 native infantry and two Dutch armoured cars were to defend P1.¹⁵⁵ The defence of P1 was also supplemented by two officers and 60 airmen Ground Gunners of the newly formed RAF Regiment.¹⁵⁶ Under the command of McCauley, P2 had over 1500 RAAF ground crew airmen, yet only 500 could be armed due to a shortage of small arms.¹⁵⁷ McCauley formed the 500 armed airmen into the aerodrome defence force for P2. Wright explained:

We had no dedicated ground defence at the aerodrome at all. So, they did the same thing as in Singapore; all staff were airfield defence. I had two airmen with me, they had rifles and bayonets, and we were allocated a spot in the jungle on the perimeter of the aerodrome [P2]. I was given the situation of defending that part of the jungle. I wasn't trained in the army.¹⁵⁸

Holding the airfields against a large force of Japanese paratroopers, RAF and RAAF airmen fought a ground war for three days before withdrawing to Java and Australia.¹⁵⁹

McCauley arrived back at RAAF Headquarters after the withdrawal from Sumatra, and produced a document called *Principle Lessons Learned in the Malaya – Sumatra Campaign (Air)*.¹⁶⁰ McCauley's 44-page document covered RAAF operations in the air and on the ground.¹⁶¹ McCauley stated, 'On the whole it may be said that nothing which was not previously known was revealed by the operations against the enemy in the Malaya and Sumatra campaign'.¹⁶² McCauley explained that airfields are always built under a peacetime Air Force

¹⁵⁴ John Wright, interview by The Australian at War Film Archives; John Wright was a Supply Officer in the RAAF.

¹⁵⁵ Dr Nigel Warwick & Sean Carwardine, A Lesson in Ground Defence for two Air Forces The Battle of Palembang 14-16 February 1942, Centurion: The Journal of the Royal Air Force Regiment, 34, Northamptonshire, 2015, pp. 18-27.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; John Wright, interview by, digital recording, 4 February 2004, The Australian at War Film Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Dr Nigel Warwick & Sean Carwardine, A Lesson in Ground Defence for two Air Forces: The Battle of Palembang 14-16 February 1942, Centurion: The Journal of the Royal Air Force Regiment, 34, Northamptonshire, 2015, pp. 18-27.

¹⁶⁰ 130 Principle lessons learned in the Malaya & Sumatra campaign (Air)-Prepared by GPCAPT McCauley MAR42, CD-ROM, Canberra, 2013.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

requirement, thus being situated in part on, or adjacent, to the coast.¹⁶³ McCauley emphasised that all these airfields were then rendered untenable for operations within a few hours of the commencement of hostilities.¹⁶⁴ McCauley stated:

The rapid loss of the use of our aerodromes in Northern Malaya is attributable to the following factors - the complete absence of/or inadequate fighter defence, inadequate defence on the ground, unsuitability of the conventional peace time station to withstand air attacks, and lack or inadequacy of air attack warning systems.¹⁶⁵

McCauley stressed that his belief in the use of small calibre machine guns for AA machine gun defence was a mistake, and indicated the minimum calibre for low-level AA machine guns is .50 calibre or 20 mm cannon.¹⁶⁶ He also claimed that the current Army allocation tables for AA guns on aerodromes was incorrect and in his view, there must be a greater allocation to airfields. As an example, the airfield at Kota Bahru had only two 3.7-inch heavy AA guns and once the enemy pilots understood this they attacked at a lower level, thus avoiding their fire. McCauley also discussed Sungei Patani, that had four Bofors 40 mm LAA guns only, and the enemy changed the attack style, so that after one attack they used medium-to high-level bombing and once the AA guns were destroyed, they followed this with low-level air attacks.¹⁶⁷ McCauley highlighted all the types of AA gun systems needed to be used on one aerodrome to give full and effective AA defence.¹⁶⁸

In this report, McCauley criticised the idea that a minimum of an infantry company could defend an airfield as 'poor judgement', and he noted the concept of using airmen of all trades and musterings in defence against attacks on the ground as, 'last minute, rushed and poor policy'.¹⁶⁹ McCauley observed that airmen with minimal training in infantry tactics and static

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, John Grehan & Martin Mace, *Disaster in the Far East 1940-1942*, 2015, South Yorkshire, pp. 22-74; Investigation shows how much McCauley's report shadows the despatches from Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, which outlined that the so called 'linear defence' was a poor defensive theory compared to all-round defence. Additionally, the war state of aerodromes was so poor that according to Brooke-Popham, thought was '...not always given to the tactical siting of aerodromes from the point of view of defence'. Brooke-Popham also highlighted the lack of anti-aircraft ammunition, of all types, as early as 1940 that there was also no mobile anti-aircraft defence for airfields and the air attack on Alor Star by 27 Japanese aircraft where 150 lb high-explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped from about 13,000 feet. The four anti-aircraft guns defending Alor Star did not bring down one enemy aircraft and did not hinder the attack. Ground attacks by Japanese forces on the 8 December 1941 forced No. 1 Squadron to fly out of Kota Bharu and by the 9 December the aerodrome was abandoned.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*; This was raised in 1935 by Bostock and McCauley with the development of the Aerodrome Defence Scheme. Both men supported the use of a larger calibre round for RAAF airfield defence.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

defence schemes did not survive the modern warfare the Japanese used against airfields. The type of warfare utilised by the Japanese in the invasion of the Far East has been described by A.C. Headrick as a well-developed form of *blitzkrieg*, and it was McCauley's view that airfield defence of the time was ill-equipped to respond to this warfare tactic.¹⁷⁰ McCauley also stated, 'The stand which was consistently taken was that airmen should only be called upon to act as soldiers in the final phase or in emergency'.¹⁷¹ According to McCauley, this was a failure waiting to happen, and predicts that RAAF airmen will be overrun by well-trained infantry because airmen were not trained as infantry.¹⁷² McCauley submitted that the function of aerodrome defence was one that should be discharged by airmen who have been trained in aerodrome defence and therefore as infantrymen.¹⁷³

Darwin – Lessons Learnt?

In Darwin prior to the Second World War, No. 12 Squadron had no Guards. At this time the only protection for RAAF Station Parap was airmen being utilised under McCauley's ADS. In 1940 RAAF airmen were tasked with gate guard duty and manning the two low-level AA machine gun defence posts.¹⁷⁴ On one occasion, during March 1940, shots were fired at unknown intruders at the aerodrome towards midnight.¹⁷⁵ A single airman, who was on the 'beat' (foot patrol) as a roving picquet, was moving through the petrol and bomb dump area and sighted some movement. He challenged two persons and, on the command, 'holt' [sic] the two persons ran away, the sentry again gave the command 'holt' [sic], but they kept running. The sentry then fired three shots at them with no result. A day after the incident, Wing Commander C. Eaton sent a secret message to RAAF Headquarters outlining the situation in the Darwin area, the event at the aerodrome, the need for RAAF Guards and noting that the Australian Army was unable to support airfield defence and security.¹⁷⁶ By mid-1940 Eaton received 15 Guards for the defence of RAAF Station Parap.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; Alan. C. Headrick, 'Bicycle Blitzkrieg: The Malayan Campaign and the Fall of Singapore', 1994, Newport, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records No. 12 Squadron 1940; Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 423-426; Douglas Gillison, noted that a Warrant Officer stationed at Darwin between June 1940 and November 1941, had recorded that there was no airfield defence organisation, training and not enough rifles for new arrivals.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; Group Captain C. Eaton, O.B.E., A.F.C. served in the RFC and in the RAF until 1925, when he joined the RAAF. Eaton commanded No. 12 Squadron at Darwin, but once RAAF Station Darwin had been completed, he took overall command of the Station.

The archives testify that the RAAF in Darwin under Eaton was in an uncontrollable situation. The only two .50 calibre Browning machine guns he held were to be transferred to the Army for the defence of the town, but not the airfield.¹⁷⁷ On 3 February 1942, the issues of the under-resourcing and under-manning affecting RAAF Station Darwin had been handed over to the new Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Griffith.¹⁷⁸ Griffith had to man all the local Advanced Operational Bases with Guards from his Station.¹⁷⁹ The archives show that Griffith had not received any of the demanded small arms from the south and was trying to borrow .50 calibre Browning machine guns from the American forces stationed there.¹⁸⁰ After a number of messages to the Air Board outlining the issues, RAAF Headquarters sent Air Commodore Jones to Darwin on 7 February 1942.¹⁸¹ Jones' report, dated 14 February 1942, identified the lack of serviceable aircraft, poor supply chain, and the sub-standard living conditions within the area, poor standard of officers and lack of Guards to provide enough defence for all taskings. All of which he believed brought the station to 'breaking point' and could lead to an eventual failure of the defence of Darwin airfield.¹⁸² Griffith did receive Jones' support, in the report, for an additional 36 Guards to man the machine gun posts and the provision of armoured plate shields for the twin machine guns, as designed by Wing Commander A.R. Tindal, the North West Area Armaments Officer.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Northern Area Headquarters 1941; Headquarters Northern Area in Townsville issued an order to Eaton to hand over spare .50 calibre machine guns to the Army for low-level AA defence of Darwin township, not the airfield. The records show that Wing Commander Eaton demanded the following equipment through the RAAF supply line from July until October 1941: 110 revolvers, two .50 calibre Browning machine guns, rifles and revolvers, wireless equipment, rations, nine Vickers machine guns for No. 11, 12 and 13 Squadrons, 96 barrels for Vickers, bomb sights, 500 helmets, .50 calibre machine gun link, water bottles, 115 revolvers, six .50 calibre Browning machine guns, 175 respirators and engine parts. However, the request for small arms was rejected as they did not match the allocation tables for the Station. So, on 26 July 1941, Eaton requested that the allocation tables of small arms be changed for Darwin. One month later the Air Board released the new small arms allocations for RAAF Station Darwin adjusted as he had requested. However, the extra small arms did not arrive from No. 1 Stores Depot until after the first Japanese air attack on 19 February 1942.

¹⁷⁸ James D Rorrison, *Nor the Years Contemn: Air War on the Australian Front 1941-1942*, 1992, p. 147.

¹⁷⁹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Headquarters Darwin 1941.

¹⁸⁰ James D Rorrison, *Nor the Years Contemn: Air War on the Australian Front 1941-1942*, 1992, p. 147; Defence planning seemed to dominate all else in this unreal situation. On 7 February, Swan chaired yet another meeting of the Station Defence Committee, and organisation of resistance to air attack was once more discussed in detail and recommendations were made for approval by Station Commander. By the end of the month, the Defence Minister had approved the purchase of 13,520 rifles at a total cost of £149,000. This did not include any spares or rifles needed for Advanced Operational Bases in the Islands or even machine guns. In addition, Eaton had requested, in both 1940 and 1941, an increase in the number of small arms for the station, an additional 500 helmets and 175 respirators and more water bottles (RAAF Station Darwin had only 50 water bottles for issue). Not only aerodrome defence equipment was lacking but aviation fuel, engines for the aircraft and shoes. Eaton, prior to Griffin, had also requested an increase in all spares.

¹⁸¹ G. Jones, 'Report on Personnel and Administrative Problems in North Western Area – Written by Air Commodore G. Jones for the C.A.S.', 1A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 37/501/99, (unpaginated).

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Griffith records that his main dispersal point was on the south eastern side of the airfield, which had greater machine gun cover and the best camouflage on the aerodrome.¹⁸⁴ By this stage, the station had 58 Guards allocated to its defence, but 35 of these Guards were stationed at other bases around the Northern area.¹⁸⁵ With the .50 calibre machine guns provided by the Americans, the defence of RAAF Station Darwin was performed exclusively by RAAF Guards, not the Australian Army.¹⁸⁶ On the 10 February 1942, over 100 Guards arrived at Darwin for posting to the Islands, however, due to difficulties with transport to the Islands, the Guards were sent to RAAF Station Darwin instead.¹⁸⁷ This was an unexpected force multiplier for Griffith, and he had therefore obtained the Guards he needed for his defence plan.¹⁸⁸ The camouflage dispersal area had eight .50 calibre Browning machine guns and four twin Vickers machine guns protecting the three Lockheed Hudson bombers located under the only camouflage netting the base possessed.¹⁸⁹ These were the only aircraft to survive the attack on 19 February 1942. Australian historian P. Ingman stated, 'If so, this is one documented 'win' for the [RAAF] ground defenders. . . from memory Griffiths or Scherger said that there was only one strafing run here, that was deterred by the machine gun fire'.¹⁹⁰ The defence plan aerial photograph details a total of 12 .50 calibre Browning machine gun posts and 11 twin Vickers machine gun posts protecting RAAF Station Darwin in 1942 (Appendix I).¹⁹¹

It was in the defence of RAAF Station Darwin that the RAAF's first Guard fatality in combat occurred. Corporal R.F. Simmons died in a weapon pit near the Motor Transport Section, and then eight days later the second Guard to die on active duty, Corporal F. K. Lewis was killed by an anti-personnel bomb dropped from a Japanese aircraft.¹⁹² Douglas Gillison claimed that the attack of 19 February 1942 was ' . . . one of the most devastating air raids of

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; The dispersal point used all the camouflage nettings at the station, thus any other aircraft on the aerodrome would be moved into the bush with no camouflage or placed into the hangars.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Bowie, 'Airfield Defence', 2004, p. 8; Wilf Bowie to Alan Giltrap, letter, 18 July 1999, original held by Sean Carwardine, 62-64 Scribbly Gum Court, New Beith, QLD.

¹⁸⁸ Anon., 'Personnel Occurrence Report Part "B" "Airmen" No. 9/1942, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 493/1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸⁹ G. Jones, 'Report on Personnel and Administrative Problems in North Western Area – Written by Air Commodore G. Jones for the C.A.S.', 1A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 37/501/99, (unpaginated).

¹⁹⁰ P. Ingman to Sean Carwardine, email, August 1015, original held in authors possession.

¹⁹¹ G. Jones, 'Report on Personnel and Administrative Problems in North Western Area – Written by Air Commodore G. Jones for the C.A.S.', 1A, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 37/501/99, (unpaginated).

¹⁹² Anon., 'Simons Robert Frederick: Service Number – 26040 : Date of birth – 24 Sep 1921 : Place of birth – Adelaide SA : Place of enlistment – Adelaide : Next of Kin – Simons Frederick', 1939, National Archives of Australia, A9301, 26040, (unpaginated); Anon., 'Simons Robert Frederick – (Corporal); Service Number – 26040; File type – Casualty – Repatriation; Place – Darwin, Northern Territory; Date – 19 February 1942, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A705, 163/162/290, (unpaginated).

the Second World War'.¹⁹³ Air Commodore A.D. Garrison supported this claim by affirming that the first raid witnessed heavy bombing and strafing of the airfield, and he stated, 'Personnel at the RAAF base were completely surprised [and] those who had been allocated to machine-gun posts. . . numbering about 50, certainly manned them and fought with great bravery and enthusiasm'.¹⁹⁴ These airmen were the 100-plus Guards sent to Darwin only nine days earlier. There were only two officers manning machine gun posts, Squadron Leader Swan and Wing Commander Tindal.¹⁹⁵ These officers manned the same pit near the RAAF Station Darwin Headquarters building. Tindal had a water-cooled Vickers at one end of a T-shaped weapon pit, while Swan, Warrant Officer Chapman and a Flight Sergeant Service Policeman manned another Vickers.¹⁹⁶

Leading Aircraftman C. Jones, a Guard at RAAF Station Darwin, witnessed the first attack while at the bomb dump, with his duty being to secure the bombs and destroy them upon invasion.¹⁹⁷ After the first raid, he went to the Station Guard room to find Sergeant F. Nelson (in charge of all Guards at RAAF Station Darwin), and Corporal H. Sinclair. Both these Guards had remained at the main gate throughout both air raids and witnessed other RAAF personnel and civilians, using any means of transport they could find, evacuating the base and moving to the south.¹⁹⁸ C. Jones indicated that after the raid, apart from the Guards remaining at duty at low-level AA machine gun pits and at the main gate, the base had emptied.¹⁹⁹

The writings of J.J. Baker regarding the airfield defence of RAAF Station Darwin, can now be corrected. J.J. Baker (and hence authors following him) noted that the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the bombing of Darwin conducted by Justice Lowe in March 1942

¹⁹³ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, 1962, Adelaide, pp. 425-429; Douglas Gillison does get some of the tactical planning for RAAF Station Darwin correct, however, there is no reference as to where he obtained the numbers of machine guns.

¹⁹⁴ A.D. Garrison, *Darwin 1942*, 1997, Australian Defence Force Journal, 122, Canberra, p. 41; The history by Bowie outlined that each machine gun post needed three airmen, the firer, the loader and the spotter.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; Peter Grose, *An Awkward Truth. The Bombing of Darwin February 1942*, 2011, Crows Nest, p. 103; The author noted that the machine gunners did their best, but there was no stopping the smiling pilots as they roared effortlessly overhead. At one machine gun post, Wing Commander Tindal sat exposed on the lip of the trench firing his Vickers at the aircraft. A single bullet killed him, and he became the first RAAF airman to be killed on Australian soil by enemy fire

¹⁹⁶ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, p. 428; A.D. Garrison, *Darwin 1942*, p. 61; Wing Commander Tindal was killed due to the mounting of his machine gun. As it was water-cooled and a mounted for AA not ground attack, it was mounted above the protected sandbags of the weapon pit. Tindal was sitting on the sandbags to fire the weapon. It must also be noted that some of the accounts of Squadron Leader Swan, who indicated that he and Chapman ran around saving ammunition storage in a shed, while the attack was on, and who claims that he manned the machine gun is questionable. It is noted that the Flight Sergeant- Service Policeman was the main firer of the machine gun.

¹⁹⁷ Clyde Jones to Alan and Jackie Giltrap, letter, 17 July 2001, original held by Mr Sean Carwardine, 62-64 Scribbly Gum Court, New Beith, QLD.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

concluded that the RAAF did not perform any airfield defence during the attack.²⁰⁰ This is not the case, and an examination of the full Inquiry shows support for the airfield defence of Darwin by Air Commodore Wilson on 5 March 1942, where he stated:

The grouping of guns was most effective because the Japanese made one dive at the aircraft protected by group guns and thereafter did not take any notice of them, and we assumed from the gun power that the enemy realised their chance of doing any damage to the lines was so very remote.²⁰¹

Griffith was interviewed by the Royal Commission on 7 March 1942 and he stated:

The aerodrome defence guns maintained constant fire throughout. As a matter of fact, their conduct was very heartening, and I saw at least one aircraft hit and fly away very low in heavy smoke. I saw that myself.²⁰²

On 8 March 1942 Squadron Leader A.D. Swan was interviewed by the Royal Commission, and he outlined that the .50 calibre and smaller machine guns were all allocated around the airfield and they, 'put up a very good show'.²⁰³ Then on 9 March 1942, Group Captain Scherger, when asked about the Hudson aircraft that were not damaged at the end of the runway because of the grouped .50 calibre machine guns, indicated that a Japanese fighter aircraft did a strafing run on a machine gun post manned by Guards.

The view that there was minimal airfield defence and training of Guards at Darwin in 1942 still exists in contemporary airfield defence knowledge. In 2014, Squadron Leader Vroomans, Director of Studies at RAAF Security and Fire School, referred to the wide-held belief that the ground defence training was, at the time, limited to 'marching in threes with sloping arms'.²⁰⁴ This is an inaccurate view which gained strength from a misquote of the interview of Griffith during the Lowe inquiry.²⁰⁵ What the transcript actually demonstrates is

²⁰⁰ Baker, 'RAAF Ground Defence', p. 4; Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished, p. 4; Kerr, 'History of Ground Defence', p. 28; Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 33.

²⁰¹ Wilson, 'Douglas Ernest Wilson sworn and examined', 5 March 1942, National Archives of Australia, A816, 37/301/293, p. 87.

²⁰² Griffith, 'Upon Resuming at 2.20 P.M. Stuart de Burch Griffith', 7 March 1942, National Archives of Australia, A816, 37/301/293, p. 286.

²⁰³ A.D. Swan, 'Squadron leader A.D. Swan, sworn and examined', 8 March 1942, National Archives of Australia, A816, 37/301/293, p. 442.

²⁰⁴ Squadron Leader Nick Vroomans, interview by Sean Carwardine, hand-written transcript, RAAF Base Amberley, 24 March 2014, in author's possession.

²⁰⁵ Timothy Hall outlined in his book *Darwin 1942* that the RAAF needed to train newly recruited person in military discipline. Military discipline and military combat training are two separate concepts. The RAAF was training all airmen and airwomen in drill and military

that the focus of questioning put to Griffith by the Commissioner was seeking answers as to why the base was not evacuated by men forming up in three ranks and marching away from the airfield in ‘. . . a military fashion’.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Griffith was asked if these men had some military training, ‘. . . for instance, to march in three?’²⁰⁷ Griffith is recorded in response stating, ‘Yes, and the majority can slope arms and that sort of thing’.²⁰⁸ The research for this thesis can now show that the view that airfield defence training comprised solely of marching in three with slope arms is an erroneous representation of Griffith’s statements to the Inquiry. In fact, he implemented airfield defence, gained extra weapons from the Americans even after the RAAF could not supply them and grouped light and heavy machine guns together to form mutually supporting defensive positions around aircraft.²⁰⁹ Swan outlined in his interview that the Guards were the only airmen in the RAAF to be trained as infantrymen and were used to protect the airfields and that all other airmen were tradesmen who were not soldiers nor trained to be soldiers. Additionally, Squadron Leader Swan stated to the Royal Commission, in reference to the Guards:

I would like to amplify the fighting side. At present we have only a certain number of men who are sent up to definitely man the guns and perform the different guard duties. Apart from that everybody is a tradesman or a non-technical man.

A correspondent for the Melbourne *Herald*, D. Lockwood, stated that there was ‘. . . poor recognition of these airmen’ (Guards) and this appears to support the statement made by Air Chief Marshal Scherger in the Lowe Commission report.²¹⁰ Scherger’s comment was directed at the Air Board and described the efforts of ‘a number of airmen’ (Guards) that stayed and defended the airfield as ‘. . . magnificent and it seems odd indeed that they were not recognised’.²¹¹ Lockwood quotes the Air Board’s refusal to the suggestion of recognition for the airmen that stayed at their machine gun posts and defended the Darwin airfield as, ‘. . . you

discipline but only airmen trained for the aerodrome defence flights – such as Guards were fully trained in military machine defence. The idea of general airmen undertaking infantry training was still a divisive topic in the RAAF.

²⁰⁶ Anon., ‘Bombing of Darwin – Report by Mr. Justice Lowe, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A431, 1949/687, (unpaginated).

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Timothy Hall, *Darwin 1942 Australia’s Darkest Hour*, Sydney, 1981, pp. 84-85; Squadron Leader Nick Vroomans, interview by Sean Carwardine, hand-written transcript, RAAF Base Amberley, 24 March 2014, in author’s possession; During this interview Squadron Leader Vroomans was asked what caused the RAAF to identify the need for airfield defence?. He replied, ‘The Lowe Report. Even today there is a lack of focus on ground defence, more of a focus on aircraft and flying. Officer training does not focus on any ground defence, then and today’.

²¹⁰ Lockwood, *Australia Under Attack*, p. 166; Graham O’Brien, *Always There*, p. 36.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

don't give gongs to a shemozzle'.²¹² Throughout Justice Lowe's report, RAAF officers acknowledge that Guards were trained, continued to man the machine guns and stayed on the airfield, even when ordered to leave.²¹³

Security Guards Unit/No. 1 AD Squadron – 'Would please Lord Mountbatten'²¹⁴

Air Commodore F.M. Bladin, previously RAAF Southern Area Commander, took command of North Western Area in mid-1942, and with Group Captain W.L. Hely, Senior Air Staff Officer Headquarters North Western Area, drew up instructions for the protection of aerodromes upon an invasion by Japanese forces.²¹⁵ He insisted that the defence of the airfields in Darwin was already at a disadvantage because they had been built close to the coast, following peacetime policy. By August 1942, Group Captain J. R. Bell, Directorate of Operations North Western Area Headquarters, had raised the *North Western Area Headquarters Memorandum No. 153* outlining the formation of a Defence Squadron as a separate RAAF unit under the command of North Western Area Headquarters.²¹⁶ North Western Area Headquarters recorded in its monthly memorandum that a Defence Squadron would be formed with all Guards (over 1000 Guards), to provide aerodrome defence of all stations. These airmen would form into a ground fighting force that could protect the aerodromes or units against enemy attacks.

RAAF Headquarters did not support the 'pooling' of Guards, however, it agreed to this formation but only under its (RAAF Headquarters) direction, and that the name would be changed to 'Security Guards Unit'.²¹⁷ On 28 September 1942, with Flight Lieutenant C.H.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Anon., 'Bombing of Darwin – Report by Mr. Justice Lowe, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A431, 1949/687, (unpaginated); Gillison, Royal Australian Air Force, p. 428; There also must be an acknowledgment of the two Guards that ran from their machine gun post onto the airfield trying to rescue the two American airmen whose aircraft had been shot down by the Japanese. Additionally, Gillison noted 'The defenders fought back as best they could with their limited arms', a true acknowledgement of the Guards in the machine gun post engaging the enemy aircraft and protecting their airfield when others had left.

²¹⁴ In the Area Operational Command of North Western Area Memorandum in which Bladin outlined the formation of his Defence Squadron 'Would please Lord Mountbatten', refers to the military skill and high standard of soldiering of these airmen.

²¹⁵ W.L. Hely, Operational Policy Directives No. 1 General Operational Policy in Event of Land Attack on Darwin', 1942, Australian War Memorial, 54, 635/5/6, pp. 1-2.

²¹⁶ J.R. Faviell, 'Headquarters North Western Area Allied Air Forces Organisation Bulletin August 1942, 1942, National Archives of Australia, AA1966/5, 134, (unpaginated); Gillison, Royal Australian Air Force, p. 556; Both Bladin and Bell attended the Staff Officers meeting in early 1942 that had called for the formation of Station Defence Squadrons. Once they were posted to the North Western Area it can be seen in the files that both had planned for the pooling of Guards in the area and the formation of the North Western Area Defence Squadron.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

MacKinnon commanding, the SGU was formed at Hughes, some 40 km south of Darwin.²¹⁸ On paper, Guards were posted from their current units to the SGU for duty, but physically remained at their current unit and did not move to the actual location of the headquarters of the SGU. Additionally, the SGU was to train all Guards, providing Guard Courses, Army Bofors 40 mm LAA gun courses, AA officers' courses, special drivers' courses and ADI courses.²¹⁹ The SGU's first Guard Course was completed on 14 November 1942.²²⁰

In January 1943, Bladin released his new *Operational Policy Directive*. Upon a potential invasion of Darwin by enemy land forces, all RAAF units were to move to over 40 aerodromes for rearming/refuelling and resting of pilots, protected by detachments from the SGU.²²¹ Phase I of the directive set out that upon invasion the SGU Headquarters and a detachment of 100 Guards would be positioned forward, towards the coast from RAAF Station Darwin, to form a buffer to slow any invasion. Once RAAF Station Darwin was evacuated, SGU in the buffer position would fall back to RAAF Station Darwin, and together with any Army elements, were to destroy buildings and facilities at RAAF Station Darwin.²²² Guards attached to other units would maintain normal guard duty and man AA machine gun positions on nominated aerodromes.²²³ Phase II of the directive held that the SGU Headquarters and Guard detachment would move from Hughes area to the Area Headquarters at 57 Mile to protect North Western Area Headquarters.²²⁴

The SGU had a Headquarters composed of many different musterings and as well as around 80-100 Guards.²²⁵ An example of the tasks performed of a Guard from SGU Headquarters demonstrates the wide range of duties. During 1943, Sergeant J.E. Gough, a Guard, was awarded a Commendation for Meritorious Service when on duty at No. 29 Radar Direction Finding Station at Port Moresby (Appendix K). His Commendation recorded that a

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 38; Flight Lieutenant MacKinnon was an officer of the Administrative and Special Duties Branch. He had only completed an Anti-Gas course, never completing an ADOs course; Anon., 'Operational Record Book No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron 1/10/42 to 30/10/45 No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron 10/4/45 to 31/5/45, Australian War Memorial, 64, 20/1, (unpaginated); Air Power Centre, *Airfield Defence*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2013, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Security Guards Unit No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron.

²¹⁹ The Anti-Aircraft officers' courses held by the Army in the North Western Area were completed by a Guard Corporal.

²²⁰ On this course some 56 Guards and one General Hand completed the Guard Course.

²²¹ F.M. Bladin, 'Operational Policy Directives by Air Commodore F.M. Bladin Air Officer Commanding North Western Area - General operational policy in event of land attack on Darwin', 1943, Australian War Memorial, 54, 625/5/14, pp. 1-2.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Anon., 'Operational Record Book No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron 1/10/42 to 30/10/45 No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron 10/4/45 to 31/5/45', Australian War Memorial, 64, 20/1, (unpaginated); Air Power Centre, *Airfield Defence*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2013, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Security Guards Unit No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron.

B-25 aircraft of No. 18 Squadron crashed into ‘alligator’ infested swamps some 24 miles from the Station’s location. Sergeant Gough and a native guide used a boat from the local Mission Station and travelling in poor weather conditions reached the stricken aircraft and rescued the crew of four.²²⁶

For over two years Guards at various locations around the North Western Area were manning the AA machine guns (Picture 2), the front gates of airfields and patrolling the internal area of the stations. Yet, by December 1944, Air Commodore A. Charlesworth, now the Commander of the North Western Area, and Wing Commander D.A. Cameron, Senior Staff Officer North Western Area, had drafted a support document for the SGU disbandment. RAAF Headquarters and North Western Area Headquarters proposed that all Guards were to be posted back to the units at which they were currently located and that a small ‘Guard Pool’ be formed at No. 2 Reserve Personnel Pool for training of Guards when they arrived in the North Western Area.²²⁷



Picture 2: North Western Area, 20 January 1943. Three RAAF Guards manning a twin-barrelled Vickers machine gun, Darwin area. (AWM 0028)

²²⁶ Anon., ‘Service Record – Gough John Edward – 29770, National Archives of Australia, A9301, 29770, (unpaginated).

²²⁷ D.A. Cameron, ‘Security Guards Unit’, 13A, 1944, National Archives of Australia, A705 231/9/1244 PART 1A Attachment, (unpaginated); This is a direct link to G. Jones not wanting defence squadrons in the RAAF. He would have a ‘pool’ of Guard for training, but all Guards will be at units.

In January 1945, however, at the same time that there were calls for disbandment and reduction in Guard numbers, a detachment of the SGU, under command of Lieutenant E.P. Lynch (seconded from the Army), had been selected for operations outside of Australia.²²⁸ After additional training, Lynch and 14 Guards were transported to the island of Seroea (now called Pulau Serua, Indonesia), some 450 miles north of Australia. The island was well within the area of Japanese occupation and surrounded by Japanese-held islands and territory (Appendix O).²²⁹ During the 'highly dangerous' five month operation, RAAF Guards manned machine gun posts, gathered meteorological information for air operations and, along with other allied services, established a forward post for air-sea rescue operations. This operation was reported as one of the most 'closely-guarded secrets of the war in the South-West Pacific'.²³⁰

As airmen continued to conduct their duties on the ground on active operations, there continued to be rumbling in Headquarters about the purpose of the SGU. On 18 January 1945, via a secret message, Air Commodore F.M. Bladin, now DCAS at RAAF Headquarters, had stated that he did not agree with the disbandment of the SGU, indicating that it fulfilled an important role in defence and training. He sought support to delay the disbandment until submissions could be made for its retention.²³¹ At the same time, in a message supporting the retention of Bladin's SGU in the North Western Area, Bostock of RAAF Command indicated that the decision of disbandment of the SGU should be made by RAAF Command.²³² Despite the threats to the Unit, in March 1945, Wing Commander A. Garran from RAAF Headquarters directed that the SGU be renamed to No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron. The new title of No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron then officially commenced on the chosen date of 28 February 1945 (backdated).²³³ Later, No. 2 SGU, proposed for formation in the 1st Tactical Air Force, would also be renamed as No 2. Airfield Defence Squadron.

Despite the renaming of SGU to No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron, the discussion of disbandment continued. Seven months later, in October 1945 disbandment of the squadron was

²²⁸ Anon., 'Lynch Eugene Philp: Service Number – NX88099: Date of birth – 08 Jan 1914: Place of birth – Shanghai China : Place of enlistment – Paddington NSW : Next of Kin – Lynch Patricia, 1939, National Archives of Australia, B883, NX88099, (unpaginated).

²²⁹ Air Power Centre, *Airfield Defence*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2013, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Security Guards Unit No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron; 'RAAF Held Island in Jap Perimeter', *The Mercury*, Hobart, 21 September 1945, p. 10; 'Outpost on a Volcano', *Western Mail*, Perth, 11 October 1945, p. 7.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ F.M. Bladin, 'Signal', 1945, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1244 PART 1A Attachment, (unpaginated).

²³² R.A.A.F. Command, 'Signal', 1945, 15A, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1244 PART 1A Attachment, (unpaginated).

²³³ A. Garran, 'Signal Referred for Action in Accordance with Minute 43, viz: -', 21A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1244 PART 1A Attachment, (unpaginated).

underway. In the midst of the cessation of hostilities with Japan and as a result of the Indonesian uprising developing in Merauke, Western New Guinea, CAS Air Vice Marshal Jones, as a member of the Chief of Staff Committee, sent a small force from No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron to Merauke (Appendix K). The force comprised one ADO and 70 Guards armed with Thompson sub-machine guns and rations for three days.²³⁴ These Guards deployed forward for two months post-war to reinforce the RAAF personnel at Merauke aerodrome due to the ground threat to the airfield from Indonesian nationalist forces.²³⁵ On 30 November 1945, these Guards arrived back in Australia with the other RAAF personnel from Merauke aerodrome. By this time No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron had been fully disbanded and the Guards were posted out to other units.

Operations in the Middle East

Of the three RAAF squadrons, Nos. 3, 450 and 451, deployed to the Middle East theatre from 1940, none deployed with any Guards. The records show that this had been laid down by RAF Command in London in the establishment table/structure for the RAF Army Co-Operation Squadron, and thus the RAAF squadrons mirrored this.²³⁶ There was, however, a requirement for an additional 18 Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen and one Corporal Aircrafthand/General Duty for manning low-level AA machine gun defences and three Service Police for No. 3 Squadron, while Nos. 450 and 451 Squadrons in the Middle East would receive one Sergeant, 12 Corporals and 24 Aircrafthand/Ground Gunners per squadron.²³⁷ All of the Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen, like L. Anderson, E. Field and P. Hayes were later remustered as Ground Gunners.²³⁸

²³⁴ J. Northcott, 'Minute by Chief of Staff Committee at Meeting Held on Wednesday, 10th October 1945, National Archives of Australia, A816, 101/302/12, (unpaginated); Operational Records No. 1 A.D. Squadron, 1945, USB Storage Device, Canberra.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*; This was the first post-war operation of a RAAF Airfield Defence Squadron.

²³⁶ W.C. Joyce, 'Establishment of No. 208 Squadron, 68, 1940, National Archives of Australian, A2353, Z7, (unpaginated).

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 20.

²³⁸ Leading Aircraftman L. Anderson enlisted at No. 1 Recruit Depot and after completing the Recruit Drill course was posted to No. 1 Squadron (which had an Aerodrome Defence Flight) and in 1941 to No. 451 Squadron RAAF. Anderson embarked at Sydney on 8 April 1941 for Egypt. He completed the RAF Gunners course at the RAF Middle East Training School with a 'Very Good' on trade proficiency, however, after 1942 this was ruled out with no explanation on file, and hence he ceased being qualified. Sergeant P.C. Hayes 21339 was an Aircrafthand at No. 2 Recruit Depot and on completion of Recruit and Drill course was posted to No. 9 Squadron on 15 February 1941 and was later also posted to No. 451 Squadron and then left for Egypt. While on operations with the RAAF, and being part of the aerodrome defence section, he was sent to RAF Middle East Training School and completed the RAF Ground Gunners course. On this course he completed instruction on the Lewis gun, 20 mm cannon, sighting, general drill, fieldwork, battle fitness, unarmed combat and aircraft recognition. He was discharged on 31 December 1945 with the RAAF Mustering: Guard Gunner. Hayes would be Mentioned in Despatches for his leadership during Operation Crusader in Libya from 26-30 November 1941. His citation noted that he had gripped the situation, organised the Aerodrome Defence Section in defence of the perimeter, led 'prowler' patrols, and performed guard duty in the most efficient manner, when part of a New Zealand Brigade Rear Echelon was overrun by German armour and infantry. E. Field enlisted in the RAAF as Aircrafthand/General Duty airmen and also embarked from Australia in 1941 with No. 451 Squadron for the Middle East.

By September 1940, No. 3 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Flight was made up of airmen such as Aircraftman I. Leaver, who was qualified on the Lewis machine gun (Picture 3).²³⁹ The Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader B. Gibbes, commented that this was ‘. . . a lonely, and indeed dangerous job’, stating further, ‘When our drome was bombed or strafed by the enemy aircraft, the Anti-Aircraft boys would open fire, thus giving away their position, drawing attention from the attacking aircraft’.²⁴⁰ By late 1940, the entire Aerodrome Defence Flight of No. 3 Squadron had qualified in ground-to-air gunnery, and Flying Officer C.S. Steel, a General Duty Pilot, was the Officer-in-Charge of the Flight.²⁴¹ It was only in late 1942, that the first posting occurred of the Guard mustering to these Squadrons.²⁴²



Picture 3: Members of No. 3 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Section in the Middle East, June 1941. The image shows a camel bone attached to the twin Lewis 0.303-inch machine guns. The idea is based on the Aboriginal belief called ‘pourri-pourri’ or pointing the bone. (AWM P12424/036)

One major event took place on 23 November 1941 when No. 451 Squadron advance party arrived at the Sidi Azeiz landing ground. This area was defended by 5th Brigade New Zealand Army under the command of Brigadier James Hargest.²⁴³ Hargest received a warning

After completing the RAF Ground Gunners course at the Middle East Training School, Field was remustered to Aircraftman/Ground Gunner in September 1942 within the RAAF mustering system.

²³⁹ Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 20; Roy Fitzgerald, Jaunty Jotting of an Aerodrome Defence Gunner/Armourer/Aircrew Wallah, Australia, <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/fitzgerald.htm>, accessed 10 March 2013; Eulogy – Ivor Leaver, one of the ‘Bofors Boys’, Australia, <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/ValeLeaver.htm>, accessed 10 March 2013.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Anon., ‘No. 3 Squadron, RAAF – Personnel Occurrence Report, 1942, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 925/4, (unpaginated).

²⁴³ Herington, *Air War Against Germany and Italy*, p. 210.

of hostile armour advancing towards the landing ground. He then moved the 22nd Battalion of the New Zealand Army 5th Brigade and the RAAF Ground Gunners of No. 451 Squadron (Picture 4) to the wadis Bir el Menastir (some 6-7 miles north of the Fort and airfield of Sidi Azeiz). On 25 November 1941, the German 15th Panzer with 53 tanks closed in on Sidi Azeiz from the west and two days later captured the 5th Brigade, No. 451 Squadron advanced party of pilots and ground crew.²⁴⁴

Upon arrival at the wadi Bir el Menastir on 25 November 1941, Sergeant Hayes RAAF Aircraftman/Ground Gunner, then took the initiative with his Ground Gunners. He requested orders, offered his section of airmen to take up a defensive position, provided machine-gun posts, airmen for guard 'proowler' duty and rostered picquet duty within the 22nd Battalion.²⁴⁵ On 27 November 1941 at 1300 hours the German 22nd Panzer Division appeared and began opening fire on to the position of the 22nd Battalion positions at the wadi.²⁴⁶ These Axis forces engaged the Bir el Menastir position with artillery, mortars and machine-gun and rifle fire. The New Zealanders considered this to be some of the heaviest artillery and mortar fire they had ever experienced at that time.²⁴⁷ During this engagement the enemy infantry made a number of attacks under the cover of their shelling. It is noted that the enemy were stopped by the amount of fire from the defenders; this included the RAAF Aircraftman/Ground Gunners. This one battle continued for two and half hours, after which the enemy withdrew and went south towards Sidi Azeiz airfield, which had already been captured. For three days, under constant mortar, 75 mm and 105 mm enemy artillery fire, tank and infantry attacks, the RAAF Aircraftman/Ground Gunners fought alongside the New Zealanders Army.²⁴⁸ On 29 November 1941, Flight Lieutenant Andrew and the Aircraftman/Ground Gunners moved towards Sidi Omar. They reached this site at 1200 hours and re-joined the squadron.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ R. Williams, Mention in Despatches, 1941, National Archives of Australian, A11305, 79/P1 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁴⁶ Jim Henderson, *22 Battalion Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force*, Wellington, 1958, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH2-22Ba.html>, accessed 10 April 2017, p. 113.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ R. Williams, Mention in Despatches, 1941, National Archives of Australian, A11305, 79/P1 PART 1, (unpaginated).

On 3 January 1942 Sergeant Hayes, Aircrafthand/Ground Gunner was Mentioned in Despatches for his action during this period, which stated that he and his men showed ‘diligence, courage and cheerfulness’ in battle. Hayes, according to Flight Lieutenant Andrew, showed confidence and efficiency of outstanding appreciation of the immediate situation, carried himself with great coolness and provided ‘the most effective administration of the men under him, in an effective soldierly manner’.²⁵⁰



Picture 4: RAAF No. 451 Squadron Aerodrome Defence Flight Aircrafthand/Ground Gunners on parade (Photograph provided by M. Thompson).

Airfield Defence in the North

Airfields cut out of the jungle, with no boundary fence line, provided a difficult situation for all defenders on the Islands to the north of Australia. Adding to this, the three airstrips built at Milne Bay, New Guinea, were located close to the coastline, once again making them easy targets (Appendix K).²⁵¹ RAAF squadrons provided air defence, and RAAF Guards fought alongside the Australian Army on the frontlines and in defending airfields in this theatre of operations and were to fight in the defence of Milne Bay, the first land defeat inflicted on the Japanese military in the Second World War.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Clive Baker and Greg Knight, *Milne Bay 1942*, Loftus, 1991, pp. 45-49; LAC William Dutton, interview by William Dutton, digital recording, in authors possession.

²⁵² LAC William Dutton, interview by William Dutton; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 75 Squadron, 1942.

The action at No. 1 Strip (Gurney) at Milne Bay provided a good example of how to defend an airfield from air and ground attacks, and C. Baker and Knight state, 'It was planned that the RAAF Guards would handle the No. 1 Strip defence, leaving the Army free for other duties'.²⁵³ Here in August 1942, two fighter squadrons (Nos. 76 and 77) were crammed onto the single jungle strip.²⁵⁴ Around the strip, were Bofors 40 mm LAA guns from the 2/3rd Light AA Regiment, the Medium Machine Gun and Mortar Platoons and two infantry platoons, a mobile platoon of the 25th Australian Infantry Battalion in defence, the US 104th Coastal Artillery Battalion (AA) also with Bofors, and six .50 calibre machine guns from the US 101th Coastal Artillery Battery (AA).²⁵⁵ Intermixed in this defence were some 120 Guards from both the fighter squadrons, deployed on low-level AA machine gun defence with twin Vickers machine guns, within the Army positions, employed with the 25th Battalion Mortar Platoon, and embedded with the infantry.²⁵⁶

The Guards of No. 75 Squadron at Milne Bay had two 3-inch mortars, and as a consequence of arrangements made by Flight Lieutenant Cavanagh, some Guards and the mortars were transferred to the Headquarters of 25th Infantry Battalion. The Guards received training on these mortars and manned them alongside the Army during the coming battle.²⁵⁷ During September 1942, another fighter squadron, No. 75, was stationed at Gurney airfield (No. 1 Strip Fall River) at Milne Bay. On 8 September 1942, a Japanese air attack on the strip resulted in the deaths of the fourth and fifth Guards to die in action, while manning their AA machine gun post.²⁵⁸

Meanwhile, another small detachment of RAAF Guards was protecting No. 52 Radar Station at Mutee Head, some 20 km north of Bamaga on the northern end of Cape York.²⁵⁹ The Operational Records of No. 52 Radar Station note, 'We were a four man team, including two Guards, to relieve the existing two at Mutee Head who were guarding the place after the other

²⁵³ Clive Baker and Greg Knight, *Milne Bay 1942*, Australia, 1991, p. 222.

²⁵⁴ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 75 Squadron, 1942; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 76 Squadron, 1942.

²⁵⁵ M.R. Buring, 'Maj M R Buring, BMRA, Milne Bay Fortress Comd at Milne Bay 20 Sep 1943', National Archives of Australia, MP498/1, 1, (unpaginated).

²⁵⁶ Baker and Knight, *Milne Bay*, p. 99.

²⁵⁷ Anon., '2nd Australian Imperial Force and Commonwealth Military Forces unit war diaries 1939-45 War, 25 Infantry Battalion', 1942, Australian War Memorial, 52, 8/3/63, (unpaginated).

²⁵⁸ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 75 Squadron, 1942; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 76 Squadron, 1942; Guards Dowton and Rose were killed by an enemy bomb while manning their machine gun position.

²⁵⁹ Ed Simmonds and Norm Smith, *Echoes Over the Pacific*, 2007, Australia, p. 66.

installation team had put the equipment in place and departed'.²⁶⁰ Radar Stations of the RAAF were deployed across New Guinea and the Islands and were a key component of the detection and interception of Japanese air attacks. Some radar stations were allocated three to five Guards, while others between ten and 20 Guards. In one instance a Sergeant Guard commanded a radar station.

In 1943, nine Guards were allocated to No. 79 Squadron for the manning of low-level AA machine gun pits at the unit's camp site on Suicide Hill on Goodenough Island (Picture 5).²⁶¹ At the same time, No. 76 Squadron were deployed to the Markham Valley, at a key airfield called Nadzab in Papua New Guinea.²⁶² Flight Sergeant C. Cugley, stated that the Guards with No. 76 Squadron carried out foot patrols around the perimeter and night guarding of the airstrip and the aircraft parking bays.²⁶³ Leading Aircraftman E. O'Meara explained being on a foot patrol at No. 12 Squadron in 1943, 'I nearly shot an officer there once', O'Meara explained that he ordered the Orderly Officer to halt, 'I got out in the middle [of the strip] and yelled out and no response, so I let my Tommy gun do the talking, they heard me then. . .' According to O'Meara, the officer then lectured him ending with, '. . . you're only a Guard'. O'Meara explained that there was a division between Guards and others within the RAAF, 'We were the lowest pay grade, lowest mustering in the RAAF. . . had more shit put on us. We had a job to do and every one of us did it, [but] we were downtrodden'.²⁶⁴

While Guards throughout the South-West Pacific Area were defending airfields, radar stations and performing on operations, problems with equipment and resourcing continued to plague the North Western Area. In November 1943, correspondence from Wing Commander Brown of the Directorate of Training, RAAF Headquarters, outlined remarks referring to No. 14 Aircraft Repair Depot, based in the North Western Area.²⁶⁵ The correspondence referred to two separate holdings of weapons, one in the repair unit with rifles, the other defence weapons housed in the Depot.

²⁶⁰ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Record RAAF Form A.50 No. 347 Radar Unit, 1944.

²⁶¹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 79 Squadron, 1943.

²⁶² J.C. Cugley to Tex Bryson, letter, 2000, original held by Sean Carwardine, 62-64 Scribbly Gum Court, New Beith, QLD.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Ernest O'Meara, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recording, 3 April 2014, in author's possession.

²⁶⁵ Brown, 'Training of Personnel – Aerodrome Defence Forward Echelon'. 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11097, 90/1/Air PART 2, (unpaginated).



Picture 5: Three RAAF Guards of No. 79 Squadron digging a weapons pit for the mounting of the Vickers machine gun for low-level flying enemy aircraft on Goodenough Island, 26 June 1943. (AWM P02875.148)

Brown noted that in relation to the unit's rifles, 'Many rifles with smashed furniture, especially fore-ends were in for repair . . . Many of these were almost new, and it was explained that they do not last long during combat training in units further north'.²⁶⁶ Brown went on to note the observations of defence weapons:

For the major depot in this area, this unit was weakly defended, especially from the AA point of view. Weapons comprised 350 rifles and a few Vickers guns. The rifles, standing in racks, in the various sections throughout the unit, were neglected and rusty. There was no Defence Officer, as he had been transferred to Adjutant duties.²⁶⁷

In summary, Brown noted that while the officers and airmen had received further training since these observations had been made, he stated that the report shows an ' . . . undesirable defence situation existed at No. 14 Aircraft Repair Depot for some time'.²⁶⁸ This seems to have occurred as the airman that was trained to instruct personnel in defence was transferred to an administrative role rather than the tasking allocated, which was airfield

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

defence. By 1945, airmen of other units performed guard duty, and undertook defensive tasks at their operational locations, some with and some without Guards.²⁶⁹

In his concise history of airfield defence, J.J. Baker dedicated an entire chapter to what he referred to as the 'Birth of the RAAF Infantry Regiment'. J.J. Baker described a situation in 1944, where with the advance of allied forces against the Japanese, a 'Spitfire' Wing of three squadrons plus reserve aircraft and support units would be formed to support American forces in the invasion of the Philippines. J.J. Baker stated that No. 80 Wing had been formed in Darwin and consisted of No. 54 Squadron RAF with Nos. 452 and 457 Squadrons RAAF, and a full complement of approximately 3000 all ranks. J.J. Baker referred to the defence of such a unit on active service as a '. . . very serious problem. . .' and credits Lieutenant-Colonel Tolstrup with the organisation of the ground defence of the Wing. Baker asserted that through Tolstrup's planning, as agreed by Headquarters, North West Command, and Group Captain Caldwell, '. . . the RAAF Infantry Regiment was born'.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, in addition to Group Captain Caldwell, Baker referred to additional officers as playing a role in the development of the RAAF Regiment. These included General Allen, Army Commander of Darwin Area, and Air Commodore Knox-Knight, Officer Commanding North Western Area.²⁷¹ Baker stated that personnel from the Defence School were transferred in, including Warrant Officer L. Allan. Baker also portrayed himself as having been a 'Regimental Sergeant Major, 1st RAAF Infantry Regiment'.²⁷² Evidence located does not support many of Baker's assertions.

The archived files and records show that in May 1944, No. 80 Wing became operational at Sattler in the North Western Area, Darwin. It was formed for the purpose of providing a fighter wing for the protection of the North Western Area, and did comprise Nos. 452 and 457 Squadrons RAAF, led by Group Captain Caldwell. However, the operational record book has only one mention of a 'Guards Regiment' and this was during No. 80 Wing parade for the Air Officer Commanding North Western Area, Air Vice Marshal A.T. Cole, on 19 July 1944.²⁷³ Additionally, the Wing operational record book has no record of the officers mentioned by

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; David Wilson, *Always First*, Fairbairn, 1998, pp. 84-85.

²⁷⁰ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, pp. 10-11; On 4 March 1944, Major (not Lieutenant-Colonel) Tolstrup was posted to North Western Area Headquarters as Defence Officer. Then, on 18 September 1944, Flight Lieutenant L.C. Conduit, ADO, was posted in to replace Tolstrup.

²⁷¹ Air Commodore Knox-Knight would not be posted to the Headquarters of North Western Area until 6 March 1945.

²⁷² Warrant Officer L. Allen, ADI, had already been posted to the Security Guards Unit in the North Western Area prior to No. 80 Wing formation at Darwin, so he could not have been sent from the Defence School at the request of Air Commodore Knox-Knight. J.J. Baker would not be promoted to Warrant Officer until 1 August 1944 and was posted out of No. 80 Wing in March 1945.

²⁷³ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 80 Wing, 1944.

Baker, apart from Caldwell. There is no mention of the conference, no mention of defence planning, no mention of instructors being attached nor posted from the Defence School to train the Regiment. In addition, there is no mention of Tolstrup being in Darwin or of planning for the purpose of a RAAF Regiment.²⁷⁴ It could be claimed that not all of the information or activities that took place were recorded; however, what is noted within the operational record book of No. 80 Wing is the two day exercise held on 21 May 1944, a Sergeant - ADI course held for two weeks and a 12-day ground defence training course for all members of the Wing from 12 June 1944. It would not be until 26 June 1944 that all Guards were called to the Wing Headquarters for a week long Guard course, and according to A.G. Smith, a Guard of No. 80 Wing, 'After we had been there for some time Jim Baker, Jungle Jim, he took us and trained us in airfield defence'.²⁷⁵ Smith indicated that once this was done all Guards went back to their original units and he does not mention the formation of a RAAF Regiment. Smith and 34 other Guards were in the advanced party for No. 80 Wing which was sent to Morotai Island to prepare the camp and airfield for the unit.²⁷⁶

In a file that is not specific to No. 80 Wing, there is evidence that there was general planning in a two-page document for a 'Guard Assault Regiment' that was designed by ADOs Flight Lieutenant J. Jacobs and Flying Officer G.B. Durack. In this planning document, J.J. Baker is noted to be a Sergeant, ADI, and 'Chief NCO' of the Flight (NB: not Regiment) while the Discipline Warrant Officer is Flight Sergeant J. Dodd, also an ADI. The structure details a plan for only 120 Guards (just under the strength of a Squadron), which would form into fighting sections of ten Guards each, plus one Corporal. The documents also outline that three Sections were to form one Flight, commanded by an ADO, and noted, 'It is hoped that three Squadrons will comprise the Regiment'.²⁷⁷

It appears, from the records of No. 80 Wing, that this Guard unit of no more than one squadron strength never eventuated, and subsequently all the trained Guards returned to their original units within No. 80 Wing. It would not be until 9 December 1944, that 35 Guards and the advanced party of No. 80 Wing would move from Australia to Morotai and the entire the Wing would follow in January/February 1945. For a period of four days, between 7 and 10

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 80 Wing, 1945.

²⁷⁵ A.G. Smith, self-recording, digital recording, n.d., in author's possession.

²⁷⁶ Morotai Island, part of the Halmahera Islands, had airfields at Wama and Pitu. Wama was some 5000 feet long (1.5km) and Pitu had two runways around 7000 feet long (2.1km).

²⁷⁷ Anon., 'Guard Assault Regiment', National Archives of Australia, A1196, 25/501/6 PART 2, (unpaginated).

March 1945, Guards of No. 80 Wing completed patrols outside the perimeter of Morotai airfield with United States Army units.²⁷⁸ It can now be understood that No. 80 Wing did not have enough Guards to form a Regiment, and that No. 80 Wing would provide Guards for close-in protection of the Wing.²⁷⁹ The Wing would be disbanded by July 1945 while the OBOE amphibious operations on the island of Borneo were taking place.

No. 10 Group - Defence Pool/No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron

On 13 November 1943, the RAAF formed No. 10 (Operational) Group, later renamed the 1st Tactical Air Force (1st TAF) at Nadzab in Papua New Guinea.²⁸⁰ In August 1944 some Wings had moved to Noemfoor in the Netherland East Indies. Over August and September that year all RAAF members of the Group completed ground defence training. The operational record book of No. 10 (Operational) Group records the pooling of Guards on Noemfoor Island and in November the Guards had been formed into the Defence Pool as part of Cyclone Task Force (158th Infantry Regiment and 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment United States military) (Appendix L).²⁸¹

Towards the end of 1944, No. 10 (Operational) Group, following the *Air Board Memorandum*, was under the direction of the Group Senior ADO, Squadron Leader McLaughlin, who had begun to organise the 'Defence Pool'.²⁸² In addition to Guards, the Defence Pool had a Headquarters of 14 airmen of varying trades, and each Wing of the Group (Nos. 71, 77, 78, 81 Wings and No. 62 Airfield Construction Wing) was allocated a Defence

²⁷⁸ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 80 Wing, 1945.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, pp. 43-50.

²⁸¹ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 81 Wing, 1944.

²⁸² S.M. Artaud, 'First Tactical Air Force RAAF APO Group 495 Organisation memorandum No. 7 Defence Arrangements', 6A, 1944, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 224/8/ORG, (unpaginated); *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 - Station Defence* (1942); *Air Force Confidential Order 97/43*; J.C. Cugley to Tex Bryson [M. Bryson], letter, 2000, original held by Sean Carwardine, 62-64 Scribbly Gum Court, New Beith, QLD; There is a completed interrogation report and an intelligence report on a Japanese airfield raiding unit. This unit provided the reason for the foundation requirements for the Defence Pool. The Japanese raiding unit had trained men on how to raid airfields for a further five months following completion of a basic infantry course. The first month involved intensive physical training, and instruction on the use of grenades and mines, first-aid and Allied aircraft recognition. During the second month, they received individual drills on scouting and aircraft destruction, with both theory and practical exercises. The next two months involved learning practical applications of the training within sections. The last month involved a review of the raiders training and further training on how to destroy land vehicles and dumps.

Wing Detachment.²⁸³ The Wing Detachments were comprised of three Flights, each commanded by an ADO, and three sections comprising of one NCO and ten Guards.²⁸⁴

The presence of the Pool was soon justified when from 4 January 1945, over a period of 45 days, the Defence Pool conducted 41 fighting patrols with soldiers from the United States Army, 593rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment as intelligence reports indicated Japanese forces were still on the Island. On 8 January 1945 a patrol contacted two Japanese soldiers, and on the command to 'halt' they ran into the jungle, the Guard patrol opened fire, killing both. On 28 and 29 January 1945, two separate patrols each captured a Japanese soldier. One, being very ill, was taken to a field hospital.²⁸⁵ On 1 February 1945, a patrol contacted three more Japanese who, after being called to 'halt', ran into the jungle.²⁸⁶ The Guards and United States infantrymen opened fire killing one, wounding another, while the third escaped. Finally, on 2 February 1945, a patrol was moving through the jungle when Japanese voices were heard. An airman challenged the Japanese who ran, the patrol fired, killing one instantly and wounding the other who became a prisoner of war.²⁸⁷

In contrast to the discussion underway regarding the disbandment of SGU/No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron, discussions for 1st TAF included consideration of the formation of No. 2 SGU and subsequently No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron. During March 1945, Air Commodore H. Cobby, Commander of 1st TAF, had sent messages to RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command noting the formation, initially, of a Defence Pool. Cobby, along with Bostock and Scherger, wanted the Defence Pool to be renamed No. 2 SGU. In the planning, at the 1st TAF, the above-mentioned officers designed the structure of No. 2 SGU as a Defence Wing with four Squadrons (each Squadron having five Flights).²⁸⁸ On 28 March 1942, a message from RAAF Headquarters directed that all Guards of 1st TAF, with the exception of flying squadrons, should be removed from the Defence Pool and moved back to the Squadrons and Wings pending the formation of No. 2 SGU.²⁸⁹ A file note of a minute sent three days later

²⁸³ The Headquarters for Defence Pool consisted of an Administration Officer, two Clerks General and a Storeman, a Drive Motor Transport, a Motor Transport Fitter and an Armourer Fitter, two Armourers, a Medical orderly and two Cooks.

²⁸⁴ Thus, a Flight of Guards would have one ADO and 33 Guards and, therefore, a Defence Wing Detachment would have three ADO's and 99 Guards – thus a Squadron.

²⁸⁵ F. Shobbrock, 'Patrol Report Fighter Recce Patrol 28th Jan, 45', 26A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/4/AIR, (unpaginated).

²⁸⁶ F. Shobbrock, 'Patrol Report Fighter Recce Patrol 1st Feb, 45', 35A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/4/AIR, (unpaginated).

²⁸⁷ Lambert, 'Daily Patrol Report 2nd Feb, 45', 26A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/4/AIR, (unpaginated).

²⁸⁸ H. Cobby, 'First Tactical Air Force RAAF A.P.O. Group 493 RAAF Pacific Organisation memorandum No. 7/45', 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 18/1/1, (unpaginated).

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

from RAAF Headquarters to Headquarters 1st TAF, indicated that the formation of No. 2 SGU was approved and the establishment was being drafted.²⁹⁰ However, as previously outlined, two days later, Wing Commander Garran, RAAF Headquarters, issued a directive for the renaming of the 'Security Guards Unit' to 'No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron'. The directive also indicated that the proposed No. 2 SGU for 1st TAF would now be named No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron and would form on 10 April 1945.²⁹¹

The formation of a Defence Squadron by Cobby was not done on a whim. Throughout the files on No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, reports demonstrate the need to counter real and significant threats. The intelligence from captured Japanese officers of the Airfield Raiding Unit was the trigger for formation.²⁹² These enemy 12-man parties were trained and equipped with one purpose in mind, the infiltration at night of allied airfields and the destruction of targets in order of priority; parked aircraft, fuel and ammunition dumps and personnel, especially pilots.²⁹³

All the members of the 1st TAF, including the Defence Pool/Defence Squadron, came together at Morotai where planning for the upcoming OBOE operations on Borneo had been well advanced. Detachments of Guards were immediately allocated to the assault force.²⁹⁴ For the next six months, No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron Companies took part in the OBOE operations, providing security and defence on the airfields at Balikpapan, Tarakan, Labuan on the island of Borneo, and Morotai in the then Netherlands East Indies (Appendix M).²⁹⁵ No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron Headquarters was composed of four ADOs, an Administrative Officer and 10 airmen.²⁹⁶ Operation OBOE 1 witnessed Guards of 'A' Rifle Company landing

²⁹⁰ Anon., '1', National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1935 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁹¹ RAAF Headquarter naming conventions of the airfield defence squadrons caused confusion, as the RAAF term 'squadron' was used for No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron but then Army terms and structure were used within the Squadron. Therefore, the unit was called an Airfield Defence Squadron, but it was made up of Companies (Squadron), Platoons (Flight) and Sections. An infantry Company in the Australian Army would have a strength of between 100 and 225 men, whereas No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron had a strength of over 754 airmen (six Squadrons of Guards or two Wings), which in military terms was five Companies and a thus a Battalion-sized force. The RAAF could have called No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron a Battalion, or followed the RAF Regiment style of Wings, Squadrons and Flights, but this did not occur, and the rather inappropriate nomenclature was used.

²⁹² T. T. McLaughlin, 'Report by Japanese Prisoner of War Infiltration Tactics', National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/4/AIR, (unpaginated).

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ Operation OBOE was made up of a number of amphibious operations by 7th and 9th Australian Divisions, that aimed to capture key towns and installations on the island of Borneo.

²⁹⁵ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operational Records No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, 1945; The nomenclature of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, as it was called by RAAF Headquarters, used RAAF terms, but the unit structure within it followed Army naming practices. Thus, it was called an Airfield Defence Squadron, but it was made up of Companies, rather than following the RAF Regiment style of Wing, Squadrons and Flights. A RAAF Flight is equivalent in size to an Army Platoon i.e. three Flights plus a Headquarters make a Squadron. An Army Company, therefore, is equivalent to a RAAF Squadron. Three Squadrons and a Headquarters make a Wing.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

on the Tarakan beachhead two days after the first Army units had come ashore i.e. D-Day, 1 May 1945.²⁹⁷ 'A' Rifle Company and its Headquarters immediately aligned itself with the Australian Army 2/24th Battalion Headquarters, and was instructed to secure Tarakan airfield in close defence.²⁹⁸ The following day, an eight-man Japanese team moved through Army defensive lines towards the RAAF camp of 1st TAF. After contact was made by Guards of 'A' Company the enemy divided into two groups. Four enemy were killed, while one Guard was killed and three more were wounded.²⁹⁹ The three wounded were acknowledged for their actions; Sergeant W. Ross was recommended for the Military Medal and two Leading Aircraftmen, S. McDonnell and C. Freeman, were Mentioned in Despatches. On 8 May 1945, another contact resulted in another Guard being killed and one wounded.³⁰⁰

Operation OBOE 2, included Guards from 'A', 'D' and 'E' Rifle Companies, who landed north of Balikpapan on the Island of Borneo to secure the airfield.³⁰¹ On 3 July 1945, Guards of Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Sections from 17 Platoon 'D' Company, under the command of Flying Officer R.S.D. Robertson, with Sergeant W.T. Bowie (Platoon Sergeant), landed first and moved to an area to take up all-round defence of the RAAF radar installation and the command post of the 1st TAF.³⁰² The remainder of the Companies landed the following day and moved into all-round close protection of RAAF installations, working parties and aircraft. On the night of 23/24 July 1945, Guards of Nos. 10, 11 and 12 Sections of 20 Platoon 'D' Company were providing all-round defence of the Water Point and were contacted by a large Japanese force. During this encounter eight enemy were killed with no damage to the only freshwater point on the Island.³⁰³

At 1600 hours on 12 June 1945, as part of Operation OBOE 6, Guards of 'B' Rifle Company landed on Labuan Island (Appendix N).³⁰⁴ They patrolled towards the airfield and connected with soldiers of 9th Australian Division. 'B' Company moved into night defensive positions on the north western side of the airfield and from this moment onward provided

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; B.E.J. Hirst to Jim Gable, letter, 29 October 1999 original held by Sean Carwardine, 62-64 Scribbly Gum Court, New Beith, QLD.

³⁰¹ Dawson, 'Defence Secret Operation Order No. 2 "D" Company No. 2 A.D.S.', 9A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 2/1/AIR PART 2, (unpaginated).

³⁰² Dawson, 'Report of OBOE 2 Operation', 53A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/1/AIR, (unpaginated).

³⁰³ L.J. Herbert, 'Report on Attempted Japanese Infiltration at Water Point on Night of 23/24 July 1945', 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11389, 7/1/AIR, (unpaginated).

³⁰⁴ Drane, 'Operation Report – Employment of 2 A.D.S. (B. Coy.)', 36A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 18/2/2 PART 1, (unpaginated).

defence of the airfield, close defence of the 1st TAF Headquarters, close protection of RAAF bomb disposal teams as well as patrolling along the coast line nearest to the airfield.³⁰⁵ On 22 June 1945, a section of 11 Guards were conducting close protection of the transmitter station when at 2330 hours the station was subjected to Japanese machine gun and rifle fire.³⁰⁶ The Guards returned fire with the engagement lasting approximately 20 minutes.

The 'Morotai Garrison' Company of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron consisted of 255 Guards and a Headquarters element. The Company was tasked with providing close defence of the airfield and RAAF units on Morotai, as well as supplementing losses (either killed, posted or ill) within other Companies of the Squadron. For five months, Guards of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron provided close defence, fighting patrols, personal protection, escort duty and inter-service patrolling for the RAAF. These airmen had engaged the enemy on the ground in close combat fighting and most importantly their defensive role had contributed to the continued air operations on these strategically significant airfields.³⁰⁷

A total of 17 Guards were killed and eight Guards wounded from 1942 to 1945 in all operations in Papua New Guinea, British Borneo, the Netherlands East Indies and within Australia. In 1945, as RAAF Guards were fighting the Japanese on the ground, and some 20 days before No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was to disband, CAS Air Vice Marshal Jones reviewed a proposal by Wing Commander Mocatta, Director of Defence RAAF Command.³⁰⁸ Mocatta had called for the establishment of a RAAF Regiment to be formed out of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron once hostilities had ceased (Appendix J). Mocatta referred to the current structure and strength of No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron, which was already more than two Wings and could form into a Regiment. Within the file for the proposed RAAF Regiment, Group Captain Pelly stated, 'The CAS has agreed in principle with the establishment of a RAAF Regiment'.³⁰⁹ However, later CAS Jones, is recorded in the same file as stating, 'I am not prepared to agree to any more of these specialised units until the Area or Group Commanders state a definite case for them'.³¹⁰ It is interesting that McCauley, Bladin, Bostock, Pelly, Scherger, Hely, Cobby and Wrigley all supported the proposal and over many years had

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ J.C. Fullerton, 'Guards – Morotai Garrison', 46A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 18/2/2 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³⁰⁷ J.C. Fullerton, 'Morotai Garrison', 19A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 18/2/2 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³⁰⁸ Anon., 'Subject: No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron – Disbandment', 1945, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/9/1935 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³⁰⁹ Pelly, 'D.T.O.R.', 2A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2, (unpaginated).

³¹⁰ G. Jones, '1', 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2, (unpaginated).

indeed put forward a definite and supportive case. However, following the end of the war, the RAAF underwent a massive reduction of personnel and resources and moved towards the creation of a peacetime Air Force.

Section Three - The Analysis

'We had a job to do and every one of us did it, [but] we were downtrodden'.

Leading Aircraftman E. O'Meara, 1943.

They Fought and Defended

In the Second World War, Australia and the RAAF were confronted with a new form of warfare, with new technology and new warfare tactics, that would challenge strongly held views and direct policy and action as experiences grew. This chapter has examined the development and evolution of airfield defence in the RAAF from 1939 to 1945. Archival files are the main source of evidence for the policy of the time, and the voices of Guards can be heard with many primary and secondary resources being sourced and cited. The archival records also provide a stable foundation that can be supplemented with oral and secondary historical records. The dichotomy of views between two separate Air Force commands is clearly demonstrated throughout the files, leading to a somewhat erratic development of airfield defence in Australia. Records show the policy evolving as it was discussed, developed, implemented and then amended many times. In addition, the Policy in Action section demonstrates the effect of the policy on the airmen operating on the ground and engaging the enemy. This section will consider and analyse the two previous sections of this chapter. This analysis will compare previously purported histories and connect with the researched evidence. It will provide a greater understanding of the events that influenced the evolution of RAAF airfield defence during the Second World War.

The research arising from this study provides strong evidence that at the commencement of the Second World War, the RAAF was not 'caught off guard' with respect to airfield defence, that it was not without knowledge of the principles and practices for defence of airfields, and it would not take another 'two years' before the RAAF would realise the need for airfield defence, as J.J. Baker has previously recorded.³¹¹ An analysis of the history written by J.J. Baker, and reflected or repeated in Kerr's and Hombsch's later works, finds that their view that the Guards had 'no job' in the first two years of the war and subsequently were '...

³¹¹ Baker, RAAF Ground Defence, 1971.

soon absorbed into other musterings', is incorrect.³¹² While this chapter focuses on the Second World War, it can be seen from the findings, that the general policy and theory of RAAF airfield defence created in 1929 was still being reworked and implemented and would remain functional and be deployed operationally for the remainder of the War. The analysis of airfield defence policy shows significant successes, despite the chorus of often frustrated requests and demands for more trained manpower and equipment. The policy implemented was not simply Army infantry theory being reproduced by the RAAF, as purported by J.J. Baker. It encompassed what RAAF officers recommended and developed, based on the RAAF's identified needs in a static area. Policy in this era reflected in some way the First World War ideas, but that was then enhanced, refined and improved by airmen, Guards, and others qualified for this specialist role by incorporating their broadening experiences. This era also saw a shift away from technical tradesmen performing airfield defence as a secondary duty, however the idea of all airmen protecting, firstly, themselves and then their working area would continue as an integrated part of RAAF airfield defence duty.

The development of a separate Guard mustering was one success of airfield defence policy during the Second World War period. The mustering policy took time to understand and to be implemented on the ground, however, from its commencement it was not infantry-aligned. Within J.J. Baker's history he highlighted that, 'Several far-sighted members of the RAAF and Air Board. . . with Japan as the probable moving force. . . in 1940 introduced into the RAAF the mustering of Air Force Guards; men who would be trained as Infantrymen'.³¹³ This study has demonstrated that this statement of J.J. Baker is far from accurate.

The evidence in this chapter shows that in late 1939, one Commanding Officer of a Station requested airmen be enlisted specifically to man the AA machine gun defences of his airfields, as detailed in the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5*. Within a few days, a second Commanding Officer requested permission to enlist airmen at RAAF Station Darwin for his low-level AA machine gun defence. Within weeks, messages from all station commanders requesting permission to enlist and train specialist machine gunners for this purpose, were received by RAAF Headquarters. Furthermore, it was not senior officers of RAAF Headquarters or the Air Board that understood the situation in the South-East Asia theatre, it

³¹² Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, 1971; Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished; It is noted by Bowie and within the RAAF posting files there were no Guard remustering in the first year and half. It was a small force at the start and the RAAF could not afford Guards changing roles.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

was men such as McCauley, J. Wright and Sir Robert Brooke-Popham on the ground, utilising the policy they had at hand, and by seeing the benefits of a dedicated RAF and RAAF defence capability, seeking approval to implement it.

The Guard mustering was created to man the AA machine gun posts around an airfield, to work as a three-man team, engaging the enemy aircraft as they attacked the airfield. These men fired at the aircraft, which drew the enemy into attacking their posts. In doing so this protected valuable targets such as aircraft, hangars, radar facilities and personnel. A Guard, in a static position, standing in a hole with two layers of sandbags for protection, unable to take cover, firing twin machine guns at every aircraft that attacks the airfield requires a high degree of courage. This is the pinnacle of the RAAF airfield defence policy in action.

The records show that there was significant interference in the development of policy at some crucial times by the Secretary of the Air Board, Langslow. Reasons for this can be attributed to both financial and equipment restrictions on the RAAF and a belief, by a few high-ranking officers, that securing airfields should be the role of the Army while the RAAF focused on local defence and keeping aircraft flying. The records reveal the view that the Australian Army did not and could not take on the task of securing and defending airfields, as their core focus was the need to field the infantry, artillery and other services required to close with the enemy on the battlefields of the Middle East, Greece, South-East Asia, the Netherlands East Indies and Papua New Guinea. This view by the Secretary of the Air Board was supported by Jones, who as CAS, reduced policy to remove the implementation of the Station Defence Squadrons.

While this study corrects many of the historical details on the Guard mustering presented by J.J. Baker, it can be demonstrated that he was accurate in his writings regarding the recommendations in December 1942, that Guards be transformed into RAAF infantrymen. The Guard mustering expanded to include a ground fighting force for local defence. This new capability would follow the pattern of the RAF Regiment in the United Kingdom and Australian Army training manuals, thus laying a foundation for the RAAF's own future airfield defence squadrons. What is interesting is that this did not reflect the then current *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* and was at odds with the policy on security guards in late 1943. By the end of 1943 and into 1944, Guards deployed on major land based and amphibious operations, took part in beach assaults, carried out foot patrols outside the airfield perimeter, protected,

and in one instance commanded, radar stations, all alongside the land and naval forces of Australia and the United States.

One major achievement was the policy of McCauley to have machine guns grouped together for greater support and protection of each other and the aircraft. An issue that emerged from the history written by J.J. Baker was the belief that the RAAF had ‘no idea’ how to perform airfield defence and were not capable of doing so.³¹⁴ The common throwaway line used for all periods of RAAF airfield defence history, directly quoted from Baker, is that in 1942, ‘the RAAF was in panic stations’ and ‘the bombing of Darwin was the cause of the RAAF then developing airfield defence’.³¹⁵ What this research shows is that RAAF Station Darwin had poor defence for many years, as in 1940/41, Wing Commander Eaton was struggling to obtain any equipment from the RAAF supply system to place his Station on a war-footing. This changed upon Wing Commander Griffith’s arrival on 6 January 1942 when he began sourcing weapons from the United States, further Guards were unexpectedly allocated, and he was able to produce an effective machine gun defence of RAAF Base Darwin.

J.J. Baker’s view is that the bombing of Darwin forced the RAAF into developing airfield defence, and this accordingly was ‘two years too late’.³¹⁶ Other authors have also incorrectly recorded that the defence of the airfield at the time of the bombing of Darwin was the responsibility of the Army, that the RAAF were not in a position to provide that capability.³¹⁷ Hall asserted that the RAAF were a ‘flock of sheep’ with no direction or leadership. He also stated that airmen had told Scherger that ‘they are not staying around to face the Japanese onslaught’.³¹⁸ The current findings correct some misunderstandings with regards to the bombing of Darwin in 1942. This chapter reveals the RAAF had airfield defence policies, trained airmen and officers located at RAAF establishments all over Australia and had implemented Station Defence Schemes.

The research shows that Griffiths and Eaton in Darwin understood airfield defence policies and had implemented them, consistently seeking resourcing and manpower for air operations. In 1939 Eaton sent one of the earliest requests for men to be enlisted into the RAAF

³¹⁴ Baker, RAAF Ground Defence, 1971, pp. 2-5.

³¹⁵ Baker, RAAF Ground Defence, 1971, p. 4.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Dr Tom Lewis & Peter Ingman, *Carrier Attack Darwin 1942*, 2013, Kent Town, pp. 133-134.

³¹⁸ Timothy Hall, *Darwin 1942 Australia's Darkest Hour*, 1981, Sydney, pp. 115-116.

specifically to be trained to man the low-level AA machine guns. Griffiths, in an interview for the Lowe investigation, outlined that he had a Station Defence Scheme at his previous station command and had implemented one at Darwin days before the bombing.³¹⁹ Griffiths had over a squadron's strength of Guards manning both .303 and .50 calibre machine guns all around the airfield.³²⁰ This chapter demonstrates this was an achievement of RAAF policy with RAAF Guards manning their machine gun posts before the Japanese attack on 19 February 1942, and for the following three years. The Guards at RAAF Station Darwin stayed on the airfield, even after Squadron Leader Swan, Senior Administrator Officer of RAAF Station Darwin Headquarters, had told the Guards they did not have to remain.³²¹ These men did the job they were recruited to do, and RAAF Guards died serving their country at RAAF Station Darwin. In response to a recommendation for recognition of their bravery by Scherger, RAAF Headquarters are reported to have responded, '... you don't give gongs to a shemozzle'.³²²

This is the first study reporting that the RAAF did form a number of specialist airfield defence units during the Second World War. These specifically being, the Guards posted to RAAF Station Darwin, the SGU/No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron in the North Western Area, the Guard Pool in the North Eastern Area, a Guard Pool on No. 81 Wing at Darwin and later Morotai, No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron at Morotai and the 'Morotai Garrison' Company. These units were in a broad sense a 'RAAF Regiment' in all but name, which Mocatta had designed and which many officers had proposed a need for. However, they were not supported in this endeavour by the then CAS, Jones. These units provided dedicated airfield defence for the RAAF, covering every area in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Queensland and over the Islands to the north of Australia, the Netherlands East Indies and in the OBOE Operations in Borneo.

The achievements, as detailed in the existing evidence, highlight the fact that Commanders acted against RAAF Headquarters directions and the rewritten *Air Board Memorandum No. 5* (1942), which directed no 'pooling' of Guards. Some directions and orders appear to have fallen on deaf ears, where Commanders felt they did not benefit their Stations.

³¹⁹ A.D. Swan, 'Squadron leader A.D. Swan, sworn and examined', 8 March 1942, National Archives of Australia, A816, 37/301/293, p. 442.

³²⁰ Two weeks before the 19 February 1942, Griffin received 150 plus Guards for manning his Station Defence Scheme. These Guards manned the AA and ground defence machine gun posts, secured the front gate, did internal night patrols, manned the fuel farm and ensured bomb dump security. Darwin and the RAAF were not without knowledge.

³²¹ A.D. Swan, 'Squadron leader A.D. Swan, sworn and examined', 8 March 1942, National Archives of Australia, A816, 37/301/293, p. 442.

³²² Lockwood, *Australia Under Attack*, p. 166; Graham O'Brien, *Always There*, p. 36.

Bladin, Air Officer Commanding North Western Area, Lukis and then Cobby, Air Officers Commanding North Eastern Area, created their own version of a defence squadron by pooling their Guards. Bladin and Flight Lieutenant L.W. Smith, Staff Officer Ground Defence, ignored Jones' earlier directions and within the planning for the defence of Darwin and Northern Australia and they would pool all Guards into their own Defence Squadron.³²³ These achievements also serve to demonstrate the divided and often contradictory command that operated in the RAAF during the Second World War, however it also highlights that often Commanders on the ground were implementing effective airfield defence policy.

The period from 1929 leading into the beginning of the Second World War, was one of severe economic restraint for the Air Force. It can be argued that as Jones and Langslow, Secretary of the Air Board, were endorsing the Empire Air Training Scheme, (that would be fully funded and a key government goal at the time) they were also attempting to reduce expenditure in all tasks not directly related to air operations, all aircrew recruitment and training. The findings from the archives demonstrate that from the creation of the Guard mustering in 1939, Langslow was willing to approve only a minimal number of Guards based on machine gun posts and that he would push continually over the next three years for the Army to take up all aspects of security and defence of airfields and stations.

The records show that Jones voiced his disapproval of the RAAF taking on a broader airfield defence capability on numerous occasions. An example of this occurred following the implementation of Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett's CAS approved policy for Station Defence Squadrons. That policy set out tasking, structure and establishment for new Station Defence Squadrons at every RAAF unit. Guards would have been posted to the Defence Squadron and maintained security and defence, taking McCauley's original aerodrome defence flight plans even further. In 1942, and within one month of Jones taking over as CAS, the airfield defence ideas developed and decisions made to meet the needs of air power by Scherger, Bostock, Hely, Bladin and McCauley had been reversed and removed, and from this time onwards there would be continual disagreement and discord over RAAF airfield defence capability.

³²³ Flight Lieutenant Smith was replaced as Staff Officer Defence by an Army Officer Lieutenant Colonel W. E. Cannon.

There are no further references to any defence squadrons in any file until Bladin ignores the *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 (1942)* order against pooling of Guards and creates his own defence squadron in the North Western Area under his own Air Officer Commanding memorandum. By the time RAAF Headquarters had released the establishment tables and orders for the formation of the SGU, Bladin already had Guards mustering under the defence squadron organisation.

In addition to concerns as to funding and resourcing, it becomes clear that Jones, as CAS, held to the view the RAAF should not participate in broader airfield defence tasking as this was ‘. . . infantry-type work’, and responsibility should sit squarely with the Army.³²⁴ This chapter demonstrates that Jones did not support the idea of having infantry-trained airmen rather, he preferred to have civilian equivalent security guards manning station front gates. He is reported to have stated that the RAAF had a similar issue for the defence of airfields as the RAF, but on a smaller scale, yet he did not support a smaller version of the RAF Regiment as outlined by Mocatta. Jones is consistently recorded as holding a view that all airmen working on aircraft maintenance, or other non-technical airmen, could perform airfield defence as a secondary duty and only when required in emergencies.

The developing argument between RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command highlighted the divide between two Air Forces and two commanders. The divide between Jones and Bostock that plays out through the records, also led to other operational and structural issues throughout the greater RAAF. However, for airfield defence it reflected poorly on the RAAF within joint commands working with either the Australian Army or the military forces of other nations. The records of the actions on the ground demonstrate an airfield defence capability inconsistent with policy. The view of some senior commanders that airfield defence was not a role for the RAAF was felt amongst the ranks of Guards on the ground as they report their duty was often dismissed and they were treated with derision.

Five years of war provided a proving ground for RAAF airfield defence, from inception, development, application, adjustment and dissolution. It was suggested by Mocatta that the RAAF implement a unified and specialist RAAF Regiment along the lines of the RAF Regiment. There was sufficient justification and evidence for the necessity of such a force, as

³²⁴ M.C. Langslow, ‘Defence of Air Bases Against Land Attack’, 4A, 1940, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/176, (unpaginated).

can be seen in Commander's actions through the pooling of Guards and the formation of airfield defence squadrons. The plan for the RAAF Regiment was not supported at the end of hostilities, as the RAAF was reduced in size to emerge as a peacetime Air Force. The development of airfield defence policy during this era, was somewhat strangled by the infighting of the commands, as a consequence of the two different ideologies of airfield defence and the peacetime policy being implemented in a wartime environment. What can be said, however, is that Jones and Langslow's persistence in advocating for the Army to provide RAAF security did not come to fruition. Despite Jones, what Burnett, Scherger, Hamilton-Smith, Bostock, Hely, Bladin, McCauley, McNamara, Bell and the hundreds of RAAF units, Stations and Squadron Commanders wanted and needed, they got – Guards that provided the first and last line of defence for air power on the ground, who went on to serve their country proudly and with recognised professionalism and courage.

Chapter Five - RAAF Airfield Defence in the Post-War Air Force 1946 – 1960

'The presence of airfields and installations of Air Force personnel untrained in defence presents the equivalent of... a land battle area of a large civilian population . . .'

Chief of Air Staff, G. Jones, 1950.

Section 1 – Policy

Airfield Defence and Guarding in war and peace

The research conducted in relation to these years of policy development raises detailed discussion pertaining to the direction of airfield defence in Australia. In order to appropriately and clearly demonstrate the policy development in these years, this chapter is set out in comprehensive and detailed chronological order. The evidence demonstrates that there were many contradictions for the RAAF when assessing risk to peacetime airfields in Australia and overseas. Questions arise as to what role, if any, is required of RAAF airfield defence in post-war peace and what level of resourcing or training should be undertaken for readiness for future wars. This time period also shows the RAAF looking to other allied nations for guidance and comparison when developing Australian policy, that continues largely, to be inconsistent. This decade does see some attempts to establish a specialist trained airfield defence mustering, although as a Reserve unit, with the implementation of the National Service Training Scheme and trained Ground Gunners. However, like the attempts to establish two Aerodrome Defence Squadrons in previous years, these plans were short-lived. Towards the end of the decade the most significant change to the policy and the field of airfield defence begins to occur due to Australia's expanding role as a regional ally and international signatory to a number of treaties in the lead up to communist hostilities in South East Asia.

Airfield defence capability in Australia was substantially reduced following the end of the Second World War and would evolve from a permanent force to a reserve force in the lead up to the Vietnam War. Demobilisation of the RAAF immediately at the conclusion of the War

was intended to remodel the war-time Air Force to one more suited for times of peace; this was termed an Interim Air Force. The Interim Air Force was tasked to maintain a nucleus of Air Force personnel and aircraft, to provide air co-operations, participate in the occupation of Japan and undertake air transport for returning Australian forces.¹ Thousands of airmen undergoing all forms of training in the RAAF were no longer required and in order to demobilise, officers, airmen and equipment alike were categorised as either surplus or essential.² However, the evidence within the demobilisation files show that the initial planning for the Interim Air Force did not include any permanent form of airfield defence, security or protection of stations or assets.

By 1946 the RAAF maintained only two 1943 policies for airfield defence, one related to the defence and security of RAAF units and the other on the employment of Guards.³ These policies saw the Guard mustering stay on in the Interim Air Force only for the purpose of gate guard duty, while airfield defence was not considered any part of their trade. Additionally, through the demobilisation process ADIs were remustered to DIs, as the ADI mustering was slowly removed from the RAAF. ADOs were either demobilised or forced to change branch to Administration, Barrack or Recruiting officer positions. Three years later, at the start of 1946, RAAF Headquarters sought information from the RAF on the scope of its post-war airfield defence policies and procedures. There are no explanations or reasons given in the records for these requests however if the intention was for an evaluation of airfield defence, RAAF Headquarters did not investigate or review its own past airfield defence policies or files and made no investigation into Mocatta's proposal for a RAAF Regiment.⁴

While awaiting a response from the RAF, RAAF Headquarters turned their attention to the stocktake and management of equipment and small arms for airfield defence. In early 1946 RAAF Headquarters requested a comprehensive listing of all aerodrome defence weapons still held within RAAF units.⁵ On 13 March 1946, a conference was convened by Wing Commander Godsell and chaired by Group Captain Watson to investigate what personal weapons would be

¹ Alan Stephens, 'RAAF Policy, Plans and Doctrine 1946-1971, *Air Power Studies Centre*, 29, 1995, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*; Norman Ashworth, *How Not To Run An Air Force*, Canberra, 2000, pp. 263-271; George Jones quoted 'old wood' about the officers that had joined at the start of the RAAF, officers that served in operational theatres of war; interestingly, Jones was one of these officers, but he would not resign.

³ Black, 'Organisation for defence of Aerodromes and Fixed Installations', 11A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Order A.103/43 Defence and Security of All RAAF Units, dated 10 December 1943, and the Air Board Order A.227 Employment of Guards, from 1942/43.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Anon., 'AL887 SEPT 14', 1946, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated). This is even after the RAAF withdrawal of small arms and machine gun from units back to the storage depots.

required for RAAF airfield defence in war.⁶ The conference had two tasks, the first was to plan the disposal of RAAF small arms that were no longer required, and the second was the future training of all airmen in the use of weapons.⁷ Despite the battles during the Second World War in which Guards had fought in defence of airfields, a statement by an unnamed officer from the conference was, 'Experience has shown in recent air operations in the Pacific that only on very rare occasions does a member of the RAAF have to use his weapon in self-defence'.⁸ This statement, not only demonstrates a lack of knowledge in relation to the duties of RAAF servicemen in airfield defence operations in the Pacific during the Second World War, but also suggests minimal investigation of past experiences in order to inform future policy.

Within months of the conference, it was revealed that the guarding of RAAF installations had become a concern due to the lack of Guards and Service Police and Commanding Officers not releasing personnel from other key musterings for gate guarding.⁹ Based on the 1943 policy, the Directorate of Operations held the view that the Guard mustering should either form part of the Service Police or that the Service Police take over all guarding of RAAF installations.¹⁰ Therefore, the Directorate of Operations and RAAF Headquarters, with support from the Provost Marshal Wing Commander Clarke, agreed on a number of points; firstly, the RAAF should not remove all forms of Guards from security duty on RAAF bases; secondly, that the mustering of Guard should be redesigned with a better career path, pay and greater tasking other than guarding; thirdly, the possibility of RAAF Service Police taking on guarding should be considered; and lastly, that there would be no employment of civilian guards for the RAAF. Wing Commander Clarke reinforced the view that a nucleus of Guards should be sustained at a strength of 435 and recommended that the RAAF Service

⁶ Godsell, 'Conference on Personnel Aerodrome Defence Weapon Requirements – Air Force Headquarters – Wednesday – 13th March, 1946', 5A, 1946, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

⁷ *Ibid.*; Anon., 'Watson Maxwell Ormsby: Service Number – O317: Date of Birth – 26/09/1906: Place of Birth – Melbourne, VIC : Conflict – WW2, 1928, National Archives of Australia, A12372, R/317/H, (unpaginated); Group Captain M.O. Watson, O.B.E., MID, joined the RAAF in 1929 as a Pilot Officer. He qualified as a pilot in 1930 and then qualified on a short Armament Course (1930) and Anti-Gas Course (1931). Watson held posts in RAAF Headquarters, as CO in Flying Schools, Senior Air Staff Officer and Senior Administrative Officer at Command Headquarters. He was Mentioned in Despatches for co-ordination of Operational Bases in the NWA and was appointed an OBE in 1953, for devoted duty and outstanding service. At no stage did Watson have any experience in or with airfield defence of any country. Nor did he complete any formal or other courses in airfield defence; The following Senior Staff Officers attended the conference: Group Captain G. Steege, Wing Commander J.P. Godsell (Armament Qualified), Wing Commander G.T. Miles, Squadron Leader K. Lord, Squadron Leader Morwood and Squadron Leader Reynolds.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Black, 'Organisation for defence of Aerodromes and Fixed Installations', 11A, 1946, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; The 1943 Air Force Confidential Order A.97 Security Guards policy which stated the Guard mustering would do guard duty.

Police mustering could take over the guarding duties.¹¹ However this plan could not be achieved at the time with the RAAF Service Police mustering strength of only 150 airmen.¹²

None of Clark's recommendations or the agreement made between him, the Directorate of Operations and RAAF Headquarters were implemented. By the start of 1947, all airfield defence policies were under review for cancellation. The archival records then show that the Secretary of the Air Board, Langslow, having received no reply to his communications to RAAF Headquarters about the 'consolidation' of *Air Force Confidential Orders* for airfield defence went ahead and cancelled the 1943 policy in relation to defence and security of all RAAF units explaining, 'I have decided to omit the order'.¹³

With no reply forthcoming from the RAF in relation to RAF policy, RAAF Headquarters demanded RAAF Liaison in London investigate current RAF airfield defence. The focus questions to be relayed to the RAF were in relation to which service held responsibility for airfield defence and what small arms were required to carry out that tasking. In a message to RAAF Headquarters, the RAF indicated the RAF Regiment would still be using the Bren gun as a section machine gun, however, the RAF Regiment would be undertaking a change in small arms.¹⁴ The RAF also referred to the RAF Regiment having 40 mm Bofors guns on the establishment of their LAA Squadrons.¹⁵ Throughout the files, Jones continued to express his firm view that all RAAF airmen should complete airfield defence as a secondary duty and that he did not support a permanent airfield defence force in the RAAF.¹⁶ By August 1947, RAAF Headquarters had received a copy of the RAF policy on airfield defence. Yet this document was only an outline of the RAF Regiment, rather than a detailed guide on how to best utilise all airmen to protect airfields, how best to resource them, and what the RAAF should do with its small arms.¹⁷

¹¹ Anon., 'Subject', 69A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/57, (unpaginated).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Langslow, 'A.F.C.O. A.103/43. Defence and Security of All RAAF Units', 36A, 1947, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 2, (unpaginated); Air Force Confidential Order A.103/43 - Defence and Security of all RAAF Units.

¹⁴ Anon., 'Future Organisation of the Royal Air Force Regiment', 1B, 1947, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/57, (unpaginated).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal George Jones, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C., would serve the RAAF as Chief from 1942 until 1952.

¹⁷ Anon., 'Secret', 8B, 1947, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/57, (unpaginated); From the files examined it is apparent that Jones wanted the RAF to provide direction on how all airmen should protect airfields and what small arms should be used for airfield defence. Written on the letters from the RAF, within the files, Jones has handwritten questions asking about small arms and airmen training in airfield defence.

Within three months of receiving the RAF policy, CAS Jones called a conference to discuss the initial action of the RAAF in the event of another global war.¹⁸ Here, Jones insisted that in a global war the RAAF would call up all reserve forces, would recreate mobilisation centres and recruitment centres, while ex-RAAF service personnel would be contacted and offered enlistment.¹⁹ In a situation much like the Second World War, Jones foresaw the CAF would require significant expansion. In a statement at odds with his previously held views regarding SGU/defence squadrons, he indicated that the RAAF would need to create large SGUs consisting of airfield defence and low-level AA machine gun defence manned by the Guard mustering and ADOs.²⁰ It is of interest that, despite Jones' earlier views and communications, there was no mention within the minutes of the conference of all RAAF airmen being required to undertake airfield defence tasks as a secondary duty. Following this conference there are very few records within the files for RAAF airfield defence policy for the years 1947 and 1948. However, it is clear that by the end of 1948 all airfield defence policies had been cancelled and, although Guards were still serving, the RAAF had no current policy for airfield defence at that time.

At the start of 1949, Jones and the Air Board released a policy which re-established the ADO Branch; some four years after all ADOs had been removed from the RAAF.²¹ With no policy in relation to ADOs or airfield defence within the RAAF at the time, according to Jones this branch was not to command airfield defence squadrons but focus solely on training the remainder of the Air Force in ground defence and weapons handling.²² This appears to be a reinstatement of Jones' previous idea that all RAAF airmen will be trained to defend airfields rather than reliance on a specialist unit. All ex-ADOs who were still serving in the RAAF in other capacities were then called to return under the new proposed title of 'Ground Combat Training Officers' (later titled Ground Defence Officers).²³ However, the 1937 policy in relation to annual musketry practice (which included weapons training for all airmen) had been cancelled by Langslow in 1949.²⁴ With no reference to any new manual or replacement policy,

¹⁸ Anon., 'Minutes of a Conference Held at RAAF Headquarters on Monday, 19th July 1948, to Discuss Fundamentals of Initial Action Necessary to Place the RAAF on a War-Time Basis', 12A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Anon., 'Ground Combat Training', 32A 1949, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2088 PART 1, (unpaginated); Air Board Memorandum 231/15/894.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Air Force Order 24/A/13A Annual Musketry Practices.

there was limited capacity for all RAAF airmen to undertake airfield defence and annual weapons training, as newly proposed by Jones.²⁵

In addition to reinstating ADOs to train airmen, RAAF Headquarters again looked to the Army for training assistance. By December 1950, RAAF Headquarters and M.C. Langslow had been in discussion with the Director of Military Training and the Director of Infantry - Australian Army, proposing either the secondment of Army infantry officers and NCOs to the RAAF as instructors solely for the National Service Training Scheme, or alternatively that the Army train RAAF officers in infantry tactics.²⁶ The Australian Army refused to transfer men to the RAAF, but did agree that Army officers would train RAAF officers and NCOs.²⁷ This offer was then rejected by RAAF Headquarters, who instead created three RAAF ADO positions for infantry training in the RAAF, with a fourth based in RAAF Headquarters within the Directorate of Operations.²⁸ RAAF Headquarters then organised for a RAF Regiment officer, Wing Commander A. Douglas M.C., to be seconded for two years to fill the Directorate of Operations Ground Defence position.²⁹ However, of the three ex-ADOs that applied for the positions only one was considered suitable for the new Branch, Flying Officer A.T. Jordan.³⁰ In a clear correction of current known history, the evidence is clear that no Army officers were seconded into the RAAF for the purpose of training Air Force personnel in infantry tactics.³¹

²⁵ Anon., 'Revision of Air Force Orders – Section 24', 1949, National Archives of Australia, A705, 150/3/310, (unpaginated).

²⁶ Langslow, 'Combat Training – National Service Training Scheme – Instructors', 1950, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/37, (unpaginated).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ L.C. Conduit, 'Copy to 208/90/10 Restricted', 27A, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/10, (unpaginated); Wing Commander A. Douglas, RAF Regiment, started his career in December 1938 as a Pilot Officer, but in March 1939, after a short period of flying training, was transferred to No. 2 Armoured Car Company RAF. This officer understood the advantages of using Air Force ground forces for airfield defence and aggressive combat action to facilitate the application of air power. At around noon on 23 November 1941, during Operation Crusader, in Libya, armoured cars of No. 2 Armoured Car Company RAF, protecting a forward landing ground, came under attack from German Messerschmitt Bf 110 fighters. A wireless tender was destroyed while another wireless tender and two armoured cars were damaged. Flight Lieutenant Douglas came under fire when he left his armoured car running to the other wireless tender to send a message for help. This tender then came under fire. Douglas then ran to the armoured cars and directed fire at the aircraft. One Bf 110 was shot down and the remainder flew off. The next day No. 2 Armoured Car Company was again attacked while on observation post duty by 11 Bf 110s and a Junkers Ju 88. As a consequence of these engagements, Douglas was awarded the Military Cross; Nigel Warwick, *In Every Place*, 2014, Great Britain, p. 248.

³⁰ Anon., 'Subject: Reference is made to enclosure 32.A', 33A 1949, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2088 PART 1, (unpaginated).

³¹ Langslow, 'Combat Training – National Service Training Scheme – Instructors', 1950, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/37, (unpaginated).

National Service Training Scheme

In the years from 1947 and leading up to Australia's commitment in the Korean War, the RAAF had no policy on the protection of its airfields. It had reduced the Guard mustering, removed ADIs completely from service and removed then re-established the ADO Branch. In 1950, the Australian Government required that all three services enlist reserve personnel for just under a year and then place them into the reserve forces for call up in the event of war. Consequently, on 16 August 1950, RAAF Headquarters released a new policy in relation to RAAF responsibility for local defence of airfields and installations.³² The memorandum stated, 'Without secure airfields an Air Force cannot operate effectively; likewise, without secure supporting installations an Air Force cannot maintain maximum efficiency'.³³ Additionally, the first paragraph of the memorandum noted that the primary, pre-existing requirement for air control was the secure conditions of the airfield.³⁴ The policy further acknowledged, 'Depending of [sic] circumstances, this commitment may be a minor one or may not exist; provisional plans have been made, however, for the raising and equipping of Low-Level Anti-Aircraft units for use in war'.³⁵ The policy further highlighted that all RAAF personnel would be trained to defend their installation and workplace in addition to their primary duties and that additionally, in war, a specially trained RAAF ground force would be required to augment and organise defence of RAAF establishments.³⁶ The RAAF now appeared to acknowledge that without secure airfields it could not operate effectively or gain control of the air.

Within the new policy on airfield defence responsibilities, there was an interservice agreement setting out Army and Air Force responsibilities for passive defence. The interservice agreement was that the RAAF would provide systems for a number of passive defence measures including dispersal, camouflage and concealment, defence against biological attacks, bomb shelters and trenches, structural protection of buildings, bomb disposal, emergency movement, and denial and demolition of RAAF installations. Under the heading, *Execution*, the policy set out the need for trained ground troops in the RAAF for airfield defence and stated that at the earliest stage of a global war, three Defence Squadrons containing both a LAA

³² Air Board, 1950, Air Staff Policy Memorandum Serial No. 15 RAAF Responsibility for Local Ground Defence of Air Force Airfields and Installations, USB Storage Device, Canberra; Air Staff Policy Memorandum No. 15 - RAAF Responsibility for Local Defence of Air Force Airfields and Installations.

³³ Langslow, 'Combat Training – National Service Training Scheme – Instructors', 1950, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/37, (unpaginated).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

capability and ground defence troops would be required to meet RAAF commitments.³⁷ This again reflected Jones' views regarding the recruitment of airfield defence personnel at the commencement of a war and his position that PAF RAAF personnel should not hold combat roles. Therefore, it is surprising that the policy then highlighted some limitation and set out a counterview:

Because of peace-time financial limitations and the relative priority of this aspect to other activities, a permanent force nucleus for ground defence only is to be formed for the purpose of instructing reservists from whom units will be drawn in war . . . in peace no permanent force personnel are to be committed to Anti-Aircraft defence training. Unfortunately, it is an erroneous idea in many minds that the RAAF on the ground is a non-combat service, virtually tradesmen in uniforms.³⁸

Despite the release of the above policy in 1949 questions of which service was responsible for areas of airfield defence were again being raised and showed no signs of resolution. In June 1950, CAS Jones, through a RAAF memorandum, had again outlined that the Army was responsible for the general ground defence of territory from which the RAAF would operate.³⁹ With the RAAF remaining responsible for the local defence of the aerodrome, the Army was still responsible for the heavy, medium, and LAA defence of RAAF aerodromes in Australian States and Territories. Overseas, the Army was also to provide these defences, however, if the RAAF was outside the Army area of responsibility, or no Army units were deployed, then the RAAF was to man LAA defences. This would mean however, that in these circumstances the RAAF would not have the equipment, manning or training at the time to fill the positions and would certainly have no access to heavy or medium AA defence weapons.⁴⁰

It was not until 30 October 1950, that the National Service Training Scheme was allocated 30 personnel as defence trainees (Guard mustering) for the first intakes at RAAF Stations at Laverton, Richmond, Williamstown, Schofields, and Amberley respectively. An additional 30 personnel were allocated as Ground Gunners to RAAF Station Pearce and to the

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ F.R.W. Scherger, 'Ground Defence Policy', 16A, 1958, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); Chief of Staff Memorandum No. 4/1950.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

National Service Training Defence Squadrons (reserve Air Force).⁴¹ This training would produce 240 Guards and 60 Ground Gunners in the first year.⁴² Additionally, a revised planning number from the current three to 14 Ground Defence Officers (GDO) was submitted to Air Force Headquarters, and of these, three would be at the forthcoming, National Service Training Defence Squadrons (reserve Air Force).

In early December 1950, in the same week, both the Air Board and RAAF Headquarters released Agendum orders in relation to the formation of Aerodrome Defence Squadrons (reserve Air Force). On 7 December 1950, the Air Board approved the formation of No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron and only a few days later RAAF Headquarters released orders for the formation of No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron (reserve Air Force). The latter was to form as a short-term peacetime defence squadron for the purpose of instructing reserve airfield defence troops under the National Service Training Scheme. On 21 December 1950, No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron was finally approved, however, the building of facilities for No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron (reserve Air Force) would stall its formation. Two months later, the Air Board and RAAF Headquarters reissued the previous December Agendum, this time directing that procurement of infantry equipment (such as mortars, machine guns, small arms and webbing) would have to be sourced through the Army, not from RAAF Stores. This demonstrates that when the RAAF had removed infantry equipment of the above descriptions in 1947, only three years later, the RAAF was unable to appropriately resource its own renewed airfield defence capability.

While these Aerodrome Defence Squadrons were in their infancy and planning underway, the records reveal that in early 1951 a disagreement arose as to the titles of the squadrons. Some officers were of the view that the names should be changed to better reflect the role and tasking. On 8 February 1951, Flight Lieutenant L.C. Conduit, GDO, and Wing Commander A. Douglas M.C., Staff Officer Defence in the Directorate of Operations, had requested that the titles of the new Aerodrome Defence Squadrons and Aerodrome Defence should be changed to 'Ground Combat Squadron' and 'Ground Combat' respectively.⁴³

⁴¹ Anon., 'National Service Training – Allocation of N.S. Trainees 1st and 2nd Intake 1950', 10A, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/13 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Conduit, 'Aerodrome Defence – Titles of Instructors and Units Concerned and Their Effects on Morale', 1A, 1951, National Archives of Australia, A705, 56/1/462, (unpaginated); Squadron Leader L.C. Conduit M.B.E., started his military career in 1914 in the Cadets until 1916 He served in the Australian Imperial Force in the 2/11 Field Regiment in the Middle East for two years and then enlisted in the RAAF as a trainee officer on 27 March 1943 and retired into the Active Reserves in August 1956. Conduit completed the No. 11 ADO, Australian Army Camouflage course, Fire Officer course 1944 and a Commando course (Army – Canungra) 1945. The Commando course was at

Conduit believed this change would instil a fighting belief in the airmen a, 'strength to win', '... should conjure up feeling of confidence and pride', provide for '... a tactical role not a defensive role', improve '*esprit de corps*', and 'provide good morale'.⁴⁴ This recommendation was supported by Bladin and Scherger, who, on 2 March 1951, created a draft *Air Board Memorandum* and recommended the change.⁴⁵ In response CAS Jones stated, 'The proposed title Ground Combat Squadron does not describe adequately the function of this unit. Its title is to remain as at present'.⁴⁶ Consequently, in May 1951 the Air Board released an order stating that the title of these squadrons was to be 'Aerodrome Defence Squadron' and there will be no use of the word 'combat' within the titles of RAAF airfield defence.⁴⁷ This debate, and subsequent decision also confirms Jones' firmly held view that RAAF airfield defence personnel would not be 'combat' aligned, but rather perform security and local defence of the airfields.

Jones also expressed his concern regarding the impact of the National Service Training Scheme on current personnel and operations. In May 1951 following the implementation of the National Service Training Scheme, a conference was held by the Department of Labour and National Service in Canberra that included Group Captains W.L. Hely and R.B. Davis. The report of the meeting recommended that the National Service Training Scheme was to be used to recruit further airmen for the purpose of providing airfield defence. This report was then submitted to CAS Jones, who wrote a short note within the file demonstrating his concern that the reserve scheme would negatively impact on existing permanent staff duties:

My understanding of the position is that National Service Trainees will be required to work on every alternate Saturday or Sunday . . . their duties should be of such a nature to require the minimum attendance of permanent personnel . . . I am inclined to think that the best way out of this at the moment is to accept it as an additional charge on the existing permanent staff.⁴⁸

Land Headquarters Training Centre (Jungle Warfare) at Canungra, Conduit was attached to the Advanced Reinforcement (Independent Companies) Training Centre Jungle Warfare course in which he received a glowing report from the Commanding Officer. He served at Headquarters North Western Area as a GDO, No. 82 Wing as the Wing Defence Officer and post-war served as an investigator at 2nd Australian War Crimes Section (1945-1950). Post-war he served in Malaya, Java and Japan at S.E.A.C. as part of the war crimes investigation, Base Squadron Laverton, Air Force Headquarters, Department of Air Force and Headquarters Training Command with the formation of the ground defence National Service Training and general service training.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Air Board Memorandum No. 1193.

⁴⁸ G. Jones, 'Minute Sheet 5.', 1951, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/13 PART 1, (unpaginated).

During the same month that Jones expressed his views regarding the titles of the squadrons and reservations noted above, in May 1951 an Instruction for National Service Training in airfield defence was released by RAAF Headquarters.⁴⁹ The instruction detailed that once National Service Training Scheme trainees completed three weeks recruit training, they would be allocated to a 'Ground Combat Flight' at different locations as detailed above.⁵⁰ These 'Ground Combat Flights' at varying locations around Australia were not part of peacetime Nos 1 and 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadrons nor the wartime equivalent, which would only be formed in times of war. Each flight would comprise a headquarters with six National Service Trainees and three sections, each containing ten National Service Trainees.⁵¹ In these flights, all trainees would undergo full-time ground combat training.⁵² For the National Service Trainees that were allocated into airfield defence, their mustering title during training was to be 'Ground Combat Trainees'. All other musterings would still complete up to 6 weeks of ground combat training prior to mustering specific (e.g. motor transport drivers) training. Once the Ground Combat Trainees had completed training, they would be remustered as either Guards or Ground Gunners (depending on the location of the training and syllabus).⁵³ The records show, however, that the trainees that were to be remustered as Guards, remained as National Service Trainees. The National Service Trainees (Guards) were to be allocated to RAAF reserve units, such as No. 23 Squadron Amberley, that required Guards in their home location. Ground Gunners would be allocated to reserve wartime airfield defence squadrons.⁵⁴ Within two months, the title 'Ground Combat Flight' was changed to align with Jones' earlier direction, now becoming 'Ground Defence Flight'. F.J. Mulrooney, now Secretary of the Air Board, released a further statement supporting Jones which again directed the removal of the word 'combat' from all titles.⁵⁵

By 1 May 1951, No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron was formed at Mallala in South Australia under the overall command of Air Officer Commanding Southern Area Air Commodore A.L. Walters, with the Squadron Commanding Officer being Flying Officer K.J.

⁴⁹ Air Force Headquarters Administrative Instruction No. 5/51.

⁵⁰ Anon., 'Administrative Instruction No. 5/51.', 23A, 1951, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/13 PART 1, (unpaginated); It is noted that Conduit used the 'Ground Combat' title of the Flights at each RAAF base allocated for Airfield Defence National Service Training, directly at odds with Jones.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*; Trainees trained as Guards would not complete the full Ground Gunner course. They would not complete the flight tactics/attacks, mortar, anti-tank weapon, armoured car and LAA training of the Ground gunner syllabus. Guard trainees would focus on the internal/local defence of airfields and installations.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Mulrooney, 'Board Paper No. 1193 Change in Nomenclature "Aerodrome Defence Squadron"', 6A, 1951, National Archives of Australia, A705, 56/1/462, (unpaginated).

Myers. By 2 July 1951, the Defence Squadron also had eight DI staff and the first intake of 30 National Service Ground Gunners.⁵⁶ Despite the squadron's planning to continue the training, the Air Board, noted that Mallala was unsuitable for airfield defence training; it had no ranges of 200 yards, no grenade ranges, was 70 miles from the nearest field training area and it lacked facilities for infantry troops.⁵⁷ On 25 March 1953, No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron was disbanded having only been in operation for just over two years.⁵⁸

Only three weeks after the formation of No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron in Mallala, the Air Board again re-released an Agendum for the formation of No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron. Then on 8 December 1951, RAAF Headquarters released further Instructions for the formation of No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron planned for 1 February 1952, at RAAF Western Junction, Tasmania.⁵⁹ The Squadron did form on that date, but on paper only as there had been no facilities built. On 27 May 1952, the lack of facilities, together with the Air Board's determination to reduce the number of National Service Trainees for airfield defence, resulted in the Air Board directing that there was no longer a requirement for No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron (as discussed in further detail in the 'Policy in Action' section). This decision resulted in National Service training being moved from Tasmania to the mainland. During late 1952, with the RAAF's National Service Training Scheme slowly winding down, RAAF Headquarters decided to reduce the intake for 1952/53, from 540 airfield defence trainees to 200 trainees per year. Then on 26 September 1952, the Air Board determined that No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron should be disbanded before full formation.⁶⁰

The records in relation to policy are silent for the next two years until 1954, when a new direction emerged within the Air Board's proposals to revise the National Service Training Scheme in the RAAF.⁶¹ In January 1954, Air Marshal Sir J. McCauley, now CAS (following the retirement of Jones), had directed RAAF Headquarters to change the training period for the National Service Training Scheme from 176 days to 160, or even 154 days for some

⁵⁶ The Personnel Occurrence Reports for No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron indicate all training staff on formation were Drill Instructors until mid-March 1952.

⁵⁷ Air Board Agendum No. 10983 Supplement No. 2.

⁵⁸ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Agendum No. 10983 Supplement No. 2.

⁵⁹ G.C. Candy, 'Air Force Head-Quarters Administrative Instruction No. 17/51', 1A, 1951, National Archives of Australia, A705, 75/1/4334, (unpaginated); Air Force Headquarter Administrative Instruction No. 17/51.

⁶⁰ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Agendum No. 10984 Supplement No. 2; Air Board Agendum No. 10984 Supplement No. 2.

⁶¹ Anon., 'Air Board Agendum No. 12373 Proposals to Revise National Service Training in the Royal Australian Air Force, 20A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/83, (unpaginated); Air Board Memorandum Agendum No. 12373 Proposal to Revised National Service Training in the RAAF.

musterings.⁶² The airfield defence trainee ‘Ground Gunners’ would continue to be trained at National Service Training Units in Canberra and Pearce, while only general service training for trainees (Guards) and other musterings was to be completed at Amberley, Rathmines, Laverton, Point Cook, Pearce, Canberra and Wagga Wagga.⁶³

With the change in airfield defence training locations came a new policy to formalise concepts of ground defence operations. This policy defined new terms including ‘general ground defence’ and ‘local ground defence.’⁶⁴ General ground defence was defined as the defence of an area against attack by formed bodies of land forces, whereas local ground defence referred to the defence of installations and establishments against minor attacks by airborne troops, infiltrators, partisans and irregulars. The term ‘local defence’ led to Air Force and Navy agreeing to the employment of specialised troops for local defence roles ‘as far as practicable’.⁶⁵ RAAF Headquarters then aligned the RAAF policy to avoid ‘misemployment’ of highly skilled airmen from their primary duty and indicated it was ‘not practicable’ for the RAAF to assume a degree of responsibility for local defence. In addition, RAAF Headquarters further indicated the employment of specialised RAAF troops for local defence would be ‘unduly detrimental to air power activity’ and the Army was better suited to undertake. Inexplicably, RAAF Headquarters then documented that it would also be inappropriate for the Army to divert its own forces from their primary role to provide airfield defence and security for the RAAF.⁶⁶

During this year, the RAAF was also attempting to align RAAF airfield defence policy with the type and manner of attacks on airfields. By July 1954, discussions by the Joint Intelligence Committee in Melbourne had considered the vulnerability of military installations in Australia and overseas, with a focus on RAAF installations and the employment of local labour as a ‘vulnerable application’ for RAAF defence.⁶⁷ The main threats, identified by the Committee, were from locally-employed persons within the RAAF installation who could use ‘go-slow tactics’, set explosives, gather intelligence, strike during or before attacks, and commit theft or wilful damage of equipment.⁶⁸ The Committee also held firmly to the view

⁶² Bladin, ‘Minister’, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/83, (unpaginated).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Air Staff Doctrine 232 Air Staff Plans and Policy - Chapter 30 RAAF Ground Defence Policy.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ E.W. Hicks, ‘The Threat to Static Defence Installations in Malaya and Australia, in Cold and Limited or Global War’, 2, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A5954, 1458/3, (unpaginated).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

that the main form of attack launched against RAAF airfields and installations would be direct ground attacks by large formations of communist military units or commando-type forces such as guerrillas or saboteurs. They also considered the possibility of air attack, using normal aerial munitions or atomic, biological and chemical munitions, and naval bombardment as a consequence of airfields being planned and established close to coastal areas.⁶⁹

The Intelligence Committee views of the time assessed that there was no direct threat to the RAAF in Australia, however they found that a possible communist insurgency to the north in South East Asia existed. On 24 May 1955, CAS McCauley, released an appendix to the previous 1950 RAAF airfield defence memorandum. The Appendix set out the possible types of attacks that might occur in Malaya, where there already was an active communist insurgency, and the means for the defence of airfields in Australia.⁷⁰ McCauley set out that the RAAF in Malaya was to be fully responsible for ground defence of its establishments, including passive defence against atomic and nuclear, biological, chemical, air, pilotless aircraft, missiles and high explosive attacks by artillery. Upon the outbreak of war, the RAAF considered that it would be responsible for the defence of one airfield (RAAF Base Butterworth) and three radio stations.⁷¹ McCauley also outlined that there was a high probability that the principal agent used to attack RAAF establishments in South East Asia will come from high explosives delivered via air weapons. In relation to ground defence against these predicted attacks, McCauley stated:

Based on the adage ‘Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Safety’, guards and picquets would be required to act quickly and resolutely to counter this form of attack. Before an airman can be trusted to carry out these duties, he should be suitably trained.⁷²

The Appendix detailed that the defence of RAAF establishments in Australia would be solely an Army tasking, ‘The RAAF, therefore, need take no direct action, at present, to provide ground defence forces against attacks from without on its establishments within Australia’.⁷³ It further detailed that the Australian Army was to be responsible for all AA defence on RAAF

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ J. McCauley, ‘RAAF Ground Defence Policy Possible Types of Attacks in Malaya and Methods of RAAF Defence’, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); Air Staff Policy Memorandum No. 15: Appendix: Possible Types of Attacks in Malaya and Methods of RAAF Defence.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

airfields and installations in Australia and its Territories; the Army was to provide heavy and medium AA defence of RAAF establishments overseas except for LAA defence which was the RAAF's responsibility. Furthermore, the Appendix predicted that the RAAF could be engaged in operations on three airfields in Malaya (although previous records only refer to one airfield) for many months and to ensure their defence, however, the RAAF was not directed to have adequately trained full time ground defence personnel, armoured cars or LAA weapons.⁷⁴

In Australia, the RAAF reserve airfield defence forces were expected to total six Rifle Squadrons, one Armoured Car Squadron and three LAA Squadrons.⁷⁵ The Appendix also outlined that the LAA defence would need fully qualified and well-trained airmen on a full-time basis to produce effective LAA defence. The Appendix further sets out that it would be unlikely that the RAAF would have full time airmen manning LAA Squadrons. Therefore, reserve defence squadrons were to re-train reserve and National Service Ground Gunners in LAA defence and the ground defence at the start of the war.⁷⁶

There appears to have been mixed support for the latest policy. On 5 July 1956, the Secretary of Department of Air E.W. Hicks released a letter providing his support for the RAAF's AA defence, in which he stated, 'The Air Force plans to meet its light anti-aircraft commitment, (a war commitment only), by training, in peace, National Service Trainees . . .'⁷⁷ Perhaps demonstrating some insight into the thoughts of Staff Officers of the time regarding the use by the RAAF of LAA weapons in peace, there is a hand written comment on Hicks' letter within the National Service Ground Defence file by an unknown Staff Officer at RAAF Headquarters asking, 'Who are we going to fire them at?'⁷⁸

Meanwhile in 1956, the Department of External Affairs had released a policy which noted that the Viet Minh forces of North Vietnam, supporting Chinese forces in South East Asia, were making full use of their manpower resources and that their mastery of guerrilla tactics to carry out sabotage and harassing operations against government facilities and military targets, such as airfields, could impede operations.⁷⁹ Within this analysis, the Defence Committee strategic long term outlook indicated that Australia could not rely on the United

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ E.W. Hicks, 'Anti-Aircraft Defence', 1956, National Archives of Australia, A6059, 6/441/5, (unpaginated).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ G.E. Blakers, 'Minute by Defence Committee at Meeting Held on 26th September and 11th October 1956', National Archives of Australia, A1838, TS677/1A ANNEX, (unpaginated).

States or the United Kingdom for defence, and stated that, 'Nor would we be able, on any scale of defence so far contemplated, to protect the mainland of Australia'.⁸⁰

Defence Squadrons – New Ideas and Policy

McCauley's policy remained in place until March 1957, when, under a new CAS, Air Marshal Sir F.R.W. Scherger, a new Appendix was drafted.⁸¹ This document did not refute McCauley's previous plans, but sought to point out weaknesses in the training of the airfield defence personnel, such as the National Service Training Scheme for Ground Gunners, and recommend solutions. Scherger stated:

. . . at present no units exists [sic] in the service for the training of various defence personnel. This is a serious disability, and results in the lack of that training peculiar to the RAAF for our Defence Staff.⁸²

Scherger noted that the RAAF deployment to Malaya, located at RAAF Base Butterworth, would not be within any Army gun defended area and that in a limited or global war, RAAF airfield defence units must be available to move to Malaya as part of the 'Mobile Support Force'. This was a new concept, with the force to include three Airfield Defence Squadrons, with each squadron having seven PAF personnel and 169 CAF Ground Gunners (ex-National Service Trainees). The ADI mustering was to be expanded and given Army training in all aspects of warfare and the defence squadron equipment required would be only be small arms, as there was no proposal for LAA weaponry.⁸³ The policy also set out that three Airfield Defence Squadrons, now numbered as Nos. 201, 202 and 203, would be based at RAAF Stations Amberley, Mallala and Pearce, respectively.⁸⁴ These units were never formed as by mid-1957 when this policy was released, the National Service Training Scheme for the RAAF had ended, and all Ground Gunners had been placed in the RAAF Reserve.

In May 1957, RAAF Headquarters had released an Australian Air Publication on ground defence that was to become the future manual for ground defence. Despite extensive

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ F.R.W. Scherger, 'Ground Defence Policy Organisation of an Airfield Defence Squadron', 1957, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); Air Staff Policy Memorandum No. 15 Appendix: Organisation of an Airfield Defence Squadron.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ The 169 Ground Gunners of the RAAF Reserves (formally National Service Training Scheme Ground Gunners) would be called-up to man the squadrons. A total of 507 would be needed for all three squadrons.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

searches of archives and files, no copy of the 1957 Australia Air Publication can be located. A copy of the replacement Publication that was released in 1970 has been obtained. The files refer to the 1957 publication, however, the previous 1952 doctrine and memorandums still remained current and continued to direct airfield defence theory until 1959.⁸⁵

In a move reminiscent of questions posed to the RAF regarding policy direction, in June 1957 the RAAF Attaché in Washington was asked to seek information on USAF airfield defence policy. Scherger wanted to know how the USAF Air Police units, that were deployed on each Air Force installation were trained in ground defence and how they provided for local defence in all operations.⁸⁶ In response, the RAAF received documents on all current USAF policy, however, it is important to note that these policies focussed only on the response to nuclear warfare and 'massive retaliation'.⁸⁷ The threat to ground base airfields on American soil was thought to be so minimal that the USAF Air Police were only tasked with guard duty and law enforcement.⁸⁸ There is no evidence within the archives that the RAAF relied on any of these USAF manuals and there is no follow up discussion recorded within the archives.⁸⁹

At this time, archival RAAF ground defence files reveal a Department of Air agreement for the formation of a Defence Training School for ground defence instructors, but no airfield defence units or forces apart from the ground defence training staff of the RAAF.⁹⁰ The facility at RAAF Base Amberley was chosen, and the Defence Training Section was formed on 20 January 1958.⁹¹ On 7 February 1958, Training Command released instructions for the training of personnel for ground defence in war, including the training of instructors in active and passive defence, passive defence specialists and as DIs.⁹²

Meanwhile, during the 1950s, the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) was based in Malaya. The FESR was a joint military force of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand and was developed as a response to communist threats in South

⁸⁵ D.L. Wilson, 'Airfield Defence', 35, 1957, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); Australian Air Publication 938 Ground Defence; Air Staff Doctrine 232 and the Air Staff Policy Memorandum No.15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; USAF Air Force Regulation 205-5 Security, AFM 125-3 Basic Air Police, AFM 125-4 Internal Security of Air Force installations, and AFM 125-6 USAF Sentry Dog Manual.

⁸⁸ Naval Postgraduate School, Air Base Defense: Different Times Call for Different Methods, p. 18.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ D.W. Kingwell, 'Formation of Base Squadron Amberley, Defence Training Section', 1B, 1957, National Archives of Australia, J1113, 3-222-AIR PART 1, (unpaginated); Australian Air Publication 938 Ground Defence Training Policy.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*; Administrative Instruction No. 2/58.

East Asia.⁹³ In 1958 Squadron Leader G. Bennett, M.C., attended a conference in Malaya on ground defence in the FESR. In March, he released a report about the conference and his visit to RAAF units in South East Asia. Group Captain A.A. Bexter, O.B.E., and Squadron Leader R.G.M. Hubbard (RAF Senior RAF Regiment Officers and Senior Ground Defence Staff of the Far East Headquarters) had assisted in the development of the report. The report outlined their thoughts that, 'RAAF units in South East Asia as part of the Strategic Reserve has [sic] posed certain ground defence problems'.⁹⁴ The report highlighted that the RAF did not foresee a need to hold RAF Regiment units in the Far East for the purpose of protecting RAAF units, and posed two questions; Was there any intent for the RAAF to form a RAAF airfield defence specialist force for protection in the Far East and would they be deployed to the Far East in peace or war or at all? The second part of the report noted that if the RAAF maintained airfield defence units and forces, then the RAF Regiment had offered to train these airmen and supplement the units, until fully manned.⁹⁵ The remainder of the report outlined the RAF Regiment formation, structure and purpose, with the aim being for the RAAF to replicate this.⁹⁶ There is no record of a written response to the questions posed.

In late 1960, a further two documents were released covering the division of responsibility for airfield defence which replaced the earlier documents.⁹⁷ These memoranda, supported by Scherger, reiterated the previous agreements however, this time under the title 'Local Ground Defence'. The Chiefs of Staff Committee recorded that the formation of Air Force personnel for local ground defence as their primary role needs to be undertaken by the RAAF.⁹⁸ For the remainder of 1960, the records show that RAAF senior officers discussed both documents with the ultimate conclusions being the general agreement that RAAF ground defence, passive defence and air defence should be controlled by the RAAF, not the Army.⁹⁹

⁹³ Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation*, 1996, p. 25.

⁹⁴ G. Bennett, 'Ground Defence', 50, 1957, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); Wing Commander G. Bennett had a written letter from Group Captain Bexter outlining the help the RAF Regiment would provide and in which he highlighted the problems the RAAF was creating with its disconnected airfield defence policy.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Chief of Staff Committee No. 52/1960; Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum No. 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Forces Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Section 2 - Policy in Action

‘ . . . [guard duty] it’s not my job ’

RAAF investigation into Security of Bases, comment by RAAF technical personnel 1956.

‘Don’t complain about guarding’

Throughout Jones’ tenure as CAS, from 1942 to 1952, RAAF Headquarters held firm to the strong conviction that there was no requirement for ground defence personnel post-war and that all airmen, not specialists, will defend their airfields. Despite this view, and the supporting policies being released, RAAF recruitment was still enlisting men for the Guard mustering from 1946 to the early 1950s.¹⁰⁰ As an example, on 7 November 1946, Aircraftman C.E. McLorinan enlisted as a Guard and completed a Recruit Drill Course. He was posted to No. 81 Wing and then on to No. 381 Base Squadron at Bofu Japan until a posting back to Australia.¹⁰¹ Another example was Aircraftman A.T. Jordan, who enlisted in 1939 as a Service Policeman and was subsequently granted his commission as an ADO in 1942.¹⁰² Then, as a result of demobilisation in 1946 and the closure of the Aerodrome Defence Officer Branch, then Flight Lieutenant Jordan was transferred to the Barracks Officer Branch, noting that he was later re-established as an ADO when policy changed again.¹⁰³ Another Aircraftman D.W. Connolly, enlisted at RAAF Station Richmond in 1951 as a Trainee Equipment Assistant and was then remustered in February 1952 as a Guard.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the evidence shows that Jones’ policies of generic airfield defence post-war were not followed directly in action by RAAF Recruiting nor commanders.

As the Interim Air Force policy reduced both Guards and Service Police numbers, the policy in action shows that RAAF Headquarters post-war structure still had 44 ADIs and 392

¹⁰⁰ Anon., ‘Australian Air Force circa 1950 – by 1951’, National Archives of Australia, SP130/1, BUNDLE 31/2, p. 22; All of these RAAF recruitment documents outline that from 1949 through to 1952 it would be recruiting airmen into the Guard mustering. This mustering was never removed from the RAAF Order of Battle, and was still required, but not for airfield defence *per se*, but for security. If, however, war started, these airmen would then be trained for airfield defence.

¹⁰¹ Anon., ‘McLorinan Charles Edward: Service Number – 85987: Date of Birth – 10 Feb 1908: Place of Birth – Scotland: Place of Enlistment – Adelaide: Next of Kin – McLorinan M’, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A9301, 116183, (unpaginated); McLorinan’s, Second World War service with 6th Division Petrol Company in the Middle East, Greece, Ceylon and New Guinea, gave him the skills he needed.

¹⁰² Anon., ‘Jordan Arthur Thomas: Service Number – 03114: Date of Birth – Date of Birth – 19/01/1923: Place of Birth – Broken Hill, NSW : Conflict – WW2, 1939, National Archives of Australia, A12372, R/3114/H, (unpaginated);

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*; Jordan service records shows that the promotion prospects for an ex-ADO was poor. From the end of the war Jordan would not be promoted for X years.

¹⁰⁴ Anon., ‘Connolly, David William: Service Number – A24529: Date of Birth – 17/01/1931: Place of Birth - , NSW: Conflict – Korea, 1949, National Archives of Australia, A11504, R/24529/H/1, (unpaginated).

Guards listed as performing ground defence and security duties.¹⁰⁵ By early 1947, many within RAAF Headquarters argued there was a lack of security and guarding being undertaken by RAAF personnel and a poor attitude had developed towards the duty. Yet by 1949, the numbers had reduced further when Jones ordered that there were to be only 106 Guards in total across the RAAF, with no ADOs and less than 10 ADIs remaining in the RAAF.¹⁰⁶ He then ordered the RAAF Police to supplement the security of establishments, supporting general airmen performing guard duty only as a secondary duty at the front gate of stations.¹⁰⁷ An example of this was Wing Commander W.J. Guthrie, whose orders stated, ‘Owing to the shortage of personnel in the mustering of Guard . . . personnel irrespective of their mustering, [are] to carry out guard duty . . . Don’t complain about it but accept it in the light that it is vitally necessary’.¹⁰⁸

In 1950, this lack of security brought the focus on RAAF Store Depots. For example, No. 6 Store Depot was storing tens of thousands of small arms held in ordinary galvanised iron storage sheds and an inspection of the sheds found that the alarm system was, ‘practically useless’.¹⁰⁹ However, according to the inspection report the only effective security, and which was functioning at a very good level, was performed by the four Guards and the Guard War Dog Handler with four war dogs.¹¹⁰ Despite these problems, the records show that at RAAF Base Richmond and its No. 386 Base Squadron, security was not a major issue, as the base had Guards and War Dog Handlers, and they would remain there until late 1951.¹¹¹

While the RAAF struggled with how to provide security for its installations, a Government Estimates Appropriation Bill was raised in the Senate in 1953.¹¹² Within this Bill a question was raised by Senator Aylett, from Tasmania, about the situation at Western Junction airfield, Tasmania, in which modern state-of-the-art aircraft were being left on aerodromes unguarded. He stated, ‘I wish to direct attention is [sic] that modern defence aircraft, which cost a lot of money, are left unguarded at [an] open aerodrome . . . It is not right

¹⁰⁵ Anon., ‘Interim Air Force – Authority to Enlist Applications and Authority to Call for Volunteers from Civil Life Agendum 7023 Supplement No. 1’, 33A, 1946, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/15/875 PART 1, (unpaginated); Interim Air Force – Authority to Enlist Applications and Authority to Call for Volunteers from Civil Life Agendum 7023 Supplement No. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ W.J. Guthrie, ‘Standing Instructions to New Arrivals’, 3A, 1950, National Archives of Australia, A11329, 2/2/AIR PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁹ M.C. Murray, ‘Security of Firearms – No. 6 Stores Depot’, 4C, 1952, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*; Randell Summerville, a relation of RAAF Guard Ted Brault. Brault served in the RAAF both as a Guard and War Dog Handler during both the Second World War and post-war, performing security duty at Townsville.

¹¹¹ H.C. Smith, ‘Security Inspection of No. 6 S. D.’, 1952, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

¹¹² Aylett, ‘Estimates Appropriation Bill’, 6A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

. . . unauthorised persons may inspect them and even place time bombs in them'.¹¹³ Upon a query from other senators, Senator Aylett continued, 'It happened at Western Junction, about four months ago. Two of our latest defence aircraft were left unguarded . . . ensure that aircraft and other valuable defence equipment shall be guarded when not in use'.¹¹⁴ Aylett also pointed out that an inspection of the security of RAAF East Sale demonstrated a major lack of airfield defence. He noted that the unit armoury (holding some 30,000 rifles and machine guns, and over 100 .38 revolvers) was insecure and that louvres in the generator room could be removed in order to gain access to the armoury. These issues were the same for most RAAF bases at the time and an incident at RAAF Base Laverton in which the armoury had been broken into and weapons stolen highlighted the growing problem.¹¹⁵

Despite these concerns being raised in Parliament in 1953, it was not until 1956, that Air Vice-Marshal V.E. Hancock, Air Member for Personnel at RAAF Headquarters, investigated the lack of security. According to his final report, the poor standard and the disturbing attitude of airmen from any mustering undertaking guarding at the entrance of the RAAF station was an issue.¹¹⁶ The Air Board provided examples of the poor discipline and attitudes which included 'lounging with hands in pockets', 'smoking while on duty at the front gate' and 'failing to pay service compliments'.¹¹⁷ The attitude of airmen was noted to be 'disgusting' by the Air Board and it was believed these airmen had a 'couldn't care less attitude', they did not assist visitors on the base, important persons were left to find their own way and some airmen, not wanting to do guard duty, were recorded as stating 'it's not my job'.¹¹⁸ In every Command that was investigated, a poor and unsatisfactory standard of security was uncovered and the attitude of airmen doing guard duty was described as 'a poor state of affairs'.¹¹⁹ In response to questionnaires forwarded to units as part of the investigation, many unit headquarters did not return them, while other units indicated in feedback that they relied on civilian police officers for guard duty. There is no outcome recorded following the investigation, with the last entry in the file being a report from North Eastern Area Headquarters on the use of civilian officers.¹²⁰ The file is then closed and there are no subsequent files at the National Archives.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ V.E. Hancock, 'Standard of RAAF Guards', 1A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ E.W. Hicks, 'Investigation of RAAF Guard System', 2A, 1952, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/111, (unpaginated).

Airfield Defence Training and Trainers

Post-war, ground crew training was concentrated at RAAF Base Wagga, for Fitters, Flight Riggers, Driver Motor Transport, Guards, Service Police and other ground mustering. Even though the demobilisation had commenced, on 17 March 1947, ten men were enlisted into the RAAF as Guards at RAAF Base Wagga and were placed on No. 1 Interim Guard Course.¹²¹ While this was taking place, RAAF Base Wagga would lose its last Warrant Officer, an ADI, but nevertheless Guard training courses would continue to be run there for the next five years.¹²² For the remainder of the RAAF personnel, after recruit training, airfield defence training would involve a few hours annually of weapon training and the firing of ten rounds.¹²³

In 1948, Group Captain Black, a Staff Officer at RAAF Headquarters, indicated in a letter to the Air Board that the RAAF post-war policy on airfield defence did not consider any future enemy that the RAAF would encounter.¹²⁴ Black continued, 'RAAF policy in training in weapons and ground defence will not make fighting men of airmen' and according to Black the results of ground defence and weapons training could place airmen into situations they would not be adequately trained for.¹²⁵ Black took the argument further stating, 'It will provide an Air Force composed of a mass of non-combatant personnel (who require detachments of soldiers to protect them) and a few heroic pilots, who alone do all the fighting, or civilians in uniforms'.¹²⁶ Black continues, 'I am convinced that the current training in the use of personal weapons does not render a feeling that the service [RAAF] is composed of trained fighting men but rather emphasises the creed of the heroic few'.¹²⁷

While officers such as Black were providing similar feedback on policy and actions, from the end of the Second World War until 1950, the RAAF continued to maintain minimalist policies on airfield defence. Following 1950 however, there are no files produced on airfield defence within RAAF Headquarters until 1955. This may be because individual units and the National Service Training Scheme held their own airfield defence or ground defence files. An

¹²¹ Anon., 'Personnel Occurrence Report Part "A" Officers Ground Training School Wagga Wagga Part "B" – Airmen 11/47', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 835/1, (unpaginated).

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Anon., 'Security', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

¹²⁴ Black, 'Organisation for Defence of Aerodromes and Fixed Installations', 11A, 1947, National Archives of Australia, 13A A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

example of this is the Commanding Officer's reports for No. 3 Squadron that demonstrates a focus on airfield defence at the unit level, from the end of the Second World War until June 1950. The Unit files show that the Squadron's Army Air Liaison Officer conducted revolver training and firing practice at the 25-yard range.¹²⁸ Another example was the visit of a Staff Officer from RAAF Headquarters who ran lectures for squadron officers and SNCOs on the policy and processes of airfield defence. The culmination of this training was in 1950, when the Squadron forward deployed to Darwin on Exercise 'Gay Jabaroo', during which all personnel engaged in intensive training in 'ground manoeuvres' and took part in the 'defence of the airfield'.¹²⁹ The exercise highlighted that for No. 3 Squadron, even with the lack of PAF officers and airmen, the unit had still attempted to manage its own airfield defence tasking.¹³⁰ At the conclusion of the exercise and upon return to base, any form of small arms training or ground defence training ceased due to the Squadron's renewed focus on its primary mission – flying aircraft.¹³¹

Similarly, No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron experienced conflicts between primary tasking and the need for personnel to take on airfield defence duties. The records show that between December 1951 and January 1952, groups of the Squadron deployed to the Cocos Islands; however, on arrival all weapons remained grease-sealed within weapons boxes, and due to the lack of manpower it took some weeks for all the weapons to be unsealed, cleaned and oiled for storage in the armoury.¹³² Further, between September 1952 and April 1953, records show that no rifle shooting or airfield defence training had taken place, despite the squadron having detachments at Momote airfield on Los Nigros, Admiralty Islands. In late 1953, Commanding Officer, Wing Commander P.G. Lings, outlined the need for security and some form of defence within those detachments and he submitted requests for natives/locals to be employed on these duties, however, RAAF Headquarters rejected all of his requests.¹³³ In the file, Lings records his view that with the formation of McCauley's proposed RAAF Regiment these issues would be resolved. This demonstrates a misunderstanding between Commanders on the ground and RAAF Headquarters' position on the overall purpose of a RAAF Regiment. While Commanders such as Lings and McCauley viewed the proposed

¹²⁸ J.W. Hubble, 'Commanding Officers Report for the Month of June, 1950', 1950, National Archives of Australia, A9435, 3. (unpaginated).

¹²⁹ J.W. Hubble, 'Commanding Officers Report for the Month of August, 1950', 1950, National Archives of Australia, A9435, 3. (unpaginated).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron 1952, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

RAAF Regiment as a combat unit, RAAF Headquarters appeared to view any airfield defence personnel purely as trainers of all RAAF personnel only.¹³⁴ An example of this follows Lings' requests for personnel to conduct security, when on 4 June 1954, RAAF Headquarters sent Flying Officer A.T. Jordan, recently recommissioned as an ADO, to conduct ground combat training for airmen's promotion examinations, rather than assisting Lings to form a defence plan for the squadron.¹³⁵

During 1954, upon taking the role of CAS, McCauley continued to assert his theories of war, in that the RAAF needed to assess the ground defence needs for units and would need to procure more weapons such as machine guns, ammunition, armoured transport and LAA weapons from friendly nations. Due to demobilisation, the RAAF had only a few GDOs and ADIs. Some of the GDOs were now ex-pilots with no future prospect in an aviation career, and hence had been transferred into the reintroduced GDO Branch. That year, Flight Lieutenant Conduit was recommissioned as a GDO, and other officers would follow suit including Flying Officer Jordon.¹³⁶ Flying Officer W.E. Pettersson (General Duty Pilot) was sent to No. 3 National Service Training Unit at RAAF Canberra on 21 December 1953 for duty as a GDO.¹³⁷ On 6 April 1954, he and Flying Officer K.G. Prain were transferred from General Duty Pilot to Special Duty Branch Defence.¹³⁸ During 1955, Pettersson attended Australian Military Forces training with the Army, and in 2003 reflected, 'So I did an aerodrome defence officers course at Kapooka and various other places in the Army'.¹³⁹ He continued:

I went into a specialist one and went to artillery. This will be one of the funniest situations of a pilot who was a qualified artilleryman, infantry company commander, artillery battery commander and shot down a drogue from the ground. The whole thing of the School of Artillery was, we [RAAF] were going to have anti-aircraft guns around our airfields. They decided that was a silly idea, so we didn't do that. The Air Force does a lot of these things.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*; A.T. Jordan enlisted in 1939 as a Service Policeman and then in 1942, was commissioned as an ADO. At the end of the Second World War he applied to stay in the RAAF, and this was approved. However, he was removed from the ADO Branch to the Barracks Officer Branch and then later the Recruitment Officer Branch.

¹³⁶ Anon., 'Conduit William: Service Number – 61635: Date of birth – 31 Dec 1906: Place of birth – Sydney NSW: Place of enlistment – Sydney : Next of Kin – Conduit Beryl', National Archives of Australia, A9301, 61635, (unpaginated).

¹³⁷ Wallace Pettersson, interview by Australians at War Film Archive, digital recording, 24 November 2003, University of New South Wales; 'RAAF will keep guard', *The Argus*, 26 October 1953, p. 5.

¹³⁸ J. Paterson, 'Personnel Occurrence Report 1/54', 1954, National Archives of Australia, A10605, 609/3, (unpaginated).

¹³⁹ Wallace Pettersson, interview by Australians at War Film Archive, digital recording, 24 November 2003, University of New South Wales.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The airfield defence files from the National Archives and Air Force History hold no information regarding the first four ADI courses; however, there are records of the following four courses (Course Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8) which were run at RAAF Base Amberley from late 1953 until January 1955.¹⁴¹ At this time, trained ADIs were needed to raise the standard of ground defence training, as the records indicate that general weapons training of RAAF airmen was ineffective. Examples include a 1953 promotion course of 67 RAAF airmen, in which many claimed to have never fired a weapon in the last 14 years, and that none were required to persist in practice to qualify on the rifle.¹⁴² Additionally, the records for No. 10 Squadron emphasise that during 1954 only 26 airmen were trained on the carbine rifle and no other airfield defence training was undertaken.¹⁴³ During this time the RAAF still maintained a small number of airmen of the Guard mustering in the PAF, and these airmen would complete all the small arms qualifications annually within the RAAF. However, due to a lack of Guards the defence of the RAAF airfields would still largely fall to untrained technical airmen.¹⁴⁴

Open archival records also reveal that following 1954, the RAAF Training Command commenced planning for ground training musterings and training locations.¹⁴⁵ Throughout 1954 and 1955 ground training for four-week Guard mustering courses, held at RAAF Base Archerfield, included 20 airmen on each course.¹⁴⁶ The training of GDOs at various Army units had become inconsistent and was not adequately standardised for RAAF airfield defence purposes. Therefore, in 1956, the RAAF gained positions for future GDOs to be trained at the Officer Cadet Training School at Portsea in Victoria.¹⁴⁷ The first RAAF GDO to complete the training was R.A. Brazier, in June 1956, with another seven GDOs to complete courses the following year. In June 1957 J.B.H. Brown, an Officer Cadet in the RAAF, trained with three other potential GDOs at Portsea.¹⁴⁸ These officers had some success, with GDO R.G.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² W. McPhail, 'Ground Combat training, Marksmanship Standards', 11A, 1953, National Archives of Australia, J277, 54/4/AIR PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁴³ Anon., 'Nominal Roll and Results of Airmen who Attended Promotion Examinations for Drill-Ground Combat Momote - 4th to 8th December 1954 Incl.', 1954, National Archives of Australia, J277, 54/5/AIR PART 1, (unpaginated); Unit Ground Machine Gun Carbine Training.

¹⁴⁴ Anon., 'Minute Sheet 51', National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/57, (unpaginated); The reorganisation of the RAAF structure of 1954 provided three commands: Home Command (home defence and expeditionary task forces), Training Command (set training policy – organisation of the NSTS) and Maintenance Command (control of equipment and servicing).

¹⁴⁵ Anon., 'Department of Air Minute Paper Ground Training Schedule 1955', National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2545, (unpaginated).

¹⁴⁶ Anon., 'Royal Australia Air Force Ground Training Scheme 1955 Part 2 N.C.O.s., Airmen, Airwomen, Apprentices and Minors', National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2545, (unpaginated).

¹⁴⁷ Neville Lindsay, *Loyalty and Service*, 1995, Historia Productions, Kenmore, pp. 150-151.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219; On 5 July 1954, J.B.H. Brown enlisted into the RAAF National Service Training Scheme on No. 11 Intake at No. 7 National Service Training Unit Western Australia. The intake covered all training requirements for the mustering Ground Gunner, including the 2-inch Mortar and the anti-tank weapon. On 5 December 1954 J.B.H. Brown qualified as a Ground Gunner. After transferring to the reserve, J.B.H. Brown requested reenlistment into the RAAF as Airmen Aircrew.

Halverson being awarded the Sword of Honour in 1958.¹⁴⁹ But this arrangement was not to last, and in 1958 the RAAF changed the training schedule with some officers trained at the Australian Army Officer Training Unit at Scheyville. It was not until 1967 that the training of GDOs returned to Portsea.¹⁵⁰

It is clear that training of GDOs was inconsistent and was not standardised due to the varying training locations. It is also clear at this time that individual units had difficulty in keeping training and qualifications in ground defence and weapon training consistent for general RAAF personnel. Although the training of Guards and GDOs had occurred, the first RAAF unit ground defence training for all airmen was not held until January 1957 at RAAF Base Butterworth, when 48 airmen of No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron completed a range practice. However, by March, two months after the range at Butterworth was opened, it was then closed, with no discernible reason being located in the files. In order to maintain the training, the GDO of No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron then obtained orders for a Station Defence Exercise to be held in May 1957.¹⁵¹ The ground defence phase of the exercise called ‘Operation Virginia’ commenced at 1600 hours on 16 May 1957 and concluded at 0100 hours on 18 May. Of the entire 33 hours of the exercise the ground defence component took nine hours. The Commanding Officer of Butterworth noted that the exercise was a ‘great success’ in that 19 Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment soldiers were captured and, of these, 11 were captured by No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron.¹⁵² The post exercise report concluded that No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron was more than capable of defending its area.¹⁵³ The Commanding Officer then decided that due to the excessive amount of leave and construction work, all ground defence training was suspended, and for the next four years until disbandment of the squadron there was no more airfield defence training.¹⁵⁴

In early 1958, there were further actions taken to standardise the ground defence training for all personnel in the RAAF. Group Captain D.W. Kingwell, acting for the CAS, directed the formation of RAAF Base Amberley Defence Training Section.¹⁵⁵ Under the plan

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151; The training of RAAF GDOs at Portsea would continue until December 1983, with J. Hollaway being the last GDO to complete a course at Portsea. A total of 30 GDOs would be trained at Portsea.

¹⁵¹ No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron 1957, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ J.E.S. Dennett, ‘Headquarters Training Command Warning Order 1/58’, 1958, National Archives of Australia, J1113, 3-222-AIR PART 1, (unpaginated).

released on 3 February 1958 Flight Lieutenant J.I. Brough was to command the Defence Training Section and train defence instructors and other selected personnel for training in ground defence.¹⁵⁶ The function of the Training Section was to include organisation and tactical employment of base/unit combatant personnel for ground defence, organisation of base/unit defence exercises, preparation of base or unit defence plans, continuation training in active and passive defence, and conducting training for passive defence specialists, and ADIs and DIs.

Guards in Occupation forces and at War, Again

By March 1946, the RAAF in Japan had settled into a peacetime role.¹⁵⁷ The British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), which included personnel from Australia, England, India and New Zealand, was supervising demilitarisation and providing protection and security for Japan post Second World War. RAAF units in Japan were facing the same issues and concerns regarding adequate manning for airfield defence. For example, Flight Lieutenant K.S. While, Officer Commanding No. 165 Radar Station at Hiroshima airfield, outlined in a monthly report that his station was secured by ten RAAF Guards.¹⁵⁸ By 12 September 1947, RAF guards had been attached to No. 111 Mobile Fighter Control Unit to assist the RAAF Guards with security.¹⁵⁹ RAAF Headquarters authorised commanders to employ locals to complement security tasks, undertake patrols on RAAF facilities, housing and accommodation and to man the front gate.¹⁶⁰ Even so, it is recorded that many Japanese guards were assessed as poorly-trained, had low morale, succumbed to stealing and, in many cases, were entering onto RAAF facilities illegally.¹⁶¹ In late 1947, it is recorded that RAAF airmen of the Guard mustering allocated to No. 305 Radar Station were placed on a higher degree of security alert due to concerns that locals had been stealing service equipment.¹⁶²

During the three years following the end of the war, there are no indications in any records located of continuous ground defence or weapons training for general RAAF

¹⁵⁶ Headquarters Training Command Warning Order 1/58 Defence Training Section.

¹⁵⁷ Graham O'Brien, *Always There: A History of Air Force Combat Support*, 2009, Canberra, p. 55.

¹⁵⁸ While, 'Operational Record Book 165 Radar Station', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 672, (unpaginated).

¹⁵⁹ McKay, 'Operational Record Book No. 82 Squadron', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 672, (unpaginated).

¹⁶⁰ No. 81 (Fighter) Wing HQ, 1946, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁶¹ No. 81 (Fighter) Wing HQ, 1947, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; No. 81 (Fighter) Wing HQ, 1948, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; For one security investigation by RAAF Police, fuses and detonators left at the bomb dump were located in Japanese hands. The Armament Section was found to be lax in their control of these items. All Japanese contractors in the bomb dump section were told not to remove these items and maximum care was to be taken when handling. During November 1947, No. 81 Wing reported 26 instances of RAAF items being found in the possession of Japanese.

¹⁶² McKay, 'Operational Record Book No. 82 Squadron', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 672, (unpaginated).

personnel, rather this was conducted sporadically or not at all.¹⁶³ As an example, No. 82 Squadron completed two days ground defence training for some personnel in January 1946, but did no more training for the remainder of the year.¹⁶⁴ In 1947, the BCOF policy on airfield defence directed that every member of the Air Forces in Japan would be armed and trained so they could resist any attack on the airfield and assist Army units so deployed.¹⁶⁵ While some units could spare personnel for basic training in ground defence, this was not the case for No. 76 Squadron. The records show that the Squadron had no attached Guards, while at the same time it was required to maintain air operations and to support the Tokyo ceremonial guarding; therefore, in contrast with BCOF policy, no weapon training nor airfield defence training took place from 1946 until its disbandment in 1948.

Where Commanders could manage to implement ground defence training, technical and non-technical airmen were required to be removed from primary tasks in order to do so. As an example, during February 1947, at No. 165 Radar Station at Hiroshima airfield, one RAAF Warrant Officer and four technical airmen were required to undergo three weeks of aerodrome defence training.¹⁶⁶ In addition, a Flight Sergeant, Corporal and 17 general and technical airmen completed a station defence course of two-hours per day over a five-day period for four weeks. According to the records, the only formal RAF ground defence training that was undertaken was Flight Lieutenant G. O'Bray, the No. 481 Maintenance Squadron's Adjutant, who was sent to complete GDO No. 1 Course at the BCOF Central Training School at Mitsuhamma, Japan.¹⁶⁷

While all RAAF airmen were required to undertake guard duty, and numbers were complemented by local employees, RAAF Guards also continued to oversee and conduct guard duty in line with their role. An example of RAAF Guard duties occurred when Leading Aircraftman McLorinan (RAAF Guard) was stationed with No. 381 Base Squadron at Otake and was on guard duty with some Japanese guards. One night he used his Thompson sub-machine gun to arrest a large number of Japanese nationals in possession of tents and other

¹⁶³ No. 81 (Fighter) Wing HQ, 1946, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁶⁴ McKay, 'Operational Record Book No. 82 Squadron', 1946, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 672, (unpaginated).

¹⁶⁵ Ashton, 'Title: [BCOF, Japan – General:] BCAIR [British Commonwealth Air]: Air Staff Instructions Nos. 1 to 6 – General instructions in compiling ground defence scheme', Australian War Memorial, 114, 130, (unpaginated).

¹⁶⁶ McKay, 'Operational Record Book No. 82 Squadron', 1947, National Archives of Australia, A9186, 672, (unpaginated).

¹⁶⁷ No. 481 Maintenance Squadron, 1947, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

RAAF equipment and, later the same night, he helped seize their boat in the south canal at Otake camp.¹⁶⁸

The allocation of guard duty to general RAAF airmen appeared to be met with some resistance as guard duty was allocated to all airmen according to rank. This is detailed by Corporal M. Cottee, an Airman Pilot at the time, where he explained that while airmen pilots were required to undertake guard duty, officer pilots were exempt. He stated:

Corporals in the RAAF usually get duties as guard commanders. So soon after arrival we almost had a revolt or a mutiny when the administration wanted to put us [airmen] pilots on guard duty. Here we were supposed to be training as fighter pilots, being side-tracked into that sort of thing and we objected very strongly. Our Commanding Officer supported us, and he wouldn't have a bar of it, so we never did do guard duty. It almost got to the stage when I was later flying in ops, flying on operations and coming back and doing guard duty. That stupid ranking system persisted right through my time in Japan and Korea.¹⁶⁹

The training of general airmen in airfield defence was widely recorded and set out in policy to be for the purpose of airmen being armed to protect their airfield in time of emergency. It is therefore surprising that a report came from the No. 77 Squadron Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader R.P. Curtis, which indicated that all small arms for the Squadron would be stored with No. 381 Central Store. The store was on the same base; however, this removed any option for rapid arming of airmen in the event of attack or emergency. He further stated that seven airmen were supplied by sections within the Squadron each night to do guard duty, however, No. 381 Base Squadron still retained Guards supplemented by the Japanese civilian guards for guard duty.¹⁷⁰ While there is no evidence within the files that Curtis created a defence scheme for No. 77 Squadron, by April 1950, the new Commanding Officer of the Squadron, Wing Commander L. Spence, alluded to the existence of a previous defence plan.

¹⁶⁸ No. 77 Squadron, 1947, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; C.E. McLorinan served in the Australian Army for the whole of the Second World War. A year after discharging, he joined the RAAF Interim Air Force as a RAAF Guard, having enlisted in Western Australia. He was attached to RAAF Base Richmond from January 1947, but in March was posted to No. 81 Wing Headquarters in Japan, and then No. 381 Base Squadron at Otake. McLorinan returned to Australia and RAAF Base Pearce in December 1948 and was discharged in January 1949.

¹⁶⁹ Milton Cottee, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 19 September 2003, University of New South Wales; An Airman Pilot is a pilot in the RAAF that holds the rank of a Non-Commissioned Officer. This type of pilot was used throughout the RAAF until early 1960s.

¹⁷⁰ No. 77 Squadron, 1947, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018

He is recorded as having reviewed the current defence scheme for his unit and due to the lack of personnel, he subsequently cancelled the scheme.¹⁷¹

Two months later, on 25 June 1950 at 0400 hours local time, North Korean forces launched an attack on the Republic of Korea.¹⁷² Within four days of that attack, the Australian Ambassador in Washington advised the United States Government that No. 77 Squadron RAAF, with 26 Mustangs, would be available for operations in Korea. RAAF Headquarters allocated the remaining airmen of the Guard mustering to the units supporting the Squadron, with Wing Commander Lou Spence's monthly report at the time recording, 'training will commence as soon as weapons become available'.¹⁷³

Following these events, the RAAF and more specifically No. 77 Squadron, implemented the policy on inter-service responsibilities in which the Australian Army was responsible for ground defence of the RAAF.¹⁷⁴ As a consequence, on 3 July 1950, Lieutenant D.M. Butler and 15 men of the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), with all their equipment, moved to Iwakuni Air Base, Japan, to provide security for RAAF ground installations.¹⁷⁵ By 15 July 1950, two other officers, two sergeants and 74 men moved to Iwakuni Air Base with 21 20 mm Polsten guns to provide 24-hour security and low-level AA defence.¹⁷⁶ However, a week later, the complete Army detachment had been recalled to Battalion lines due to re-organisation for deployment on operations to Korea.¹⁷⁷

This redeployment of the Army detachment meant that No. 77 Squadron again had inadequate security and no low-level AA defence capability, with the deployment to Korea imminent. Furthermore, almost simultaneously, the USAF Command at Iwakuni Air Base issued orders that all Air Force units were to be responsible for their own defence. According to the No. 77 Squadron Commanding Officer reports, the training of airmen for ground defence was then 'spasmodic' or even 'none existence [sic] at this moment due to air operations'.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ No. 77 Squadron, 1950, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁷² James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, Washington, 1998, vol. III, Part One, History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V003_P001.pdf, accessed 9 August 2010, p. 25.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Chief of Staff Memorandum No. 4/1950 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Air Defence, Anti-Aircraft and Ground Defence of Airfields, Shore Establishments.

¹⁷⁵ Anon., '3 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment July 1950 Australian Army unit war diaries, Korea', 1950, Australian War Memorial, 85, 4/18, (unpaginated).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ No. 77 Squadron, 1950, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

Subsequently, as new Guards were posted to the Squadron, they were trained on 20 mm Polsten guns, however, there were only sufficient numbers to man only two guns out of the 21 needed to defend the unit due to the minimal number of Guards posted to the Squadron.¹⁷⁹

By November 1950, while No. 77 Squadron was struggling with manning numbers and security requirements, No. 391 Base Squadron was managing guarding very differently. At the same time Squadron Leader L.W. Smith, the senior Administrative Officer No. 91 (Composite) Wing Headquarters, also held the secondary duty of Senior Defence Officer and in that capacity he directed No. 391 Base Squadron at Iwakuni to form personnel into three Rifle Flights under the command of Squadron Leader J.J. Rice (Administrative Officer) and Flight Lieutenant A.V.C. Taylor (Pilot) (secondary duties of Defence Officers No. 391 Base Squadron) and have the SNCOs and all personnel carry out training in small arms.¹⁸⁰ In addition, Taylor as Defence Officer No. 391 Base Squadron, organised the modification and refurbishment of all concrete shelters, aircraft revetments, the command post and the Battle Headquarters of RAAF Iwakuni.¹⁸¹ While the ground defence was being organised, the Squadron Commanding Officer's monthly reports state, paradoxically, that, 'slit trenches would not be dug until the position warrants it'.¹⁸² Even by December 1950, the security of No. 391 Base Squadron was still reliant on indigenous Japanese guards, under the supervision of RAAF Guards and Service Police, while the air base itself was being secured by 3rd Air Police Squadron USAF.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ No. 391 *Operational Record Book*, 1950, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; No. 391 (Base) Squadron *Operational Record Book*, 1951, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Squadron Leader L.W. Smith was of the Administrative & Special Duties ADO Branch of the RAAF since early 1943. Smith would also be the Officer Commanding ADO Section at No. 1 Recruit Depot Shepparton from 1943. Smith would continue serving post-war but was forced to perform administrative duties when the ADO trade was removed from the RAAF. Smith would serve in Japan as the Senior Administrative Officer and as Senior Defence Officer for No. 91 Wing until his posting back to Australia.

¹⁸¹ No. 391 *Operational Record Book*, 1954, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

JK0486

Picture 6: Corporal M. Buscombe, a RAAF Guard, on guard duty at Kimpo Air Base talking to Aircraftman D. Kirkwood, 1952. Buscombe completed 145 days service in the Korean War. (Australian War Memorial, JK0486).

Once deployed to Korea, No. 77 Squadron would have Flight Lieutenant F.W. Barnes, D.F.C., A.F.C. (Pilot) and Pilot Officers H.B. Howard (Pilot) and J.D. Alford (Pilot) as unit Defence Officers command the Guards and the airfield defence component for the Squadron. From November 1950 until November 1954, the duration of the Korean War, the RAAF was to have 29 Guards on a rotational attachment between No. 77 Squadron, which had moved to Korea, and No. 391 Base Squadron, at Iwakune (Picture 6 and 7).¹⁸⁴ Some of these Guards served more than 250 days of continual operational service in Korea, while one completed 479 days.¹⁸⁵ The Guards formed the core of the defence flights for No. 77 Squadron in Korea, provided supervision for prisoners of war and Korean workers and maintained security foot patrols within the unit's internal perimeter.¹⁸⁶ There is evidence of Guards carrying out nuclear, biological and chemical warfare practice and one Guard was Mentioned in Despatches for security and airfield defence duty in Korea. It is clear however, that at this stage there were no GDOs nor ADIs deployed to this theatre.

¹⁸⁴ No. 391 (Base) Squadron 1954, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra; RAAF Guards such as Corporal M.F. Buscombe. He served with No. 77 Squadron in Korea, where he was awarded a Mentioned in Despatches in recognition of distinguished airfield defence and security service in Korea.

¹⁸⁵ Anon., *Nominal Roll of Australian Veterans of the Korean War*, <http://www.koreanroll.gov.au>, accessed 9 March 2014.

¹⁸⁶ No. 391 (Base) Squadron 1954, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra.



Picture 7: Photo of Frank Miller, a RAAF Guard, at Kimpo airfield in Korea 1953. (Photograph provided by Neville Miller)

National Service

Following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and as previously outlined, the Australian Government introduced a compulsory National Service Training Scheme for males aged 18 years old under the *National Service Act 1950* (Cth). This was the first occasion that the RAAF had been part of a National Service Scheme and airmen of all different musterings would be recruited. An annual period of compulsory military training of 176 days was required, after which trainees would be transferred to the RAAF Reserve for five years after their call-up date. In 1950, Flight Lieutenant L.C. Conduit was posted to RAAF Headquarters as Staff Officer Defence, and in conjunction with Flight Lieutenant M.W. Anderson, Staff Officer Ground Defence Training Command Headquarters, commenced planning for the formation of airfield defence flights at each National Service Training location.¹⁸⁷ In Bennett's 1996 description of his meeting with Conduit in 1950, he reflected:

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; Frank Miller guard duty at Kimpo Airfield Korea 1953, photograph, 1953, original held by Neville Miller.

Prior to the first intake [of National Service trainees] I was invited to visit the Directorate of Training . . . There I met Flight Lieutenant Lionel Conduit for the first time. The training scheme and ground defence details worked out by Lionel and approved by the then Director of Training were most comprehensive, and it was obvious that a most skilful, knowledgeable and dedicated person was responsible. He was certainly held in high regard by the Director of Training.¹⁸⁸

By 1950, RAAF Headquarters had established a post for an Airfield Defence Adviser on staff, which at this time was held by a Wing Commander of the RAF Regiment.¹⁸⁹ Bennett records at the time that the views of this adviser appeared to be the development of a force along similar lines to the RAF Regiment, but it was obvious there was little support among RAAF Air Staff Officers for this proposal.¹⁹⁰ In addition, Bennett observed that the Senior Air Staff did not support the idea of Ground Defence Sections or the Aerodrome Defence Squadrons, which formed for the National Service Training Scheme, and were to be based on the RAF Regiment structure.¹⁹¹ Despite the views of many senior staff, the planning was progressing and the Ground Gunners syllabus for training was a direct copy of the RAF Regiment Ground Gunners Basic course.¹⁹²

Therefore, No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron at RAAF Base Mallala, South Australia, was formed on 3 July 1951 for the purpose of training National Service Trainees in the Ground Gunner mustering.¹⁹³ The first Ground Gunners course of National Service Trainees commenced on 30 July 1951, with a total of only 36 airmen.¹⁹⁴ A total of three National Service Trainee Ground Gunner courses were completed at No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron with a total of 106 Ground Gunners qualifying, with each course completed within 6 months and one week. Once the training was over these airmen were posted to the RAAF Reserves.¹⁹⁵ A number of Australian newspapers reported on the progress of these trainees, where, according to the RAAF and Senior Officers, these airmen would be trained like infantry

¹⁸⁸ Gordon Bennett, 'Lest We Forget', Airfield Defence Association Australia, June, 1996, pp. 28-29.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² R.M. Ick, 'No. 3 National Service Training Unit RAAF Canberra', 1954, National Archives of Australia, AA1969/100, 3/1/AIR/PART 1, (unpaginated); No. 3 National Service Training Unit 1953, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁹³ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Agendum No. 10983.

¹⁹⁴ No. 4 National Service Training Unit 1956, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron staff were four Drill Instructors, one Clerk General, one Armourer, one Equipment Assistant, one Fitter Armourer, one Armourer Mechanic, one Fitter Drive Motor Transport. Two Drive Motor Transport and four ADIs.

¹⁹⁵ National Service Training Ground Gunners Courses at No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron: No. 1: 30 July 1951 – 21 January 1952, No. 2: 12 March 1952 – 1 September 1952, No. 3: 8 September 1952 – 2 March 1953.

and this training was the ‘ . . . first step by the RAAF towards equipping its own ground fighting squadrons’.¹⁹⁶

As previously mentioned, and simultaneous to the formation of No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron, in July 1951 Air Force Headquarters had released the instruction to form No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron at Western Junction, Tasmania by 1 February 1952 for the training of National Service Trainees as Ground Gunners.¹⁹⁷ The building of the facilities commenced, and equipment was moved to a RAAF Store Depot for transportation to Western Junction. However, RAAF Headquarters noted a distinct issue with the building of facilities on time for training the airmen.¹⁹⁸

During 1952, obstacles were arising in the development of the Scheme. Flying Officer K.J. Myers, Commanding Officer of No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron, reported difficulties with the RAAF store system that included the unavailability of basic clothing for infantrymen, with the Ground Gunners having to be issued Army clothing from Army stores.¹⁹⁹ Other stores lacking included infantry webbing equipment, large packs and the movie projectors for training films (which were not issued to No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron but allocated to No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron and promptly placed into storage). The Assault and Bayonet course, which was a pre-requisite for graduation as a Ground Gunner, was not completed in time due to a lack of materials to build the assault course, and therefore this part of the training was simply overlooked. It was reported that while there was a 25-yard firing range, there were no grenade throwing facilities, no field engineering equipment and no field eating equipment. Weapons had however been procured with Bren guns, Thompson submachine guns and rifles having been issued by the RAAF, and mortars and anti-tank weapons from Army stores at Keswick Barracks.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ ‘Ground Defence Duties’ *Cairns Post*, 26 October 1953, p. 3; ‘Conferring on Trainees’, *Advertiser*, 21 July 1951, p. 4; ‘Third Intake Of RAAF Trainees’, *Advertiser*, 7 March 1952, p. 2; ‘Buildings “Blown Up” in RAAF Exercise’, *Advertiser*, 3 May 1952, p. 5; ‘Trainees Praised At Mallala’, *Advertiser*, 21 January 1952, p. 4; ‘Trainees for RAAF’, *News*, 10 March 1952, p. 12.

¹⁹⁷ Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Agendum No. 10984; Administrative Instruction No. 5/51.

¹⁹⁸ The structure of No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron was slightly different to that of No. 1 A.D.S. in that two GDO’s six ADIs, one Fitter Armourer, two Fitter DMT’s, three Cooks, one Cook Assistant, one Clerk General and only two Ground Gunner courses, each of 36 airmen, were planned.

¹⁹⁹ No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron 1951, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra; No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron 1952, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra; No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron 1953, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

By November 1952, seven months after the proposed formation date for No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron, the facilities had not been completed and a further Instruction was issued by Air Force Headquarters to disband the Squadron without forming stating, 'Accordingly it has been decided not to proceed with the formation of No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron'.²⁰¹ Within six months of the failure to establish No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron at Western Junction, Headquarters Southern Area had declared that there was no longer a requirement for No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron as part of the National Service Training Scheme and that it was to disband by 25 March 1953.²⁰²

Following the cancelled formation of No. 2 and then disbandment No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadrons, in 1953, the RAAF moved the training for Ground Gunners back to the Ground Defence Flights located at RAAF bases in southern and western Australia.²⁰³ Initially, the National Service Ground Defence Flights would be manned by DIs until ADI and GDO strength enabled them to take over. In addition, No. 3 National Service Training Unit, Canberra, was formed in November 1953, with the first intake on 4 January 1954 composed of 36 National Service Trainees. As part of the training schedule, the trainees carried out a night infiltration exercise at the Majura Range. During the night of 14 April 1954, 60 trainees, in heavy rain, thunder storms and 'bitter winds', defended RAAF Base Canberra against an invading force from the Royal Military College Duntroon.²⁰⁴ During October of the same year, they participated in an 'Air-Sea Rescue' of an Auster aircraft missing in the Blue Mountains.²⁰⁵ The records of National Service Trainees confirm that airmen located at Rathmines, Wagga and Pearce were remustered to Ground Gunners at the end of the training while other trainees that undertook general ground defence training, at the Ground Defence Flights Amberley, Laverton and Point Cook, were remustered to Guard.

As training and exercises were preparing the Ground Gunners for a reserve combat-ready airfield defence capability, there is evidence that training was often delayed due to issues with the lack of equipment and personnel within the National Service Training Flights, resulting in some airmen not completing the full syllabus. Further, it is recorded that No. 1 National Service Training Flight could not carry out any small arms firing due to the

²⁰¹ Administrative Instruction No. 34/52.

²⁰² Air Power Centre, *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Agendum No. 10984 Supplement No. 2; Administrative Instruction No. 2/53.

²⁰³ The RAAF Bases for the Ground Gunner training were Pearce, Point Cook, Canberra and Rathmines.

²⁰⁴ No. 3 National Service Training Unit 1954, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

unavailability of .303 ammunition in the RAAF. Additionally, the shortage of GDOs and ADIs caused significant obstacles to training when the officers and airmen were attached to Army units for career training.²⁰⁶

The same problems plaguing No. 1 National Service Training Unit would also be faced by No. 4 National Service Training Unit. The National Service Training Unit at RAAF Wagga commenced operations as a separate unit, and airmen who had enlisted to become Ground Gunners in intake Nos. 12, 15 and 16, were unable to be trained due to the lack of instructors and the airmen of these courses and only completed general service ground defence training.²⁰⁷ Despite the establishment for instructor positions, by May 1956, No. 4 National Service Training Unit Wagga was unable to fill the positions of Flight Lieutenant, Flying Officer GDO, Corporal ADIs and a Sergeant ADI for the next two years.²⁰⁸

The National Service Training Scheme Units still maintained general service training, pilot training and ground defence training of Ground Gunners. By late 1954 and during 1955, a proposed policy for the RAAF National Service implementation had authorised the RAAF to form LAA squadrons for protection against low flying aircraft. It was also envisaged that the Army would provide coordination in operations, training, equipment and organisation.²⁰⁹ Air Commodore W.N. Gibson, Staff Officer RAAF Headquarters, whose report had outlined changes in ground defence training, noted that the RAAF had placed an order for three 40 mm Bofors guns from the Australian Army and Oerlikon guns from the Navy. He records that, a total of 180 20 mm Oerlikon guns were to be transferred to the RAAF.²¹⁰ These were to be allocated to the proposed LAA squadrons.

The proposed formation of LAA squadrons in the RAAF caused some enquiry among senior officers. On 2 February 1956, an unknown RAAF officer sent a handwritten note to Squadron Leader Bennett requesting information about the formation of RAAF LAA units.²¹¹ On 8 February 1956, Bennett responded that three LAA squadrons, each of 12 guns, would be

²⁰⁶ No. 1 National Service Training Unit 1955, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; According to the Commanding Officer Squadron Leader Brackenridge, as of the 3 February 1955 the unit had been without ammunition for two weeks after the month of reduced firing as the ammunition ran out. As of 4 March 1955, RAAF Base Amberley was completely out of ammunition.

²⁰⁷ No. 4 National Service Training Unit 1956, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Military Board Instruction 4/55.

²¹⁰ Anon., 'National Service Training Ground Defence Units – Locations', 1954, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated); W. Gibson, 'Reorganisation of N.S. Ground Defence Training', 51A, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/90/83, (unpaginated).

²¹¹ Military Board Instruction 4/55.

formed in the RAAF at the commencement of war. A comment is raised by Group Captain W.E. Townsend Director of Operations who stated the DCAS (Candy) had asked why the RAAF needed Bofors and Staghound cars in the service. In a similar vein to questions that would be raised later that year, Candy is reported to have posed the questions, ‘What we [the RAAF] . . . would shoot with these guns and how we intend to use the cars?’²¹²

These questions are in contrast to what was occurring in the RAF at the time. By 1956, with the RAF already possessing multiple armoured car squadrons, it appears that some thought was given to the procurement of armoured cars for airfield defence purposes.²¹³ In conjunction with the LAA weaponry, Group Captain C. Eaton, Director of Operations, requested the transfer of 12 Staghound Armoured Cars M6 for the proposed war airfield defence squadrons and the training of Ground Gunners in the National Service Training Scheme, with a plan that these were to be in RAAF stores by the end of 1956.²¹⁴ The records further show that Eaton, a strong supporter of a full RAAF airfield defence capability, gained approval from the Army for the transfer of the armoured cars. However, Eaton conceded that RAAF financial circumstances and the lower priority for this type of vehicle meant obtaining them would be deferred until a later date.²¹⁵

As CAS, McCauley continued to develop the National Service Training Scheme within the RAAF, with a focus more on his proposed Airfield Defence, Armoured Car and LAA Squadrons.²¹⁶ In 1957, McCauley had planned for National Service Training Units at a number of bases and flights, to conduct various ground defence tasks (Table 1). McCauley’s plan was for reserve Airfield Defence Squadrons and when war commenced, they would form a RAAF Regiment. He planned that the RAAF would have 590 Ground Gunner Rifleman, with 336 Ground Gunner/LAA and 72 Ground Gunner/Armoured Car airmen qualified. McCauley had outlined that the principal members of the Airfield Defence, Armoured Car and LAA Squadrons in war, were to be reserve Ground Gunners, PAF GDOs and some ADIs located at Rathmines, Canberra, Point Cook and Pearce.²¹⁷ According to McCauley, over a period of five years the RAAF National Service Training Scheme had trained 2896 Ground Gunners at

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Nigel Warwick, *In Every Place*, Great Britain, 2014, pp. 551-590.

²¹⁴ B.A. Eaton, ‘RAF Regiment Field Squadrons’, 11A, 1955, National Archives of Australia, A705, 211/1/2379, (unpaginated); B.A. Eaton, ‘RAAF Air Staff Requirement OR/MT.7 for an Armoured Car’, 8E, 1956, National Archives of Australia, A705, 211/1/2379, (unpaginated).

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ J.P.J. McCauley, ‘National Service Training – Planning 1957’, 60A, 1957, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated).

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Rathmines, Canberra, Point Cook and Pearce to meet the war time requirement of 1680 Ground Gunners (based on losses).

Table 1: Deployment of National Service Training Units to RAAF Bases in 1957 (National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5).

National Service Training Unit (NSTU)	Base	Strength
No. 1 NSTU	Amberley	Technical Flight Flying Flight General Service Flight (Ground Defence Flight)
No. 2 NSTU	Rathmines	Technical Flights x 4 Light Anti-Aircraft Squadron Flying Flight
No. 3 NSTU	Canberra	Aerodrome Defence Squadron made up of: • Rifle Flights x 3 • Mortar Flight
No. 4 NSTU	Wagga	General Service Flights x 3 (Ground Defence Flight)
No. 5 NSTU	Laverton	Technical Flight Flying Flight Medical Flight General Service Flights x 3 (Ground Defence Flight)
No. 6 NSTU	Point Cook	Armoured Car Squadron Technical Flight Radio Flight General Service Flights x 3 (Ground Defence Flight)
No. 7 NSTU	Pearce	Aerodrome Defence Squadron made up of: • Rifle Flights x 3 • Mortar Flight

It is interesting that McCauley's proposal for the overall strength of Airfield Defence Squadrons at war would have been the equivalent of the full strength of Guards of Mocatta's earlier RAAF Regiment proposed in 1945. However, McCauley's plans were fraught with equipment and resourcing failures as none of the mortars, Bofors guns nor Oerlikon cannon arrived at the squadrons for training the Ground Gunners. Despite the planning and orders made

earlier, the files outline that the ordered Bofors guns stayed with the Army and the Oerlikon cannon remained in Navy stores.²¹⁸ The armoured cars were eventually transferred and stored at RAAF facilities until later used as ground targets for aircraft bombing practice.²¹⁹ Therefore, all Ground Gunners were instead trained as Riflemen, and the formation of the RAAF's LAA and Armoured Car Squadrons never eventuated. By June 1957, No. 4 National Service Training Unit Wagga, had disbanded after the completion of Nos. 17, 18, and 19 courses.²²⁰ Further, within months of McCauley's reorganisation of the National Service Training Scheme, it was abruptly ended.²²¹

Over the time period between the end of 1957 until 1959, the training of airmen in ground combat was reported to be so far below standards that some within RAAF Home Command held that the RAAF was no longer fit for operational deployment and could not be sent outside of Australia if it had to provide its own airfield defence.²²² Additionally, according to RAAF Home Command, there had been no ground defence training of General Duty Officers in two years as it was no longer viewed as a tasking required for officers.²²³ Air Vice Marshal A.M. Murdoch, DCAS, stated:

The lack of weapons (at units), the poor knowledge of Aerodrome Defence Instructors and the overall belief that is imbedded in RAAF psyche of 'others will protect me' and 'I only have to fix aircraft – I'm not army', is making the RAAF not operational.²²⁴

With the loss of the National Service Training Scheme, RAAF Commanders once again had to rely on the use of every airman to conduct security and defence as a secondary duty. The repetitive nature of the arguments for and against are again noted in the files. On 21 August 1959, the Director of Operations, Group Captain Townsend, drafted a letter to CAS Scherger in which he stated that the minimising of threats towards airfields by the RAAF is 'wrong' and the prevailing idea that only 15 per cent of airmen were required to be trained in ground combat was 'erroneous'.²²⁵ He went on to assert that the idea of only training airmen once they arrive

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Paul D. Handel, *The Staghound Armoured Car in Australian Service*, Australia, in ANZAC STEEL, <http://anzacsteel.hobbyvista.com/index.htm>, accessed 9 February 2010.

²²⁰ No. 4 National Service Training Unit 1957, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²²¹ Anon., 'The RAAF Experience of National Service', *Air Power Development Centre Bulletin*, iss. 21, 2005.

²²² A.M. Murdoch, 'RAAF Ground Defence Training', 91, 1959, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated).

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Townsend, 'Ground Defence Training – Small Arms Requirements', 95, 1959, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated).

at the operational location or forward area is inappropriate and places them and the RAAF in a position that is considered 'liable'.²²⁶ Townsend outlined, 'An attack by minor bodies of air dropped troops could not be repelled' and, 'If any realistic action is to be taken to meet this threat it would be necessary to arm at least 50% [RAAF]'.²²⁷ With greater disapproval he stated, 'The concept of training personnel in the use of automatic weapons only if and when they are posted to an overseas theatre is not practicable'.²²⁸ Within a few months, Air Vice Marshal I.D. McLachlan stated, 'Due to assessed threat level – very low, to Australian bases, all automatic machine gun training is discontinued'.²²⁹ By October 1959 another letter from McLachlan indicated the storage of weapons on RAAF bases will be kept to a minimum, ' . . . for training of Armourers and ADIs, so the burden will be lessened for the maintenance and security of these weapons'.²³⁰ All surplus weapons were then withdrawn from RAAF bases in order to alleviate security requirements.²³¹

The archival records demonstrate that in 1959 and 1960, the RAAF was on occasions, conducting weapon training on the rifle for airmen and the pistol for officers; however, there was rarely machine gun training or even submachine gun training. Ground combat training for aircrew was, however, carried out with additional courses in combat survival at the Army Jungle Training facility at Canungra.²³² By December 1959, all CAF Squadrons had been reorganised into ground squadrons and by early the following year the CAF personnel commenced a ground training programme under the control of Base Defence Sections.²³³ These Base Defence Sections were formed on every airbase in Australia. The tasking for these sections was firstly, to account for the storage of small arms, secondly to train all of RAAF personnel in ground combat and the use of weapons. It was noted though that the number of weapons held at RAAF units was still below what could be used in war or emergency.²³⁴

²²⁶ A.M. Murdoch, 'RAAF Ground Defence Training', 91, 1959, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated).

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ I.D. McLachlan, 'RAAF Ground Defence Training', 110, 1959, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 5, (unpaginated).

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² RAAF Base Squadron Amberley 1956, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; RAAF Base Squadron Amberley 1960, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; The archives provide no indications that the ground defence training was either weapon training or ground combat training or both. However, the archival files on ground defence training and ground defence policy at this time indicate only weapon training.

²³³ RAAF No. 23 City of Brisbane Auxiliary Squadron 1960, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²³⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s these were called Ground Combat Flights. Most RAAF Bases had their own, and they were manned by any airmen of any mustering that could spare the time. All of these flights were commanded by ADIs and then ADGs and their primary duty was to protect the base when the base did not have RAAF ground defence forces such as ADGs.

The decade ending in 1960 was one of significant change for RAAF airfield defence. However, the changes were again plagued by reoccurring arguments and theories, differences of view regarding how to prepare adequately trained airmen in airfield defence for future wars. This decade also saw detailed planning for the development of airfield defence squadrons that were later disbanded, failed to form or inadequately resourced. What was different about this decade compared to previous eras, was the detailed planning for expansion of airfield defence capabilities, the planning for RAAF Regiment-sized operations, the idea of reserves of airfield defence capability and in the latter half of the decade, the increasing hostilities in South East Asia leading Australia to consider its international obligations in the region.

Section 3 – Analysis of Policy

‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’.

George Santayana, The Life of Reason, 1905-1906.

Not in Limbo

The study of current known RAAF airfield defence history provides only a few full pages of information for the time period, 1946 to 1960, which inadequately portrays this period of airfield defence as ‘in limbo’.²³⁵ Many authors of previously written histories have described a ‘loss’ of airfield defence capability post-war as being a result of the disbandment of the Aerodrome Defence Squadrons, however, the research shows that the loss of the squadrons did not cause, or equate to, the complete loss of Guards and their service. While No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron was disbanded and No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron failed to form, evidence shows that airfield defence in the RAAF, both in terms of security and ground combat training, had continued in some form throughout this period.²³⁶ Additionally, an erroneous notion raised in the current histories was that ADOs, ADIs and Guards were all discharged or transferred to the Army following the Second World War.

The known history for this period, as outlined by Kerr, suggests that airfield defence in the RAAF was ‘Twenty Years in Limbo’. Contrary to Kerr’s claims, at the end of the Second World War the Aerodrome Defence Officer Branch (some were forced to change Branch/Category) and the ADI mustering (some remustered to DI) were removed from the RAAF and the slow reduction of the Guard mustering resulted in the RAAF being unable to provide full airfield defence capabilities in the years that followed.²³⁷ It is clear that the Guard mustering continued past 1945 and remained until 1959, when the last Guard was transferred to the Reserves; there are no records of men transferring to the Army following the disbandment of the Airfield Defence Squadrons in 1945. The Guard mustering continued to undertake security tasking at Depots and some RAAF Stations in Australia, while during the Korean War airfield defence tasking was carried out, albeit with lower numbers. When the National Service Training Scheme commenced, the RAAF already had Guards and DIs, and

²³⁵ Kerr, ‘History of Ground Defence’, p. 30.

²³⁶ Within the formation files for Nos. 1 and 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron in the NSTS, both Aerodrome and Airfield are used interchangeably.

²³⁷ Kerr, ‘History of Ground Defence’, p. 30.

would create the Ground Gunner mustering in the Reserves to man the war established Airfield Defence Squadrons. To train these Reserve Ground Gunners in infantry tactics, the RAAF re-established the ADO and ADI trades only four years after they were removed.²³⁸

Guards had provided security from the end of the Second World War and into the Korean War. By the end of 1954 there were less than 100 PAF Guards in the RAAF, and these Guards had served with some success and honour, with some having been Mentioned in Despatches. This was occurring at a time when the RAAF continued to be plagued with a clear divergence of view on how best to defend their airfields from air and ground attack and strong competition for the allocation of scarce resources and funding. It is clear that airfield defence in the RAAF was not 'in a mess' during this time period, but conversely, the evidence shows senior commanders attempting to follow RAAF policies and Joint Army-RAAF and allied policies on responsibilities for the safety and security of their bases, units, personnel and assets.²³⁹

Despite the challenges faced by the manning required for operations in Japan and Korea, the evidence shows that wartime airfield defence policies developed in 1943 were working reasonably well in those operational areas. Back in Australia the guarding system which had a central focus on securing the front gate of stores depots and completing internal security checks during a peacetime Air Force, was also working well. The evidence illustrates that the Guard mustering (including War Dog Handlers) would continue to be part of the RAAF for the next 15 years providing security at RAAF installations. RAAF Service Police had also played an important part of the security of RAAF installations post-war, supplementing the lack of numbers of the Guard mustering. It is clear from the archival evidence, that the majority of Guards that did not discharge (along with those recruited) post-war continued to provide security and airfield defence for the RAAF from 1946 onwards. However, from 1946 onwards a review of the guarding system, that relied on general musterings (other than Guards) for front gate duty, revealed that this plan did not meet its objectives of the RAAF during the post-war period. The investigation found that local Commanders were struggling with a lack of resources, 'poor attitude' of airmen undertaking the duty, and a lack of discipline.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Anon., 'Ground Combat Training', 32A 1949, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2088 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²³⁹ Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished, p. 10.

²⁴⁰ V.E. Hancock, 'Standard of RAAF Guards', 1A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

In addition to a general lack of resources for airfield defence post-war, the files demonstrate a lack of post-war understanding of RAAF airfield defence and the preparation and ongoing training required to defend airfields from attack in a war. The impacts of post-war policies and resourcing issues were keenly felt by flying squadrons requiring ground defence during the occupation of Japan and Korean operations. Despite the continued lack of support for the resourcing and funding of ground combat airfield defence, Conduit led the development of airfield defence training in the National Service Training Scheme. This resulted in a resurgence of a force entirely developed for the RAAF Reserves to address the need for airfield defence in wartime. What is clear from the archival evidence, is that despite the efforts of a few visionary officers to develop a capability for ground defence, the National Service Training Scheme had only lasted a short number of years. The National Service Training Scheme and the airfield defence component was again plagued by a lack of support from key senior officers and commitment from RAAF Headquarters. This led to a lack of resources, weapons, personnel and qualified instructors on bases across Australia and overseas.

While the evidence now clearly shows that during the Korean War, Guards were undertaking security tasks around Australia, Japan and Korea, current airfield defence history holds that there were only ADOs or ADIs serving in Korea.²⁴¹ On the contrary, the evidence demonstrates that at that stage, ADOs and ADIs tasking was limited to training staff in the National Service Training Scheme, based in Australia, and they did not serve in Korea. The officers that took up airfield defence duties in Korea did so as a secondary duty, such as the Administrative Officers who were ex-ADOs, taking on airfield defence tasking. What is now irrefutable is that the only security or airfield defence force the RAAF had in Korea included 28 Guards and five Service Police. What is now known fact is that airmen and Guards of the RAAF performed airfield defence and security for their units in this war.

When it comes to the National Service Training Scheme and the need for security at RAAF stations, National Service airmen were completing general service training or the basic airfield defence training (Guards), while at the same time being utilised to undertake gate guard duty and security. This investigation into the National Service Training Scheme shows that, at the commencement of the Scheme, the RAAF (through the orders of CAS Jones) stressed that there would be no funding or direction for ongoing training of National Service Guards and

²⁴¹ Hombsch, 'An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence', unpublished, p. 10.

Ground Gunners.²⁴² These airmen were subsequently posted to reserve squadrons, where in the 1950s these were flying units until early 1960 when they became 'ground squadrons'.²⁴³ At RAAF Amberley, Warren Powell explained:

I was a motor vehicle mechanic before enlisting in the National Service Training Scheme and I enlisted as Motor Transport. I did the training which comprised of drill for much of the time and worked at the Motor Transport Section. We did some airfield defence and a week of bush exercise. Once this was done, we were used to do security at the antenna station tower for RAAF Base Amberley and also did gate guard, that's it.²⁴⁴

It can now be stated, that Jones as CAS had no practical knowledge with modern RAAF security and airfield defence. Jones' concept of a 'global war' was based on the last war, where he envisaged having ample time to call-up and enlist CAF airmen into the Guard mustering. He planned that, only then, SGUs would be newly created, fully equipped and resourced.²⁴⁵ Jones demonstrated no knowledge or acceptance of the dynamics of a modern warfare, as advocated by his contemporaries, the new emerging capabilities of nuclear war, and that there were already hundreds of newly trained Ground Gunners at his disposal. Even so, why did the RAAF not enlist Guards or deploy the National Service Ground Gunners trained in airfield defence and establish SGUs for the protection of RAAF assets in the Korean War? This could have been a response to Jones' concept of a 'global war'. However, within the files investigated there is no indication at all of CAF activation, nor the deployment of National Service Ground Gunners who were already trained, no request for AA guns or armoured cars, and no formation of SGUs. The files are silent.

Unfortunately, for No. 77 Squadron, on the 25 June 1950, the Commanding Officer was faced with predicted set of circumstances arising from the Australian inter-service airfield defence agreements. Upon the invasion of South Korea, the Army 3rd Battalion RAR had

²⁴² Anon., 'Ground Combat Training', 32A 1949, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/2088 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁴³ Ground squadrons are those manned by RAAF ground staff, with no aircraft, for the purpose of supporting ground operations of flying squadrons.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Warren Powell and Sean Carwardine, 4 June 2017; Warren Powell enlisted into the National Service Training Scheme as a Motor Transport Driver. During his general service training in airfield defence he completed exercises where he and his fellow airmen protected an area from attackers. Additionally, Powell indicated that his course was used to do security at the front gate of RAAF Base Amberley and at the base antenna station.

²⁴⁵ Anon., 'Minutes of a Conference Held at RAAF Headquarters on Monday, 19th July 1948, to Discuss Fundamentals of Initial Action Necessary to Place the RAAF on a War-Time Basis', 12A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

supplied men and AA gun systems for LAA defence and for the security of the Squadron, in keeping with then current policy, that the Army would be responsible for all defence against ground and air attacks.²⁴⁶ Then within a month after this joint defence policy being activated, 3rd Battalion RAR were withdrawn due to the Army's own commitments. With no other Army units to replace them, the RAAF was then ill-prepared to take over defence of the unit and once No. 77 Squadron moved into Korea on active deployment, there was no Australian Army support for airfield defence or LAA forthcoming.²⁴⁷ The Australian Army had very good reasons for not complying with this agreed tasking and responsibility due to more pressing priorities on its part, yet at the same time the RAAF had seemingly no foresight or preparedness for this eventuality, despite the warnings of a few men such as McCauley, Scherger and Bladin. This situation required No. 77 Squadron to rely on a handful of Guards, recruitment of indigenous personnel, the knowledge of ex-ADOs currently filling the role as secondary duties, and a heavy reliance on the USAF Air Police to provide defence against attacks.

Under Jones and Langslow's airfield defence model, every airman and officer would be expected to take up weapons and defend the airfield, yet in reality there was minimal (sporadic) or no weapons or combat training provided. Therefore, it could have been reasonably foreseeable that these airmen, in the event of war and/or local emergency, would not be able to provide an effective defence, and at worst, could become targets for a potential attacking enemy, with loss of life and assets a predictable result. This concern regarding the ground defence of airfields was also raised in relation to the state of security of bases in Australia. In the Government Estimates Appropriation Bill raised in the Senate, the ability of a military service (RAAF) to secure its equipment and assets was raised.²⁴⁸ The poor security reported in that investigation was a reflection of the lack of planning and resourcing under RAAF Air Board policies of the time. The files on airfield defence and security for this time period show no response or outcome for the noted poor security, and there is no correspondence between services or RAAF staff officers addressing the issues raised.

By the end of 1950, the RAAF had reduced the Guard mustering to approximately 85 airmen, around 25 GDOs and some 60 ADIs in the PAF, while approximately 2000 Ground Gunners and around 200 Guards were in the RAAF Reserves. Likewise, the number of machine

²⁴⁶ Anon., '3 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment July 1950 Australian Army unit war diaries, Korea', 1950, Australian War Memorial, 85, 4/18, (unpaginated).

²⁴⁷ No. 81 (Fighter) Wing HQ, 1946, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁴⁸ Aylett, 'Estimates Appropriation Bill', 6A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

guns and rifles had been reduced to non-deployable levels. In planning for war, the vehicle and weaponry requirements for Airfield Defence Squadrons had been identified as armoured cars, LAA gun systems and mortars. Evidence that demonstrates the planning and tailoring to qualify officers and airmen as instructors, such as requiring them to complete Army courses, in addition to the National Service Training Scheme, is overwhelming.²⁴⁹ Additionally, Conduit had started to arrange for ADIs and GDOs to be trained in the use of LAA guns, mortars, anti-armour weapons and armoured cars, but this was not implemented. A major obstacle to the development of these units were that the RAAF had none of the equipment to create these units if war had commenced, especially a 'global war' of Jones' description. At this time, some of the permanent Guards still serving in the RAAF would be deployed to Japan and Korea for operations in security and airfield defence, yet in numbers insufficient to prevent reliance on other airmen, Army or allied nations.

In 1955, when Bennett took over from Conduit at RAAF Command Operations (Ground Defence), he would once again support the proposals put forward by McCauley, Mocatta, Bladin and Scherger for a permanent airfield defence force with his own 52-page proposal for the formation of an Airfield Defence Squadron (Rifle). This proposal would go the way of Mocatta's proposal, as the archival files show no correspondence about the proposal, no discussion with RAAF Headquarters and no extra discussion on file via handwritten notes. For the next five years until 1960, Bennett would follow Conduit's airfield defence training plans for the National Service Training Scheme, and he would also seek direction and guidance from RAF Regiment officers in the FESR. He also sought support from Eaton, Scherger and McCauley to source the equipment for the training of Ground Gunners and develop a standard qualification for range operations. Although, over these 14 years, RAAF airfield defence never reached the manpower levels, or the full scope of airfield defence capability employed in the Second World War.

For some of the time that Bennett was serving in RAAF Command Operations, Air Marshal Sir J. McCauley was CAS. At the beginning of his tenure in 1954, he wanted the RAAF to take a major role in airfield defence (including defence from ground and air attacks in addition to internal security) with the creation of airfield defence squadrons for wartime

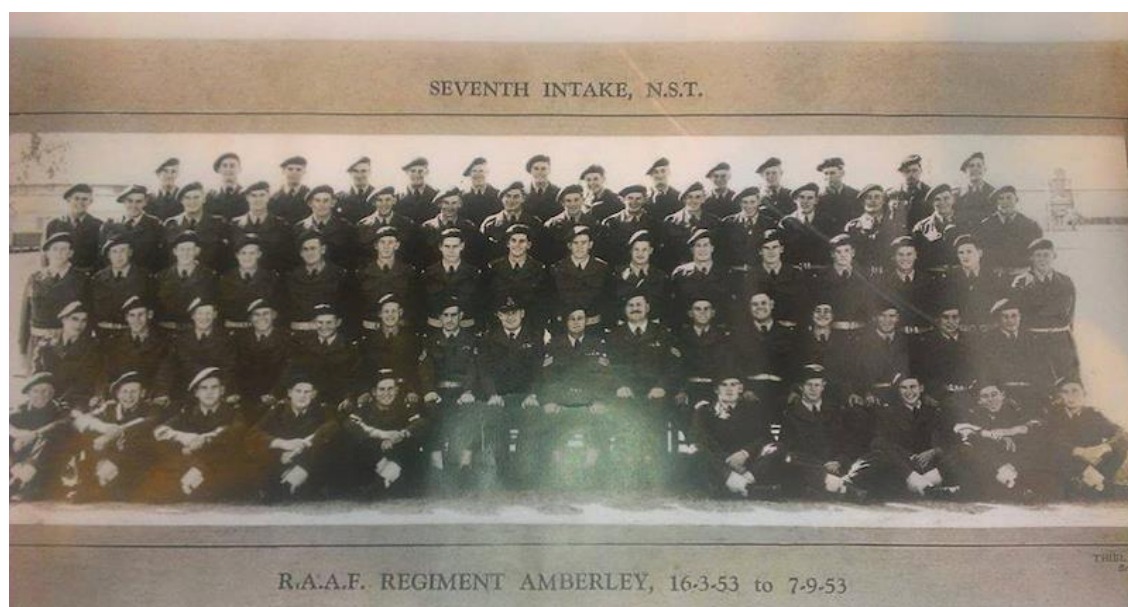
²⁴⁹ In 1951 Conduit held the first RAAF airfield defence meeting (recorded) of GDOs at RAAF Headquarters with Flight Lieutenant G. Bennett, Flight Lieutenant J.I. Brough, Flight Lieutenant J.K. Bothwell, Flight Lieutenant J. Dewar, Flight Lieutenant H.O. Ross and Flight Lieutenant K.R. Glanville in attendance and discussed the way forward for RAAF National Service Training Scheme and RAAF airfield defence.

operations. The archived evidence shows that even as CAS, McCauley faced opposition to his vision of a RAAF Regiment in a peacetime Air Force, in addition to manning, funding and resourcing restraints. The effects of these funding and resourcing problems are demonstrated with both No. 2 Aerodrome Defence Squadron, which did not eventually form, and No. 1 Aerodrome Defence Squadron, lasting less than two years. Many within Air Force Headquarters still supported an Air Force focus on aircraft and held firm that airfield defence from attack was an Army responsibility. Further, it was held that the basic security of aircraft on the ground (in peace and in war) was not considered a necessary capability for the PAF but could be fully conducted by Reserve units. McCauley fought to form a permanent RAAF Regiment over his tenure as CAS and promoted a supportive partnership between the RAAF and the RAF Regiment. He had supporters, such as Bladin and Scherger, both who understood his vision, and who were long term proponents of the need for the RAAF to have a permanent airfield defence capability, adequately trained in peace for immediate readiness in war.

This period of RAAF airfield defence history has scattered references to the RAF Regiment and a number of proposals for a RAAF Regiment, with like tasking and resourcing to be developed in Australia. Whether a RAAF Regiment had actually formed in Australia in the 1950s has always been an argued topic in the modern airfield defence community. The discussion has been largely based on rumour, misleading stories and false evidence, with a variety of claims that a RAAF Regiment did form, even though briefly. Previously written articles and booklets, purporting to be a history of RAAF airfield defence, claim that a RAAF Regiment formed during 1953 (which would be prior to McCauley's term as CAS).²⁵⁰ In addition to this account, there is a well-known photograph depicting, at least on a *prima facie* basis, a graduation of RAAF Regiment airmen in 1953, that is currently held at the RAAF Amberley Aviation Museum (Picture 8). This one photograph became a 'red herring' for the current understanding of airfield defence history, as many amateur historians then referred to the photograph as evidence that a RAAF Regiment had to have been formed at some point during these years. Some point to J.J. Baker, who has been held out to be the most reputable author of airfield defence history, as further evidence that the RAAF Regiment existed.

²⁵⁰ Victor Smith, comment posted on 'Airfield Defence Association', Facebook, 2016
https://www.facebook.com/groups/AirfieldDefenceAssociationAustraliaInc/search/?query=raaf%20regiment&epa=SEARCH_BOX,
accessed 12 February 2017.

The circumstances surrounding the graduation photograph have been extensively researched as part of this thesis. It is now known that the photograph is an image of the seventh intake of National Service Training Scheme airmen at RAAF Base Amberley in late 1953, but not of a RAAF Regiment, and it is questionable that it is even a graduation photograph.²⁵¹ At this early stage of the National Service Training Scheme, in 1953, there were seven National Service Training Sections at the nominated bases. The National Service Training Section at RAAF Base Amberley was part of Base Squadron and not a separate unit. This section provided general service training, flying training and technical training only. There was no formation, in any National Service Training Scheme files sourced either from the Government or RAAF, of an established RAAF Regiment nor of Ground Gunners being trained at RAAF Base Amberley. The printed message on the photograph is, at this time, unexplainable and can only be assumed to be an error. The question can be summed up by Powell, serving at the time, who stated that there was no indication of a RAAF Regiment being formed and that he had ‘never heard of the idea’.²⁵²



Picture 8: This image is of No. 7 NST intake of 1953 at RAAF Base Amberley. The image shows airmen in service dress with berets, gaiters. The National Service Association have indicated the mixing service dress with working dress is incorrect. Additionally, there are no other photos like this one in the RAAF collection with the National Service Association. (Photograph taken by author)

²⁵¹ Upon the author presenting the photo to the National Service Association for comment in 2019, a response was received that they questioned the dress standard of the men in the photograph as not depicting formal graduation dress of the time. Further investigation also indicates the course was not for Ground Gunner Trainees as RAAF Base Amberley did not train Ground Gunners. RAAF Base Amberley National Service Training Flight at the time only did general service training and ground defence training for all musters. Additionally, if this was a RAAF Regiment graduation, there are no more photos of other graduations of the RAAF Regiment and no written evidence within any of the files viewed.

²⁵² Interview with Warren Powell and Sean Carwardine, 4 June 2017.

In summary of this chapter, what came about from the reduction of airfield defence personnel post-war was the requirement for all airmen to undertake airfield defence, a tasking which many general/technical airmen believed was 'not their job'.²⁵³ With this reduction of airfield defence specialists, the Army was requested to provide general ground defence of airfields in war, and inter-service policies were drafted that reflected these responsibilities. However, this later proved problematic due to Army's operational requirements, that left the RAAF exposed without a contingency plan. By 1960, the musterings manning security for the RAAF had changed, the PAF Guard mustering was gone, yet airmen of the Guard mustering were still serving, as CAF in the Reserves. They continued to serve alongside National Service-trained Guards and Ground Gunners, who were also part of the Reserves.

The evidence presented in this chapter concludes the position of this study that the RAAF did have airfield defence personnel serving from 1946 through to 1960. The currently held belief that airfield defence in the RAAF was 'Twenty Years in Limbo', is conclusively incorrect. The RAAF had never 'lost' an airfield defence function during the post-war years, but it had been under-resourced, reduced in size, and would not regain the strength and capabilities seen during the Second World War. Significant findings from this research are that Guards served on operations during the Korean War; Ground Gunners were trained under the National Service Training Scheme; ADO/GDOs and ADIs were instructing the RAAF in ground defence and, as instructors, also manning National Service Training Units and Aerodrome Defence Squadrons in Australia. Although this was a time of change, of trial and error, reorganisation and reinvention for airfield defence, the tasking was never completely removed nor was it 'in limbo'.

²⁵³ V.E. Hancock, 'Standard of RAAF Guards', 1A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

Chapter Six RAAF Ground Defence in South East Asia 1961 – 1970

‘This early absence of attacks should not be interpreted as an indication of communist disinterest in USAF activities’.

Project CHECO, 1966.¹

Section 1 - Policy

This chapter will consider RAAF airfield defence from 1961 to 1970; a period that is believed by many in the RAAF and airfield defence community to be where RAAF airfield defence reached its pinnacle, and, despite what has been presented in earlier chapters, the period when RAAF airfield defence commenced. Rather than being the time of the inception of airfield defence, this was a time of reorganisation and development of a new direction for RAAF airfield defence capabilities. Following the cancellation of the National Service Training Scheme in July 1957, RAAF ‘Airfield Defence’ was renamed ‘Ground Defence’; a new term designed to capture the refocus on training of all RAAF personnel in airfield defence. As a consequence, the RAAF Defence School was formed to train personnel, who would be deployed across RAAF stations for the purpose of training airmen in this role. The 1950s had ended with Conduit’s regrouping and modernisation of the airfield defence force and policy, that had been largely diminished following the end of Second World War. This would continue under Bennett and others into the 1960s. However, it would be Australia’s commitment in another war that would test the long-standing airfield defence and inter-service policies, change the direction of RAAF airfield defence yet again, and set in place new policies.

New Direction, same Confusion

Throughout 1960 and into 1961, the archival files validate the current RAAF understanding of inter-service airfield defence policy at this time, which for the RAAF included

¹ Barnette & Barrow, Project CHECO South East Asia Report Base Defense in Thailand, 1973, San Francisco, p. 3.

less ground defence training. The files contain many discussions on policy such as how the RAF ground defence training would affect RAAF units at Butterworth in Malaysia, the introduction of new weapons, whether continuation and individual training should be removed, whether training should be organised by location of units as categories and finally whether the allocation of small arms within the RAAF should be only for training and drill purposes or for war purposes. At this time, the Australian Air Publication on ground defence had been current since May 1957, and within the airfield defence files discussions continually refer to this Air Staff Document.² It is clear that the RAAF airfield defence policy at this time, was a combination of a number of policies.

The files also show that concerns regarding the utility of technical and non-technical airmen conducting airfield defence, and the reliance on Army conducting general ground defence was far from resolved. On 23 June 1960, Wing Commander J.M. Sutherland, Joint Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, raised concerns regarding the inter-service responsibilities for ground defence policies which directed that the Army would provide some form of protection while all airmen would take up internal defence as a secondary duty only.³ Yet again, the suggestion of a separate specialised ground defence force within the RAAF arose. Sutherland advocated for the RAAF forming an 'Air Police' or 'Regiment' type force to undertake local defence along the lines of similar units in the USAF or RAF. He was of the view that this would free up technical airmen who had a primary tasking of maintaining aircraft for all operations. He predicted that if the RAAF was to follow the current inter-service directive, utilising all airmen taking up arms to fight on the ground, this would lead to highly skilled technical airmen being 'reduced' to the role of infantrymen. Sutherland argued for, '... recognition of the need to avoid mis-employment of highly skilled and specialised personnel by diversion from their proper tasks. . . [it would] be unduly detrimental to their prime roles and which might better be undertaken by Army units'.⁴

Sutherland also questioned the division of responsibility for ground defence between RAAF and Army under Australian policy. He raised firstly, that reliance on Army units would not be appropriate if the RAAF was deployed and located within installations of allied nations,

² Australian Air Publication 938 Ground Defence; Air Staff Document 235, Chapter 30 Ground Defence and Chapter 31 Passive Defence.

³ J.M. Sutherland, 'Minute by Chiefs of Staff Committee at Meeting held on Wednesday, 22nd June 1960 and Appendix A', 1960, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

⁴ *Ibid.*

and secondly, that deployment of RAAF units was not an Australian Army responsibility.⁵ Sutherland illustrated this view with an example where a RAAF unit was deployed to a base of an allied nation overseas. The base itself could foreseeably have AA and ground defence provided via the United Kingdom's RAF Regiment or USAF Air Police, however specific RAAF units might have no local defence, AA or ground defence due to the commitments of the Australian Army on the battlefield.⁶

Sutherland's position was clear, and as Joint Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee he may have raised his arguments in that forum. However, during January 1961, a review of the policies in relation to inter-service responsibility for ground defence of Naval and Air Force establishments, and the conclusions reached by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, did not align with Sutherland's view.⁷ The Committee clarified and confirmed the terms held within the inter-service memorandum. The term general ground defence was described as the defence of an area around the airbase out to the frontlines of the battlefield or the Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) away from the airbase by the Army against attacks by formed bodies of enemy land forces. Local ground defence was described as the defence in emergency by Navy or RAAF personnel of the interior of installations and establishments against attacks by airborne troops, infiltrators, partisans and irregulars and by action resulting from civil disturbance and sabotage. The Committee then reaffirmed that all responsibility for the general defence of airfields and naval establishments overseas and in Australian territories, or areas in which Air Force or Naval establishments were deployed independently of allies, would be the responsibility of the Australian Army including all AA defence and infantry general defence.⁸ The Committee also confirmed that RAAF or Navy personnel would be trained and equipped to resist attack and to perform local defence of their installations, but only within the limits of their resources and after being armed to defend their location in an emergency. Most importantly, for this study, the Committee asserted that the RAAF would neither maintain a specialist local ground defence force or units, and nor would the Australian Army provide units or troops for local ground defence.⁹ Following this meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Air Staff Document was updated by RAAF Command.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Anon., 'Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments,' 1960, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

By this time, the RAAF had already commenced a program of expansion, with the ordering of new aircraft, weapons and equipment.¹⁰ The re-issued ground defence policy for the period of 1961 to 1963 resulted in the introduction of the Browning 9 mm pistol and the Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) L1A1, with a reduction of collective and annual training of all airmen in ground defence.¹¹ It is of interest that, within the ground defence policy LAA was still viewed as a RAAF air defence responsibility, despite the outcomes of the 1961 Chiefs of Staff Committee.

For RAAF Units deployed to allied installations in the Far East, the training and conduct of the RAAF in airfield defence had come to the attention of RAF Command. On 8 January 1962, Air Vice-Marshal J.P. Hobler (RAF), Acting Commander-in-Chief Far East Air Force (FEAF), issued a five page directive on ground defence training to RAAF units under his command.¹² His view was that commitment to ground defence training by RAAF commanders and airmen in the Far East had been poor or non-existent, that a greater emphasis should be on collective training and that ground defence training for airmen to defend their airfields should be consistent across all Air Forces.¹³ Group Captain C.F. Read then proposed an amendment to the ground defence training schedule to incorporate RAF recommendations. This common core training was to include weapons training for 71 minutes per week in the first year of an airman's service. In addition, there would be a total of 30 hours of weapon refresher courses, a field exercise and 6 hours defence training annually.¹⁴ The weapon training schedule (firing 55 rounds) was required to be undertaken annually from a member's second to fourth year of service after recruit training, from their sixth to their eighth year, and then again in their tenth year.¹⁵ For the fifth and ninth years of service the airmen would undergo a total of nine hours divided between annual and collective training.¹⁶

Even though Read recommended the change in ground defence training, which was supported by Squadron Leader Bennett (Ground Defence), within the Directorate of Operational Requirements, by mid-March 1962, RAAF Headquarters had adjusted the ground

¹⁰ Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, St Leonards, 1995, pp. 3-11.

¹¹ J.P. Hobler, 'Ground Defence Training Policy – Annual Review of Ground Defence Training in F.E.A.F. – 1961 and Summary', 1962, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹² RAAF operations in the Far East came under the command of the Commander of FEAF. Therefore, the training of all airmen in ground defence was directed by the RAF Commander-in-Chief Far East Air Force.

¹³ J.P. Hobler, 'Ground Defence Training Policy – Annual Review of Ground Defence Training in F.E.A.F. – 1961 and Summary', 1962, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

defence training for RAAF personnel by abolishing the continuation training, reducing the amount of time for refresher training, and directing that collective training was only to be conducted on major field exercises.¹⁷ Within weeks of this development, Bennett had criticised the ‘poorly developed and mixed theories’ regarding the protection of RAAF airfields and installations.¹⁸ Bennett argued that if RAAF personnel were to defend RAAF airfields, they would need knowledge of the security requirements and of the small arms they were to use, and be capable of acting as soldiers in defence of the airfield. For this to happen, Bennett indicated that they needed to complete all range shoots and undertake more ground defence training over the year.¹⁹ At odds with Bennett’s comments, Squadron Leader Blackwell, Deputy Director of Operational Requirements stated, ‘I have spoken to Command Staff about the *Air Staff Document 235 Chapter 30* ground defence training. The only training requirements needed by RAAF bases is for the threat of sabotage’.²⁰ Blackwell continued, ‘I do not consider that we should provide collective training on an annual exercise at Darwin, at this time’.²¹

While these internal policy amendments, recommendations and disagreements on ground defence at a local level continued, internationally threats and hostilities were brewing that would draw the RAAF into regional conflicts that would challenge the direction of airfield defence policy in Australia.

¹⁷ Anon., ‘Ground Defence Training’, 21/52, 1962, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹⁸ G. Bennett, ‘Active Ground Defence – Annual Continuation (and Collective) Training’, 23/56, 1962, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); Bennett’s career had led him to be able to demonstrate the training requirements for a person to be able to take up arms and defend their area against a well-trained enemy. The direction the RAAF was going with the ground defence training was towards inadequately trained airmen defending their airfield in a situation that would lead to overall destruction of the airfield and RAAF assets. Airmen detailed for this task needed to know how to secure aircraft both by day and night, know how to change guards during the day and night and how to organise and conduct small patrols. If the RAAF only wanted a secure area within the airfield, then more training was still required. The statements by Bennett did not look at airfield defence of the airfield or air operations, just security.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Blackwell, ‘Active Ground Defence - Annual Continuation Training’, 24/57, 1962, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

²¹ *Ibid.*

South East Asia operations

Following the Second World War, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was developed for collective defence in South East Asia against communist agitation. Australia was a member of SEATO alongside New Zealand, France, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, United Kingdom and the United States of America.²² On 8 September 1954, the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty was signed, effectively creating an anti-communist defence treaty.²³ During the early 1960s, there was a developing atmosphere of hostility between communist and non-communist participants in the regional areas under the influence of SEATO, while at the same time other nations were seeking independence. The SEATO Treaty provided a 'forward defence' plan for Australia, which ensured that any war would be fought away from Australian soil.²⁴

By early 1962, the situation in Laos had deteriorated into skirmishes between American backed forces and communist insurgents. The United States deployed forces to support the government of Thailand while approaching SEATO countries for support. The United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand agreed to send aircraft.²⁵ By 6 June 1962, the Supreme Commander Thai Armed Forces, and representatives of allied forces had agreed on the *Co-ordinating Authority*, allowing allied forces to be stationed in Thailand to support operations against pro-communist forces.²⁶ The RAAF would supply a squadron of eight Sabre aircraft, armed with 'sidewinder' and 30 mm cannon, and base personnel, to be only used in air defence. Australian Rules of Engagement provided the RAAF contingent with a clear role, that no RAAF aircraft will investigate any unidentified contacts unless requested by the Thailand Government, and no RAAF aircraft will attack unless fired upon. In conjunction with these policies, J.J. Corrigan, Secretary of the Defence Committee, released policies for the deployment of RAAF aircraft and personnel to Thailand.²⁷ Both these documents held directives that covered operational responsibility, including that the Commanding Officer was to take measures to '... safeguard all airmen and provide security for the equipment and

²² Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 7.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 10.

²⁶ G.E. Pettit, I.B. Ferguson, 'Defence Committee Agendum Directive to Officer Commanding RAAF Contingent, UBON, Thailand', 1962, National Archives of Australia, A5799, 57/1962, (unpaginated).

²⁷ J.J. Corrigan, 'Defence Committee Agendum Directive to Officer Commanding RAAF Contingent, Ubon, Thailand No. 57/1962', 1962, National Archives of Australia, A5799, 57/1962, (unpaginated); Agendum No. 57/1962 and Joint Planning Committee Report No. 49/62.

property of the RAAF'.²⁸ However, the Secretary of the Defence Committee policy clarified that flying, technical and base personnel posted to Ubon were not to operate weapons (small arms) for the purpose of safeguarding personnel or equipment unless in self-defence.²⁹

Concurrently with the above, the Australian Government and the RAAF were liaising with the United States regarding the possible commitment of transport aircraft to operations in the developing insurgency in South Vietnam. In 1962, the Australian Government committed 30 Army advisers, as the Australian Army Training Team, to South Vietnam. By February 1963, the Australian Ambassador to Saigon, B.C. Hill, held the view, based on discussions with the American ambassador, that a small RAAF transport detachment could be supported by the Parliament and the Australian people.³⁰

In light of this decision, within RAAF command circles back in Australia, discussion had recommenced in relation to the preparedness of all airmen to defend airfields against both air and ground attacks. During April 1963, over a year since Bennett and Blackwell's discussions on the extent of ground defence training, Group Captain C.F. Read, now the Director of Operational Requirements, had sent letters to Headquarters Support Command regarding his concerns in relation to ground defence training. He indicated that Squadron Leader Blackwell's views on reduced ground defence training for saboteurs only, and the subsequent insufficient training currently completed by RAAF members on small arms, had resulted in an Air Force that was not ground-combat ready.³¹ Read stated, '... training only on the rifle in Australia has been applied to initial training units . . . we have been turning out from the recruit units, airmen with a limited knowledge of active defence . . .'³²

After a year of discussion about commitments to Thailand and Malaysia, and in the face of growing military commitments to South Vietnam, the voices of criticism of RAAF airfield defence policies continued to grow in 1964. Previously, in Australia, there had been a view that 'security' of an airfield was as an ongoing tasking, while airfield defence (ground and air defence) was only required as a wartime activity. Whereas, the RAF combined both concepts

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 25.

³¹ C.F. Read, 'Recruit Training Syllabus', 46/81, 1963, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); Air Marshal Sir C.F. Read, K.B.E., C.B., D.F.C., A.F.C., joined the RAAF as an Air Cadet in 1937 and over the next year qualified as a pilot. He was flying Beaufighters in No. 30 Squadron when in mid-1942 he was promoted to Squadron Leader and given command of No. 31 Squadron. By the War's end he was a Group Captain in the Headquarters of the First Tactical Air Force.

³² *Ibid.*

for peace and war, training in peace for readiness in the event of war. On 24 February 1964, Group Captain Read forwarded a letter to CAS Air Marshal Sir V.E. Hancock and stated, '... we should differentiate between security of RAAF property by Service Police in peace, and the guarding or defence of vulnerable points in an emergency or war situation'.³³ Read pointed to the FEAF policy which detailed potential threats to airfields and Air Force establishments as being more likely to come from quasi-military or military trained forces, not criminals or civilians. Read held that, rather than a focus on the latter two, the RAAF needed to be prepared for attacks by well-trained quasi-military or military trained forces.³⁴ Furthermore, he argued that there was a need to be prepared for threats in both peace and war, and to be able to meet these threats immediately, not waiting until after a war had started.³⁵ He again advocated for the need for airmen specially trained as Guards to protect airfields in Australia and that these Guards should be ready for immediate deployment.³⁶ He noted that employment of specialists would not remove the responsibility of all airmen to protect their working area nor would it remove responsibility from the Army for the overall protection of RAAF or Navy installations.³⁷ Read reinforced his reasoning for the reintroduction of a PAF RAAF Guard mustering (four years after the last PAF Guard was discharged from the RAAF or moved to CAF Reserves) for the purpose of maintaining a core specialist airfield defence force, much like the RAF Regiment.³⁸

Again, as in previous decades, while some senior staff were arguing for specialist airfield defence personnel, others continued the alternative argument, that the Army should maintain responsibility but that should extend to providing units for airfield defence. On 26 March 1964, Wing Commander M.C. Murray, now the Provost Marshal (Senior Officer in charge of RAAF Service Police), was critical of RAAF defence policy in line with the assessed potential threats of the time as detailed by the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Murray asserted that the policy had forced RAAF personnel to spend more time undergoing ground defence training which removed them from their primary duty.³⁹ In words reminiscent of Sutherland in 1960 and others in the decades prior, he argued that the increase of ground defence training will be 'unduly detrimental to primary role'.⁴⁰ Murray noted that if the Army was to be responsible for

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ M.C. Murray, 'Ground Defence Policy', 51/96, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

ground defence then the Army should provide units for airfield defence.⁴¹ In essence Murray was agreeing with Read that a specialist unit should undertake airfield defence, the only difference being which service would provide it.

While RAAF senior staff continued to debate the policy for airfield defence, within the SEATO council meeting in April 1964, planning was taking place for increased deployments of the Australian military. The United States was seeking more Allies supporting the operations in Vietnam, to provide a 'show of flags' against communist agitation.⁴² The Joint Planning Committee of the Australian Defence Force concluded that the deployment of air transport units and personnel was impractical due to the changeover of aircraft types at this time. The Committee had also agreed that a detachment of six Caribous with crews would support United States forces if the United States provided all logistical and airfield services, including protection and defence of aircraft and personnel.⁴³ In June 1964 the Australian Government and the RAAF announced that the RAAF Caribous would be detached to South Vietnam.⁴⁴

During this time, Murray and Bennett were investigating the requirements and standards of airfield defence in South East Asia. During their visit to Ubon, Murray and Bennett suggested to the Thai Government that RAAF Security Guards and dogs be deployed to Ubon, however the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) supplied their own dogs handlers and guards.⁴⁵ Upon investigation, Murray and Bennett had found the Thai dogs and handlers to be poorly trained and from information obtained from Thai Air Force security personnel, it was determined that there was no useful purpose for dogs at Ubon. Despite this the Thai Air Force would continue to maintain dogs as part of the security requirements.⁴⁶ In comparison, Murray and Bennett reported that the USAF was employing security dogs and handlers at Ubon, that were working well in security operations. They also reported that the greater security issues which confronted the RAAF at Ubon were that the airport was a joint civil/military airfield, which was under construction using military and civilian companies. Therefore, there were many other military units located on the airfield, all with different levels of security.⁴⁷ Murray

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 33.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ R.C. Murray, G.W. Bennett, 'Defence/Security of RAAF Bases in South East Asia Report by Provost Marshal and Staff Officer (Ground Defence)', 53/104, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); Security Guards were a new mustering that secured aircraft at night-time with dogs. This mustering replaced the Guards that qualified as War Dog Handlers.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Both Wing Commander Tonkin and Squadron leader Payne agreed.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

and Bennett's report highlighted the need for consistent international and local security command structures for airfield defence in allied nations' bases.

Murray and Bennett further emphasised that the technical site for aircraft dispersal at Ubon used by the RAAF was secured by Thai Air Police, and in their view, this was an unreliable arrangement. The Thai Air Police were described by Murray and Bennett as inadequate, undisciplined, and that the RAAF could not place any reliance on the Thai Air Police in an attack on the airport.⁴⁸ They also indicated that the responsibility for security of RAAF facilities at Ubon would be better undertaken by RAAF personnel, and then went on to state, '... to release tradesmen from guarding and security duty, it may be that the RAAF needs to have, in peace, airmen trained in ground defence ready for any emergency'.⁴⁹ In principle, the report makes the argument that it would be better to supply RAAF ground defence troops and employ them at Ubon and within Australia. Murray and Bennett raised three final questions for RAAF Headquarters: is there a need for the RAAF to provide its own protection, what is the type and category of airmen required, and should draft establishment tables be drawn?⁵⁰ There are no answers to these questions within the file.

The voices arguing that RAAF airmen could not be deterred from primary duties continued to rise in the lead up to further commitments in South East Asia. On 3 July 1964, Director of Operational Requirements, Group Captain Read, had once again raised a letter to RAAF Headquarters focusing on the wording of the 1960 Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum.⁵¹ Only a few months earlier, in February, he had advocated for the training of specialist airmen to undertake local ground defence, yet this time he noted that the RAAF needed to train and equip all airmen for emergency local ground defence, within the RAAF's resources, yet this should not deter them from the RAAF's primary role of providing air power. Read stated, 'The statement does not clarify the extent or duration of this responsibility ... and is in opposition to the initial intent ... the Army is to undertake local ground defence tasks which are beyond the resources of the RAAF'.⁵² Read then suggested an amendment to the Air Staff Document on ground defence. He continued as follows:

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

⁵² C.F. Read, 'ASD 235 Chapter 30', 54/106, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

I think you will agree that the new policy implies an entirely different emphasis on ground defence training in Australia and I doubt this was intended. If the intention is to retain our present capability . . . [the policy be] amended by adding new paragraphs as follows: In Australia – training against sabotage attacks and civilian disturbances, Overseas units – attacks by minor bodies, partisans or irregular forces, sabotage or civilian unrest.⁵³

Read then noted the Defence Committee small arms restriction for the deployment of the RAAF to Ubon in Thailand. He also reiterated the agreement within the Chiefs of Staff Committee of 1960 and the arrangements that the Army would provide local defence (internal safeguarding) for the RAAF, while the RAAF maintained its primary role at Ubon.⁵⁴ Read then put to RAAF Headquarters, that if the Army did not comply with the memorandum, an increase in additional ground defence training for the RAAF personnel would be required to meet emergency ground defence needs.⁵⁵ Read recommended an increase in the number of ADIs along with two extra days for ground defence training on top of the current quota, with a proviso that it should not interfere with primary air operations. However, Read's extra training concept would not be implemented as RAAF Headquarters could not agree on whether the RAAF ground defence training was to be guided by the Chiefs of Staff Committee direction or the RAAF's threat assessments as outlined by Air Force Intelligence (Appendix P).⁵⁶

While the above arguments and recommendations continued, in August 1964, the first Caribous of RAAF Transport Flight had flown into Vung Tau airfield to provide support missions for the South Vietnamese and American forces. As hostilities in South Vietnam continued to escalate, discussions regarding further troop support for United States' operations in Vietnam had commenced between the Australian Government and Australian Embassy in Saigon. The following year, the Australian Government considered that all Australian forces in Vietnam should come under a single Australian Commander.⁵⁷

Policy in relation to the appropriate level of airfield defence continued to be reviewed and considered. The files reveal that discussion then turned to consideration of an airfield

⁵³ Air Staff Document 235 Chapter 30, Amendment No. 32.

⁵⁴ Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Australian Embassy, 'Inward Cablegram 447. Top Secret', 1965, National Archives of Australia, A1838, TS696/8/6 PART 1.

defence response based on or corresponding with current threat assessments. In January 1965, with possible increased deployments by the RAAF, Staff Officer Group Captain H.H. Wood-Glover recommended that the type and amount of ground defence training required for all airmen should be reflected by the RAAF's threat assessment.⁵⁸ He suggested that a high threat would equate to more training in ground defence, while a low threat would require only minimal ground defence training. The Director of Operations, Wing Commander M.C. Raban in a letter to RAAF Operational Command criticised Wood-Glover's idea as being 'tainted'. He further stated, '... it would never keep pace with the threat level'.⁵⁹ Raban's comments led to a hand-written comment from RAAF Headquarters, 'This has led to a view that there is a requirement for a review of ground defence policy'.⁶⁰

The suggestion bought a reply from RAAF Headquarters Intelligence one month later. The Chief of Staff (Joint) Intelligence and RAAF Headquarters Intelligence responded that the new statement of the level of ground defence training based on the RAAF intelligence threat assessment will 'aggravate' the training situation within the RAAF (Appendix P).⁶¹ RAAF Headquarters Intelligence agreed that threat overviews could be provided, but raised concern that these will 'mislead' or even 'confuse' Commanding Officers in relation to the level of ground defence training required for their airmen on a local level.⁶² This discussion would continue within RAAF Headquarters into April 1965.

As a result of the concerns raised, and subsequent review of policy in April 1965, the Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum of 1960 was then made obsolete and a new policy was released.⁶³ The new Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum redefined 'local defence' to 'close defence', and assessed that attacks against airfields were only likely to be undertaken by individuals. This new policy seemingly attempted to resolve the continual discussion regarding responsibility for ground defence by directing the RAAF and Navy to take full responsibility for the:

... close protection and security of equipment, installations and establishments. All personnel will be combatants for the close defence of their location. This protection

⁵⁸ H.H. Wood-Glover, 'Ground Defence Training', 61/117, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁵⁹ M.C. Raban, 'Ground Defence policy', 121/64, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Anon., 'Ground Defence Policy', 126, 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60; Inter-Service Responsibility for Ground Defence 5/1965.

will protect against all sabotage and attacks by individual enemy regulars, partisans or guerrillas and thus civil disturbance. While the Australian Army will defend airfields against deliberate attacks.⁶⁴

By 10 May 1965, H.A. Dunn Esquire, from the South East Asia Branch of the Ambassador of the Australian Embassy in Saigon, had sent a memo to the Australian Government outlining the full tasking required for United States and third country ground combat operations within Vietnam. Dunn noted that Australian Army infantry would conduct security of base areas, deep patrolling and reaction operations. The requirements were to focus on the security of base areas, where the Australian infantry would provide close-in perimeter defence around nominated airfields and patrol outside the base to mortar and light artillery range.⁶⁵ The interesting aspect of this policy highlights that one of the operational tasking of the Australian infantry battalions in Vietnam was to include airfield defence. However, the files demonstrate that the Australian Army were allocated the general ground defence only for USAF and US Army aviation at Beinh Hoa airbase, while RAAF aircraft and personnel were stationed at Vung Tau.

Reinvention of the Guard Mustering

After more than two decades of contradiction and divided commentary over how the RAAF would implement and maintain an airfield defence capability, for the first time since September 1939, a clear and definite statement was made regarding an intention to re-establish a dedicated Air Force ground fighting force. In a full cycle returning to previous policy, the Air Board released a new Air Board Agendum directing that the employment of technical trade airmen for guard duty should cease in favour of specialist ground defence personnel, yet to be established.⁶⁶ In July 1965 Air Marshal A.M. Murdoch, CAS, released a new Air Board Agendum, directing that both active and passive defence will be maintained without the loss of air efficiency by a nucleus of specialist [RAAF] defence personnel which was to be established.⁶⁷ Suggested titles for this mustering included Air Security Police, Air Force

⁶⁴ Anon., 'Ground Defence – Policy', 72/131, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁶⁵ H. Dunn, 'Australian Battalion – Visit of Planning Team', 1965, National Archives of Australia, A1838, TS696/8/6 PART 1, (unpaginated).

⁶⁶ Air Board Agendum 13072; Four years after the last Guards was transferred to the Reserve, the RAAF considered reinstating the mustering.

⁶⁷ A.M. Murdoch, 'Physical Security of RAAF Units Introduction of an Airfield Defence Mustering', 1965, *Air Board Agendum No. 13109*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Air Board Agendum No. 13109.

Security Police, Air Security Guards or even Air Force Guards; although the word ‘Police’ was considered as inadequate to capture the full purpose and tasking of these airmen. There was also no indication within the Air Board Agendum as to why the RAAF did not link the title back to the ‘Guard’ mustering of the Second World War or even the then novel ‘Ground Gunner’ title of the 1950s.⁶⁸ Ultimately, these airmen would be known as ‘Airfield Defence Guards’ (ADG). They would have a total strength of 455 men, composed of 127 airmen (proposed Airfield Defence Squadron) to be allocated to Base Squadron Ubon, Thailand. In addition, for the two proposed Units for South Vietnam, No. 82 Wing Base Support Element Tan Son Nhut would be allocated 72 ADGs (two Airfield Defence Flights), and No. 9 Squadron Detachment Mukdahan would receive 36 ADGs (one Airfield Defence Flight). The remaining 220 ADGs would be deployed across 11 major RAAF airbases in Australia for guarding bases and reserve defence teams (with a flight of 22 airmen at each base).⁶⁹

The responsibilities of the new mustering were laid down as airfield defence and security, including the internal guarding of RAAF aircraft, equipment and facilities.⁷⁰ ADGs were to provide a trained nucleus of airfield defence specialists for overseas deployments at short notice and were to release other airmen from guarding and passive defence duties.⁷¹ The ADGs would therefore be tasked with point guarding, base patrolling, control of all entry points, vehicle searching, provision of reserve defence teams, a nucleus of specialist defence teams and defence against nuclear and biological warfare.⁷² With the introduction of this mustering, the Air Board was clear that there was no requirement for ADGs to patrol outside the airbase, as the agendum noted they were only for close defence and security.⁷³

Approval for the formation of the new mustering came from the Air Board and Secretary of the Department of Air A.B. McFarlane, on 29 July 1965.⁷⁴ The approval

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Physical Security of RAAF Units Introduction of an Airfield Defence Mustering 1965, *Air Board Agendum No. 13109*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Of the 455 ADGs, the RAAF only considered the need for 220 airmen on a full-time scaling within Australia, the extra airmen for the current emergencies in South East Asia are only for these theatres. There is no indication as to what these airmen would once the conflict ended.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*; The Air Board did not include external patrolling of the airbase/airfield as part of the ADG mustering requirements as this was the Army responsibility under Inter-Service Agreements. It can be understood that the ADG mustering was a guard mustering as the first five duties out of the seven were the same as the Second World War Guard mustering duties as laid down in 1943 Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Ground Defence.

⁷⁴ A.B. McFarlane, ‘Introduction of RAAF Mustering of Airfield Defence Guard – Decision on Pay Grouping’ 85/151/ 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated); A.B. McFarlane was a Squadron Commander in the RAAF during the Second World War, after which he joined the Commonwealth Public Service.

highlighted that the overall RAAF strength in ADGs for the current overseas structure was 205 airmen, 21 Corporals, six Sergeants, two Flight Sergeants and one Warrant Officer.⁷⁵ These ADGs would not be required, however, if there were no operations overseas and thus the RAAF would only maintain a core strength of 220 ADGs for base defence and security on the 11 RAAF airbases in Australia. Therefore, the core of 220 ADGs would be used during peacetime and would then deploy overseas in wartime. During wartime, it was planned that the mustering would rely on reserve ADGs or increased recruitment to backfill the positions left open at the 11 RAAF bases.⁷⁶

There was also some movement in relation to AA defence. On 7 September 1965, the RAAF sought the transfer of 140 20 mm Oerlikon cannons from the Royal Australian Navy. This was supported by the Director of Operational Requirements, Air Commodore C.F. Read who stated, ‘. . . we should accept Light Anti-Aircraft responsibility’.⁷⁷ Read then outlined a discussion with Bennett, explaining, ‘There should be six 20 mm Oerlikon cannons on every key point, failure to provide this will expose the RAAF to operational risk’. He further added that no increase in general manning would be required as these would be manned by ADGs.⁷⁸ In support of the need for RAAF LAA defence, Bennett completed a draft proposal for the formation of a RAAF Ground Defence structure along the lines of the RAF Regiment. There is evidence within the files that Bennett and Group Captain D.A. Pocock (RAF), Senior Ground Defence Staff Officer Headquarters FEAF, believed the RAAF should form a RAAF Regiment for its airfield defence within the next year or so. With further support from Pocock, Bennett planned an overall structure of a RAAF Corps, with RAF Regiment members being attached to assist within the first few years and a continual ongoing support between the two Corps.⁷⁹ This planning remained in the files and never proceeded any further.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Anon., ‘20M.M. Oerlikon Light Anti-Aircraft Guns’, 49/161, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; Air Vice Marshal D.A. Pocock enlisted into the RAF in 1940 and was commissioned in 1941. When the RAF Regiment was formed, he was transferred to the Corps and went to the Middle East and established the training school for the training of Ground Gunners in Amman, Transjordan. He commanded a RAF Regiment squadron in North Africa, the Middle East, Italy and the Balkans. In 1946 he was appointed to command a RAF Regiment Wing in Austria. He served as Senior Ground Defence Staff Officer Far East Air Force before assuming the command of RAF Regiment Depot Catterick in 1968. He subsequently served in staff officer positions at the Air Ministry, Allied Air Forces Central Europe, Cyprus and Singapore. He was promoted to Air Commodore and assuming the appointment as Director of Ground Defence. He was then appointed Commandant-General in January 1973 and became the first Commandant-General to have entered the service as a Ground Gunner in 1940 to become head of the Corps. He retired from the Royal Air Force in 1975 after being appointed a C.B.E.

By 1966, Australian military commitments to Vietnam had increased with extra infantry and a Task Force, which included RAAF Iroquois helicopters of No 9 Squadron being deployed.⁸⁰ By 13 April 1966, No. 9 Squadron had re-equipped with the Bell Iroquois helicopter as a short-range transport support for the Australian Task Force in Vietnam. On 21 July 1966, Squadron Leader J.I. Brough, GDO, after a short attachment to the USAF in Vietnam, sent a report to RAAF Headquarters on the examination of threats to airfields in South Vietnam.⁸¹ Firstly, Brough explained the difference between the USAF 2nd Air Division concept of ground defence and that of the RAF Regiment in the FEAF. Brough indicated the USAF was not 'aggressive' and sought to 'shield rather than seek out', while the RAF Regiment was the opposite. Brough noted that these were the standards for Air Force ground defence in modern war and he then set out a plan to develop the RAAF airfield defence using both concepts.⁸² Brough outlined his plans as follows:

You are already aware I have concluded that the 'Police' or 'industrial security' concept of the USAF is not the answer, as it has many fundamental weaknesses. In all fairness, it must be said that the SAC [strategic air command] security system they were employing was never designed for the task it was given. The RAF concept, built around the RAF Regiment, is much nearer the mark, but it too lacks one essential.⁸³

Brough's 'one essential' that he claimed the RAF Regiment was lacking was in relation to close defence of installations and undermanning of these specialist personnel within the RAF Regiment.

In late December 1966, No. 2 Squadron equipped with Canberra bombers, was deployed to South Vietnam by Australian Prime Minister H. Holt.⁸⁴ The Government and RAAF deliberated between either sending RAAF Sabre fighter aircraft or Canberra bombers, however, at this time the Sabres were being withdrawn from Ubon and were being replaced

⁸⁰ Doug Hurst, *Magpies in Vietnam*, Victoria, 2012, p. 7.

⁸¹ J.I. Brough, 'Report on Airfield Defence in South East Asia', 19/99, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*; On 8 August 1966, Bennett submitted to RAAF Headquarters an overview and the principle points of the policy of the USAF within a four-page document containing seven Appendices. He highlighted that under international agreements, the USAF did not have full authority on the defence of the airbases they worked from. What is covered is that the Republic of Vietnam Army are the sole force responsible for the protection of all Republic of Vietnam Air Force bases, while the Republic of Vietnam Air Force base commander is responsible for the overall physical security of the internal base. The USAF was restricted to providing only internal security of USAF areas. At that time, the only US forces charged with protection of a base was the Marines at Da Nang airbase. Bennett also concluded that the USAF Air Police organisation was only able to undertake policing functions and lacked the ability to provide airfield defence.

⁸⁴ R.A. Scott, 'No. 9 Squadron Unit History Sheet Form A.50 '71, 1966, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

with new Mirage III jet fighters.⁸⁵ Therefore, fighter aircraft were removed from the equation, whereas the procurement of the replacement for the Canberra bombers, the F-111, was still some years away. The tasking of the Canberra bombers would provide the USAF with extra low- and high-level bombing capability. However, the two aircraft are different and RAAF Canberra bombers could only use a small number of American parts for the aircraft servicing if needed. Upon arrival on 20 April 1967, the Canberra aircraft would be based at Phan Rang.⁸⁶ There is no mention within the files of the airfield defence position of No. 2 Squadron prior to deploying to Vietnam. There is, however, a note on the allocation of small arms to all members of No. 2 Squadron at RAAF Butterworth prior to deployment and that six Aircraftman ADGs had been attached to the unit.

As operations continued in Vietnam it became necessary to increase the numbers of ADGs. In June 1967, RAAF Headquarters reinforced that the ADG mustering had been capped at 220 ADGs deployed around the 11 airbases in Australia, however, an additional but limited contingency of 235 Guards was to be committed to operations in Vietnam.⁸⁷ During this month, Bennett made a submission to the Air Board seeking approval for a LAA unit to be based in Darwin for operational deployments when required. Bennett requested an extra 108 ADGs to be enlisted for this tasking. In addition to his recommendation for a LAA Unit, Bennett also sought further resources and equipment for ADGs, including more small arms, M79 40 mm Grenade Launchers, 81 mm L16A1 mortars, AN/PRC 25 radio sets and RC 292 Base Stations, 4x4 Land Rovers and Trailers, Ferret Scout Armoured Cars, and 20 mm Oerlikon cannon.⁸⁸ Bennett's vision for RAAF LAA units never did eventuate.

There is no available copy of the *Australian Air Publication 938 Ground Defence (1957)* at the National Archives nor the RAAF History Section. However, a copy of the 1970 version of the Australian Air Publication for defence was obtained by the author to determine the situation regarding policies on airfield defence at this time.⁸⁹ The content of the publication is divided into a number of sections, these being: General Concept of Airfield Defence and Standardization [sic] Agreements; Active Ground Defence; Light Air Defence; Defence

⁸⁵ Hurst, *Magpies*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁷ G.W. Bennett, 'Air Board Submission Airfield Defence Guards Increased Personnel and Equipment Proposal', 1967, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Anon., 'Australian Air Publication AAP 938 Ground Defence', No. 129, Canberra, Department of Air, 1970; Australian Air Publication 938 Ground Defence, 1970, original held by author.

Officers and ADGs; Passive Defence; Planning for Ground Defence; Ground Defence Training; and Ground Defence Equipment.⁹⁰ The 1970 version of the Australian Air Publication has no modifications or amendments listed until 1972. In addition, the files on Ground Defence over the period of 1969 until the end of 1970, demonstrate continual discussions and recommendations of the above concepts, with no subsequent modification or agreement on those recommendations. What becomes clear when viewing the files for late 1969 and all of 1970 is broad agreement that ADGs are tasked only for internal security, including gate guard duty but not external patrolling outside the base. Additionally, there is no policy change for RAAF Ground Defence nor the ADG mustering over this time period. The reoccurring documents in the files for 1970 are the reports on the state of ground defence in Vietnam, however discussions regarding the development of an Airfield Defence Squadron again arose.

In late 1970, Flight Lieutenant L.D. Bleakey raised a 28-page document for Squadron Leader R.A. Carey, Commanding Officer Headquarters RAAF Element Vietnam addressed to RAAF Headquarters, Headquarters Operational Command and Headquarters Support Command covering the requirements for RAAF ground defence in Vietnam.⁹¹ Bleakley's report included recommendations from Bennett's and Brough's previous reports on the formation of a RAAF Airfield Defence Guard Squadron. Bleakley proposed that an ADG Flight (of the proposed Airfield Defence Guard Squadron in Vietnam) tasking would not include any aggressive patrolling or day/night-time ambushes outside the perimeter at any airbase in Vietnam. It did indicate, however, that ADGs would only conduct internal patrols of the apron and flight line, manning surveillance towers, providing a Quick Reaction Force and road escort duties. It should be noted, that an Airfield Defence Guard Squadron was never formed.

The report by Bleakey outlined the current USAF Police role and weapons they utilised for airfield defence. Bleakley then incorporated previous recommendations by Brough and Bennett, and recommended the weapons required for an effective RAAF airfield defence capability in Vietnam, taking into consideration the ADGs duties. RAAF Headquarters then consulted Australian Army Headquarters about the suggested weapons required by ADGs in

⁹⁰ Anon., 'Australian Air Publication AAP 938 Ground Defence', 1970, pp. V -VI.

⁹¹ L.D. Bleakey, 'Operational Report Airfield Defence – Vung Tau', 107, 1970, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 2, (unpaginated).

Vietnam and provided the Army with Air Board Agendum No. 13109 covering specific ADG tasking. The response from Army Headquarters was that the ADG role as outlined in the Agendum was considered 'defensive' and not 'offensive' and most of the weapons recommended would therefore not be required. Army Headquarters also outlined that the M60 machine gun was reported to be a 'good weapon' for defensive operations, however the flexible mounted machine gun would not be appropriate as it is an 'aircraft weapon' only (Picture 9).⁹² According to Lieutenant Colonel Grey of Army Headquarters, '... the F1 machine carbine is not used by the Army and therefore is entirely unsuitable for the ADGs'.⁹³ For the XM148 attachment grenade launcher (attaches to a rifle), the report noted that while there were advantages for this type of weapon attachment, and it will eventually replace the M79, it would not be supplied to the ADGs.



Picture 9: An ADG sits on the front of a Land Rover at Phan Rang with the twin mounted M60s, similar to the helicopter mounts. (Photograph provided by M. Bryson).

It is interesting that in the report, Grey demonstrated that he was informed that ADGs were patrolling aggressively outside the perimeter of the base. He questions why ADGs were conducting such patrols and carrying M18A1 mine anti-personnel weapons for ambushes,

⁹² *Ibid.*; The list of weapons recommended by Bleakley included, the L1A1 rifle, L2A1 Automatic Rifle, M60 machine gun, XM60D Flexible machine gun, Browning pistol, M16A1 rifle, F1 machine carbine, M79 grenade launcher, XM148 attachment grenade launcher, M18A1 mine anti-personnel, M26A2 grenade, M174 automatic grenade launcher, .50 calibre machine gun and 81mm mortar. The XM60D machine gun is a standard NATO M60 machine gun that has been modified for use as a door gun with helicopter armament subsystems. The M60D is a flexible, gas-operated, air-cooled machine gun having a firing rate of 550 rpm. The M60D has spade grips, an aircraft ring-type sight and an improved ammunition feed system. A canvas ejection control bag attaches to the machine gun to catch ejected links and cartridge cases, preventing them from being ejected into the path of the rotor blades or turbine engine intake. This type of weapon was also fitted to vehicles.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

which are both against the Air Board Agendum. He stated, ‘. . . this is considered a dangerous practice that should cease as this is not the role of RAAF airfield defence’.⁹⁴ However, ADGs had been trained in the use of these weapons, and continued to be ordered to carry out patrolling with these mines out to the ambush areas, where the mines were setup and engaged if enemy were contacted. In relation to the M174 automatic grenade launcher (Picture 10), both RAAF Headquarters and Army Headquarters noted that they could foresee no requirement for this type of weapon for ADGs, and also held that there was no threat in Vietnam that would require a .50 calibre machine gun. For the 81 mm mortar, the report noted that the Chiefs of Staff Committee policy did not permit the equipping of RAAF personnel with these weapons for the engagement of targets outside the base perimeter.



Picture 10: Image of M-174 Automatic Grenade Launcher issued to USAF Security Police 1969. (Photograph provided by J. Gorto)

RAAF Headquarters, in its response to Bleakley’s report, affirmed that the tactical area of responsibility for RAAF airfield defence was internal of the perimeter only, and the responsibility of engaging the enemy with these weapons was solely the responsibility of the Army. It should be noted that despite drafting this response to Bleakley’s report, and Bennett’s and Brough’s recommendations, RAAF Headquarters Vietnam and RAAF Headquarters Australia were officially aware (through ongoing Commanders reports) that ADGs were being ordered to conduct external aggressive patrolling outside the perimeter, and by this response appeared to accept that the men would not be sufficiently armed for the task.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Section 2 - Policy in Action

'I guess from my point of view at least, there was a very big disconnect between the [Ground Defence] policy and what actually happened on the ground'.

Peter Cowell, 2019.⁹⁵

Ground Defence Training

By January 1961, as Director of Operational Requirements, Read outlined the small arms holdings for ground defence by the RAAF was in a dire state.⁹⁶ He indicated that the SLR rifle, sub machine gun and the light machine gun are required to meet ground defence policy, finally stating, 'The rifle is required at all RAAF bases'.⁹⁷ RAAF Headquarters and the Air Board assessed that the operational priorities at this stage (RAAF Base Butterworth, RAAF Base Darwin and Ubon), did not require machine guns of calibres of 7.62 mm or larger.⁹⁸ Over the next two years, the 9 mm Browning pistol and the SLR L1A1 were introduced into the RAAF. Overall, the ground defence training of all airmen in the RAAF continued to be carried out, as explained by Leading Aircraftman G. Dunstan, a Trainee Storeman at RAAF Base Wagga, 'Well we had to learn how to, being a soldier [sic], you had to learn how to fire a rifle, and just the basic arms which were available that day or period'.⁹⁹ There is no doubt some airmen could fire a weapon, however, to defend their position and the airfield against highly trained attackers was an entirely different consideration. Within a year Dunstan would be posted to RAAF Butterworth and he explained the weapon training there, '. . . at Butterworth that is, we had to do an occasional update on weapons and that was the second introduction of the SLR'.¹⁰⁰ The policy indicated that weapon training should not impede the RAAF's primary mission and this is evident through Dunstan's recollections. He described the 'lax nature' of weapons training:

It should've been annually just to update you and different weapons, but we only used the SLR which was a standard weapon at the time. Should've been annually, I think we

⁹⁵ Peter Cowell, comment posted on 'High Intensity Warfare', *Airfield Defence Guards Facebook*, 6 October 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/134732188183/>, accessed 6 October 2019.

⁹⁶ Read, 'Ground Defence – Weapons Requirements', 1961, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Graham Dunstan, interview by Australians at War Film Archive, digital recording, interviewed 29 June 2004, University of New South Wales.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

only, I think we only did it once up there. See holiday, a holiday unit thing gets, like discipline slackened off a bit you know. We [were] trying to get the job done but not military, you know, that's where you know, I think the Air Force is a little bit slack in discipline.¹⁰¹

In Australia, RAAF bases would continue to release Routine Orders requiring all airmen of various musters to perform front gate guard duty. Aircraftman S. Alder, a RAAF photographer, posted to RAAF Base Richmond explains his tasking of guard duty:

During my lengthy time at RAAF Richmond during the 1960s I was very often rostered for front gate guard duty. This involved an eight-hour shift, for a week, in the fire control room that was located within the very old and original drive-through Base entrance brick building facility.¹⁰²

Whereas Aircraftman T.C. Martin's experience with security and ground defence in the RAAF during the same time period was very different to Alder. Martin recalls he never did guard duty, 'In fifteen years, I never did a guard duty or anything outside my field, Airframes'.¹⁰³ According to RAAF Headquarters, allocating this task to technical airmen at Amberley, Canberra, Darwin, East Sale, Edinburgh, Laverton, Point Cook, Pearce, Richmond, Townsville and Williamtown would lose the RAAF 230,450 man hours per year. However, there is evidence that technical airmen in every operational squadron of mustering Group I, like Martin, were not required to undertake guard duty as only non-technical airmen from Groups II, III and IV were allocated gate guard duty.¹⁰⁴

At the same time in 1961, RAAF Base Defence Sections organised courses in weapon training for airmen. As an example, RAAF Base Amberley had a total of 83 trained airmen in 1961.¹⁰⁵ There is a lack of recorded history in both the monthly reports by Commanding

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Stephen Alder, 'Guard Duty at RAAF Richmond', RAAF Memories Group, 6 February 2019, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/646397848833173/.html>, accessed 6 February 2019.

¹⁰³ Terry C Martin, comment posted on 'Guard Duty at RAAF Richmond', RAAF Memories, 2019.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; The RAAF personnel are arranged into Groups by their trade, Group I: Ammunition Examiner, Blacksmith, all Fitters, Electroplater, Radar Mechanics, Linguist, Printers, Plumbers; Group II: Armourers, Motor Trimmers, Tailors, Flight Mechanics, Painters, Photographers; Group III: Clerk Accounts, Cooks, Butchers, R/T Operator, Drivers, etc; Group IV: Guards, Cook's Assistant, Service Police, Clerk, Trainees. The mustering groups, such as I, II, III, IV are the pay level for all airmen based on the educational standards for said mustering. That being most technical trades that serviced the aircraft were of the I or II grouping, while unskilled airmen were of the III or IV group.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Officers and within the Ground Defence files of the era detailing the training of airmen in ground defence and airfield defence. During 1961, a number of RAAF Bases started working on a requirement for extra ground defence for their base. Amberley, Richmond, Darwin, Williamtown and Edinburgh established Ground Defence Flights manned by any airmen of the mustering Groups II, III and IV and trained in greater depth in ground defence.¹⁰⁶ These Ground Defence Flights were supported by RAAF Base Defence Sections manned by ADIs and GDOs.¹⁰⁷ These airmen were utilised by local Commanders as the first line of defence of the base throughout 1960 and into 1962, despite the Chiefs of Staff Committee concluding that the RAAF would not maintain specialist local ground defence forces or units.

By late 1966, as a consequence of the formation policy, ADGs had been allocated to ADG Flights at RAAF Bases Amberley, Williamtown, Richmond and Fairbairn. There was also a Darwin Flight that lasted only a few years.¹⁰⁸ The junior leaders for these flights would come from the old musterings of DIs and ADIs. RAAF Headquarters saw no use for DIs and ADIs into the future as it was believed that ADGs could take on these duties.¹⁰⁹ The re-mustered DIs and ADIs, who held ranks from Corporal to Warrant Officer, were then placed on a shorter and modified version of the basic ADG course. This meant that the DIs and ADIs were seemingly rushed through training and then placed in 'infantry' junior commander positions over ADGs, some who were ex-Army and having completed more specialised training. It is interesting that the RAAF did not reflect or implement the same arrangements that occurred at the beginning of the Second World War. At that time, where a recruit for the Guard mustering presented with prior service in the Australian Army or military experience in the First World War, he was promoted to LAC or Corporal Guard following recruit training. This method resulted in trained, experienced junior leaders.

This decision to amalgamate the DIs and ADIs into the ADG mustering was implemented from October 1966, with minimal specialised training and irrespective of members' medical categories. The DIs and ADIs of Corporal rank were only required to pass a written trade test for the same rank of ADG (according to Air Vice Marshal Candy, ADI

¹⁰⁶ Graham O'Brien, 'Always There', p. 67.

¹⁰⁷ RAAF Base Amberley 1965, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; The reintroduction of ADIs and GDO would allow base commanders to have their airmen trained in weapons and ground defence.

¹⁰⁸ A.M. Murdoch, 'Physical Security of RAAF Units Introduction of An Airfield Defence Guard Mustering Agendum No. 13109 Appendix B', 1965, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁰⁹ From the late 1960s, ADGs were undertaking the role of DI, this later would be called 'General Service Instructors'. The ADGs would train new recruits during the basic recruit training held at RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia.

Corporal and ADG Corporal were the same).¹¹⁰ The DIs would be ‘confirmed’ in the ADG mustering only after doing one and half years as an NCO or SNCO ADG and then complete a trade test to be remustered and most of these airmen would be maintained at training establishments in the RAAF. The Air Board also considered bringing the Warrant Officer Discipline (WOD) and Security Guard mustering into the ADG mustering, but this was rejected.¹¹¹ These decisions brought internal conflict and resentment from within the ADG ranks that then impacted morale.¹¹² According to retired ADG P. Beckwith, supported by retired ADG A. Brazil:

There was [sic] too many DIs and ADIs being used as [ADG] NCOs and some of the Defence Officers were a fucking embarrassment. Dudley Irwin and . . . ‘Dizzy’ Dean are perfect examples of the incompetence in the musterings lower level of leadership. It wasn’t until NCOs started to come through the ranks [from the ADGs] that the ship began to right itself.¹¹³

There is no mention within the files of ADGs being posted to all 11 RAAF bases as detailed in the agendum.¹¹⁴ The monthly reports from the Commanding Officer RAAF Base Amberley recorded the activities of ADGs in Australia during the Vietnam War period, however, there is no direct mention in any of these monthly reports throughout Australia of any training activity of the ADG Flights that were part of the other bases.¹¹⁵ Of interest however, the reports show that some sections, such as Motor Transport and others, incurred loss of work days due to the commitment of training in ground defence for their technical trades airmen.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Air Board Submission No. 51/66, *Amalgamation of Ground Defence Musterings*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; At Ubon, ADIs Flight Sergeant Allen and Sergeant Liekefett were automatically remustered to ADG on 1 January 1967, retaining their rank.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Peter Beckwith, ‘Security Forces in High Intensity warfare,’ Airfield Defence Guard Facebook Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/646397848833173/permalink/1506657589473857/http>, accessed 6 October 2019.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; M. Bryson stated, ‘On our basic course field exercise we were tactical while, the DIs and ADIs doing the shorter course were with the instructors in a non-tactical environment – with a fire, tents, talking and laughing. We decided that if they are not tactical then we would not be tactical and so we started a fire in the bottom of our machine gun pit. A major argument started with the DIs and ADIs telling us to put the fire out and us on the basic ADG course telling them to get stuffed. Foskett settled the discussion and made the DIs and ADIs go tactical. I had Army experience prior to being an ADG, I was asked to teach my Corporal (ex-ADI) on how to use the Claymore mine at Phan Rang, so the Corporal could teach the troops of our section how to use the mine. I had to sit in on this lesson and learn what I just taught the Corporal’.

¹¹⁴ Air Board Agendum No. 13109.

¹¹⁵ RAAF Base Amberley 1966, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹¹⁶ RAAF Base Amberley 1967, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

Airfield Defence, Ubon Thailand

In accordance with Australia's obligations under the SEATO agreement, in 1962 Australia had committed to supporting Thailand's defence against North Vietnamese-backed Laotian communist forces. The RAAF deployed a force to Ubon in Thailand for a period of six years coinciding with other commitments in South Vietnam. On 31 May 1962, a RAAF advanced party had arrived at the RTAF base Ubon in Thailand. At this time the RAAF had an international agreement with the Thai Government for its local forces to provide surface-to-air and ground defence for the RAAF squadron at Ubon.¹¹⁷ However, given the base was still under construction local Thai forces were not employed for the protection of the RAAF until 7 June 1962.¹¹⁸ Only one GDO, Squadron Leader L.W. Meacham and two ADIs L.E. Garland and K.J. Lane had been posted to RAAF Ubon in the advanced party.¹¹⁹

On 24 June 1962, the RAAF unit based at Ubon was formally titled No. 79 Squadron and a detachment from No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron commenced work in July 1962. The archives show that RAAF passive defence did not commence until December 1962 with security lighting being installed around the perimeter of the domestic area.¹²⁰ Between December 1962 and February 1963, the domestic perimeter fence was completed, and construction of bunkers for protection against air attack commenced but then ceased shortly after due to the lack of building materials.¹²¹ A year after arriving at Ubon, the RAAF had installed a double apron of barbed wire security fencing around the technical area.

In relation to the close defence of the RAAF at Ubon, G. Bland, a RAAF Fire Fighter, stationed at Ubon in 1963-1964 recalled:

I don't know what happened at night on the flight line as I was sleeping my head off in my hut at the time, so I cannot comment on this. Certainly, the guards on the gate were RTAF and the gate was closed at night.¹²²

¹¹⁷ J.J. Corrigan, 'Defence Committee Agendum Directive to Officer Commanding RAAF Contingent', Ubon, Thailand No. 57/1962, 1962, National Archives of Australia, A5799, 57/1962, (unpaginated).

¹¹⁸ Coulthard-Clark, RAAF in Vietnam, pp. 9-12.

¹¹⁹ Personnel Occurrence Report RAAF Contingent Ubon 1962, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Flight Sergeant L.E. Garland and Sergeant K.J. Lane, ADIs, were attached from RAAF Butterworth and arrived at Ubon on 31 May 1962. Flight Sergeant N.A.R. Sampson and Sergeant C.S. Evans, ADIs, arrived from No. 1 Recruit Unit on attachment to Ubon from 20 July 1962.

¹²⁰ RAAF Ubon Commanding Officer's Report December 1962, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹²¹ RAAF Ubon Commanding Officer's Report January 1963, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹²² Greg Bland, 'Security Forces in High Intensity warfare', RAAF Memories Facebook Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/64639784883173/http>, accessed 6 October 2019.

Bland also commented about the lack of discipline and security protocols followed by RTAF guards at Ubon, 'I never felt threatened at all. Interesting thing though, as I visited the RTAF officers club regularly, when we went out to eat in town, once outside the gate I was given one of the officer's Colt 45s to carry'.¹²³

In April 1965, at around the same time that Bennett was in discussion with RAAF Headquarters regarding the need for RAAF General Hand airmen and ADIs to undertake airfield defence and security in Thailand and Vietnam (as ADGs had not yet been recruited and trained), he also visited Thailand to review base security. Bennett reported difficulties when relying on indigenous military police forces for security of RAAF installations and assets. He noted that in the previous March and April, the RTAF Air Police deployed on guard duty for the RAAF had been found sleeping while on duty. Bennett also stated, '. . . the Thai Guards are reasonably inefficient, no one knows how they will react in an emergency'.¹²⁴ He then noted that for any work to be done an interpreter had to be found, then the application of the routine tasking was unacceptable for the RAAF, and he predicted, if there were any major incursions outside guarding there would be losses. He reinforced this statement with:

Last week was the first [RAAF] squadron night flying at Ubon. I wanted the airstrip crossing closed at two points. I made, as I thought, the necessary arrangements. At the appointed time, I checked and found that nothing had happened. I finally did the job with our SPs [RAAF Service Police].¹²⁵

On 11 May 1965, Bennett raised another report from a visit to Ubon titled 'Ground Defence and Security of Ubon', which again reiterated the lax security and defence of Ubon airport by Thai forces. This time Bennett laid out evidence for his argument of three cases of RTAF Air Police guards found sleeping on duty while securing RAAF equipment and aircraft and to remedy this, the RAAF had to roster airmen on guard duty to wake up the Thai guards.

¹²³ Greg Bland, 'Security Forces in High Intensity warfare', RAAF Memories Facebook Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/646397848833173/hp>, accessed 6 October 2019.

¹²⁴ G. Bennett, 'Security – Ubon', 78/139, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; The Project CHECO Report on base defence in Thailand indicates the USAF had issues with the Thai Air Police and their airbase defences. Firstly, the report indicated that there were difficulties with the lack of training and poor communications: Secondly, the USAF commanders were not willing to fully integrate the Thai Air Police into the USAF Security Police functions and structure due to mistrust. As an example, the Thai Air Force Police tried to implement a program to take command of security from the USAF, with the Thai Security Guard Regiment Commander issuing Order 265/15, which directed local commanders to implement supreme command over all security forces and directed the Thai Air Police to only work a 4 hour on and 4 hour off shift system, rather than the USAF 8 hours on and 16 hours off.

Bennett also raised that the RTAF Air Police guard's responsibility in an emergency was unknown due to no practices or policies being laid down. He noted that the RTAF Air Police did not have the same loyalty or *esprit de corps*, did not follow instructions or commands, and RAAF airmen were forced to check on the Thai guards at all times.¹²⁶



Picture 11: Bunkers camouflaged with netting at Ubon in 1966. (Photograph by J. Canning)

Despite the concerns outlined by Bennett, the RAAF Ubon ground defence plan was taking shape, albeit slowly. By October 1965 the passive defence construction had been completed, that included construction of ten air raid shelters, sandbag protection for the water pumping station, and the Ground Defence Headquarters post had also been built (Picture 11).¹²⁷ In a positive step towards improving the security of RAAF assets at Ubon, on 26 October 1965, a ground defence exercise was held and, according to the Commanding Officer, apart from minor issues (not detailed), the defence plan by the RAAF appeared 'practical'.¹²⁸ However he noted that the RAAF contingent was finding it difficult to carry out any ground defence training due to the tempo of aircraft operations.¹²⁹ The following month, a Ground Defence Section and the RAAF Armoury, consisting of nine General Hands, two ADIs and one GDO was

¹²⁶ G.W. Bennett, 'Security – Ubon', 78/139, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹²⁷ RAAF Ubon Commanding Officer's Report April 1965, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; RAAF Ubon Commanding Officer's Report October 1965, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

established.¹³⁰ A General Hand attached to Ubon for Ground Defence duties, Aircraftman J. Canning, explained the extent of his training before deployment:

At No. 1 Stores Depot I volunteered for Ubon, Special Duties. We were sent to RAAF Base Richmond and were met by an ADI called Eddy Garrard. We did un-armed combat and weapon training and then went out to Singleton Army Training Centre and spent some time out there training in defence, for defence of the airbase. Spent an overnight there and was attacked by the Officer Cadets from the Army Officer Training School.¹³¹

On reaching Ubon the General Hands received further small arms and machine gun training and were assigned to escort officers travelling off the base (Picture 12).¹³² Canning further explained:

The normal duty was ground defence. We were rostered on to guard the aircraft at night on the other side of the airfield once all the other troops [airmen] stood down for the day. However, we did fill sandbags and build bunkers and did time on the front gate with the RTAF Guards.¹³³

From the start of January 1966, Wing Commander B.F.N. Rachinger, Commanding Officer, RAAF Ubon, outlined in his monthly reports that the security situation for the RAAF had deteriorated to a point where a higher level of guarding was to be enforced.¹³⁴ The perimeter fence for the domestic area was not secure and the fence line for the aircraft dispersal area provided little protection from attack. To attempt to improve ground defence skills, Rachinger organised a one-day shoot at the rifle range for 133 newly arrived airmen and officers.¹³⁵ However, over the following months the standard of security at Ubon continued to decline. Rachinger reported that sandbag bunkers had fallen apart due to the monsoon rains

¹³⁰ RAAF Ubon Commanding Officer's Report November 1965, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; General Hands – Canning, Brown, Bray, Farrell, Harris, Higgings, Pemberton, Newcombe, Rumph, Mckie and ADIs Taylor (16 July 1965 – 14 January 1966), Aherns (14 January 1966 – 14 July 1966), Garrard (4 November 1965 – 6 May 1966) and GDO Irwin (1 July 1965 – 7 January 1966), Harlow (1 January 1966 – 5 July 1966).

¹³¹ John Canning, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recording, 4 December 2017, held by author.

¹³² *Ibid.*; John Canning also indicated that the ADIs that trained him and the other General Hands, did not like the idea that General Hands were being used for airfield defences rather than the ADIs. However, this reinforces the RAAF's understanding of the tasking of ADIs, that being they instruct the Air Force in airfield defence but are not themselves airfield defence personnel.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Unit History Sheet RAAF Contingent Ubon 1966, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

and had to be repaired. He also indicated that the RAAF 'J' Group (explosive ammunition and bomb storage) area, situated near the USAF bomb storage area, had only a three-strand cattle fence. Operational records reveal that the USAF bomb storage area had been entered by unknown local person who stole a number of phosphorus grenades. Additionally, in March two Thai locals were killed trying to remove the fuse from a 750 lb bomb presumed to be stolen from the airfield. In another incident one month later, stolen bombs were found on a passenger train and under a bridge just outside Ubon township.¹³⁶



Picture 12: RAAF General Hands at Ubon in 1965 after a rifle shoot with RTAF Air Police. (Photograph by J. Canning)

On 10 March 1966, ten RAAF Service Police airmen had arrived to take over ground defence duty from the General Hands.¹³⁷ Once again, the RAAF sought to imbed ground defence skills into these airmen prior to deployment via one week of training as explained by Leading Aircraftman J. Jeffreys, a RAAF Service Policeman:

The ground defence training was a week out of Richmond with three ADIs giving us shit. We were not trained on the SLR or any other weapons. They hated the RAAF Police no end and it showed for the duration we were under their control.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ John Jeffreys to Sean Carwardine, email, 25 April 2017, copy held in authors possession.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Over this time there had only been three weapon training activities for the Squadron when at 2200 hours on the night of 24 July 1966, suspected unfriendly air activity caused the base to go on 'Red alert', and 'the ground defence plan was brought into action'.¹³⁹ By 0030 hours seven aircraft and pilots were ready for dispersal to other bases and all RAAF defensive positions were manned by RAAF personnel with rifles and ammunition. In his monthly report, Rachinger outlined that 'the response was good' there were 'several short-comings' with the defence plan which required resolution.¹⁴⁰ He does not explain what the short-comings were but noted that a new defence plan was to be produced.

The date of 8 September 1966 is significant, as on this date the first flight of newly trained ADGs arrived from RAAF Base Amberley to Ubon to take over ground defence duties from the RAAF Service Police.¹⁴¹ ADG, Aircraftsman V. Smith explained:

. . . and as an ADG we worked in association with Thai Air Police and worked directly beside them in our tasks, and in fact for that matter linked in with the American Air Policing through their radio network and whatnot. But from our role as Airfield Defence Guards we were to provide standing patrols, main gate guards, roving picquets around the aircraft lines and the domestic area, and we were also permitted to work off base, up to five miles off the base, on patrols. And we would go fully armed on those patrols and apart from the Thais and the occasional military policeman we were the only force doing that.¹⁴²

Contradicting RAAF and Defence Committee policy and international agreements at the time, retired GDO, B.J. Ellison, indicated that the ADGs were the only non-Thai military force allowed to patrol armed outside the airbase of Ubon.¹⁴³ Ellison and Hombsch outlined

¹³⁹ Unit History Sheet RAAF Contingent Ubon 1966, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Personnel Occurrence Report RAAF Contingent Ubon 1966, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Records demonstrate that in November 1966 another 12 ADGs arrived at Ubon from No. 3 Aircraft Depot. According to Hombsch booklet the first ADG flight arrived at Ubon in 1967 with him as the commander. Posting records demonstrate that 14 ADGs came from RAAF Base Fairbairn and one from RAAF Base Darwin on 3 February 1967. Then on 6 April 1967 Flying Office G. Hombsch GDO arrived at Ubon. On 11 May Hombsch and the ADGs with other RAAF members arrived at Bangkok to commence five days of Guard of Honour duties. By June 1967, all RAAF Base Amberley ADGs departed Ubon for Australia. On 15 June 1967 another 11 ADGs arrived, then on 8 September 1967 another 11 ADGs arrived and another ten arrived on 11 December 1967 at Ubon from RAAF Base Amberley. Flying Office G. Hombsch departed Ubon for RAAF Base Fairbairn on 22 October 1967, replaced by Flying Office T. Turnbull GDO.

¹⁴² Victor Smith, interview by Australians at War Film Archive.

¹⁴³ Barry Ellison to Sean Carwardine, email, 30 April 2017, copy held in authors possession; There is no indication in any RAAF ground defence file that the Australian forces (ADGs) gained written permission from the Thai Government nor the Thai military to allow ADGs to move outside the base perimeter.

that these patrols were to actively conduct fighting patrols in a seven-kilometre radius to the north of the airbase.¹⁴⁴ Smith discussed the patrols:

We were the only unit apart from the Thais themselves and some service and military police that carried sidearms. But we went out fully gunned up, up to SLR and M60 type weapons, and I think M79 grenade launchers. Our sections would go out as an infantry section would do, with the same sorts of equipment, the same sorts of firepower available. Generally speaking, they [sic] would be a day patrol just familiarising ourselves [sic] with the area, looking at areas where there could be trouble happening. As I said there was an area where it was suspected that aircraft were being fired at and it was basically a dried lakebed. We had scouted that area; we had a look at it.¹⁴⁵

By 1968, RAAF Contingent Ubon was preparing to withdraw from Thailand. On 31 August that year, the RAAF deployment ended, Ubon was handed over to the RTAF, and the RAAF contingent then moved to Butterworth in Malaysia.¹⁴⁶ At the same time the number of attacks on both Thai and Vietnamese airfields were increasing and followed a similar tactical doctrine. One month before the cessation of the RAAF deployment, in July 1968, an enemy sapper team attacked the RTAF airbase at Udorn resulting in damage to aircraft and fatalities.¹⁴⁷

The ADGs are reported to have ‘played a major role’ in ground and airfield defence, while stationed at Ubon airfield. After being newly recruited and trained, they worked closely with the USAF Air Police from arrival until the RAAF departure in 1968, and in doing so played a crucial role in airfield defence at Ubon. In a report to the Minister for Defence, prepared in 2004, an Independent Review Panel recognised that to counter the threat of ground attack, the RAAF ADGs area of operations ‘comprised the whole airfield, its aircraft and installations, and patrols in depth outside the airfield perimeter. Unlike the RAAF ADGs, the USAF Air Police were constrained to operate inside the perimeter’.¹⁴⁸ Most importantly, this

¹⁴⁴ Hombsch, ‘An Introduction to RAAF Ground Defence’, unpublished, pp. 17-19.

¹⁴⁵ Victor Smith, interview by Australians at War Film Archive; Anon., ‘RAAF Service Record – Kirkwood, John Lynden A113169’, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A12372, A113169; On 19 November 1966, J.L. Kirkwood an ADG died in a house fire in Ubon township. There is no information given or found within the Airfield Defence community with regards to this airman. According to the message sent on the 21 November 1966, the airman was reported missing believed dead in a building in Ubon township. He was the only person in the dwelling and the Thai rescue/fire brigade could not gain entry to the bedroom in which the airman was located. The body of the airman was unable to be identified until the RAAF had provided dental details.

¹⁴⁶ Unit History Sheet RAAF Contingent Ubon 1968, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Barnette, *Project CHECO*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Anon., *Vietnam Campaign Recognition for RAAF Service at Ubon, Thailand 25 June 1965 to 31 August 1968*, Canberra, 2004, https://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/_Master/docs/Reviews-Reports/Review-Vietnam-Campaign-Recognition-RAAF-Service-Ubon-Thailand.pdf, accessed 12 January 2010, p. 14.

is an official recognition that ADGs were operating outside the perimeter at Ubon, in contrast to RAAF policy at the time.

Airfield Defence in Vietnam

Airbase attacks within Vietnam cannot be measured by the number that occurred against individual airbases but must be seen within the context of the entire operational theatre. According to D. Wilson, an Air Force historian, 'The threat was intangible and interminable', and 'With 20/20 hindsight it is easy to claim that the enemy threat to both bases was relatively small'.¹⁴⁹ As in Thailand, the attacks against airfields in Vietnam had increased as the enemy became more proficient and emboldened in attacks on these assets. Roger P. Fox a USAF airbase defence historian noted that in 1979 the:

. . . VC/NVA [Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army] hewed to a military concept old in theory and application. As early as 1921, Giulio Douhet, an early and most influential prophet of air power, theorized that the only effective way to counter enemy air power was to destroy it at its [sic] bases on the ground.¹⁵⁰

Following a request from the Government of South Vietnam for assistance to counter the growing insurgency and the threat that communism posed to the region, in 1962 the United States had sent advisors to provide tactical and logistical advice. As an ally of the United States and given obligations under the SEATO Treaty and ANZUS Pact, Australia provided a similar commitment in South Vietnam. Only a few months after the RAAF arrival in Thailand, under the SEATO Treaty, in July 1962, 30 military advisors (Australian Army Training Team Vietnam) arrived in South Vietnam.¹⁵¹

While the RAAF in Ubon had enough weapons for the 150 personnel to provide airfield defence, the RAAF was struggling with its allocations of small arms for use in Vietnam and at home in Australia. On 13 February 1964, the RAAF released its listings of weapons held. There was a total of 5222 small arms held by the RAAF, which were not allocated for war use but

¹⁴⁹ David Wilson, 'C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters', paper presented to the RAAF History Conference: The RAAF in the War in Vietnam, Canberra, 30 October 1998, p. 87.

¹⁵⁰ Roger P. Fox, *Airbase Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961 – 1973*, 1979, Washington, p. 31.

¹⁵¹ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 35.

held at RAAF units for training and drill only.¹⁵² The RAAF requirements for small arms just for the South East Asian war commitments was a total of 3424.¹⁵³ Foreseeably, with a war commitment already in place at Ubon in Thailand, and the commitment to South Vietnam, the RAAF would need to issue small arms. Based on the numbers of arms available, the RAAF would find itself without sufficient weapons to train the remainder of personnel in Australia. For the airmen that deployed to Vietnam throughout 1964, who under RAAF policy would be required to defend their airfield if required, they were issued a mix of weapons, some not in RAAF holdings at the time, and many were sourced and issued from the USAF.¹⁵⁴

The RAAF's first deployment to Vietnam, a Transport Flight of Caribou aircraft, was formed at RAAF Base Butterworth under the command of Squadron Leader C.J. Sugden. The Caribous were able to provide short take-off and landing, support ground forces, paradrops, communication flights and medical evacuation into nearly 115 tactical airfields in Vietnam.¹⁵⁵ While the interservice agreement and RAAF airfield defence policy held that the Army was responsible for the ground defence of Air Force installations while the RAAF was responsible for the close protection.¹⁵⁶ However, in South Vietnam the application of international agreements for defence of airfields in Vietnam provided for a 'layered defence', which would allow for the collective defence of Air Force establishments and personnel.¹⁵⁷ Under the Republic of Vietnam Air Force (RVNAF) policy agreement, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), in conjunction with the United States Army forces, were charged with the protection of areas external to the perimeter of the airbases.¹⁵⁸ Internal protection was to be conducted by the RVNAF and USAF. While RAAF airmen remained tasked with secondary duties of protection of their workplaces, should a local attack occur, there were no ADIs or GDOs as part of the RAAF Transport Flight unit attachment and based on Australian and United States governments agreements, the RAAF would not provide specialist airfield defence personnel.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵² Anon., 'Arming of Units for South East Asia – Ground Defence Weapons', 1964, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Chris Coulthard-Clark, *RAAF in Vietnam*, pp. 38-40.

¹⁵⁶ J.I. Brough, 'Airfield Defence in South East Asia Appendix I', 48, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Richard R. Lee, *7AF Local Base Defense Operations – Jul 1965 – Dec 1968 – Special Report*, 1969, San Francisco, pp. 1-5.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

On 8 August 1964 the first Caribous flew into Vung Tau to commence the RAAF commitment of combined airlift systems with the USAF. Sugden raised concern that the barracks being constructed were not completed and the temporary tented accommodation on the base was inadequate for RAAF personnel. He made the decision that all RAAF Transport Flight personnel would be housed in rented villas in the local township.¹⁶⁰ Sugden seems to have made no consideration for the local protection of these airmen living outside the base, and his approach is also vastly different to the Commander at Ubon, where RAAF personnel were all accommodated in tents on base while awaiting construction of accommodation barracks. Upon the move of personnel off base, the only protection able to be provided for the accommodations was by local Vietnamese police. The 2-mile drive from the secure base to the villas in Vung Tau township had to be made in unarmoured and undefended vehicles.¹⁶¹ In addition, when RAAF airmen were no longer on base, no airfield defence support was available to support the USAF security forces.

Discussion had begun by this time between Bennett, RAAF Headquarters and Sugden over the protection of accommodation for RAAF Transport Flight. Bennett raised concerns as the developing skills of the Viet Cong in airbase attack were producing some successful outcomes.¹⁶² Similarly, concerns were being raised as to effective airfield defence for other airbases in Vietnam. On 10 September 1964, a VNAF spokesman (no name given) advised the United States High Command in Vietnam that the ground defence of Bien Hoa airbase was being undertaken by a newly recruited Regional Force of reserve soldiers and the combined Defence Command post on Bien Hoa airbase would only be manned if the base became under attack. Additionally, the spokesman commented that the lack of personnel to man the outer perimeter of the base placed it in a tenuous position. In response, Joint General Staff of the USAF raised questions about the loyalty and political disposition of soldiers of the Regional Forces that were protecting USAF bases.¹⁶³

At this time there were many examples of the vulnerability of airfields and other assets in Vietnam. A month after Bennett raised concerns about the poor protection of the RAAF villas, and USAF Joint General Staff raised concerns regarding protection of Bien Hoa airbase,

¹⁶⁰ Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, Canberra, 1995, p. 59.

¹⁶¹ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, p. 60.

¹⁶² G.W. Bennett, 'Staff Visit to South Vietnam by SQN LDR G.W. Bennett OR (Ground Defence)', 20/5, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁶³ Roger P. Fox, *Airbase Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961 – 1973*, 1979, Washington, p. 16.

a Viet Cong mortar company positioned themselves 400 metres from the fence line of Bien Hoa Airbase and subsequently attacked the base.¹⁶⁴ Within 20 minutes this attack killed four, wounded 72 United States military personnel and destroyed or damaged numerous aircraft.¹⁶⁵ The defence of Bien Hoa airbase had been the responsibility of the ARVN Regional Force Battalion (newly recruited), while the interior defence of the airbase was allocated to 230 Air Police of the VNAF.¹⁶⁶ This one attack destroyed a full USAF squadron (twice as many aircraft of the RAAF's No. 2 Squadron) of modern bomber aircraft costing over \$23 million.

In a further example of Viet Cong attacks against airbases in Vietnam, Sugden had received reports via the United States Army, Vung Tau, in January 1965 of Viet Cong in the township of Vung Tau and random ground fire at parked aircraft had increased. As a result, ARVN forces had increased operations outside Vung Tau airbase with a kill ratio of 3 Viet Cong for every ARVN soldier. In additional security measures, the United States Army was doubling the strength of forces securing the bunkers on Vung Tau air base. Additionally, major ground force operations had taken place some 12 miles north east of Vung Tau air base.¹⁶⁷ It is recorded that Sugden's response to this intelligence, and actions taken by Allies for heightened security was that the attacks were, '... isolated sniping and does not constitute a threat ...'.¹⁶⁸ In the February 1965 Commanding Officer's report Sugden increased guarding at the villas in Vung Tau by one airman.¹⁶⁹

In the same month, an attack occurred at the Pleiku airbase, which was situated on high ground compared to surroundings and layered ground defence. This airbase could be

¹⁶⁴ Richard R. Lee, *Project CHECO TAF Local Base Defense Operations July 1965 – December 1968*, 1969, San Francisco, pp. 7-8; The Central Intelligence Agency of the USA released an Intelligence Information Cable to USAF Command on the 16 November 1964 covering the Viet Cong Planning for the Bien Hoa attack. The airfield near Saigon was investigated by the Viet Cong and careful planning had taken place which indicated an attack would only take place if favourable conditions were available. Two companies were deployed, one creating a diversion while the other carried out the mortar attack. The Viet Cong leader had told his men that the attack would not be done until there was no moon. He also indicated the victory would raise the morale of his forces and units deployed throughout South Vietnam. The Viet Cong had been well-prepared with models of the airbase and the aim was to destroy all aircraft on the ground and all fuel dumps, and if possible, kill or capture as many American personnel as possible.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28; Bien Hoa airbase was protected by the ARVN, which consisted of four Companies of the 36th Regional Force Battalion (700 soldiers) deployed along the 16 km airbase perimeter. These units had small arms, machine guns and mortars. The internal defence of the base was the responsibility of the RVNAF which had 230 Air Police. These airmen had small arms and crew-served weapons, .50-inch machine guns, a mobile multiple rocket launcher and 20 mm cannon. The USAF had a detachment of 61 USAF Security Police which had small arms and M-60 machine guns. The fence line of the base consisted of double barbed wire fences with a 30 m deep minefield. RVNAF Air Police patrolled the base at night and security dogs were used at the bomb dump and flight line. There were no revetments for the aircraft, there was no alarm system, no perimeter lighting and no flares available.

¹⁶⁷ The battle of Binh Gia took place in the Phuoc Tuy Province (north of Vung Tau township and air base) over the period of 28 December 1964 until 1 January 1965. With 1800 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces against 4300 ARVN and US Army forces. This indicated the increasing military activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. In four days of fighting, only 32 Viet Cong were killed (found on battlefield) while the ARVN and US Army lost 201 killed, 192 wounded and 68 missing (captured).

¹⁶⁸ Unit History Sheet RAAF Transport Flight Monthly Reports 1965, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ W.M. Coombes, 'Security – RAAFTF – Vung Tau', 37/21, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

considered well defended by 300 South Vietnamese Rangers, 900 soldiers of South Vietnamese Regional Force Companies and 14 tanks of South Vietnamese Armoured Company outside the perimeter of the base.¹⁷⁰ Inside the perimeter were some 400 men of the United States Army 52nd Combat Aviation Regiment providing some internal security.¹⁷¹ In January 1965 a report was received late on the night of 6 February 1965, the Viet Cong, in a large co-ordinated attack, cut their way through the wire perimeter and attacked the base with small arms and improvised explosive devices.¹⁷² The attack left eight United States soldiers killed and 126 wounded, ten helicopters destroyed, and 15 more helicopters damaged.¹⁷³ In a further incident, only two days later, on 8 February 1965, the Viet Cong fired rockets at Soc Trang airfield with no damage or casualties.¹⁷⁴ Throughout 1965, it was becoming clear that the North Vietnamese insurgency (an example of asymmetric warfare), had led to South Vietnam descending into chaos and political instability.¹⁷⁵

To emphasise the vulnerability of RAAF personnel at the villas, an attack took place on 10 February 1965 in which the Viet Cong attacked the United States Army enlisted men's barracks at a hotel in the town of Qui Nhon.¹⁷⁶ The Viet Cong began an assault on the hotel and killed the South Vietnamese police guards who were outside the gate and around the building. There were 60 soldiers billeted to the hotel, with 44 at the accommodation at the time of attack. Of these, 23 United States soldiers and 7 Vietnamese civilians were killed. It should be noted that the Commanding Officer of the 117th Aviation Assault Helicopter Company, Colonel James E. Rogers was against placing the detachment in the hotel due to safety and security reasons even though it was approved by the Detachment Commander and the United States Government. Raul D. Serrano noted that this one attack destroyed the whole detachment, killing 23 of the 44 men. No other attack in Vietnam took such a toll.¹⁷⁷

As a result of these events, on 12 February 1965, Air Vice Marshal F. Headlam, DCAS, raised concerns over the lack of defence, the poor security arrangements, the lack of overall

¹⁷⁰ Edward. P. Lukert, JR, 'Department of the Army Headquarters, 52D Combat Aviation Battalion Enemy Attack on US Installations After Action Report, San Francisco, 1968, <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/reports/images.php?img=/images/1683/168300010693.pdf>, accessed 12 March 2018; G.W. Bennett, 'Staff Visit to South Vietnam by SQN LDR G.W. Bennett OR (Ground Defence)', 20/5, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated); Camp Holloway was located on Pleiku airbase, Camp Holloway consisted of the 4th Infantry Division and 119th Assault Helicopter Company of the US Army.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Alan Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest*, p. 128.

¹⁷⁴ Carl Berger, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1961-1973: An Illustrated Account*, 1984, Washington, p. 37.

¹⁷⁵ Richard R. Lee, *7AF Local Base Defense Operations – Jul 1965 – Dec 1968 – Special Report*, 1969, San Francisco, pp. 1-5.

¹⁷⁶ Carl Berger, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1961-1973: An Illustrated Account*, 1984, Washington, p. 37.

¹⁷⁷ Richard Fournier, 'Terrorism takes a toll', *Veterans of Foreign Wars*, February 2015, pp. 36-37.

ground defence at Vung Tau airbase and the vulnerability of the RAAF villas. In addition, he noted that the RAAF had not accepted responsibility for the protection of its aircraft or the security of the hangar at Vung Tau.¹⁷⁸ With this statement, Headlam was referring to the Joint Planning Committee's agreement, made in 1964 and prior to the Vietnam commitment, that upon detachment of the RAAF Transport Flight, the United States would provide for the protection and defence of aircraft and personnel.¹⁷⁹ The security of the villas was found to be inadequate following an investigation by the RAAF Air Attaché in Saigon, Group Captain W.M. Coombes, had found that the local police at the RAAF villas could be removed by their superiors from duty at any time, even when under attack. Lieutenant Colonel A. Feldman, USAF, wrote comments on Headlam's minute specifying that the USAF Air Police duty was firstly the airbase of Vung Tau and not the township. Additionally, a Lieutenant Colonel Dillan, also USAF, added that there was a problem with the RAAF villas and that, '... some more adequate protection should be undertaken'.¹⁸⁰ The overall outcome was that USAF security forces would not provide a timely response to any threat to the villas if a situation arose within Vung Tau township. There was therefore concern that RAAF personnel were not being adequately or reliably protected by the South Vietnamese (civilian) police in their current quarters (Picture 14).

Fifteen days after the attack at Qui Nhon, Squadron Leader Bennett arrived in Vietnam to investigate the local security of the RAAF Transport Flight in the town of Vung Tau.¹⁸¹ Bennett's report indicates that full responsibility for the general security of airbases was vested with the Vietnamese armed forces, however they, like the United States forces, could not provide protection for the RAAF villas outside the base. Bennett described that the reasons for the lack of ability of these forces to assist in protection were due to USAF Air Police security policy and international security agreements. Under those agreements, airbase defence was divided into three areas: inner perimeter secured by United States forces; outer perimeter secured by Vietnamese forces; and a special zone, extending from 3000 to 5000 metres beyond

¹⁷⁸ F Headlam, 'Defence/Security of RAAF Transport Flight Vung Tau', 2/3, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ F Headlam, 'Defence/Security of RAAF Transport Flight Vung Tau', 2/3, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸¹ H.D. Marsh, 'Staff Visit to South Vietnam by Squadron Leader G.W. Bennett OR (Ground Defence)', 41, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated); Bennett was briefed on airfield defence by Lieutenant Colonel G. Hackett of MAC-V Saigon, Colonel J. Smith, Deputy Commander Headquarters Support Command, US Army, Colonel Switzenberger, Deputy Commander of 2nd Air Division and Lieutenant Colonel A. Feldman, Divisional Director of Security and Law Enforcement [sic] (Air Police USAF).

the outer area, which was patrolled by ARVN forces.¹⁸² The only protection available for the villas was the South Vietnamese civilian police for intermittent guarding purposes only. Bennett recorded Sugden's and his officers' views in his report. He noted that Sugden was concerned with the security of the villas, however his reason against providing further airmen for guarding, or to augment the US Army guarding arrangements at the base, was that, '... it would take away from the already splendid servicing record of the Transport Flight ... any additional burden would mean a lesser effort in the primary role'.¹⁸³



Picture 13: A Vietnamese Policeman watching over the villa. The basic security provided for the RAAF Transport Flight off base near Vung Tau township. (AWM MAL/64/0104/06)

In an attempt to resolve the issue and increase security of the villas, Headlam added further comment to his minute covering ground defence in Vietnam. He indicated that he now agreed that the level of protection of RAAF aircraft by USAF security forces on the airbase itself was satisfactory, yet RAAF personnel should perform their own guard duty at the villas.¹⁸⁴ In response, Sugden, Commanding Officer RAAF Transport Flight at Vung Tau, expressed the view that ADIs or indigenous guards should guard the villas instead of his personnel. He stated, 'I will not commit RAAF personnel to guard in favour of the plan for ADIs or indigenous guards'.¹⁸⁵ The RAAF Air Attaché in Saigon, Group Captain W.M.

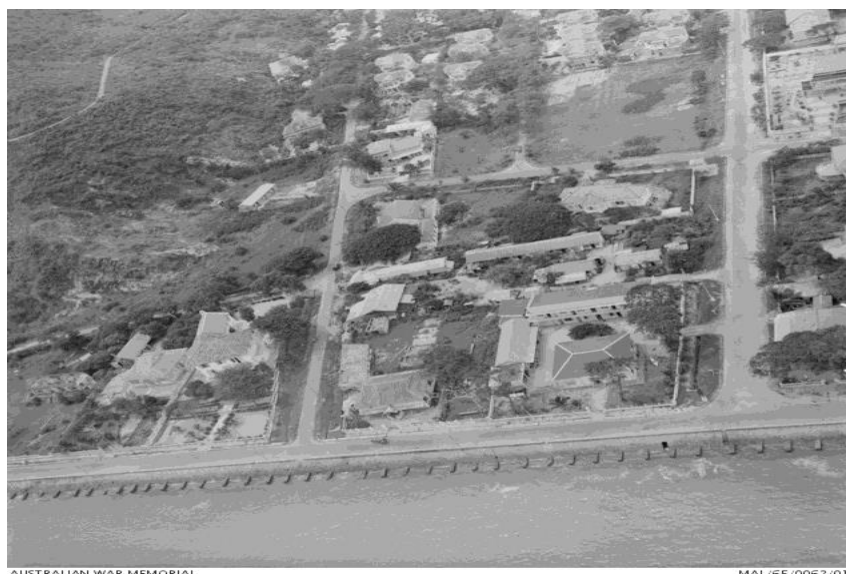
¹⁸² G.W. Bennett, 'Staff Visit to South Vietnam by SQN LDR G.W. Bennett OR (Ground Defence)', 20/5, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ F Headlam, 'Defence/Security of RAAF Transport Flight Vung Tau', 2/3, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Coombes, supported Sugden by stating, ‘RAAF Transport Flight recommends employment of indigenous guards and Army from the [ARVN] 6th Air Bourne [sic] Battalion that are unfit for paratrooping [sic] but are suitable for guarding’.¹⁸⁶ In April 1965, Squadron Leader D.C. Harvey, the newly-appointed Commanding Officer of the RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam, argued the need for a RAAF specialist ground defence unit for guarding, conducting weapon training, continuation training, maintaining defensive works and supervision of local guards.¹⁸⁷ This supported Sugden’s previous stance against using his airmen for airfield defence of the villas, and Harvey agreed that the use of technical airmen for the duty of guarding was ‘uneconomical’.¹⁸⁸



Picture 14: Aerial view of the two villas occupied by the RAAF outside Vung Tau. Both villas have messing and recreational facilities and an open-air cinema. (AWM MAL/65/0062/01)

After a review of security at the villas in February 1965, Bennett and RAAF Headquarters supported Sugden’s original March request for the temporary attachment of General Hand airmen and ADIs to the villas for security duty until the newly-recruited ADGs could arrive.¹⁸⁹ RAAF Headquarters had agreed that six to 18 airmen were required for

¹⁸⁶ W.M. Coombes, ‘Security – RAAFTF – Vung Tau’, 37/21, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸⁷ D.C. Harvey, ‘RAAF Transport Flight Monthly Report’, 46, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ H.D. Marsh, ‘Staff Visit to South Vietnam by Squadron Leader G.W. Bennett OR (Ground Defence)’, 41, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

effective security of the two villas.¹⁹⁰ By the end of April 1965, one ADI had been posted to RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam and, two months later, four General Hand airmen were posted in after a one-week ground defence instruction course carried out at RAAF Base Richmond. RAAF Headquarters had also supported the proposal for a GDO to be seconded to the 2nd Air Division USAF in Vietnam to evaluate and learn how the USAF did airfield defence for a period of 12 weeks and subsequently, Squadron Leader J.I. Brough was attached from 23 September 1965.¹⁹¹ Almost 12 months after the arrival of the Flight in Vietnam, there was still no adequate allocation of airmen specifically tasked with security at the villas in Vung Tau township (Picture 15).¹⁹²

In 1965 the threats to airbases in Vietnam continued to increase. Examples included two major Viet Cong ground attacks launched against United States Marine Corps (USMC) units at Da Nang and Chu Lai airbases.¹⁹³ On 28 October 1965 an attack on Da Nang airbase commenced with Viet Cong firing heavy weapons onto the base (this fire was maintained during the full raid). One Viet Cong force attacked the hospital area with grenades while other Viet Cong forces moved onto the apron area, throwing grenades into the nearest bunker, wounding four USA soldiers. Viet Cong moved towards the Sikorsky UH-34 helicopters parking area, running into Marines erecting tents, a firefight resulted in seven Viet Cong being killed. The attack destroyed 15 Bell UH1E Iroquois helicopters and 15 UH-34s, the hospital was damaged, medical equipment, crash fire equipment and the firefighting unit were destroyed, three Marines were killed, 26 wounded, and 70 United States Naval Construction Battalion personnel were casualties. The Viet Cong had 17 killed and four wounded and captured.¹⁹⁴ While this attack was occurring, at Chu Lai air facility (30 miles from Da Nang) the 4th USMC Regiment were securing the outside of the perimeter. Viet Cong attacked the 31 McDonnell Douglas F4B Phantom jets that were parked on the apron, with only one guard per four aircraft for protection. After a 12-minute attack, two F4Bs were destroyed, four sustained

¹⁹⁰ Durack, 'Security of Personnel Billets RAAF Transport Flight – Vung Tau', 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

¹⁹¹ J.I. Brough, 'Airfield Defence in South East Asia Appendix I', 48, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

¹⁹² Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, p. 60; In contrast, Coulthard-Clark indicates in July 1965 a detachment of four ADGs are attached the villas, this cannot be correct as the first ADG course finished in April 1966 and were posted to Ubon, not Vietnam. These airmen were Aircraft Hands and ADIs. There is no source information concerning the four ADGs at the villas. However, the files on airfield defence in Vietnam demonstrate that Bennett arranged for non-ADGs to be security guards.

¹⁹³ J.I. Brough, 'Airfield Defence In South East Asia Appendix I', 48, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

¹⁹⁴ J.I. Brough, 'Airfield Defence In South East Asia Appendix I', 48, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

major damage and the fire truck was destroyed. Four Marines, and nine Viet Cong were killed.¹⁹⁵

It is interesting that less than 15 days later, on 10 December 1965, General W.C. Westmoreland Commander of United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam wrote a letter to Headquarters 2nd Air Division USAF, which was forwarded to all military forces in Vietnam. This letter was received by the RAAF and it outlined that the United States could not provide all of the combat forces needed for defence of airfields and other installations, and that every airman (including of allied nations such as Australia) must defend the airbases. He stated:

This brings me to another problem which also is of increasing concern. This is the problem of the security of headquarters, logistic and communications installations and airfields and helicopter staging areas in a war with no front lines. In order to provide a high level of security to these installations, it would obviously be necessary to deploy all US infantry elements in a defensive role. Obviously, this cannot be done and at the same time go over to the offensive and destroy the VC [Viet Cong] . . . we must call for a greater level of participation in self-defence by every element and every individual in this command.¹⁹⁶

Following these major attacks on well defended airbases and Westmoreland's statement that all airmen must defend airbases, Squadron Leader Harvey had deployed technical airmen to guard duty of the RAAF Caribous.¹⁹⁷ However, after an incident where an American serviceman on guard duty fired at RAAF personnel, also on guard duty, together with the excessive working hours of the air and ground crew, Harvey then refused to provide RAAF airmen for further security duty. At this time, the four RAAF General Hands, who were then working over 56 hours per week conducting guard duty at the villas could not participate in defence of the airfield. Flight Lieutenant B. Williamson, GDO, in a letter to Bennett, stated that the current number of guards at the villas (one RAAF General Hand guard and two Vietnamese Police on a 12-hour shift roster) did not provide an effective standard of security. In addition, Williamson noted that Sergeant Holt, ADI in charge of the guards, was now undertaking WOD duties for the Flight, and therefore not available for guard duty. Holt also

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ D.C. Harvey, 'RAAF Transport Flight Monthly Report', 46, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

indicated to Williamson that the General Hands tasked with guard duty at night, when not on duty during the day, were being be tasked with any 'mundane job'.¹⁹⁸ In preparation for the arrival of ADGs, RAAF Headquarters and Bennett modified the structure of the Transport Flight to include one Corporal ADG and seven ADGs (once they completed the basic ADG course at RAAF Base Amberley), yet they would not be posted in for another eight months.

With the increasing number of major attacks on airbases across South Vietnam it was inevitable that Vung Tau would be attacked. One of the first major ground attacks recorded by the RAAF at Vung Tau airbase took place on 12 March 1966 when a mortar attack of 80 rounds struck the airbase, killing one United States Army soldier. The hanger that housed the RAAF Caribous received large shrapnel holes with two aircraft having more than 18 holes in them.¹⁹⁹ On the same day, a RAAF Caribou on the Chau Valley air strip was shot at by a Viet Cong sniper, with the round hitting the port engine.²⁰⁰ A few weeks later, on 23 April 1966, two RAAF Caribou aircraft were damaged by mortar fragments.²⁰¹ The RAAF ground crew notably worked in extreme conditions for 48 hours to repair both of these aircraft for operations. To reinforce the point of the lack of a dedicated ground defence force, under the RAAF ground defence policy of the time, these airmen would have been expected to undertake ground defence duties as well if needed, as there was no specialist RAAF ground defence force.

¹⁹⁸ Barry Williamson, 'Letter to Wing Commander Bennett – Ground Defence of RAAF Transport Flight', 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated).

¹⁹⁹ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF in Vietnam*, pp. 57-58.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁰¹ RAAF News, Viet Cong Bomb Hits Caribou, 8, 3, April 1966.

of the RAAF Transport Flight.²⁰⁵ He further outlined the lack of weapon training by technical personnel, stating, ‘. . . the CO being somewhat reluctant to let his boys off’.²⁰⁶

By mid-1966, the RAAF contribution had been significantly increased with both No. 9 Squadron and Base Support Flight deployed to Vung Tau. Despite the RAAF Headquarters having already approved the establishment of ADGs at Base Support Flight Vung Tau in December 1965 they had yet to be posted in. The Base Support Flight would look after all the administrative matters, supply of stores from Australia and the general operations of RAAF at Vung Tau, but as Coulthard-Clark indicates, ‘Members of BSF [Base Support Flight] were not combatants in the ordinary sense . . .’ and as a consequence were vulnerable when attacked.²⁰⁷ This vulnerability was exposed on 14 July 1966, when Viet Cong attacked the Vung Tau beach bar area. This was frequented by off-duty RAAF and allied military personnel, and resulted in the death of one United States serviceman and the wounding of many others.²⁴ Then less than a month later, 40-50 rifle shots came from the hill opposite to the villas in Vung Tau in which the RAAF were housed.

From 6 June 1966, RAAF Iroquois Helicopters of No. 9 Squadron were deployed to Vung Tau. During initial acceptance of the helicopter in Australia, pilots completed conversion courses and airmen completed crewmen courses on understanding the weight capacity of the helicopter, winch operations (lifting and lowering men) and the M60 machine gun, so that crewmen could be used as side door gunners. Side door gunners had two positions, number one position on the right of the helicopter and number two position on the left side. Early on, the second position was filled by any airmen qualified on the M60 machine gun, therefore General Hands and any technical airmen took up these positions. As would be expected, this immediately raised concerns by RAAF Commanders due to the removal of groundcrew and technical mustering airmen from their primary duties as tradesmen.²⁰⁸ However, RAAF Headquarters responded with the justification that, ‘these airmen could repair the aircraft if needed’.²⁰⁹ The problems with reassignment of technical airmen to fill the role of side door gunners would only be resolved when ADGs were posted into Vung Tau.

²⁰⁵ Barry Williamson, ‘Letter to Wing Commander Bennett – Ground Defence of RAAF Transport Flight’, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated); Jeff Pedrina, Wallaby Airlines, 2006, Canberra, pp. 5-6.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Coulthard-Clark, *Vietnam*, p. 73.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²⁰⁹ Anon., ‘Helicopter Crewmen Training’, 184, 1967, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

As the size of the RAAF commitment at Vung Tau was increasing, Bennett continued to advocate for an increase in security and airfield defence. On 22 August 1966, Bennett wrote to the CAS, Air Marshal Sir A. Murdoch, recalling the concerns Headlam raised regarding the defence and security of Vung Tau airfield and again recommending that ADGs be established to guard the personnel billets.²¹⁰ He also forwarded his recommendation that the RAAF provide additional security personnel to assist the USAF on the airfield itself.²¹¹ Bennett stated, 'In view of the greatly increased military activities in the Australian Army area of operations, I am concerned that the RAAF assets and personnel could become targets for VC activities . . .'²¹² Here, Bennett highlighted the foreseeable risk to aircraft and personnel of the RAAF due to increased military operations and that as a consequence the Australian Army were unable to protect the Vung Tau airbase, as outlined in Joint/Inter-service policy.

As a result of the decision to deploy ADGs to Vietnam, newly recruited ADGs had undergone basic training and ground defence training, including patrolling and infantry tactics, at Canungra in Queensland. Whereas in 1966, the RAAF policy and Department of Air policy only required the ADGs to carry out internal guarding duties of airbases, by contrast the basic training of the new ADG mustering focused on infantry training from the Australian Army manuals i.e. on aggressive Platoon (Flight size) patrolling outside the perimeter. This was fully based on the Australian Army Doctrine.²¹³ According to retired ADG M. Bryson, who had served in the Australian Army prior to enlisting as an ADG, 'The ADG basic course was 100% infantry training, not guard duty or guarding'.²¹⁴

Airfield Defence Guards arrive in Vietnam

By early September 1966, 13 highly trained and combat-ready RAAF infantrymen, ADGs, had arrived at Vung Tau airbase. On arrival, and despite their infantry training, these

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ G. Bennett, 'RAAF Element – Vung Tau', 184, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated).

²¹² *Ibid.*; Bennett was referring to the tasking of the Australian Army into Vietnam and the Inter-Service responsibility agreement on the defence of airfields. He indicated to Department of Air and the CAS that the RAAF, that under Australian Army planning for Vietnam, they would not provide external defence of the airfields where the RAAF were deployed. Within this discussion, Bennett also noted that the USAF Air Police had been in the United Kingdom investigating the command, formations, structure and policies of the RAF Regiment. The USAF would then begin to form of Squadrons of 450 airmen for airbase defence based on the RAF Regiment model.

²¹³ Airfield Defence Guard training took place at RAAF Base Amberley in the No. 3 Aircraft Depot Ground Defence Training Squadron. All training was from the Australian Army training manuals, focusing on infantry, field engineering, signals and tactics. None of the training focused on gate guarding and internal airfield foot patrols.

²¹⁴ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine; Michael (Tex) Bryson joined the RAAF as an ADG after his discharge from the Australian Army. Bryson served as an Infantryman from 1963 until 1965 in A Company 2nd Battalion 2RAR. Bryson had prior Army training, and this supports his comments where he has compared the ADG training and accurately stated that it was 100% infantry training.

ADGs were formed into shifts to undertake 12 hour guard duty; standing at the gates checking identification of RAAF personnel and aircrews at the base and at the villas.²¹⁵ Meanwhile, and rather frustratingly for the ADGs, they were also allocated as bus drivers for the RAAF, as the hiring of Vietnamese drivers had not been a success and there were no Driver Motor Transport airmen allocated to the RAAF Base Support Flight at the time.²¹⁶ If not on guard duty they were also used, alongside local labour, to construct revetments for the No. 9 Squadron helicopters and around Base Support Flight buildings and bunkers. To the ADGs, given their training, this may have been seen as a mis-direction of their role, however, Air Commodore W.N. Gibson, Senior Air Staff Officer Operational Command, indicated that static guarding at the villas in Vung Tau by the ADGs aligned with current RAAF policy and that this was what this mustering was created for, and tasked with, when in Australia and deployed.²¹⁷

Once ADGs had arrived in Vung Tau and began undertaking airfield defence duties, there was discussion within RAAF Headquarters about expansion of the duties of ADGs to include the role as number two side door gunners on helicopters. The ADGs were already trained in infantry tactics and the use of weapons and as side door gunners could relieve technical airmen of the task. The ADGs were requested to volunteer for side door gunner duty and after a few days formalisation on the helicopter they would be employed for six-month tours (Picture 16). At this stage they did not qualify as helicopter crewman however, later there was some formalised training at RAAF Base Fairbairn prior to posting rotations.²¹⁸

ADGs were now able to play a crucial role, for which their training suited them, on offensive operations with the RAAF helicopters, and the early ADG deployments as gunners was a success. As a result in early 1967, the Directorate of Operational Requirements released a short message stating that the use of ground crew or technical musterings for crewmen positions in Nos. 5 and 9 Squadrons was no longer required, ‘. . . as ADGs will be established in these units for these positions’.²¹⁹ Over the next five years, helicopters of No. 9 Squadron would be frequently used to support Army operations, medical evacuations, fire support, SAS operations, infantry extraction and infiltration and supply drops, all with ADGs acting as side

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Air Board Agendum No. 13109.

²¹⁶ J.W. Hubble, ‘RAAF Contingent Vung Tau Report on Activities – May 1968 Operations’, 1968, National Archives of Australia, A10779, 15, (unpaginated).

²¹⁷ W.N. Gibson, ‘Airfield Defence Guards’, 196/81, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated); Air Commodore W. N. Gibson, C.B.E., D.F.C., was at this time was at the Headquarters Operational Command in Penrith, NSW; Air Board Agendum No. 13109.

²¹⁸ Victor Smith to Sean Carwardine, email, 21 May 2019, original held by author.

²¹⁹ Anon., ‘Helicopter Crewmen Training’, 184, 1967, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

door gunners. According to V. Smith, an ADG and a No. 9 Squadron side door gunner in Vietnam, ADGs were posted to the squadron for six months at a time; however, later when ADGs completed Gunner training at RAAF Fairbairn, prior to deployment, some did 12-month tours.²²⁰



Picture 16: Leading Aircraftman Victor Smith, an ADG who took on the role of side door gunner in No. 9 Squadron Iroquois at Vung Tau. (Photograph by Victor Smith)

A retired ADG side door gunner, B. Fletcher, described an operation supporting a SAS patrol:

And at a certain point, basically when you hit the treetop level you set your guns and everything ready, you're not expecting anything at that time. But as you're coming in to land and you know that it is getting close to the area, two thousand metres to go, fifteen hundred, a thousand and then they will tell you, 'You're coming up to the clearing now' and you come over trees and immediately you are there. And that's immediately when you start watching everything, and the aircraft, you basically don't even touch the ground. Aircraft drops down touches the ground, they're out, they race off into the trees.²²¹

²²⁰ Victor Smith to Sean Carwardine, email, 21 May 2019, original held by author.

²²¹ Barry Fletcher, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 30 March 2004, University of New South Wales.

Fletcher continued, explaining a SAS extraction when the enemy is at the extraction point:

Because you always tried to get them to a clearing but there were occasions that 'Charlie' [Viet Cong/NVA] knew they were there in the area, they just couldn't find them. And they would say, 'We're virtually surrounded, we can't get to the clearing, you have got to come in'. So that meant we had to go in and winch them out. So, then what would happen was once we located where they are, they would be told to throw a flare. Our pilot would immediately verify it with them, 'Was it red, green, yellow?' And what would happen is an aircraft would be directed down on top of them and gunships would come down both sides firing rockets and mini guns. And they would strafe both sides of you because you would be sitting right over the top of the patrol and they would strafe each side and you also would be strafing the jungle. So, you would just sweep the area unless you did see somebody.²²²

The additional duties did not, however, excuse the ADGs from their primary tasks, as ADGs continued to defend part of the perimeter area of Vung Tau airbase. The area was so large that the ADGs could not have sole responsibility and any airman not on duty within Base Support Flight was also required to assist, alongside the ADGs, with guard duty on this perimeter section. The establishment of this extra guard duty tasking for other musterings within Base Support Flight was causing issues. These technical airmen had to work 50 hours per week on their main duties, and, according to Base Support Flight records, they were unhappy as this left minimal time to run the airmen's club amenities (recreation and service of alcohol).²²³ Additionally, as mentioned previously, the training for general airmen in ground defence of airfields prior to deployment to Vietnam was limited. A RAAF Communication Operator, L. Highfield, highlighted this lack of training in his preparation for Vietnam:

When the posting come [sic] through, they gave me probably three months' notice I think it was, and a posting date, what date I was going to go. Then I had to go and do more weapons training because I hadn't done any weapons training since, well you don't really after you leave 'rookies' [recruit training]. So, I had to go and do that out

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Base Support Flight Vung Tau 1967, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

at Point Cook. Well virtually just your SLR again, we used SLRs in those days. That was virtually it.²²⁴

The RAAF commitment was to be further increased in 1967 with the deployment of No. 2 Squadron, Canberra bombers, to Phan Rang (Appendix R). Phan Rang airfield was an old Imperial Japanese Army airfield built in 1942 and used by the French Air Force until the early 1950s. With the build-up of United States military forces in Vietnam, Phan Rang was expanded in size to accommodate large numbers of fighter jets and bombers.²²⁵ With no real detail in policy or doctrine, the development of Phan Rang was based on a peacetime design. The airbase was therefore vulnerable because the water and fuel supplies came from off-base sources received through pipelines. According to Coulthard-Clark, Phan Rang, which already had the American B-57 bombers, was considered the best location for the similar RAAF Canberra bombers which would be tasked for the same type of operations.²²⁶

Prior to the arrival of No. 2 Squadron at Phan Rang, a GDO, Flight Lieutenant R.W. Lyon, and 12 ADGs (Sergeant C.E. Buckley and Corporal D. Kaye and 10 ADG airmen) drawn from various RAAF bases in Australia had been posted to No. 2 Squadron to form a Ground Defence Section embedded within the Squadron.²²⁷ According to Bryson, this type of posting system, in which individuals were posted to an operational flying unit caused manning issues and further deterioration in the capabilities and morale of the ADGs. Bryson stated, ‘. . . we were not a unit within ourselves but were sourced individually from all over Australia and incorporated into aviation units’.²²⁸ This was a result of RAAF Headquarters’ decision not to form a separate Airfield Defence Guard Squadron and unique to the RAAF as this posting system was not utilised in allied nations such as the RAF and USAF.

Furthermore, when the ADGs began to employ effective patrolling outside of the perimeter of Phan Rang airbase (Appendix R), as they were trained and ordered to do, there was considerable disquiet among No. 2 Squadron senior officers. Despite there being ‘Rules for Engagement’ for RAAF personnel in Vietnam (Table 2), there was some confusion on when

²²⁴ Lance Highfield, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 1 April 2004, University of New South Wales; L. Highfield joined the RAAF in 1967 and did over two-and-a-half years of training in communication before being posted to Vietnam. His statement indicates that for those two and-a-half years he did no weapon training.

²²⁵ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, p. 94.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1967, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²²⁸ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

it was appropriate to fire at an enemy.²²⁹ A RAAF Interpreter on No. 2 Squadron, A. Fry (no rank given), explained that ADGs were ordered not to fire at an enemy unless the enemy fired at them first. This angered the ADGs who were being sent out beyond the wire to face an expected hostile and highly skilled enemy, as explained by Fry:

. . . FLTLT Lyon decided to send a patrol of ADGs outside the perimeter wire, which was strictly unheard of in the MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam] circles. This body were virtually the umpires of how we ran the war. MACV rules for engagement were too numerous to mention here . . . but basically were ‘Do not fire unless you are fired upon’.²³⁰

As ADGs continued conducting external patrols, Wing Commander R.B. Aronsen, Commanding Officer No. 2 Squadron, reported to RAAF Headquarters that there was increasing movement and preparation by Viet Cong within the area. He noted that Viet Cong strength had increased in the last month (June-July 1967) within the province of Ninh Thuan, in which Phan Rang airbase was situated. According to Aronsen, this activity was countered by South Vietnamese Army Units undertaking ‘anti-VC’ ground offensive activities, such as aggressive patrolling. As a result, there were discussions within the Squadron command about the urgent requirement for additional ADGs.²³¹ This was finally met in October 1967, when more ADGs arrived from Australia and were tasked with inner perimeter defence improvements and guarding duties.²³²

²²⁹ A. Fry, Airfield Defence Association News Letter March 1993, Queensland, pp. 10-11.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1967, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²³² *Ibid.*

Table 2: Rules for Engagement (Operational Record Book No. 2 Squadron).

Rule	Situation	Action to be carried out
1	When fired upon or when persons inside or outside the perimeter wire are positively identified as hostile	Shoot to kill
2	When persons or objects are discovered actively penetrating the perimeter wire or present in the area of RAAF operations	1. Challenge HALT – DUNG LAI 2. If suspect stands still: a. Cover with weapon readiness ACTION b. Notify Defence HQ c. Cover prisoner until relief arrives 3. If suspect flees and is not positively identified as hostile: a. Do not shoot b. Inform Defence HQ Note: Under no circumstances approach the prisoner or allow the prisoner to approach you.
3	If ordered to engage by Defence HQ	Shoot to kill

The lack of a dedicated Airfield Defence Squadron and the confusion as to the appropriate use of the ADGs was becoming apparent. On 11 December 1967, Squadron Leader J.A. Downie, GDO Vung Tau, indicated that ADGs were providing mainly security and internal airfield defence, but only the occasional external patrol at Vung Tau. He further outlined in a three-page document that, in his view, if infantry-trained ADGs at Vung Tau were required to undertake internal and external ground defence tasks in addition to static gate guard duty, an ADG Flight of three Sections would be required. He proposed that each Section should include one Corporal and ten airmen, and a Flight Headquarters of one Sergeant and Flight Sergeant, with a GDO in command.²³³ Downie insisted the idea of utilising skilled RAAF infantrymen (ADGs) as gate guards was ‘below’ what these airmen could provide to the defence of the unit. He went further, suggesting that if the purpose of ADGs was solely guard duty then less intense training was required.²³⁴

²³³ J.A. Downie, ‘Establishment – BASUPFLT Vung Tau – ADGs’, 2/5, 1967, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 2, (Unpaginated).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, the ground defence plan in Phan Rang was to be rewritten with a new focus. In December 1967, GDO Flight Lieutenant G.W. Fosskett, an ex-RAF Regiment officer with many years of experience including service with the Gurkhas in the Burma campaign of the Second World War, arrived at Phan Rang to replace Lyon. With him came 32 replacement ADGs, and the total strength of No. 2 Squadron Defence Section was then 34 ADGs.²³⁵ Fosskett was able to bring his RAF Regiment experience to bear on the discussions of airfield defence with Wing Commander D. Evans, No. 2 Squadron Commanding Officer. Fosskett had pointed out that the original planning by USAF Security Police for the base defence would see many untrained RAAF airmen being killed.²³⁶ Fosskett, in conjunction with the USAF, redesigned the defence plan for Phan Rang in 1968 and included a small number of ADGs to patrol outside the perimeter.²³⁷

Wing Commander S. D. Evans, described the professionalism of his ADGs, as follows:

. . . at Phan Rang any movement over that side of the airfield might have been a kilometre away and they [USAF] started firing at something, everyone would fire, they would fire out, just not knowing what they were firing at. The best troops there were the airfield defence guards that I had a flight of and I was very fortunate in that the Flight Lieutenant that was commanding that flight was an ex Royal Air Force Wing Commander who had been in a Royal Air Force Regiment and he knew a great deal about it and he looked at the plan for the protection of the airfield and said, 'If this is ever put into practice the Americans are going to kill more people of their own than they would ever kill the enemy', because people were given rifles, no training and he said, 'It would be chaotic'.²³⁸

The overall security of Phan Rang airbase during 1967 had included USAF 35th Security Police Squadron and the 821st Combat Security Police Squadron, elements of USAF personnel, the 1/30 Republic of Korea Battalion and local MACV, ARVN and Regional forces.²³⁹ Despite these resources, the ADGs were to continue with their own active defence of

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ Selwyn Evans, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 16 September 2003, University of New South Wales.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Selwyn Evans, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 16 September 2003, University of New South Wales.

²³⁹ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, pp. 226-227.

the airbase. By this stage, Phan Rang airbase was under regular mortar attack and the purpose of patrols outside the wire was to seek out the enemy at mortar range and deter or prevent attacks on the base. With increasing mortar attacks, and in addition to outside patrols to prevent them, the existing bunkers and overhead protection were strengthened. This manual work was undertaken by all RAAF airmen who were reported to have worked, ‘. . . with considerable vigour and surprising enthusiasm’.²⁴⁰

While ADGs were patrolling outside the base in Phan Rang during both the day and at night, at Vung Tau it was a very different operation due to the geographical closeness of the airbase to the coast. The ADGs at Vung Tau did undertake some external patrolling but not to the extent that was occurring at Phan Rang. In Vung Tau, in early 1968, disciplinary problems arose with the ADGs and charges were laid against four of them resulting in sentences of Detention and Confined to Barracks. The morale of ADGs had been ‘hit hard’, according to Squadron Leader A.S. Matters, Commanding Officer of Base Support Flight; ‘. . . morale has been low in this section because of the mundane duties they are required to carry out and lack of suitable areas for field training’. Wilson suggests that the impact of ADGs being constrained in a static role and tied to a ‘defensive posture’ caused a deterioration in morale. As a result, Wilson further records that between 1968 and 1971, approximately 66 percent of disciplinary charges at Vung Tau involved ADGs.²⁴¹ Matters summed up the issue:

Airfield Defence Guards do not have the opportunity to put a lot of their training into practice . . . All the ADGs would prefer patrol duties outside the confines of the airfield and preferably in active areas. They are highly trained and as proficient as any infantry soldier.²⁴²

The methods and tactics used by the ADGs at Vung Tau was described by retired ADG A. White:

And we also had blokes at Phan Rang which was up country again, and they had the Yanks and the Vietnamese and the Koreans there – it was a big airbase, so we had airfield defence guards there. They did patrols around the base. We [Vung Tau] looked

²⁴⁰ Coulthard-Clark, *Vietnam*, p. 231.

²⁴¹ Wilson, ‘C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Canberra, p. 87.

²⁴² A.S. Matters, ‘Visit Officers WG CDR J.A. Downie OR(GD) DEPAIR’, 8/15, 1968, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 2, (Unpaginated).

after the airfield security through the main gate and the gate entrance to our compound and security in the airfield at night, so around the perimeter. On the base the Americans would have what's called RED and YELLOW alert. So RED alert means we'll run an attack, so everyone got up and grabbed their rifle and we'd get taken to the towers and then there'd be a 'stand down'. You were talking about twenty-four on and twenty-four off and some of the, sort of just principles, behind airfield defence if you like. Well airfield defence only went to the perimeter of the base.²⁴³

The official purpose of ADGs in Vietnam was to provide close defence of both Vung Tau and Phan Rang airbases. ADGs were already patrolling outside both bases, and this was clearly beyond the scope of the ADGs intended role in Vietnam. Their defined role had been set in policy and in line with international agreements. However, for the ADGs at Vung Tau, further unofficial and unauthorised tasks were also required. In early 1968, RAAF GDOs, with the knowledge of RAAF Commanders, began ordering ADGs from Vung Tau (and later Phan Rang) to work alongside Army units on infantry operations at 1st Australian Reinforcement Unit (ARU) at Nui Dat. The records show that the reasons appear to be for training/experience but also to 'improve the morale of ADGs'.²⁴⁴ The earlier detachments to Army Units were again in direct contravention of RAAF policy at the time, none were officially sanctioned or authorised, and many are not recorded. However, post 1970, some of the attachments were noted in RAAF and Army records.

In the July 1968 monthly reports from the Officer Commanding Vung Tau Base Support Flight, Squadron Leader Matters, indicated that the morale of the newly arrived ADGs was poor, with seven charges laid against them that month alone. He further noted that this poor morale was not expected to persist as they were now being detached to the Horseshoe (with Army) and to Phan Rang.²⁴⁵ It is interesting, and perhaps demonstrates a different approach to morale management for ADGs than for other personnel, that in the same report he stated that in order to maintain morale for 'the rest of the Base Support Unit', the 'emphasis will be on welfare and recreational activities'.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Alan White, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 13 January 2004, University of New South Wales.

²⁴⁴ Unit History Sheet RAAF Base Support Flight Vung Tau 1968, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁴⁵ The hill known as the Horseshoe is located on the road between Long Tan and the Long Hai hills.

²⁴⁶ A.S. Matters, 'Base Support Flight Commanding Officer's Report for July 1968', Unit History Sheet RAAF Base Support Flight Vung Tau 1968, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

The ADGs attached to Army units, ostensibly for further training, at the Horseshoe were involved in enemy contacts alongside Army Regiments during infantry operations.²⁴⁷ After one month in Vietnam, ADGs K. Lovell, E. Charles and T. Beaven were attached from Vung Tau to Charlie Company, 4 RAR, based at Nui Dat. At 1030 hours at Checkpoint Charlie, at the Horseshoe, an engagement erupted with the Viet Cong in a wooded area.²⁴⁸ According to Lovell, an M79 grenade launcher round exploded in the weapon position of the Army machine gunner. The soldier died instantly, and the M60 machine gun was destroyed.²⁴⁹ Lovell was acting as number two on another M60, feeding the ammunition into the gun, and he stated:

As the belts started to deplete, I told the gunner that I was going back to my bunker to get more ammo, I just ran to the pit, retrieved some of the belts and returned. The gunner continued to use up the ammo at a rapid rate. I made the same trip for more ammo on three separate occasions. I noticed movement in the Plantation of what looked like armed VC moving to encircle the position from the rear and engage from two fronts.²⁵⁰

The Viet Cong attempted to encircle the Company, and as Lovell, while under direct fire was running back to his original position to get more ammunition, he picked up an M79 grenade launcher and fired a number of rounds at the moving enemy. Lovell continued, 'After several rounds, I had definitely hit at least one of the enemy and the rest withdrew'.²⁵¹ Armoured Personnel Carriers soon arrived and soldiers dismounted and began moving through the enemy position, among them was E. Charles, an ADG.²⁵² Lovell stated, 'I was told that the CO of Charlie Company was going to make a recommendation that I be recommended for the Military Medal or a bravery medal'.²⁵³

Despite extensive research there is no record of Lovell being recommended for the award, and investigation of Army files is continuing. However, many ADG Vietnam veterans attest that they have first-hand knowledge that the recommendation for Lovell's medal was forwarded to RAAF Command from the Army, but the recommendation was not supported by RAAF GDOs due to the unsanctioned nature of the detachment. The knowledge of this caused

²⁴⁷ K. Lovell, interview by M Bryson, Word Document, n.d., in author's possession; No. 3 Airfield Defence Squadron stationed at RAAF Base Amberley opened the Ken Lovell Club to honour the actions of all three ADGs at the Horseshoe.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ This soldier killed in action was Private O'Connor of Charlie Company 4 RAR.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

an immediate deterioration in morale of those ADGs in Vietnam at the time, and the anger still continues many years later within the Vietnam veteran cohort of ADGs.²⁵⁴

Retired ADG J. Kenna recalled, ‘I believe the Army wanted him [Lovell] to have it but RAAF said no, as it was not an official attachment. Would have been interesting if one of us was killed or wounded’. Kenner also stated, ‘I can’t remember any paperwork involved, that’s why it was never classified as official. We didn’t know the origins of the exchange, we were never told anything, just go’.²⁵⁵ Bryson explained the impact that the RAAF’s rejection of recognition for Lovell’s actions at the Horseshoe had on the morale of the ADGs being sent to Nui Dat for training and operations with the Army. Bryson recalled that in early 1969 he was ordered to be detached to Nui Dat, from Phan Rang, when word was released about the formal rejection of Lovell’s medal. Bryson stated:

We all knew that he had been recommended for a medal, not what kind of medal, but he was recommended for what he did. Then this business came down that he’d been rejected because ‘he wasn’t supposed to be there’. We were told a recommendation had gone from the Charlie Company Commander at 4 RAR to RAAF Command Vietnam and it was passed on to Terry Howe [GDO]. Howe was the one who rejected it on the grounds that ADGs were not supposed to be there, it was not authorised. That is almost verbatim of what was said.

Bryson went on to describe that once ADGs discovered that the attachments to Army units in Nui Dat and operations in the Horseshoe were unauthorised and, like Lovell, they would receive no support for their actions or events occurring there, there was a general refusal by many ADGs to obey orders to go. Bryson recalled:

I said, “wait a minute, why am I being sent to a place I’m not supposed to be at?” . . . I said, “What are you going to say if I get killed? that I’m not dead because I wasn’t supposed to be there?” . . . so, I got fronted to Squadron Leader [Charles Alasdair] Ephraums [OC Administrative Flight], and I got fronted to the WOD and my Flight Sergeant. I was threatened with disobeying a lawful command, and believe it or not,

²⁵⁴ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁵⁵ Jack Kenna, comment posted on ‘Kenny Lovell Incident Horseshoe’, *Airfield Defence Guards Facebook*, 12 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/134732188183/>.

mutiny was thrown in there as well . . . other section members also refused to take my place . . . I will admit now though that what I was doing actually was inciting mutiny, my section was looking up to me because I was older and an ex-soldier. I was the same age [22 years of age] as our Corporal but I had more infantry experience, and I said I'm not doing it.²⁵⁶

The ADGs being seconded or attached to Australian Army units in Vietnam for infantry operations was well known, even though not officially authorised. A single cutting from an unknown newspaper dated September 1969, reported the broad thinking of RAAF GDOs within Vietnam as to the role of ADGs. The article reports that Flight Lieutenant J.B.H. Brown, GDO, had organised for ADGs to carry out patrols in conjunction with the Australian Army around the Australian Task Force situated in the rubber plantations of Nui Dat.²⁵⁷ The Australian Task Force was formed as a Brigade level formation for Australian and New Zealand infantry, armour, aviation, engineers and artillery forces with the task of providing security for the Phuoc Tuy Province.²⁵⁸ This article acknowledges that ADGs were working with the Australian Army in some areas and, while embedded into Army units, RAAF ADGs were to become heavily involved in active Army operations.

While this was occurring, the ADG Flight at Phan Rang (now consisting of three Sections, each of 13 men) would roster one section for external patrolling, with another used as the Quick Reaction Force for the perimeter. The third Section would be on stand down, but ready to support the perimeter and act as a secondary Quick Reaction Force if necessary. Bryson recalled:

We were patrolling out to 3 kilometres and then we were told to take it out to 5 kilometres. The reason was that the Army didn't have the resources to be that close, so they left that up to us. In the daylight patrols, we were all over the place all the time.²⁵⁹

An example of one of these patrols conducted by ADGs in early 1968 is provided by ADG, B. Heap, 'Merv [Corporal M. Reid], our section leader, is yelling for us to form up

²⁵⁶ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine; Bryson was never charged, but also was not detached to Nui Dat.

²⁵⁷ Anon., 'ADGs Join Army on Patrol', 16/72, 1968, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 2, (Unpaginated).

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

outside for a briefing. In the bunker we go through the planned ambush for tonight'.²⁶⁰ The ADGs were trucked to the perimeter, Heap continued, 'The truck leaves us as we conduct a final check on gear and weapons . . . Clearing the concertina wire perimeter, we head off slowly. We have a kilometre or so to walk before we have to cross a canal'.²⁶¹

Moving towards the ambush site, Heap believed there was someone following the patrol.²⁶² Heap as 'Tail-end Charlie', the last person in the patrol, passed information forward to the section commander who formed the section into a quick ambush.²⁶³ According to Heap, 'The noises come closer and Merv sends up a 'pop' flare. Night turned into day'.²⁶⁴ Heap explained, 'Pop had them sighted. Someone yelled 'Contact!' Crump, an explosion in the vicinity of my left ear . . . Pop yells that there are three of them . . .'.²⁶⁵ While the area was lit up, all ADGs fired their weapons and engaged the enemy. After a brief exchange the patrol called for heavier firepower from the USAF Security Police mortars. Rounds were brought to bear, and the Viet Cong started to withdraw. This is an example of the purpose of external patrolling, which was to prevent an attack by armed enemy directly onto the airfield.

It should be noted that Australian Army patrols in Vietnam had a minimum size of 30 men or a Platoon, and Foskett's plan for ADG patrols were for a strength of only seven to 13 men (Picture 18).²⁶⁶ Patrolling outside the base was a dangerous and risky proposition. A section of seven to 13 ADGs carrying small arms would patrol out to approximately 1 to 2 miles (1.5 to 3 kilometres) from the base, with the only external support being the 13 ADGs of the Quick Reaction Force and the Korean Army troops on the base. In later years of the Vietnam conflict ADGs were patrolling up to 5 kilometres from the base. The size of the ADG section had also fluctuated with men sent on rest and recuperation, convalescence leave or posting back to Australia. In relation to the size of the patrols at Phan Rang, Bryson described:

On one occasion my section commander Laurie Gay and another guy, Hogan, were sent on R&C [rest and convalescence leave] to Malaya. Bolton took command of the

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Heap, 'Tail', Airfield Defence Association Newsletter, p. 22.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Anon., 'Australian Army Training Information Bulletin Number 69 Infantry Battalion Lessons from Vietnam 1965-71 (Obsolete)', 1988, Canberra, Headquarters Training Command, p. 3-3; An Australian Army Rifle Section consisted of 10 men. Three of these rifle Sections and a HQ of four soldiers were formed into one Rifle Platoon. There were three Rifle Platoons to a Rifle Company.

section, which was now only five ADGs. We were tasked to go on patrol out to Claymore Hill and set up an ambush for the night. We would be some 3 km from the base with five men. I had a brain snap and said, ‘You want us to go out there with five fucking men?’ Claymore Hill is called this because of another patrol to the area where we’d had a previous ambush site. During the night we heard noises and when Laurie Gay told us to go get the Claymore mines in the morning, they had been turned around to face us. That’s why it’s called Claymore Hill.²⁶⁷

The Viet Cong would continue to target Phan Rang and the ADGs would be actively involved in base defence. Between January 1968 and June 1971, approximately 784 mortar rounds and rockets were fired into the airbase and there were many skirmishes. For instance, in a further incident, on 13 November 1968, a small Viet Cong mortar team was detected moving some distance out from the base perimeter by a seven-man ADG patrol, and once engaged the enemy withdrew (Picture 17 and 19).²⁶⁸ Importantly, Coulthard-Clark, in the RAAF official history, has highlighted that once the ADGs started aggressive patrolling outside the perimeter enemy activity was reduced and that, ‘. . . no part of the base perimeter screened by their patrols had been subjected to enemy interference’.²⁶⁹



Picture 17: Airfield Defence Guard Section at Phan Rang. Right rear is M. Bryson. (Photograph provided by M. Bryson)

²⁶⁷ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁶⁸ Alan White, interview by Australians at War Film Archives, digital recording, Canberra, 13 January 2004, University of New South Wales.

²⁶⁹ Coulthard-Clark, *Vietnam*, p. 230.

The number of mortar and rocket attacks on the airbases continued to increase with 425 82 mm mortar bombs and 70 107 mm rockets being fired into Phan Rang airbase during 1969.²⁷⁰ One key battle occurred on 25-26 January 1969 and was recorded in both United States and Australian records. On 25 January a company of NVA and Viet Cong left their base camp at 1400 hours and by 2245 were 500 metres from Phan Rang airbase. Records show that the Viet Cong bypassed the east side in order to attack from the south (Appendix R).²⁷¹ As they moved towards the fence, the Viet Cong removed their clothing (in order not to get snagged on wire) and commenced cutting the wire.²⁷² When the Viet Cong moved closer to the perimeter USAF Security Police dogs were alerted, and the United States Air Police began firing in the direction (southern part of Juliette Sector). By 2330, Security Police dogs and handlers had been sent to the perimeter to sweep the area, and the Viet Cong withdrew a short distance. At that time a seven-man section of ADGs were in ambush to the east of the base and received five rounds of mortar fire directly on to their position. They then withdrew as it was clear the enemy knew where they were.²⁷³



Picture 18: Phan Rang after mortar attack on USAF Barracks, February 1968. (Photo provided by C. Tripp USAF SP)

²⁷⁰ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1969, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; On 26 January 1969, a Viet Cong sapper attack on the airbase destroyed two aircraft and damaged another 15, while 14 Viet Cong sappers were killed. On 25 February 1969, 86 rounds of 82 mm rockets were fired at the airbase and in June it was rocketed five different times, with a total of 41 82 mm mortar rounds and 12 107 mm rockets landing on the airbase.

²⁷¹ Craig Lord, 'Attack on Phan Rang Air Base, RVN', n.d., Happy Valley Phan Rang News No. 43, http://theseverts.com/Phan_Rang_AB.htm, accessed 19 August 2019; The information from the Happy Valley Phan Rang association comes from the oral history of Craig Lord, USAF SP dog handler and the interrogation of the VC POW.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, pp. 232-233.

At 0015 on 26 January 1969 the base was hit again by a co-ordinated attack at multiple points around the base. These included a Vietnamese sapper team's infiltration, together with mortars and rockets being fired into the base. The ADGs on patrol to the east were called back to base and, along with a 12-man Quick Reaction Team, were sent immediately to the southern perimeter to assist the USAF (Appendix R). The attacks continued and at 0200, mortar rounds hit a F-100 Super Sabre and burning fuel was washed into a nearby revetment which set a second jet on fire. Fuel and ammunition were exploding, and from this shrapnel was being thrown about inside the base. The mortar attacks continued and at 0300 hours attacks were being made in the vicinity of the USAF officers mess, No. 2 Squadron barracks and the liquid oxygen plant.²⁷⁴ The attack was escalating but NVA were pinned down in the canal area outside the wire on the southern perimeter. The Viet Cong had, however, already infiltrated the base, moving 75 meters inside the perimeter.²⁷⁵

Bryson recalled that he was with the section at ambush at Claymore Hill (Appendix R) when they were called back and formed up with the QRF to reinforce the USAF Security Police. The ADGs arrived at the southern perimeter at the height of the contact, and on arriving they were immediately engaged by small arms fire. There were mini guns on jeeps engaging the enemy positions from inside the base, continuously firing wide sweeps of the area. Bryson recalled that during the contact, and while under fire, he observed a USAF Security Police airman firing an M16 at an enemy that kept running towards them, until ADG Alan Ross fired his SLR and killed him at very close range.²⁷⁶ The contact continued until 1100 hours that day.²⁷⁷ The ADGs then conducted a clearing patrol outside the southern perimeter, where they located the form up point directly in front of a USAF tower. They also found weapons, explosives, documents and marijuana in the area.²⁷⁸

Casualties from this attack included 16 American wounded, 11 F-100s destroyed, six more with major damage and 20 buildings and facilities damaged. Fourteen enemy were killed (majority being permanent NVA), one wounded and captured. Blood trails were discovered indicating more wounded had escaped. Two of the Viet Cong dead were found to have been employed as civilians at the base.²⁷⁹ The records that have been located have no reference to

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁷⁷ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, pp. 232-233.

²⁷⁸ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁷⁹ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, p. 233.

any other RAAF mustering manning the perimeter during the incidents of 25-26 January 1969. It is unknown at this stage, if technical airmen went to the bunkers, or if they were armed to defend the airfield upon infiltration as per Phan Rang procedures. Investigations are ongoing.

This attack was a significant event for both United States and Australian airbase defence and security teams. As attacks continued to increase, Coulthard-Clark reports that there was an 'acute nervousness' that led to the wounding of two ADGs by USAF forces.²⁸⁰ On 1 March 1969, an ADG patrol returning to base carried out all the required notifications via radio, both on the RAAF and USAF ground defence nets, to avoid any friendly fire engagements.²⁸¹ However, USAF Security Police airmen noticed movement near an entrance to the base and opened fire, wounding Leading Aircraftmen K.D. Fisher and Sergeant Paine.²⁸² According to Bryson, 'The Yanks only stopped firing when they heard the swearing and abuse coming from enraged Australian voices over radio. They were in shock knowing they fired on Australians'.²⁸³ Fischer sustained serious leg injuries requiring surgery and evacuation to Australia, Paine was able to recover and return to duty.²⁸⁴

Attacks continued at a high rate throughout 1969, and by August that year, the ADGs were also tasked with securing the USAF Security Police southern perimeter area while the USAF 821st Combat Security Police Squadron was rotated out of the country.²⁸⁵ Between June and December 1969, ADGs carried out 101 night patrols and 31 daylight patrols.²⁸⁶ In one action during this time period, an ADG patrol engaged a small enemy patrol that threw a hand grenade at the ADGs, which exploded with no harm and the enemy withdrew.²⁸⁷ In another, a party of Viet Cong saboteurs were ambushed by ADGs as they attempted to approach the base, the ADGs suffered two wounded and thwarted an attack on the base.²⁸⁸ However, attacks by the enemy were not the only threat to RAAF personnel. On 3 December 1969 Aircraftman I.A. 'Pop' Woolley, ADG, who was on armed escort duty in a convoy vehicle, was involved in a road accident and subsequently died of head injuries eight days later.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, p. 233.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; During July, the airbase was rocketed with six 107 mm rockets and mortared with 11 82 mm mortar rounds, but they caused little damage.

²⁸⁸ Coulthard-Clark, Vietnam, p. 239.

²⁸⁹ Anon., 'Casualty Notification', 14, 1969, National Archives of Australia A12372, R/118435/H.

At Phan Rang during 1969, the USAF airbase defence policy had been redeveloped, and the RAAF modified the Ground Defence/Alert Procedures to include different levels of alerts (Table 3).²⁹⁰ For No. 2 Squadron, Alert Yellow required all non-combatant technical airmen to mass in the domestic area of No. 2 Squadron and await orders. During this phase, Cooks and Service Police, but not ADGs, would be pre-positioned to strengthen the airbase defensive perimeter. On Alert RED Option 1, all non-combatant technical airmen were to arrive at their appointed bunkers wearing flack vests and steel helmets and remain under cover until the Ground Defence Command Post indicated that the Alert was over. For the Alert RED Option 2 procedure (when the base was overrun with enemy forces), all airmen of No. 2 Squadron were to move out of the bunkers and proceed to the armoury and be issued with weapons and ammunition. They were to then man the base defence line.²⁹¹

Table 3: Security Alert Level (Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1969).

SECURITY LEVEL	ALERT	INDICATION
White		Normal conditions.
Grey		Implemented when intelligence reports indicate a need for increased alertness.
Yellow		Indicated that the base was to be subjected to attacks.
Alert RED Option 1		Implemented when the base was under attack.
Alert RED Option 2		Would only be implemented when an internal line of defence is needed as the base is being overrun by the enemy. ²⁹²

While Phan Rang had organised defence and procedures for security alerts, at Vung Tau, Group Captain J.I. Adams Officer Commanding No. 1 Operational Support Unit, outlined his concerns to RAAF Forces Headquarters Vietnam in his January 1969 activity report, ‘The ground defence of Vung Tau airfield is a concern. I believe the threat from mortar fire and

²⁹⁰ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1969, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1969, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

ground attack to be understated and do not believe there exists at Vung Tau the capability to secure the airfield'.²⁹³

Adams also explained why he believed airfield defence was of concern. He stated:

Although there is a large conglomeration of allied forces in the area, few are ground combat trained. Contingency plans are, to say the least, sketchy . . . Communications [between units and allies] are poor, and all officers live off base . . . I am not aware of any existing plans to reinforce the airfield defences in any emergency²⁹⁴

Adams indicated that the RAAF area at Vung Tau was small and enemy mortar fire would prove troublesome. He then outlined his planning if the airfield was attacked:

In view of the above, if attacked, the RAAF Contingent plan is to fly out as many serviceable aircraft as time permits. If it is not possible to retain control of the perimeter of the RAAF area of responsibility, or should our flanks be breached by the enemy, RAAF members are to fall back into the living area. This area has bunkers, is reasonably fenced and should prove difficult to assault . . . I am confident that our force could more than hold its own until the enemy withdrew, or relief arrive.²⁹⁵

Despite the development of the plans and the clear requirement for involvement of all RAAF personnel, there was still the long-held view of some technical airmen that they were not required to defend the airbase, at any time or in any circumstance. This was explained in a 1992 letter to the editor of the Australian Defence Force Journal by Flight Sergeant D.E. Hadfield, in response to an article on airfield defence written by ADG Sergeant Brasher. Hadfield's comments demonstrate the long-standing divide within the RAAF and the views of some RAAF technical personnel operating in a war zone. Hadfield stated:

Sgt Brasher (ADG) knows very little about maintaining aircraft serviceability, particularly under active service conditions. As a member who served in the Republic of South Vietnam under active service conditions, I can assure Sgt Brasher that

²⁹³ J.I. Adams, 'RAAF Contingent Vung Tau Report of Activities January 1969', Unit History Sheet Headquarters RAAF Forces Vietnam 1969, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

technical musterings would be hard pressed to find a spare hour in which to take up arms.²⁹⁶

Hadfield continued to insist that technical airmen could not defend the airfield and, as well ‘rectify faults, carry out repairs, replenish and rearm the aircraft . . . while looking for the enemy’.²⁹⁷ He further explained, ‘. . . all technicians are technicians because that is what they wanted to become. Had they wished to become soldiers they would have joined the ARA [Australian Regular Army]’.²⁹⁸

As far as inter-allied relationships between USAF Security Police and RAAF airfield defence personnel were concerned, retired USAF Security Policeman and Heavy Weapons (Mortar Section) specialist, J. Gorto explained, ‘We all thought they [ADGs] were great guys to work with, no ifs and or buts. They were always willing to do what needed to be done on the APCs or the mortar pits’.²⁹⁹ Gorto further provided his thoughts on the ADGs patrolling outside the base:

I thought it was a good idea and militarily wise, it was a must. I have no idea why they [USAF] did not send out the Security Police to do the same. We had on base, after let’s say June 1969, the ‘Super Cops’ sent to our base. These were SP’s [USAF Security Police] who were trained in jungle warfare in Hawaii I believe. The official name was ‘Safe Side’. As far as I remember they did no such thing [patrolling outside the base]. They rode around in the Commando Car on the fence line.³⁰⁰

Furthermore, Gorto supported the aggressive patrolling of the ADGs, ‘They did a great job at stopping the VC from walking around the base at will. I was only able to supply illum [illumination mortar rounds] or HE [high explosive mortar rounds] when needed’.³⁰¹ In

²⁹⁶ D.E. Hadfield, ‘Ground Defence’, Australian Defence Force Journal, 93, 1992, p. 4; It must be noted the journal article by ADG Sergeant Brasher was explaining the use of the RAF Regiment in the RAF and the different policy that the RAAF took on airfield defence. Brasher indicates that every airman should undertake airfield defence training and be able to defend the airfield. This supported the policy and the direction of the CAS during the time period for this chapter and post-Vietnam. D.E. Hadfield was a Leading Aircraftman of the Airframe Fitter mustering at No. 35 Squadron from 28 June 1967 until 26 June 1968. As a junior airman of this rank he would have had to follow orders on defence as required, however it is likely that he would have spent time maintaining the aircraft and relaxing during stand-down.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ J. Gorto to Sean Carwardine, email, 12 August 2019, original held in author’s possession.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

relation to USAF Air Police patrols outside the perimeter, Gorto stated that they did not patrol outside the perimeter, but recalled one USAF clearing patrol that occurred close to the base:

It was a daytime sweep after there was a mortar attack that night. It was a one-time thing. I never saw another one in 1969. There were two 113's [Armoured Personnel Carrier] and all the unit [platoon strength]. Except me and a helper, to provide mortar support if they were hit.³⁰²

There were some successes against the enemy, and one incident in which an ADG was awarded a Military Medal. At Phan Rang on 11 February 1970, two Viet Cong, conducting a sapper attack, were killed by USAF Security Police and an ADG patrol during a short 5 minute engagement outside the perimeter with a force of unknown size.³⁰³ The Corporal of the eight-man section, N. Power, had positioned his section to the south-east corner outside the base, facing out into paddy fields. Later Viet Cong attempted to enter the base through the wire directly behind Power's section. As the USAF opened fire from the base, Power had to move his unit to avoid being hit. He realised that in retreat the Viet Cong would have to cross a foot bridge or vehicle bridges over the canal, and his section moved into position, aiming away from the base and toward the bridges. They later engaged the enemy as they withdrew, with the contact involving small arms and grenades. After it had ended, the ADG section continued sweeps of the area until dawn, where a wounded Viet Cong was located and intelligence was obtained that a planned raid by North Vietnamese sappers had been foiled.³⁰⁴ The Corporal of the section, N. Power, was later awarded the Military Medal for his command of the patrol during the contact.³⁰⁵ The next morning on clearing sweeps, two bodies of deceased and naked Viet Cong were discovered.

A feature of asymmetric warfare, such as that in Vietnam, is that there was no front line, and servicemen found it difficult to escape the constant enemy threat. As an example, the

³⁰² J. Gorto to Sean Carwardine, email, 24 March 2020, original held in author's possession.

³⁰³ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1970, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; During January 1970, the base was subjected to three 107 mm rocket attacks; Sapper Attacks are a tactic in which highly trained soldiers in small units penetrate through the defensive perimeter of secure bases – such as airfields, fire support bases etc. The defenders of these bases were numerically superior in numbers compared to the Sapper unit. Sapper attacks normally indicated an attack on the base by regular forces is coming after the Sapper unit had cut its way through the base defensive wire. Sappers normally used small arms, grenades, explosive satchels and Bangalore torpedoes (long tubes of high explosive).

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1970, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018; Odgers, *Mission Vietnam*, p. 82; In March, the airbase was mortared and rocketed. One USAF member was killed and with nine others were wounded. A team from No. 1 Field Force United States Army inspected the RAAF domestic area defences and where the defensive protection was classed as 'Exceptional'.

beach facility at Phan Rang township, to which many RAAF personnel went for relaxation on days off, was attacked by a Viet Cong sapper team, and trucks and other vehicles were damaged.³⁰⁶ From this time on, two ADGs were detached to the beach area to protect the facility at night.³⁰⁷ At the same time, ADGs were conducting personal protection on convoy for RAAF personnel, and armed escorts for other RAAF travelling to and from the beach.

While ADGs continued serving in Vietnam, those who had completed their deployments had returned to Australia and were stationed at RAAF bases around the country. They returned from Vietnam as highly trained and experienced infantry airmen, and many were preparing to be deployed, or return again, to Vietnam. In 1970, the Base Squadron Amberley Commanding Officer submitted his monthly reports; however, none referenced any planning for training or preparedness activities for the ADGs. The reports do show, however, that the Commanding Officer recorded the high levels of disciplinary charges against ADGs at his base. These were largely for insubordination and petty misdemeanours and, according to Group Captain D.W. Hitchens, he had heard of more ADG personnel being charged in the last two weeks of November of 1970 than in any other time in his career.³⁰⁸

There was some justification for the low morale of ADGs stationed at Australian RAAF bases, as explained by retired ADG Bryson. By late 1971, Bryson had already served two 12-month tours in Vietnam, at both Phan Rang and Vung Tau. He explained his experience after returning to RAAF Bases in Australia:

Following the Ground Defence policy, we owed the Commanding Officer of Base Squadron 'working time'. An allocation of a number of hours of general duty to the base; this being mowing lawns, cleaning areas around the base, even painting rocks.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ By May 1970, the headquarters shelter had been completed. During this month, the base received four rocket and three mortar attacks. During an external patrol by Korean military three Viet Cong were killed.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*; The base was rocketed twice in June 1970.

³⁰⁸ RAAF Base Amberley 1970, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

³⁰⁹ M. Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recording, 24 November 2017, original held by author.



Picture 19: Vung Tau Airfield Defence Guards in 1971, who were sent to Phan Rang to assist with the withdrawal of all Airfield Defence Guards and No. 2 Squadron when the airbase was decommissioned. According to M Bryson, some Airfield Defence Guards who were due to go home left for Australia, but for an unknown reason there were a few Phan Rang ADGs who were returned to Vung Tau. Note that the Flight had a Headquarters of four men and three Sections of seven men. (Photograph provided by M. Bryson)

Another retired ADG, P. Pannowitz, stated, ‘. . . we were used and abused and generally thought of as only good for guard duty from most Base COs . . .’³¹⁰ The ADGs based at RAAF Base Amberley were regularly attached to units such as RAAF Base Glenbrook to conduct front gate guard duty. According to ADG N. Tyne, ‘. . . we had blokes sitting around everywhere, a Squadron in Malaya would of [sic] been a lot better use than main gate guard and painting rocks’.³¹¹ Authors such as Wilson, offer an explanation for the ADGs low morale and subsequent disciplinary charges. He implies that a number of factors influenced the behaviour of ADGs, firstly, the inconsistency between the ADG infantry training and their static roles, and secondly their attachment to flying squadrons as individuals rather than belonging to an Airfield Defence Squadron.³¹² In comparing the attachment of ADGs with other ground units, Wilson suggested that where airmen deploy from a ‘parent unit’, they develop a ‘proud corporate identity’ and have a united tangible purpose. An airfield defence squadron would have provided the ADGs with effective ground defence leadership and direction.

³¹⁰ P. Pannowitz, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *Airfield Defence Association News Letter*, November 1992.

³¹¹ Neil Tyne, ‘Security Forces High Intensity warfare’, Airfield Defence Guard Facebook Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/646397848833173/permalink/1506657589473857/hp>, accessed 6 October 2019.

³¹² Wilson, ‘C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Canberra, p. 87.

At the beginning of 1970, the United States Army had decided to relocate aviation operational and support units from Vung Tau, thus increasing the security tasking for the remaining units. The entire security of the on-base living quarters became the sole responsibility of the ADGs, approximately 850 square meters of area and associated access roads. The ADGs also provided roving picquets on the flight line and these duties caused the weekly workload to rise to 81-man hours per ADG.³¹³ With the decision to close down Phan Rang, the RAAF base personnel and No. 2 Squadron started to wind-down their flying activities. Nevertheless, the ADGs still continued with their aggressive day and night patrolling outside the wire, even though their own numbers were also being reduced. By this stage the patrolling range had increased by an additional 1500 metres from the perimeter (up to 5 kilometres outside the base). While No. 2 Squadron left Phan Rang in 1971, those ADGs at Phan Rang who were not due for posting out of Vietnam (had not completed 12-month tour) were sent to Vung Tau to finish their time (Picture 17). ADGs would continue to serve in Vietnam until the withdrawal of Australian forces in 1972. Although, Nos. 1 and 3 ADG Flights would return to Vietnam one last time on 25 April 1975 to assist with the last evacuations of the Australian Embassy in Saigon.³¹⁴

³¹³ Coulthard-Clark, *Vietnam*, p. 226.

³¹⁴ Office of Air Force History, *Embassy staff evacuated from Saigon*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

Section 3 – Analysis of Policy

‘Therein lay the problem. By sheer luck, nothing to do with good planning and management (of airfield defence or force protection), they’ve [RAAF] managed to keep stumbling through.

One of these days, their luck will run out.’

Mr S. Brasher, 2020.

Modern Airfield Defence

As initially raised in 1921 and confirmed by Wrigley in 1932 and demonstrated in the following decades, a crucial aspect of airpower is protection of assets on the ground. The RAAF in the early 1960s held the same discussions and arguments which had taken place in the 1930s, then again in the 1940s and into the 1950s. An examination of the development of RAAF airfield defence during the first years of the 1960s demonstrates that only when all other options failed, and after the RAAF being committed to war-like activity, was the RAAF forced into recruiting and training its own permanent specialist airfield defence airmen. During the period of insurgency and war in South East Asia, it was demonstrated very clearly how sustained small arms and frequent mortar attacks could have significant impacts on the effective operation of an Air Force. There were no locations in Vietnam or Thailand that were completely safe for use as an airbase and they were subjected to ongoing attack during the period of hostilities. From 1964 until 1973 approximately 475 recorded attacks against airbases in Vietnam resulted in the destruction of 375 aircraft, with another 1170 damaged.³¹⁵ The overall evidence demonstrates that of the 475 attacks, 49 per cent succeeded in damaging or destroying aircraft on the ground.³¹⁶ Dividing the loss of aircraft by military services demonstrates that the US Army had the greatest loss of aircraft, followed by the USAF and then the USMC.³¹⁷ The reintroduction of a Guard (ADG) mustering into the RAAF was the first step to the establishment of a dedicated, in-house, air-minded, and permanent airfield defence force. A policy direction that allied nations with greater resources and political will, such as the United Kingdom and United States, had undertaken many years prior.

The evidence presented in this chapter has revealed that in the lead up to active service deployments in Thailand and Vietnam, the same scattered and disconnected policy

³¹⁵ Alan Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle’s Nest*, p. 68.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

development continued to be argued and discussed. In the early 1960s, the RAAF Air Board would not accommodate the view that specialist airfield defence units were required, despite Base Commanders' reports and the focus on the loss of time away from key duties by maintenance and trades personnel when completing defence training. These policies, that still held that the RAAF could rely on Army for some form of defence, had again failed, as it had in previous decades. As soon as the RAAF deployed to Vietnam and Thailand, the Army was immediately committed to its own tasks in the ground war in Vietnam and were therefore unable to assist with RAAF airfield defence. The reliance on indigenous services or international allies to provide defence of RAAF assets was demonstrated to be less than ideal. This modern war was not a frontline based war, it was asymmetric and of high intensity, and previous policy and theory that all airmen could defend against ongoing attack as secondary duties was proven inadequate. The lessons from this time demonstrate that all airmen defending airfields as secondary duties would not be successful unless more time and resources were spent on continuous airfield defence training.

When reliant on allied nations or indigenous services for protection, as in the early stages of commitments in Ubon and Vietnam, the RAAF was required to accept other nation's policies and decisions that dictated how airfield defence was to be conducted. In Ubon, agreement was made that local defence would be conducted by the RTAF.³¹⁸ Subsequent investigations of the level of protection provided for RAAF assets and personnel was found to be lacking, requiring additional allocation of airmen to support security and protection. When Australia offered to support the United States and deploy RAAF units to Vietnam, it came with an agreement that the United States would provide protection.³¹⁹ However, at Vung Tau, allied nation protection (both the United States and the AVRN) was not applicable to security of the off-base accommodation at the villas. This meant the RAAF had to rely on local police for security or manage the security with RAAF airmen.

Protection of the villas was an ongoing concern, as evidenced by discussions between the Air Attaché at the Australian Embassy in Saigon, RAAF Headquarters, Air Marshal Sir A. Murdoch, CAS, Air Vice Marshal B. Eaton, DCAS, and Bennett. That security issues continued to be debated while allied nations were informing the RAAF of increasing threat

³¹⁸ J.J. Corrigan, 'Defence Committee Agendum Directive to Officer Commanding RAAF Contingent', Ubon, Thailand No. 57/1962, 1962, National Archives of Australia, A5799, 57/1962, (unpaginated).

³¹⁹ Coulthard-Clark, *The RAAF*, p. 35.

levels, attests that RAAF in Vietnam had difficulty planning for and managing ground defence of personnel and assets without its own specialist guards.³²⁰ The employment of local police was assessed as unreliable, Aircraft Hands and Service Police were inadequate in numbers to provide effective security, measured against the risk. It had been established that RAAF Commanders in one instance, attempted to seek out sick or injured AVRN paratroopers with a suggestion that they be removed from their unit to provide security and defence of RAAF accommodation at the villas. After the arrival of ADGs in Vung Tau, their numbers were, again, reported to be insufficient to provide guard duty in addition to conducting internal and external ground defence.³²¹ The evidence shows that RAAF personnel at the villas continued to remain inadequately protected until 1968-69 when they were moved to on-base accommodation.

The South East Asian conflicts were a turning point for the RAAF, as the experiences gained in these theatres appear to have settled the long-standing question regarding the need for a permanent specialist airfield defence force. Senior Air Staff Officers such as McCauley and Bennett had been advocating for such a force for many years and the idea of a formed airfield defence unit was not new. Initially, an independent unit establishment within the ground defence force was raised in the planning for the ADG mustering in the mid-1960s. This was detailed in the Air Board formation orders, with each Airfield Defence Guard Flight being under the command of a GDO of Flight Lieutenant rank. It was planned that one flight would be deployed to Phan Rang and one to Vung Tau. The airmen based at Vung Tau would also be detached to No. 9 Squadron on rotation.³²² Therefore, an Airfield Defence Guard Squadron had been suggested for Vietnam, however, there were a number of obstacles preventing the development of an appropriately resourced Squadron. These appeared to be the reoccurring issues of lack of funding and resources, in the context of the ongoing debate and divergence of views of the purpose of a dedicated guard mustering. These issues, together with underestimated threat levels regarding the risk to bases, hindered support for the formation of an Airfield Defence Squadron.

³²⁰ Barry Williamson, 'Letter to Wing Commander Bennett – Ground Defence of RAAF Transport Flight', 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated); Jeff Pedrina, Wallaby Airlines, 2006, Canberra, pp. 5-6.

³²¹ J.I. Brough, 'Airfield Defence In South East Asia Appendix I', 48, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 7, (unpaginated).

³²² *Ibid.*

While the idea of a permanent guard mustering was not new, in the 1960s the implementation of the ADG mustering was a new capability for the RAAF. The ADGs were to be trained in combat ground defence, to seek out and engage a skilled enemy outside the base, following Army doctrine and infantry tactics. In contrast, however, they were officially tasked, under policy, to provide gate guard duty, internal security and provide protection posed from thieves, saboteurs and small groups of insurgents. Importantly, according to RAAF Headquarters, ADGs were to relieve technical airmen from guard duty. This was a key theme and recurring statement that occurred each time guarding was discussed, or a guard mustering formed. Therefore, the ADG mustering was governed by unclear and inconsistent policy in comparison with the training and expectations of the ADG role on the ground. However, the contradiction of this RAAF policy against the training of ADGs is detailed by Bryson, 'Our basic course was 100% infantry training'.³²³ According to Bryson, the Infantry Training manual Infantry Platoon and the Patrolling and Tracking document was utilised throughout his basic training.

The inconsistency between ADG infantry training and their required tasking led to confusion by non-airfield defence RAAF officers regarding the role and purpose of ADGs under their direct command. Many veterans recount being tasked with bus driving, rock painting and general duties amongst performing static gate guarding; duties which were far removed from their training and skill. This in turn impacted the morale of ADGs and is recorded as a factor in the disciplinary issues that arose at that time. In comparison, despite being undermanned and under-resourced, other ADG sections were conducting patrols outside the perimeter, moving with stealth through jungle terrain and often engaging the enemy at close range. They also took up positions as side-door gunners, a role that was aligned with their training. Trained GDOs, such as Foskett, some with many years of military and combat experience in either the Australian Army or the armed forces of other Commonwealth countries, were a crucial support to the operational deployment and role performed by the ADGs.

Wilson further explained that poor morale of ADGs was also a by-product of the of the manner in which the RAAF deployed these infantry-trained units. He stated, 'Air [sic] defence guards were employed as individuals'.³²⁴ The ADGs were not part of any larger and

³²³ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

³²⁴ Wilson, 'C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Canberra, p. 87.

independently administered airfield defence unit, and a major consequence of this was a sense of isolation and disconnection with the remainder of the force. This caused some rebellious behaviour by ADGs towards non-airfield defence RAAF officers, as ADGs report they were treated as less than equal by the rest of the RAAF. It can be noted that these reports by veterans are not unique to the Vietnam-era, as guards of the Second World War and post-war era have reported similar treatment from RAAF Officers and airmen of other musterings.³²⁵ These issues, together with senior leadership overlooking the need for *esprit de corps*, and for the ADG unit's capability to be valued impacted ADGs developing a sense of belonging to a broader RAAF culture and an airpower concept.³²⁶ There also was discontent between combat trained ADGs, some who had years of Army (infantry) training, and RAAF DIs and ADIs that were forced to remuster as ADG NCOs.³²⁷ It may have been beneficial for the RAAF to have repeated the recruiting of the Second World War. In those years, airmen with infantry training that had joined as Guards had been quickly promoted as NCOs or officers, but this did not happen for the ADGs.

The question of what worked well from RAAF policy and procedural directives, that translated into action on the ground can be answered easily. Airfield defence conducted by ADGs and GDOs in its broader scope was an overall success in Vietnam. It is recorded that the work of ADGs in Phan Rang reduced the number of enemy incursions and attacks. Additionally, the employment of ADGs as side-door gunners for No. 9 Squadron in Vung Tau relieved technical airmen to focus on aircraft maintenance. A case can therefore be made that external patrolling provided better defence, and that a section of ADGs was all that was needed to patrol, provide early warning of impending Viet Cong movement and undertake small ambushes at night as a way of deterrent. At all times the ADGs were prepared to, and often had to, respond to direct attack and seek out and kill the enemy and, if required, at close range. However, more often their main task was to go quietly out on patrol and provide what information they could obtain on any enemy movement they could discern. That the patrols were able to give both bases early warning was one of the greatest advantages of this type of defence. The ADGs at Phan Rang performed 180 recorded patrols from December 1968 until January 1970. No other records exist of further patrols for either the Vung Tau or Phan Rang

³²⁵ Ernest O'Meara, interview by Sean Carwardine, digital recording, 3 April 2014, in author's possession.

³²⁶ David Wilson, 'C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters', paper presented to the RAAF History Conference: The RAAF in the War in Vietnam, Canberra, 30 October 1998, p. 87.

³²⁷ Air Board Submission No. 51/66, *Amalgamation of Ground Defence Musterings*, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

detachments, however, these patrols demonstrate the ability of the ADGs to directly contribute to the provision of RAAF and allied air power.

It is interesting that, where ADGs were utilised on patrols outside the perimeter of the base in an infantry role, it has to be acknowledged that while successful in providing early warning and preventing enemy attacks, the resourcing allocated to the patrols was dangerously inadequate. Contemporary armies of the time, including the Australian Army infantry units, (and on the rare occasions that USAF patrolled outside the base), did not consider patrolling in an aggressive jungle environment to seek out and engage or ambush an enemy with patrols of between seven to 13 men.³²⁸ Foskett was RAF Regiment trained, and he organised the external patrolling with the support of the Commander of No. 2 Squadron at a time when there was no endorsed RAAF policy (or agreement with the Vietnamese government) that ADGs could patrol aggressively outside the wire. In addition, RAAF Headquarters were provided with reports with recommendations as to suitable weaponry for ADG tasking.³²⁹ Concerningly, while RAAF Headquarters both in Vietnam and in Australia were aware that ADGs were performing external patrolling, policy that this was not an ADG role was relied on to deny the recommendations. RAAF Headquarters sought the advice of Army Headquarters by supplying an outline of the ADG tasking, which was not in line with what was occurring in action.³³⁰ While the young men of the ADG mustering performed their duties admirably and with success, it could be argued that they were certainly, and knowingly, placed at a higher level of risk by the RAAF than their Army infantry contemporaries undertaking full strength patrolling.

In a further example of a direct contravention of policy, the attachment of ADGs to Army units in Vietnam, mainly the 1st ARU, was again an unauthorised use of ADGs and reasons for this attachment were initially listed as ‘training’.³³¹ However, as ADGs had already received infantry training prior to deployment to Vietnam, and if their role under policy, was indeed largely static guarding and internal close defence, then the reason further infantry training is required is not clear. The secondary reason for this attachment to Army Units comes directly from the operational records of Vung Tau Commander’s reports to RAAF Headquarters, and is repeated throughout the records. That reason is that placing ADGs in more

³²⁸ Anon., ‘Australian Army Training Information Bulletin Number 69 Infantry Battalion Lessons from Vietnam 1965-71 (Obsolete)’, 1988, Canberra, Headquarters Training Command, p. 3-3.

³²⁹ L.D. Bleakey, ‘Operational Report Airfield Defence – Vung Tau’, 107, 1970, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 2, (unpaginated).

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Unit History Sheet RAAF Base Support Flight Vung Tau 1968, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

direct combat roles would improve their morale.³³² This is of interest, as the same report records that the plan to boost morale for the ‘rest of’ Base Support Flight was that ‘recreational activities’ would be encouraged. This was a clear indication and example of different treatment of ADGs to other RAAF unit personnel, and in the words of Vietnam era ADGs, in effect, had the reverse effect of improving morale.³³³

Additionally, the evidence shows that upon secondment to the Army Regiments, it was rarely training that was occurring as ADGs were being directly imbedded into Army combat operations against with the enemy.³³⁴ These operations had no link or purpose to RAAF operations, airpower or RAAF airfield defence policy. If it is accepted that the reason for this attachment was for training purposes alone, the question must be raised why inexperienced ADGs requiring further ‘training’ were sent into direct combat. The example of K. Lovell’s attachment and the allegation that a recommendation for a Military Medal was refused due to the unauthorised nature of the attachment is an ongoing source of resentment for ex-ADGs of the Vietnam era.³³⁵

Investigation has revealed that Lovell’s personnel records show that he was posted into Vung Tau, and like all other RAAF personnel his deployment was for ‘Special Duty’ in a ‘Special Area’ as defined in the *Repatriation (Far East Strategic Reserve) Act 1962*. These terms of deployment meant that he was not ‘allotted for service in an operational area’.³³⁶ In addition, Lovell and E. Charles’ personnel records show that at the time they were directly attached and imbedded with an Army regiment, and came under fire at the Horseshoe, the RAAF has recorded they were either on leave (in Charles’ case) or the fields appear to have been intentionally left blank (in Lovell’s case).³³⁷ While this research has not revealed direct evidence of an Army recommendation in relation to Lovell, or a subsequent RAAF response,

³³² A.S. Matters, ‘Base Support Flight Commanding Officer’s Report for July 1968’, Unit History Sheet RAAF Base Support Flight Vung Tau 1968, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

³³³ Jack Kenna, comments posted on ‘Kenny Lovell Incident Horseshoe’, *Airfield Defence Guards Facebook*, 12 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/134732188183/>; K. Lovell, interview by M Bryson, Word Document, n.d., in author’s possession; No. 3 Airfield Defence Squadron stationed at RAAF Base Amberley opened the Ken Lovell Club to honour the actions of all three ADGs at the Horseshoe.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Anon., ‘LOVELL Kenneth James : Service Number – A112559 : Date of Birth – 22-Jun-46 : Place of Birth – Murwillumbah, NSW, : Conflict - Vietnam’, National Archives of Australia, A12372, R/112559/H, (Unpaginated).

³³⁷ Anon., ‘LOVELL Kenneth James : Service Number – A112559 : Date of Birth – 22-Jun-46 : Place of Birth – Murwillumbah, NSW, : Conflict - Vietnam’, National Archives of Australia, A12372, R/112559/H, (Unpaginated); Anon., ‘CHARLES Errol : Service Number – A117327 : Date of Birth – 15-Mar-44 : Place of Birth – Cloncurry, QLD, : Conflict - Vietnam’, National Archives of Australia, A12372, R/117327/P, (Unpaginated); The personnel records of Beaven are unopened.

the number of ex-ADGs who have confirmed knowledge of the event and the response of RAAF Headquarters provides a compelling reason for further investigation.

As highlighted by Scherger, there were inter-service agreements that required all RAAF personnel to be trained and equipped to resist ground attack, and, once an airbase was threatened, the airmen were ‘to put down tools and take up arms’.³³⁸ The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates this policy had not changed, despite the experience and knowledge gained during the Second World War and Korea. The RAAF commanders in the field faced the difficult task of meeting increasing operational requirements for flying activities and requiring all personnel to be engaged for that purpose alone. They could rarely afford the technical personnel to spend time training, and to ‘take up arms’ and the evidence shows that many Commanders, and their technical airmen, continued to rely on either the Army, or other forces. Both at Vung Tau and Phan Rang, alert systems for varying levels of attack required that technical airmen were to proceed to protection in bunkers, unless called upon to defend their airfields, alongside ADGs and other allied nations, in the event the base was overrun. During the significant infiltration of Phan Rang base during attacks in January 1969, there is no record of how this policy was implemented during that event, this requires further investigation.

In an event where the base was in the process of being infiltrated and overrun, it is difficult to envision how the arrangement of technical airmen being armed would be implemented in an emergency. Processes would include the relevant RAAF WOD to organising the armoury to issue weapons and then ammunition (held in a different secure bunker) to every airman as the attackers advanced throughout the airbase. There is some evidence that technical airmen believed that the role of protecting themselves, the airbase or aircraft, even as a last resort, was simply not their job. While some had received weapons training, this was inconsistent and often Commanders were unable to spare airmen for this training. It is indisputable however, that RAAF policy at the time, relied on all airmen to protect the airfield.

This chapter presents a brief history and analysis of a conflict in which the RAAF on the ground was in unprecedented close proximity to an enemy whose aim, in countless and

³³⁸ Chief of Staff Committee No. 52/1960; Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum No. 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Forces Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

unrelenting incursions, was the destruction of aircraft and personnel on allied airbases. Analysis of policy over this time shows the clarification of the inter-service agreement, which was never implemented as soon as Australian military assets were deployed, but which only exacerbated disconnection and confusion as to who was responsible for the protection and guarding of airfields.

This chapter has examined a period of RAAF history that has been heavily studied. The majority of ADGs in Vietnam were under the age of 21, and of the entire 14 RAAF deaths in the Vietnam War, 28 per cent were ADGs and of the 56 RAAF wounded, 27 per cent were ADGs.³³⁹ Additionally, ADGs and GDOs, collectively, received one Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), a British Empire Medal, a Military Medal, four Distinguished Flying Medals, eight Mentioned in Despatches and one Certificate of Outstanding Service. In comparison, concerns with morale are acknowledged and ADGs, while highly represented for mentions and awards, also received a higher number of disciplinary charges in comparison to other musterings. This demonstrates that while ADGs were under pressure with morale and minor disciplinary issues, they continued to perform at a high level of professionalism and dedication when undertaking their airfield defence roles. A more thorough and accurate history of the experiences of ADGs in Thailand and Vietnam has yet to be recorded and this is a critical gap in Australian military and RAAF history of the Vietnam War. Many of the ADG veterans that fought in this war are still living and attempts have been made to capture their voices, knowledge and experiences, however, there remains a deep distrust of external authors representing their stories. While a large number chose not to participate in this research, some provided the author with information upon request, while others had recorded their experiences in newsletters, letters, diaries and voice recordings with the Australian War Memorial. For the purpose of this thesis, this chapter on airfield defence in the South East Asian conflicts has been limited in scope, however given the detailed history of this period and resources available, this is an area that provides future research opportunities.

The men that served as ADGs and GDOs during the Vietnam period carry well-earned pride in their service, knowing it to be a unique part of overall RAAF history. However, there is also a high level of discontent and disconnection toward the RAAF from the ADGs who served in Vietnam, largely noted by themselves and others to be a direct consequence of RAAF

³³⁹ S.D. Kerr, 'Mission Vietnam', *Airfield Defence Association News Letter*, July 1992.

culture and attitude towards them and their service. The information and records pertaining to RAAF airfield defence in Vietnam is much more detailed and complex than the scope of this thesis. This research can be expanded with further academic investigation into the RAAF airfield defence during the Vietnam War period.

Chapter Seven: The Analysis and Recommendations

'It is intended that the aerodrome defence flights should consist of personnel whose normal duties would keep them employed on the ground during war operations'.

Deputy Director of Training (Armament Training) Flight Lieutenant McCauley, August 1929.

'[Guard mustering] could be enlisted to fill the aerodrome defence flight positions rather than using technical airmen'.

RAAF Air Board account, September 1939.

'... every man in R.A.F. uniform is determined to use every possible means in resisting it [enemy] and is prepared to die in defence of his station. No one must be allowed to rely on others for protection: all must realise that their duty is to kill the attacking Germans by every means in their power and to hold on to their Station, to the death if necessary. ... no armed and unwounded man will ever surrender. ...'.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force, The Lord Portal, 5 July 1941.

'Owing to the shortage of personnel in the mustering of Guard ... personnel irrespective of their mustering, to carry out guard duty ... Don't complain about it but accept it in the light that it is vitally necessary'.

Commanding Officer of No. 2 Central Reserve, 1949.

McMaster suggested that through very intense formative experiences and, consistent with adult learning principles, militaries can and should reflect on those experiences and apply the lessons to future conflicts.¹ McMaster also suggests that the study of history is crucial in preparing officers for future operations; this includes the study of campaigns, battles and policies which leads to an understanding of the complexity of events that were experienced and in the context of those policies.² This is tempered by the caution expressed by Stephens,

¹ Andrew Erdmann, *How militaries learn and adapt: An interview with Major H.R. McMaster*, 2013, McKinsey & Company Public Sector, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-militaries-learn-and-adapt>, accessed 20 January 2014.

² *Ibid.*

suggesting that examining history is just one key component of military education, and that lessons learned through history should be considered in context of modern technology, doctrine and theory.³ This research has revealed the policy evolution of RAAF airfield defence in Australia, the influences and outcomes, and the impacts of that policy on ground defence in both war and peace. In line with McMaster's view, contemporary Senior officers of the RAAF Security Force support the need for researched knowledge of RAAF airfield defence policy, and understand the value that a study of history can provide to a modern force.⁴ Wing Commander C. Montgomery, a GDO, supported this view, stating, 'What I would like to see is us getting to the stage where we are discussing airbase defence/protection/security with academic rigour and we have published papers similar to how the USAF do'.⁵

The purpose of this research was initially conceived to document an accurate portrayal of airfield defence history and correct assumptions and erroneous beliefs that are currently held with regards to both policy development and the service of airmen in these musterings. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that many difficulties were faced by senior officers, from as early as 1929, in gaining support to implement workable policies for protecting their aerodromes. This was due not only to the restrictions of economics, resourcing and manpower, but also an extreme disparity in views about what the RAAF, as an arm of the Australian defence forces, should be tasked with as a primary role. One significant value of this research is that it provides comprehensive evidence that there is over nine decades of RAAF airfield defence policy development in Australia. The progress was not linear or smooth, with many achievements but also many obstacles noted and replicated over time. This research details some unique Australian concepts that have arisen through the exploration of policy development and implementation in Australia, in both peace and war.

This study reveals two separate points of view in relation to the acceptance of, or the role of, airfield defence as an Air Force capability. A militarised view was held by senior officers such as Bladin, Scherger, McCauley, De La Rue, Cobby, Eaton, McNamara, Bostock, Mocatta, Conduit, Bennett, Douglas, Murray, Foskett, Downie and Lyon who, over a period of 41 years, were advocates for a specialist Guard and RAAF Regiment capability. These views were based on their own direct experiences, the influences of Australian and allied nations

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Patrick Hoare to Sean Carwardine, email, 10 March 2016, original held in author's possession.

⁵ Craig Montgomery to Sean Carwardine, email, 23 January 2020, original held in author's possession.

learnings in theatres of operations and what commanders were reporting back about what they required for the direct defence of their airfields. In contrast, there was a view held by other senior officers such as Jones, Swinbourne, Cameron, Charlesworth and others, whose names are not recorded, that held firm to their belief that airfield defence should not be an Air Force responsibility. Their view was that the RAAF should only be concerned with the flying and maintenance of aircraft and if it became necessary to defend an airfield, the task could be taken up either by the Army, or by Air Force tradesmen undertaking the role as an emergency secondary duty only. This strongly held view was a continual obstacle to those Air Force officers who saw the value of recruiting a specialised airfield defence unit of infantry trained airmen, who could not only be deployed for the sole purpose of maintaining security of airbases, but also in direct protection from ground and air attacks. What resulted was an inconsistent policy development that was often stagnated, repetitive, contradictory and at all times under-resourced when compared to the requirements of the tasking.

The control of the air in support of land and naval operations had been demonstrated in many instances since 1914, to be a crucial factor to a successful operational outcome. From as early as 1921, there were some RAAF senior officers who understood the requirement for the fledgling force to protect its own aircraft and airfields from attack. Wrigley was the first Australian aviator to write a document linking the necessity of protecting vulnerable aircraft on the ground to maintain the advantages derived from the use of air power.⁶ Wrigley highlighted three requirements by an Air Force for application of air power, those being suitable air routes, effective communications and secure airfields.⁷ Adding further to Wrigley's theory, Douhet's theory leads to the conclusion that the protection of the airfield is a crucial requirement of an effective Air Force. It must be acknowledged that aircraft are not machines of the sky alone, they are bonded to the ground and when on the ground, become weak instruments of war, as do their valuable highly trained and experienced pilots and technicians. For this reason, air power needs secure air bases.

The first RAAF airfield defence personnel that were posted to man low-level AA machine gun positions from 1929 were CAF and PAF airmen of the Aircraft Hand and Storeman musterings already located at a station or within a squadron headquarters. In 1939 came, firstly the dedicated Aircraft Hand/Guards who would man the AA machine guns and ground defence

⁶ H.N. Wrigley, *The Decisive Factor*, Alan Stephens and Brendan O'Loughlin (ed), Canberra, 1990, p. 34-140.

⁷ *Ibid.*

machine guns. Later renamed 'Guard', the Guard mustering had additional subcategories, such as 'Guard War Dog Handler' and 'Guard Gunner'. Additionally, ADOs and ADIs were recruited to lead an all-round airfield defence capability and train all RAAF personnel for secondary ground defence duty. Following the end of the Second World War, the PAF Guard mustering was continued until 1960 and then continued in the Reserves, while at the same time further Guards, and Ground Gunners, were trained under the National Service Training Scheme during the 1950s.

From the earliest creation of the Guard mustering, there is evidence that they were referred to as Guardsmen, Ground Gunners or Wardens, and there was even discussion regarding a complete change of the mustering title to make it sound more combatant i.e. 'Air Force Infantry'.⁸ It is interesting that some historians have used the incorrect title in their research, 'Air Defence Guards' is the most commonly incorrect name used.⁹ Even as recently as 2018, the Minister of Veterans and Defence Personnel referred to the ADGs, who had fought in Vietnam, as 'Air Defence Guards'.¹⁰ The history of RAAF airfield defence presented here demonstrates that despite the various incarnations of the musterings, there has been one continuous trade for the defence of airfields since the first airman guarded an airfield in 1939.

This history reveals many heroic actions by these RAAF airmen, with bravery awarded and recognised throughout airfield defence history, although in some cases their bravery was recommended for acknowledgment that was refused. The actions of RAAF Guards in the defence of Darwin airbase in February 1942 has now been explored and detailed in this thesis. These Guards stayed on the airfield, despite orders to the contrary, to face what they expected to be a Japanese invasion. It was interesting that when recommendations for commendations were made for Guards bravery during the bombing of RAAF Station Darwin, the RAAF Air Board refused on the basis that the defence of Darwin was a 'shemozzle'.¹¹

In contrast to the direct evolution of a well-resourced, professional, highly regarded and integrated specialist RAF Regiment in the United Kingdom from 1942, and a USAF Security Force in the USA raised in 1949, a unique Australian dynamic contributed to a minimal airfield

⁸ D.R. Williams, 'Guard – Suggested Change of Name', 1A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A705, 231/10/354, (unpaginated).

⁹ David Wilson, 'C130 Operations, No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters', in *The RAAF in the War in Vietnam*, John Mordike (ed.), Air Power Studies Centre, 1999.

¹⁰ Darren Chester, Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, '50 years since Australia's RAAF Thailand service', media release, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 31 August 2018.

¹¹ Lockwood, *Australia Under Attack*, p. 166.

defence capability in the RAAF. The vast distances within Australia and on the islands were one issue, with the distance between the many airfields requiring protection, making consistent and effective deployment impossible. A further important factor was the low probability of a hostile ground force attacking the RAAF on Australian soil, together with the view that the next war would follow the same tactical trajectory as the last. The view at the conclusion of the Second World War was that as Australia was so far away from any foreseeable future war-like actions, that the RAAF would have time to recruit, train and resource an airfield defence capability, if and when required.¹² In the lead up to operations in South East Asia, the view was developed that Australia would forward-deploy to assist with regional conflicts, along with allied nations. It was thought that this action may prevent a war arriving on Australian soil.¹³

Through the course of this study it is clear that the dichotomy of views held by various Headquarters and senior officers saw RAAF Guards facing inconsistent training, a lack of resourcing and equipment, reduction in numbers (only to be re-recruited again as policy changed), inconsistent tasking and, at times, utilised solely as gate guards. An airbase's need for security and ground/air defence varied according to assessed threat levels, and the history shows that various Commanders utilised Guards, and later ADGs, in response to their perceived need. Some Commanders demonstrated little insight into the utility of a dedicated airfield defence force, while others deployed their airfield defence sections effectively, employing them in robust airfield defence tasking. In war-like operations trained airmen could perform more than guarding the front gate and have demonstrated an ability to be a pro-active combat infantry force using aggressive patrolling outside the base boundary fence to prevent and deter attacks occurring in the first instance. This role would be developed to a high level by the ADGs both during and after Vietnam and was a successful strategy for the effective protection of airbases. This was despite RAAF policy at the time stating that they were not to be tasked with external patrolling.

Major Findings

Some of the most significant aspects of this thesis are the themes that resurface and reoccur throughout the history, as revealed in the policy and unit records. These repeating

¹² Anon., 'Minutes of a Conference Held at RAAF Headquarters on Monday, 19th July 1948, to Discuss Fundamentals of Initial Action Necessary to Place the RAAF on a War-Time Basis', 12A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

¹³ G.E. Pettit, I.B. Ferguson, 'Defence Committee Agendum Directive to Officer Commanding RAAF Contingent, UBON, Thailand', 1962, National Archives of Australia, A5799, 57/1962, (unpaginated).

themes are; the difference in views regarding the threat posed by hostile action to RAAF airfields; the reinventing of the Guard musterings; the contradictory views of senior officers as to the responsibility for airfield defence, and, evidence that commanders often overlooked parts of the policy or orders to implement what they required for defence of their own stations.

What the history so far has revealed is that some RAAF senior staff officers (many who were pilots, navigators or engineers with no airfield defence knowledge) appeared to struggle with the concept of airfield defence as an Air Force capability. Circular questions and arguments, recommendations and counter-recommendations, orders and counter-orders make up a large part of the records' dynamics. Underpinning the difference of views appears to be a central disagreement about what the 'RAAF' is and does. Is the RAAF solely an 'air' focussed entity? If so, some argued, then resources should not be spent on tasking outside of aircraft and aircrew and the Army should provide airfield defence forces. Alternatively, others argued that the RAAF should develop (as with 23 other nations) a deployable capability that understands the interface between land and air power; a RAAF ground defence force with its primary aim being to protect assets from ground and air attack as a crucial facet for the maintenance of 'air power'. Time and again, the issue of whether the Army or RAAF should provide the tasking is raised throughout the history, and at times where this policy was applied, the Army rightfully, required their own personnel to support their land warfare operations and were not available to protect RAAF airfields. By the time of the South East Asian conflicts in Thailand and Vietnam, it was clear that the RAAF had finally conceded that airfield defence was a necessary part of RAAF tasking, although it continued to be under-resourced and operated under less than clear policy directions.

Assessment of the Threat to RAAF airfields

Over the decades of policy development for airfield defence, two distinct components that make up the 'defence' of an airfield are apparent. The first, is security of the base itself, largely static guarding of entry gates to the base, security checks and internal patrols. The second, is the protection from aggressive and organised enemy air or ground attack, requiring AA or external patrolling by armed infantry-trained airmen, to ward off enemy aircraft or thwart ground attacks before they occur. While airfield defence does encompass facets of both

security and defence, the records reveal differing requirements measured against assessed threat levels that influenced the views of senior officers and the resulting variance in policies.

McCauley first presented his ideas in 1929, and that included a defence against air and ground attacks on RAAF stations.¹⁴ He believed the use of small calibre machine guns could provide a depth of defence required, but he would alter this in 1942 following the experiences and learnings from previous policy implementation and military campaigns. McCauley's later vision encapsulated the developing idea of forward deployment in support of naval or land forces, that is, moving a squadron from its home base to operate on any airfield within Australia. These squadrons would have their own airfield defence force composed of airmen not allocated for aircraft operations but specifically protecting the airfield. McCauley held to the broader view of an airfield defence capability including not only internal security of the base, but the use of protection forces to guard against ground and air attack.

The RAAF had gained knowledge from experiences in the Second World War, these included the role of the RAAF Guards in the bombing of Darwin, the role of airmen in the battles of the Palembang airfields, and from McCauley's report on how airfield defence could be conducted following the loss of the Far East.¹⁵ All of these experiences were learned from operational areas under high war zone threat levels. For the development of policy during this period, advocates were proposing airfield defence squadrons at every RAAF Station. This proposal recommended a strength of three rifle flights of 30 men each, that could be Guards and as well any airmen qualified to be infantry trained, and one to two low-level AA flights made up of Guards with 30 each. These manning levels would equate to a similar RAF Regiment squadron at each base. Throughout the Second World War, however, RAAF airfield defence policy was not progressive, as the threat assessment continued to be based on airfields located in Australia. Additionally, with Jones' influence on the policy development, it was held that a maximum of 20 Guards per station and 60 per squadron could provide security on a 24-hour basis for all Australian and overseas RAAF bases and installations.¹⁶ Despite this view, the provision of Guards never reached the recommended manning levels. Even while Australia was at war, airfield defence (both in Australia and overseas) was being reduced from machine

¹⁴ J.P.J. McCauley, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 4, 1929, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated)

¹⁵ 130 Principle lessons learned in the Malaya & Sumatra campaign (Air)-Prepared by GPCAPT McCauley MAR42, CD-ROM, Canberra, 2013.

¹⁶ F.J. Mulroney, 'Air Force Confidential Orders 288 – Security Guards 25/501/16 – 3.10.42', 1942, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

gun defence, to internal gate guard security, based on the narrower threat levels, which included threats from sabotage by one to two persons, theft or ‘unruly poorly trained civilians’.¹⁷

During the Second World War, and despite the restrictive policies (based on lower threat levels) issued from the Air Board and RAAF Headquarters as outlined above, many Commanders were forced to become creative to meet the demand for effective defence against increasing threats. Cobby, Bostock, Scherger and Mocatta were able to staff and resource airfield defence units for use in the Far East with great success. Examples include the development of Cobby’s 1944 Defence Pool, that in 1945 was renamed No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron; Bladin, in the North Western Area, formed the SGU which ultimately was renamed No. 1 Airfield Defence Squadron; and Headquarters at North Eastern Area formed their own defence pool of Guards based in Queensland.¹⁸ All of these initiatives together, were in essence, reflective of Mocatta’s RAAF Regiment, in all but name. This was based on the size, structure and capability to meet the need for the defence of airfields during forward operations throughout the Islands of the Pacific campaign. The creation of Guards in ‘pools’ and units were formed without the oversight of formalised RAAF policy. These achievements would not be repeated successfully.

When the war ended, in line with de-mobilisation and threat assessments that there was no longer any threat to Australian airbases, much of the policy for RAAF airfield defence was removed. All of the training outlines, structure of the aerodrome defence sections, and the memorandums reflected the depletion of the force. The only two documents that remained were those on the security of RAAF installations and the policy on security guards.¹⁹ The focus again returned to the RAAF employing Guards for security, with the Army being expected to take on protection of airfields if and when required in the future. Even so, the removal of nearly all of the Guards, reducing the strength RAAF wide from over 6000 to as few as 180 airmen could not possibly provide the nation-wide internal security for the RAAF that Jones foresaw. With the reduction of the strength of Guards in the RAAF at this time, every airman would then be required to contribute to security as a secondary duty, and this was met with widespread discontent from technical and non-technical airmen.

¹⁷ Anon., ‘Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments,’ 1960, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/2 PART 6, (unpaginated).

¹⁸ S.M. Artaud, ‘First Tactical Air Force RAAF APO Group 495 Organisation memorandum No. 7 Defence Arrangements’, 6A, 1944, National Archives of Australia, A11225, 224/8/ORG, (unpaginated)

¹⁹ The RAAF Headquarters term for the Guard mustering. Throughout the Second World War and post war there were never Security Guards in the RAAF until the reformation of the dog handler mustering, which would be called Security Guards.

The reduced role of Guards only performing security duties was proven to be inadequate during the Korean War in the 1950s. RAAF commanders who had their Army protectors removed in the midst of offensive flying operations, were left without adequate protection in the face of increasing hostilities and threats. They sought the provision of trained RAAF Guards again to provide security and airfield defence; the same tasking that was undertaken in the Second World War.²⁰ However, the view was that, according to CAS Jones, there would be sufficient notice of the next global war for Guards to be recruited at that time. In addition, the threat level at the time did not require higher numbers of Guards. This reflects that Jones' planning for future capabilities was largely based on recent history only, rather than taking a broader view in context of increasing hostilities and changing threat levels to RAAF Bases and facilities.

During the 1950s, the training of reserves and RAAF personnel in weapons and ground combat focused on the common threats the RAAF assessed at the time; that there were no significant threats to Australian mainland airfields and only theft or sabotage on those overseas.²¹ There is no explanation in the evidence as to why the RAAF had not utilised the National Service airmen of the Ground Gunner or Guard mustering for duty in Korea, and why the recruitment of permanent Guards was not increased at that time. For the duration of the occupation of Japan and the Korean War, and into the lead up to operations in Malaya, Thailand and Vietnam, the ground threats against RAAF airfields overseas, as assessed by RAAF Headquarters, did not change. This was at odds with the situation on the ground where North Korean armoured units of tanks were attacking the airfields of the United Nations forces deployed in this theatre.

Even as early hostilities were increasing in South East Asia, in both Thailand and Vietnam, it was a frustration to some senior officers that RAAF Headquarters still asserted that security of installations was all that was required, seeing theft, sabotage and unruly civilians as the only consideration for security the RAAF was responsible for. It is clear on the evidence, that again the objective was not resourced appropriately to achieve the stated aim. During this time, the Australian Army was allocated security and AA defence of the RAAF in Japan and the start of the Korean War, however, were very quickly withdrawn.²² This left RAAF

²⁰ No. 391 (Base) Squadron 1954, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra.

²¹ E.W. Hicks, 'The Threat to Static Defence Installations in Malaya and Australia, in Cold and Limited or Global War', 2, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A5954, 1458/3, (unpaginated).

²² No. 391 (Base) Squadron 1954, *Operational Record Book*, USB Storage Device, Canberra.

commanders without protection for any form of defence and protection. At the same time, in Australia, even basic security was not within the capability of the RAAF, as detailed by the inquiry by senators regarding insecurity at Western Junction in Tasmania and other stations around Australia. There were still Guards and War Dog Handlers undertaking security at some RAAF Stations in Australia and in Japan, while other bases recruited civilians to provide gate guards. When the Korean War began, Guards were tasked with operational airfield defence and security.

It could be stated that the Vietnam War demonstrated most effectively the ground threats to airbases and personnel from new enemy tactics and methods of combat, and hence the greater need for airfield defence specialists at each base. The mechanics of the attacks on airfields in Vietnam did not substantially differ from those in past wars, however, the ground attacks through mortar, rockets and attempted infiltration were now perpetrated by guerrilla tactics of a skilled, determined, organised and clandestine enemy. Threat assessments by the RAAF continued to replicate the thinking of the period from 1949-1960. This was demonstrated by the ongoing, and dangerous, lack of adequate security for personnel accommodations in Vung Tau, despite the examples of direct local attacks, incurring devastating loss of life for allied personnel in similar accommodation.²³ There appeared to be an unwillingness of RAAF Senior Command to firstly reassess the risk based on emerging evidence, and secondly to ensure the appropriate protection of personnel, a task that was not undertaken until much later. It should also be noted that some authors of RAAF histories record that ground threats towards RAAF units in Vietnam were considered ‘slight’.²⁴ The archives researched for this thesis, demonstrate that this view is incorrect as attacks, if one only considers Phan Rang air base over the period of RAAF involvement, occurred almost daily in some form or another.

Reinventing Airfield Defence musteringings

It was in June 1939 that the idea of a dedicated mustering being developed for the manning of the aerodrome defence sections at each station was first posited. Based on the views of two Station Commanding Officers, who understood the connection between air power and

²³ W.M. Coombes, ‘Security – RAAFTF – Vung Tau’, 37/21, 1965, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁴ David Wilson, ‘C130 Operations, No5 Airfield Construction Squadron, Airfield Defence, Logistics, Photographic Interpreters’, in *The RAAF in the War in Vietnam*, John Mordike (ed.), Canberra, 1999, p. 87.

station defence, a specialised ground combatant force would be created for AA and ground defence machine gun defences of the airfields. These trained airmen would be used for both AA capability and internal protection of the airfield, and through direction by the Secretary of the Air Board, these airmen would also be responsible for gate guarding. The policy laid down at this early stage demonstrated that the Guard mustering would man aerodrome defence sections at stations within Australia. Apart from New Guinea, there was no indication that these airmen would be posted to overseas squadrons. Guards performed all the types of tasks orientated around airfield defence and security, including escort of classified documents, AA machine gun defence and gate guard duty.

Even though the RAAF had a dedicated mustering for airfield defence from 1939, the RAAF in the Far East witnessed airmen of the Aircraft Hand mustering being used for security and defence. Of interest is that the RAAF plan for airfield defence in the Middle East was not based on the *Air Board Memorandum*. On the contrary, all squadrons that deployed to this theatre relied on McCauley's ADS policy and formed aerodrome defence sections. Further, the RAAF squadrons deploying to the Middle East were instructed by the RAF, who controlled operations in the theatre, to follow the RAF system of airfield defence. Aircraft Hand airmen were trained under McCauley's training scheme, that had been in place for some 11 years. These Aircraft Hands completed Ground Gunner training at the RAF Middle East Gunnery School (Ground Gunner training schools) in which RAAF ground defence airmen would train and requalify as Ground Gunners. This study has also, for the first time, highlighted that these RAAF airmen moved forward from one landing ground to another, providing protection for the Air Force survey teams or recovery teams and within this duty were involved in land warfare operations with the RAF Regiment and New Zealand Army units.²⁵ During the North African campaign, these airmen were recorded as fighting as infantrymen alongside British and New Zealand forces and some defended their location from tank attacks.²⁶ Some of these airmen later remustered to Guard Gunners, while others served for many years in the aerodrome defence sections and then, at various times, were reverted back to Aircraft Hand/General Duties.

While the fighting withdrawal from Malaya and Singapore took place at the same time as operations in the Middle East, the need for a dedicated airfield defence capability was recognised by the Air Forces of Australia's allies, which led the United Kingdom to form the

²⁵ R. Williams, Mention in Despatches, 1941, National Archives of Australia, A11305, 79/P1 PART 1, (unpaginated).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

RAF Regiment. Compared to the RAF, there was limited revision of RAAF airfield defence policy in light of the losses of airfields and aircraft on the ground. This was despite McCauley's reports on the deficiencies of the airfield defence in the Far East and his subsequent recommendations from that experience.²⁷ It was at this time, 1942, that the ADO branch was formed, with the proposed policy change under the direction of Bostock, Scherger, Hely, Cobby and others for the formation of the Station Defence Squadrons. To command stations defence squadrons, the ADO branch would be trained as Infantry Officers. These officers would also provide airfield defence specialist planning and advice for commanders of stations and airfields and the overall training of all airmen for secondary airfield defence duties. While this proposal was initially supported by CAS Burnett, it was almost immediately overridden by Jones upon his appointment as CAS in 1942.

The reinvention of the duty of the Guards, followed requests by a number of Commanding Officers of units for Guards to be trained as infantrymen. For the Guard mustering, by mid 1942, these airmen started to be trained as infantrymen, the first standard training course for Guards was run at the SGU in NWA and then No. 1 Recruit Depot Shepparton in 1943. This type of training was beneficial in the OBOE operations in Borneo with Guards defending airfields from attacks by large numbers of Japanese infantry. By late 1942, Scherger pushed RAAF Headquarters for a dedicated mustering of airmen to train all other airmen and officers in airfield defence, therefore the ADI mustering was formed.

By the end of the Second World War there were 4780 Guards, 312 ADIs and 140 ADOs RAAF wide. The reduction of the Guard mustering narrowed their duties to security and gate guarding. The ADOs that remained in the RAAF were moved into Barracks or Administrative positions and did not undertake airfield defence duties. For the ADIs, a very similar situation took place. After 1948 there are no records of any ADIs remaining in the RAAF, the ones that did were remustered to DIs. However, within a few years the RAAF would reenlist ADOs (renamed GDO) and ADIs for the National Service Training Scheme.

In the early 1950s the National Service Training Scheme caused the RAAF to fully commit to reserve airfield defence forces that could be called up in war. The RAAF formed two musterings; 'Guards' to maintain security and 'Ground Gunners' to train for and man the

²⁷ 130 Principle lessons learned in the Malaya & Sumatra campaign (Air)-Prepared by GPCAPT McCauley MAR42, CD-ROM, Canberra, 2013.

war time airfield defence squadrons. With no post-training funding, allocation of equipment or instructors to the reserve squadrons, these airmen slowly departed the service. Within a few years of the National Service Training Scheme ending in 1957, the more than 2000 Ground Gunners and Guards from the National Service Training Scheme, were posted to the reserves.

The reinvention of a full-capacity airfield defence unit came about once again in the 1960s. The evidence shows that three circumstances lead the RAAF to concede that a dedicated airfield defence force was required. In the lead up to commitments in Korea, and for RAAF deployments to Thailand and Vietnam, the inter-service policy that Army would provide general ground defence for airfields could not be relied on.²⁸ Secondly, attempts to rely on indigenous services and allied nations protection of airfields in Thailand and Vietnam was assessed to be inadequate.²⁹ Lastly, in the high intensity operational tempo of air campaigns in Thailand and Vietnam, commanders could not spare technical airmen to provide the level of training and ground defence the Units required.³⁰ These were concerns that advocates for a specialist airfield defence force had been predicting, and the solution was a new Guard mustering.

This time the RAAF Guards would be titled 'Airfield Defence Guards', known as ADGs, and ADIs and DIs were remustered into the ADG mustering. The formation documentation outlined that these airmen would be tasked with internal security and entry guarding/gate guard duty, at a time when threat levels still remained as theft and sabotage. Yet, incongruously the records show, and the veterans have recounted, that their training focused on infantry and ground combat skills for active defence of airbases against insurgency, and organised aggressive ground attacks by enemy forces.³¹ This process produced highly skilled airmen trained as infantry, deployed to hostile environments, only for some to find themselves initially at least, standing at the front gate of a RAAF base and performing other general hand duties such as grounds keeping or bus driving. This then led to confusion regarding the role, within the ADGs themselves and RAAF personnel of other musterings.

²⁸ Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum 2/60 Inter-Service Responsibilities for Ground Defence of Air Force Installations and Naval Shore Establishments.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Bryson, interview by Sean Carwardine.

This disparity of view regarding the role of ADGs, appears to be based on the experiences and requirements of the RAAF unit commanders as to the duties that could be performed by ADGs. In Vung Tau ADGs undertook internal security, protection on convoys and rare external patrols, while some performed the role of side-door gunners on the helicopters of No. 9 Squadron. At Phan Rang, on the advice of GDOs, ADGs patrolled outside the wire, day and night, engaged the enemy in combat, conducted internal security and provided protection on convoys. This divergence of duty once again raised the same issues that had arisen during the Second World War; the application of ADGs at Vung Tau was within the policy and establishment configuration, yet commanders at Phan Rang saw the role very differently.

The files also demonstrate that where ADGs were patrolling outside the wire, for the purpose of protecting airfields through proactive detection, engagement and deterrent, their role was successful. With the external patrolling by ADGs around the perimeter the number of direct attacks was reduced, and while not directly measured in any research to date, it is conceivable that the actions of the ADGs would likely have prevented the loss of valuable aircraft and assets and saved many lives. Yet despite this, it is clear that the policy did not allow for external patrolling. RAAF Headquarters were aware that ADGs were indeed being ordered to undertake this dangerous task, yet subsequently relied upon the policy to refuse to resource them adequately for external patrolling. Events where infantry trained ADGs conducted day and night external jungle patrols while being dangerously undermanned are well known within the airfield defence community, and the research from this study supports this view. Furthermore, for questionable reasons that require further investigation, ADGs were ordered to take part in Army operations in hostile areas, for purposes that had no connection to RAAF air power or policy. In this tasking, where ADGs came under direct enemy fire, they again conducted themselves with unarguable bravery, all without the oversight or support, of formalised RAAF policy and guidelines.

Contradictions of the responsibility for airfield defence

The next major theme that emerges from this investigation was the lack of support or willingness by the RAAF to accept it was required to meet the expenditure for the creation of infantry/AA/airfield defence trained airmen. When the theory and concept was expounded by

Wrigley in 1921, he had both quoted and expanded on the writings of Doughty from the same year and integrated his experiences with the RAF. The vulnerability of aircraft on the ground, and the need for airfields to be protected appeared to be accepted as a necessity in order to maintain air power. However, the documents from the following decades show that the debate over who should 'do' airfield defence was not fully resolved until well into the 1960s, and even then, remained contradictory. Further, as the RAAF at times accepted a responsibility for defence of the airfield, debates then ensued over what type of airfield defence was minimally necessary, which airmen could undertake the role, and how economically could it be resourced. The primary resources, often with handwritten notes upon memorandums and communiques, occasionally become quite heated as the frustrations of senior officers become apparent.

From the earliest proposal that RAAF hold responsibility for some aspects for air and ground defence of airfields, debate commenced regarding which service held responsibility for airfield defence; was this an Air Force role or an Army obligation? Whereas the United Kingdom had commenced RAF aerodrome defence planning, Australia faced very different and unique considerations. Issues regarding lack of resources, funding and varying views about the purpose and what the focus of the RAAF, as a military service, should be. In the early years, concerns were raised by some Australian commanders at the time, that if they were to undertake defence of their own airfields, more storage space would be required for weapons and equipment, and the additional workload, added paperwork and reports would be an unnecessary burden on officers.³² An overall concern for many senior officers throughout the history is that airfield defence would potentially take scarce resources and time away from air operations and aircraft maintenance.

These concerns from the command element of some RAAF Stations were later supported by Jones, the then Director of Training, who held a clear view that he was not willing to support multiple aerodrome defence sections on one station.³³ Despite holding the position of the Director of Training, it is interesting that Jones then produced orders to station commanders, that CAF Aircrafthands allocated under the ADS for manning the AA machine gun posts, be reallocated to what he considered more essential tasking for the RAAF.³⁴ If Jones' orders had been complied with, the impact of the reductions would have meant that the PAF

³² A. Swinbourne, 'Aerodrome Defence Training', 18, 1931, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

³³ G. Jones, 'Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections', 1933, National Archives of Australia, A705, 208/1/1254, (unpaginated).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

staffed aerodrome defence sections of a RAAF station would remain at the station while a flying squadron would deploy forward. Therefore, if the flying squadron moved away from the station, it would be without ground protection. In contrast, the history demonstrates that many Commanding Officers ignored Jones' directions and continued to use Aircrafthand CAF and other PAF airmen in the aerodrome defence sections attached to both stations and individual squadrons.

Supporting Jones' idea of airfield defence many within the RAAF have over its history held firm views that airfield defence is an Army tasking. This was based on the theory that Air Force has a sole purpose for air operations and Army had traditionally been responsible for any land operations. Proponents of this view took that further, claiming that 'defence' of an airfield from the ground should be an Army role.³⁵ These differing views resulted in fragmented policy, often contradictory and led to commanders overlooking many policy directions and making plans for their own airfield defence in the field. During the Second World War, while Aircrafthands and Guards were serving and protecting airfields, the debate was still continuing between the Secretaries of Air and Military. The debate divided further into questions of whether the airfield was designated military or civilian, what units (Army or Airforce) were stationed on the airfield, and where the airfield was located (in Australia, its proximity to the coast, or overseas). One of the main factors was the tactical location of the Army from the airbase. Where the airbase was located in an area that the Army were operating within, the Army could provide defence within the tactical area of the battlefield; the areas external to the base. However, the RAAF ultimately had to accept that it was responsible for the internal security of the airfield.

Agreements that the Army would protect the airbase from external ground and air attack could not be relied on in circumstances where the Army were required to move away from the airbase. An example of the loss of Army protection was in RAAF Base Townsville from early 1940 until late 1941. Initially the USAAC and the local VDC were providing security and defence; however, the USAAC moved forward and did not replace the defenders and the VDC were re-tasked and removed from the airbase. This left the RAAF Commander with an allocation of 16 Guards to replace the 30 VDC and 60 USAAF to provide security and defence for the whole airfield.³⁶

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *DIRH RAAF*, (CD-ROM), Canberra, 2018, Office of Air Force History, Operation Records Northern Area Headquarters 1941.

Where the RAAF was prepared to accept internal local/close defence and security matters, a further debate then arose as to how that would be achieved, and which airmen could be spared to undertake the task. The records throughout the history detail this reoccurring discussion on whether the RAAF should create a specific ground defence focussed mustering, or alternatively, the more economical means of training every RAAF airman, regardless of their trade, to undertake security/defence as a secondary duty. The success of the SGU and Defence Flights, and the creation of the Guard mustering during the Second World War demonstrated the value of specifically trained airmen for this role. However, in the post-war era, the fiscal constraints on budget and resources, saw significant reduction in the mustering. RAAF Headquarters, throughout Jones' tenure, would not be swayed from the position that very minimal numbers of Guards were required for low threat levels, and ADIs would train all other airmen to undertake weapons and defence training for the purpose of defending their airfield in an emergency. This also saw tradesmen being redirected from their primary role to undertake gate guard duty. In addition, there was resistance from unit officers and the airmen themselves, that guarding was 'not their job'.³⁷

Even though Jones, later as CAS, initially agreed and signed off on the formation of a RAAF Regiment in March 1945, less than a month later he rejected Mocatta's suggested RAAF Regiment.³⁸ The interesting aspect of the RAAF Regiment is that all General Hands, the Airfield Construction Squadron, airfield defence squadrons, bomb disposal would come under the same command. All working to provide defended and operational airfields for the flying squadrons. In Jones' view, recruitment for a new global war could be undertaken when required, and at that time the RAAF would reintroduce the Guard musterings and create SGUs in every RAAF area.³⁹

This research shows that the RAAF witnessed an increase of training for all airmen prior and during war, but then very little infantry training post war. This cycle has been repeated throughout the investigated period of this thesis. During recruit training, Air Force personnel learned basic ground defence skills, and a subsequent yearly shoot was believed to be adequate

³⁷ V.E. Hancock, 'Standard of RAAF Guards', 1A, 1954, National Archives of Australia, A705, 96/1/110, (unpaginated).

³⁸ G.H. Mocatta, 'Paper for Formation of RAAF Regiment', 1A, 1945, National Archives of Australia, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2, (unpaginated).

³⁹ Anon., 'Minutes of a Conference Held at RAAF Headquarters on Monday, 19th July 1948, to Discuss Fundamentals of Initial Action Necessary to Place the RAAF on a War-Time Basis', 12A, 1948, National Archives of Australia, A705, 15/2/701, (unpaginated).

for these airmen to go on to fight a ground war, if necessary. The experiences of RAAF airmen attempting to fight an experienced infantry in the battle of Palembang highlights the deficiencies in this plan. Evidence within this thesis demonstrates many airmen rarely fired a rifle during recruit training during the Second World War. Through the 1950s and 1960s, many airmen would not train with a rifle for five to seven years after recruit training. Some report that they only received weapon training and a rifle shoot prior to deployment to Vietnam. A Commander of the Royal Marines, I. Gardiner, described the limits to this type of training:

What we do as infantrymen is in essence not very difficult, but to succeed it has to be done extremely well and, most importantly, as part of a team. Constant practice is the only way to develop and retain the cohesion and corporate fluency necessary to win battles and save lives.⁴⁰

This highlights that for airmen to be trained to be able to defend their airfield and themselves without becoming a casualty, requires constant practice and training. A unique aspect of RAAF airfield defence training compared to that of the Army during the Second World War was that from the end of 1942 until the end of 1945, RAAF Guards, ADOs, ADIs and Gas Instructors were all trained at the same facility i.e. the Defence School at No. 1 Recruit Depot at Shepparton, by the same core of RAAF training staff. After this core training, Guards would continue their training within the RAAF and, at times, on Army courses. This practice for Guards and ADGs is repeated throughout the history. These airmen trained on a continual basis to fight a defensive battle for their airfields, and in the case of ADGs, were also trained in aggressive jungle patrolling to seek out an enemy as preventative protection.

Throughout the history, and as the arguments for and against the role of the RAAF in the defence of airfields continued, inter-service agreements were implemented for the protection of RAAF and Navy establishments. Here again the policy led to the division of the area on which the airfield is located. The Army was responsible for the defence of the airfield from the perimeter out into the tactical area, while the RAAF or Navy would provide its own local defence and small arms AA for its facilities. This worked well when the operational areas of both the Army and RAAF were close in proximity, however it failed every time the Army was required to move forward or redeploy. An example of this was the security and defence of

⁴⁰ Ian Gardiner, *The Yompers with 45 Commando in the Falklands War*, South Yorkshire, 2019, p. 36.

RAAF units in occupation of Japan and the Korean War. The 3rd Battalion was allocated the defence of RAAF units in Japan, they provided LAA defence, security and ground defence. However as soon as the Korean war started these men were relocated to the battlefield and the RAAF had no means of protecting itself as it had reduced the only allocated airfield defence personnel.⁴¹ The inter-service agreement for this period (1950s) directed the Army to provide all heavy, medium and light AA defence for the RAAF airfield overseas. In addition, the Army was responsible for the general ground defence of the land area that the RAAF operated from. The RAAF was to be responsible for local defence of the airfield. Similarly, under the inter-service agreement of the time, in the Vietnam war the deployment orders for the Australian Army outlined that one of its tasking was to provide airfield defence. This did not occur, and under international agreements, the RAAF initially was to rely on indigenous services or allied nations for defence.

What can be revealed is that when the RAAF ground defence forces and Army units worked together, they achieved an effective defence of the airfield. The battles of Milne Bay, as explained by historians, was the first defeat of the Japanese on land.⁴² RAAF Guards from both fighter squadrons were allocated local defence positions, forward ground defence alongside infantry units, provided mortar support, security at night of the airfield and aircraft and small arms AA defence. Records show that RAAF Guards patrolled with the Army infantry sections.⁴³ Then for the OBOE operations RAAF Guard Companies fought side by side with Australian infantry. Once the RAAF conceded the need for a fulltime airfield defence force in the early 1960s, the ADGs provided early warning and fighting patrols for their airfields in Vietnam. Working alongside the USAF Air Police, US Army, Korean Army and ARVN. The ADGs also took up patrolling into the ground defence area, up to 5 kilometres from the base, in contradiction to the inter-service policy at the time.

By the time of the Korean War, the Guard mustering was still being used on operations. The archives of No. 77 Squadron demonstrate the process of ignoring the current policies and forming the Guards into a rifle flight for airfield defence. This then leads to the operations in Thailand and Vietnam, and here again commanders ignored international agreements and RAAF airfield defence policy by sending ADGs outside the wire. There is no evidence in the

⁴¹ Anon., '3 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment July 1950 Australian Army unit war diaries, Korea', 1950, Australian War Memorial, 85, 4/18, (unpaginated).

⁴² Clive Baker and Greg Knight, *Milne Bay 1942*, Australia, 1991, p. 222.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

RAAF files that show that the RAAF had permission from the South Vietnamese Government to apply this aggressive patrolling program, while the USAF Air Police under that same agreement were still restricted to overall internal base protection.

During the early years of the 1960s, the archives demonstrate that staff officers were again requesting armoured cars and 20/30mm cannons for AA defence, with a statement in response by some senior officers questioning where and how this equipment could be utilised and why it was necessary. This demonstrates a crucial misunderstanding of the use of tactical vehicles and AA weaponry for airfield defence, and reflects a common view expressed throughout the RAAF's history of airfield defence. When ADGs deployed to Vietnam the requirement for heavier calibre machine guns was raised again, however, by this stage the acquired cannons had been returned to the Navy. Further, the RAAF was unable to supply the recommended .50 calibre Browning machine guns or other required weapons based on a direction from Army regarding the purpose and tasking of RAAF ADGs under policy. The armoured cars that had been previously transferred from the Army would also have been useful in Vietnam with the escort duties being undertaken by ADGs and would also have provided some extra machine gun support against airfield ground attack. Instead, these vehicles were taken out to an air combat range in North Queensland and used for aircraft bombing practice.

There is evidence that when an airfield was attacked, airmen followed the local station or base policy and procedure by securing themselves in trenches or bunkers. From 1965 the new inter-service agreement outlined that all airmen (irrespective of tasking or job) were to take up arms to defend the airfield if the base was attacked, or in an emergency.⁴⁴ The evidence in Vietnam overwhelmingly demonstrates that once the airfield was attacked, airmen were to move to their allocated bunkers and remain there until the attack was over or become armed only as a 'last resort'.⁴⁵ This provided added protection for highly specialist trained technical airmen, however removed them from the responsibility of defending the airfield until it was being overrun. This alert system was at odds with the broader RAAF policy directing that all airmen will take up weapons and defend the airfield, aircraft and themselves. If a base in Vietnam was being overrun by the enemy, which almost occurred at Phan Rang in January 1969, then local plans were that the technical airmen would ascend from their bunkers, move to the armoury and be issued with weapons and ammunition and then be expected to repel an

⁴⁴ G. Bennett, 'RAAF Element – Vung Tau', 184, 1966, National Archives of Australia, A703, 564/8/36 PART 1, (Unpaginated).

⁴⁵ Unit History Sheet No. 2 Squadron 1969, USB Storage Device, Canberra, 2018.

experienced and trained enemy already in position on the base. This plan would have failed in reality and may have resulted in many airmen being captured or killed.

Commanders ignoring policy to implement what they need

The records have revealed a willingness of some commanders to ignore or overlook aspects of policy or directions in order to provide protection for their assets and personnel. In some cases, this was an overt and direct rejection of RAAF Headquarters and Air Board policies, while others found ways to resource their needs utilising other means. An example of this was Bladin, Cobby, Bostock and Mocatta, in the face of directions not to ‘pool’ guard, using allocation of airmen for ‘special purposes’ to work around the direction.⁴⁶ The first major policy issue arose in 1940, when all Guards were allocated for RAAF Station defence, within Australia only. Therefore, when the Second World War commenced, RAAF squadrons deployed without Guards. When McCauley arrived in the Far East to command RAAF forces, he ignored this policy and ensured airmen were trained as Ground Gunners under his ADS. The aerodrome defence policy as laid down by the RAAF was ignored by RAAF squadrons in the Middle East, as the squadrons were divided into sections and were mobile, moving from airfield to airfield supporting Army operations. This is why some aerodrome defence sections found themselves in combat alongside RAF Regiment and New Zealand Army units. RAAF policy, which was designed for Australian airbases only, were insufficient and inadequate for operations alongside allied nations in the Middle East. Many Commanders had little option but to follow RAF ground defence policy and redevelop their own orders for the purpose of meeting operational goals.

The RAAF Headquarters policy that was written within Australia was not changed for the airfields within overseas tactical areas throughout the war. What becomes clear is that to meet their own needs, sporadic changes to policy were made, or units wrote their own separate policy on airfield defence as required. Commanders on airfields ‘pooled’ the Guards together to form a fighting force, to provide security and ground defence. However, the divided senior command (RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command) continued to develop separate, and contradictory, policies for airfield defence. While the RAAF Headquarters focused on Australian static airfields, with up to 20 Guards per station and 60 per flying squadron, RAAF

⁴⁶ G.H. Mocatta, ‘Subject:’, 92A, 1943, National Archives of Australia, A11093, 686/3A1 PART 2, (unpaginated).

Command with the allied Air Forces in the South West Pacific Area Headquarters focused on airfield defence in the Island campaigns, that being a mobile defence. A notable example of this difference was with the development of Bladin's Defence Squadron (SGU) in the North Western Area and the Guard Pool in the North Eastern Area. The pooling of Guards into a unit was supported by RAAF Command; however, it was in direct opposition to both what Jones had directed and the Air Board's *Memorandum*.

Final Comments

The history of RAAF airfield defence did not end in 1970. The period from 1971 to the end of the Vietnam War and through to the early 1980s witnessed the development of Airfield Defence Guard Flights (with a strength of 80 airmen) being assigned to RAAF bases around Australia. These Flights provided supplemented gate guard duty, completed Scout Dog Handler training and other Army or RAAF courses. The Flights also engaged in regular combined inter-service and international operational exercises and training. During the 1980s, there was, a continual lack of ADGs. The CO reports indicate throughout the 1980s that lack of NCOs and airmen.⁴⁷ Once again, a reduction of the ADG mustering and tasking in the RAAF as a cost saving exercise No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was directed by CAS to take over all front base gate guarding to allow the acquisition of new aircraft.⁴⁸ The airfield defence capability was then built up again in the early 1990s and into the 2000s, with the recruitment of one permanent and two reserve squadrons under the command of an Airfield Defence Wing. By 2005, the Airfield Defence Wing had been removed due to RAAF restructuring and the fielding of only one PAF squadron and one reserve squadron was in place until 2012. That year, the 'Airfield Defence Squadrons' were renamed 'Security Force Squadrons' and ADGs, Security Dog Handlers and RAAF Police were all integrated into one airfield defence and security force. From 2012, the RAAF has maintained three Security Force Squadrons based at Amberley, Williamtown and Edinburgh, and flights at every other RAAF base.⁴⁹

This thesis is the first academic investigation of RAAF airfield defence policy history and is a new area of study for the RAAF and Australian military history. This thesis has

⁴⁷ D.M. Anderson, 'Summary of Activity 2AFDS Unit History', 1988, National Archives of Australia, A9435/9, 2001/02947189, (unpaginated).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Royal Australian Air Force, *Structure*, Canberra, 2020, <https://www.airforce.gov.au/about-us/structure> accessed on 20 January 2019.

demonstrated for the first time, that from 1929 the RAAF had an active airfield defence capability. Through the exploration of the RAAF airfield defence policy patterns, the development and evolution of airfield defence has emerged. One of the aims of this research was to describe a vivid and lucid history of RAAF airfield defence based on the policy on the ground. As such, the research has demonstrated that airmen have defended their airfields since 1929, under difficult circumstances, facing often contradictory orders and at all times chronically under-resourced. This significant outcome is at odds with the current known histories, both official and amateur historical writings. This history reveals, for the first time, that 2019 was the 90th anniversary of the formation of RAAF airfield defence in Australia, yet unlike other RAAF 90th anniversaries, this was an event that was overlooked by the Department of Defence, the RAAF, and the community.⁵⁰ Ms L. Reynolds, the Minister for Defence has recently acknowledged that the ‘history and proud traditions of the ADF are an important piece of our history that should not be forgotten’. However, she went on to state, ‘I am advised that Air Field Defence Guard’s [sic] do not celebrate their formation’, and further references the general Air Force commemorations in March each year.⁵¹

It can now be fully acknowledged, firstly that airfield defence has been an integral part of the Air Force tasking since 1929, for varying purposes, in fluctuating size and strength, and operating under a number of titles. Secondly, it is noted that airfield defence in Australia has never been resourced or implemented adequately to achieve its various policy goals. This research has outlined a history of airfield defence since its inception, and detailed the evolution of policy, and provided an analysis of how policy has impacted the decisions and actions of Commanders and airmen on the ground. The history of airfield defence can now be corrected and expanded. In addition, airmen of airfield defence mustering, and those of all mustering, can be acknowledged as having served with dedication and bravery in defence of RAAF assets, installations and personnel. Lastly, while this research has been restricted by the scope of this thesis, the breadth and detail of airfield defence across Australia, provides a unique area of previously unrecorded military history. This topic opens many opportunities for future robust academic enquiry.

⁵⁰ Full communications between author and all three Security Force Squadrons Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, Squadron Warrant Officers, RAAF Security and Fire Training School, RAAF Directorate of Air Force History, RAAF Newspaper, RAAF Media and RAAF Event Coordinator has taken place. The details of the anniversary, the history has been provided to no avail.

⁵¹ Linda Reynolds to Sean Carwardine, letter, 7 May 2020, copy held by Mr Sean Carwardine.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Aerodrome Defence Scheme.

Air Force Confidential Order 25/C/11 – Citizen Air Force Training Methods of Training, 2/A/3 – Local Defence of Aerodromes and 24/D/6 – Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections with Appendix A – Aerodrome Defence Flight Organization, Appendix B – Training of A.A. Lewis Gun Section, Appendix C – Training of Vickers Gun Section (NAA: A705, 208/1/1254).

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
MINUTE PAPER.
(This side only to be written on.)

AIR SERVICE
208/1/458

SUBJECT: *Extract vvo. 179 of 15th June 1931 and new AFos. 2/A/3 and 24/D/6 published with same.*

25/C/11 Citizen Air Force—Training—Methods of Training.
Insert new paragraph 3 as follows:—
"3. Members of an aerodrome defence section are to carry out the annual training provided by A.F.O. 24/D/6."

2/A/3. Local Defence of Aerodromes.—1. A commanding officer shall form and train an aerodrome defence section for local defence against air and ground attack.

2. One aerodrome defence section is to be maintained fully trained at each unit, except where a unit comprises members of the Permanent and Citizen Air Force, in which case a complete complement of both Permanent and Citizen Air Force personnel is to be trained.

3. The organization of an aerodrome defence section shall be as follows:—

O.C. Aerodrome Defence Section.

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graph TD
    OC[O.C. Aerodrome Defence Section.] --> NCO1[N.C.O. in charge.]
    OC --> NCO2[N.C.O. in charge.]
    NCO1 --> ALGS[Anti-Aircraft Lewis Gun Section.]
    NCO2 --> GDS[Ground Defence Vickers Gun Section.]
    ALGS --> G1[No. 1 Gun Team. (1 Lewis Gun. 3 airmen.)]
    ALGS --> G2[No. 2 Gun Team. (1 Lewis Gun. 3 airmen.)]
    GDS --> G3[No. 3 Gun Team. (1 Vickers Gun. 3 airmen.)]
    GDS --> G4[No. 4 Gun Team. (1 Vickers Gun. 3 airmen.)]
  
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The section is to be manned by personnel who are not directly concerned with the immediate operation of aircraft.

4. As to training see A.F.Os. 24/D/6 and 25/C/11, paragraph 3.

24/D/6. Annual Training of Aerodrome Defence Sections.—1. The object of the annual training of an aerodrome defence section is to provide some measure of local machine gun ground defence of aerodromes against land and air attacks.

2. The training is to be spread over twelve months and the syllabus is to be repeated annually.

3. The sequence of training is to be decided by the commanding officer.

4. Each non-commissioned officer and aircraftman in an aerodrome defence section is to carry out the duties of each of the three appointments in a gun team in each of the practices laid in Syllabuses of Training (R.A.A.F. Publication No. 10) for the type of section of which he is a member.

5. A report is to be submitted to Head-Quarters before 30th June each year. In the report the commanding officer is to certify that the annual training has been completed for the current training year, indicating the standard of efficiency attained.

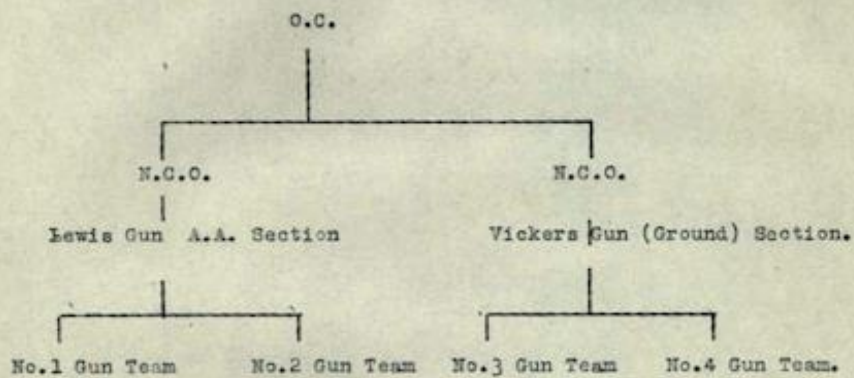
DT. 16/6/31
DDT
Ren P.A.

P.A. *Jan 21k* 18.6.31
P.A. *Jan 21k* 18.7.31

APPENDIX "A".

AERODROME DEFENCE FLIGHT.

ORGANIZATION.



Gun Team consists of three men.

Total Establishment: 1 Officer, 2 N.C.O.'s and 12 men.

APPENDIX "B".

TRAINING OF A.A. LEWIS GUN SECTION.

INITIAL TRAINING.

1. Lewis Gun.

The members should be given a thorough grounding in mechanism stoppages and maintenance so that they can operate the gun efficiently.

Ref. A.P.1242.
Pt. I. Chap. 2.

2. Anti-aircraft sighting.

How to lay a correct aim at an aircraft in flight.

Ref. A.P.1242.
Pt.I. Chap. 10,
paras. 59 to 67
inclusive.
Small Arms Training
Vol. I. (1924)
Secs. 116 to 120
Sec.123.

3. Fire control - by day and by night.

4. Ammunition - to be used against aircraft.

5. Drill.

Handling of Lewis Gun
Preliminary Training
A.A. Elementary Handling
Tests of Elementary Training
Standard "R"
and test 19 of standard "L".

Chap.III Sec. 97
Secs.101 and 102.
Sec. 121.
Sec. 124 and
page 356

6. Range Practices.

Table III. Lewis Gun Practices
1 to 6 inclusive and 10.
Table IV. Lewis Gun Tests
1, 2 and 4.
Table "T" Part V, except
practices 1 and 2.

A.P.1244. Chap. 5.
Small Arms Training
Vol.II
pages 265, 266
and 267.

ANNUAL TRAINING.

Theory: Revision of Initial Training.

Drill: As for Initial Course.

Range Practices:

Table IX practices 1,2,5 & 6
" X " " 1,3 & 4.
Table "T" V, except practices
1 and 2

A.P.1244. Chap.5.
" " "
Small Arms Train-
ing Vol.II. page
265, 266 & 267.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

Targets

A A 1
A A 2
A A Grouping Ring

Small Arms Train-
ing Vol.III 1924.
Plate 65 & page 157
" 66 " 158
" 67 " 159
" 68 " 160
" 69 " 161

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APPENDIX "C".

TRAINING OF VICKERS GUN SECTION.

INITIAL TRAINING:

1. Vickers Gun.

A thorough grounding in mechanism stoppages and maintenance so that the pupil can operate the gun efficiently.

} Ref. A.P.1242
Part I, Chap. 1.

2. Sighting.

Aiming Instruction

} Machine Gun Training
1925. Chap. II.
Sec. 10. pages
24, 25 and 26.

3. Drill.

Elementary Gun Drill (excluding sub-section and section training).

} Machine Gun
Training, Chap III.

4. Range Practices.

Will not be fired until the machine gunner has passed the tests of elementary gun drill.

Part I 25 yds. range

Part II Open Range

} Machine Gun Training
1925 Chap.VII.
Sec.37 page 174
"Annual M.G. Course-
Territorial Army"

ANNUAL TRAINING.

1. Theory: Revision of Initial Training.

2. Drill: As for Initial Training.

3. Range Practices.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED.

Targets.

1. M.G. Target for application or traversing practices

} Machine Gun
Training.
page 179.

2. Large. 6 foot L.A. M.G. Target

} page 181.

3. Screen comprising 2 L.A. & M.G. targets.

} page 182.

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Appendix B – Local Defence of Aerodromes.

Air Force Confidential Order 2/A/18 to 2/A/27 Organization and Administration General – Local Defence of Aerodromes, 11/B1 Movement – Rail and Road Anti-Aircraft Defence of M.T. Convoys (NAA: A705, 208/1/1254).

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.
MINUTE PAPER.
(This side only to be written on.)

208/1/1254

SUBJECT: LOCAL DEFENCE OF AERODROMES.
ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCE OF M.T. CONVOYS.

EXTRACTS FROM WEEKLY ORDER NO.517 of 11th SEPTEMBER, 1939.

2/A/18 to 2/A/27 .. Organization and Administration—General.—These Orders published herewith supersede A.F.Os. 2/A/18-27, dated 9th July, 1934, as amended by W.O. 626, various amendments having been made to A.F.O. 2/A/18.

2/A/18. Local Defence of Aerodromes.

Station Aerodrome Defence.

1. Officers commanding stations shall form and train aerodrome defence sections for local defence against air and ground attack.

2. One aerodrome defence section is to be maintained fully trained at each station. Station aerodrome defence sections are to be composed of Citizen Air Force personnel.

3. In order, however, that the aerodrome defences may be manned, if necessary, pending the calling out of the Citizen Air Force, arrangements are to be made to detail gun crews from permanent airmen, irrespective of units, whose places of employment are nearest the gun positions.

4. The strength of a station aerodrome defence section will depend upon local conditions at the station, which will also determine the number of defence posts required. Each defence post will consist of a Lewis gun manned by a team of three airmen.

5. As to the policy in connexion with aerodrome defence, see Air Board Memorandum No. 5, dated 26th June, 1939.

6. As to training, see A.F.O. 24/D/6.

Squadron Aerodrome Defence.

7. When a squadron is not located on a permanent air-force station where a station aerodrome defence scheme is in operation, it will be responsible for its own aerodrome defence. The organisation and training for this defence will be similar to that set out for a station in paragraphs 4 to 6 of this order.

8. In the organization of its aerodrome defences, personnel for gun crews should be drawn from those airmen whose places of employment are nearest to the gun positions.

9. In order to make possible the foregoing, squadron commanders are to arrange for the training in peace in the use of the Lewis gun of as many airmen in the squadron as is found practicable.

11/B/1 .. Movements—Rail and Road—Anti-aircraft Defence of M.T. Convoys.

11/B. MOVEMENTS—RAIL AND ROAD.

11/B/1. Anti-Aircraft Defence of M.T. Convoys.—1. Commanding officers are responsible for the local anti-aircraft defence of their M.T. convoys.

2. When conditions are such that anti-aircraft defence of a convoy becomes necessary, suitable squadron personnel are to be detailed to man the anti-aircraft guns provided for the purpose.

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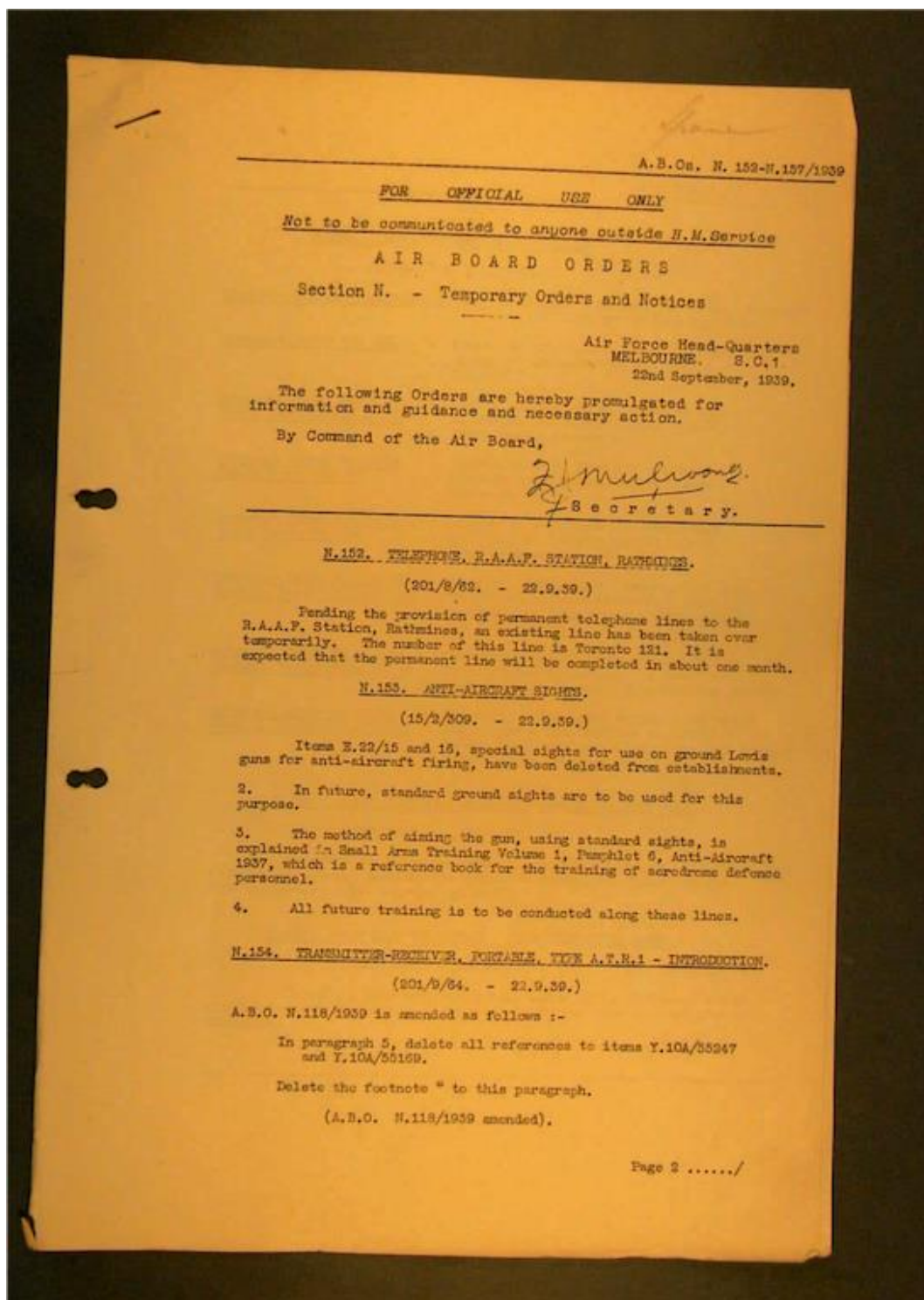
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Appendix C – Anti-Aircraft Sights.

N. 153 Anti-Aircraft Sights used in the RAAF for ground to air firing (NAA: A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1).



Appendix D - Aerodromes.

List of Aerodromes under Army Protection 1940 (NAA: A1196, 15/501/17)

<u>AERODROMES</u>	
<u>QUEENSLAND</u>	
Horn Island (Thursday Is.)	Bundaberg
Cairns	Townsville
Cooktown	Gladstone
Rockhampton	Maryborough
Coen	Childers
Bowen	Toowoomba
Nackay	Murgen
....	
<u>NEW SOUTH WALES</u>	
Evans Head	Kempsey
Coff's Harbour	Taree
Nowra	Nabiac) when available
Moruya	Williamstown)
Wingham	Cessnock
Newcastle	Wamberal
Lismore	Hargrave Park
Casino	Menangle
Old Bar	Bargo
....	
<u>VICTORIA</u>	
Mallacoota	Flinders Is. (Whitemark)
Bairnsdale	King Island
Yanakie	Warrnambool (when aerodrome available for use)
....	
<u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>	
Mount Gambier	Tintinara
Port Lincoln	Kingscote
	Ceduna
....	
<u>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</u>	
Busselton	Albany
Maylands	Carnarvon
Geraldton	Port Hedland
Derby	Onslow
Wyndham	Broome
Esperance	Roebourne
	Drysdale Mission
....	
<u>NORTHERN TERRITORY</u>	
Cape Foureroy	Millingimbi Mission
Bathurst Island	Groote Eylandt
....	
<u>NEW GUINEA</u>	
Rabaul	
Lae	
Salaguna	

Appendix E – RAAF Operational Bases.

These documents were forwarded to The Secretary Department of Air on 8 May 1941. These bases were only guarded against sabotage and there would be no detachment of troops for emergency tactical defence of the aerodromes (NAA: A1196, 15/501/176).

SECRET ⁴⁷³ <u>SECRET</u> 25/401/229 <u>PROVISION OF GUARDS ON R.A.A.F. OPERATIONAL BASES</u> <u>WESTERN COMMAND</u>			
Aerodrome	Local Guard Available	Recommend	Present Measures.
Wyndham Priority AIII	Police (3) Rifle Club R.S.L. (R.A.A.F. care- taker proposed)	Local Force insufficient Guard re- commended	Nil
Drysdale Priority AI	Spanish priests and aborigines	Guard re- commended	Nil
Derby AIV	Police 3	Guard re- commended	Intermittent visits only
Broome AII	Police; Broome guard	Intermittent patrol in emergency. Guard re- commended	Nil
Port Hedland	Rifle club; police (2) R.S.L.	Available in emergency. Guard re- commended	Nil
Carnarvon A/14	Police; Rifle Club and R.S.L. available for enlistment but no voluntary guard except in emergency	Recruit per- manent guard	Visits four days a week by air line agents
Busselton AIO	Police Rifle club, W.D.C. and Coy. 19 Gar. Bn.	No guard. Intermittent night patrol sufficient	Nil
Albany AIS	Garrison bn. personnel available full time duty. Police	Garrison personnel sufficient No guard until bomb dump es- tablished	R.A.A.F. caretaker proposed
Esperance A12	Police (1) Six locals could be enlisted for full time duty.	No guard at 'drome until bomb dump established.	Nil
<u>EASTERN COMMAND</u>			
Williamstown	Permanently manned by R.A.A.F. personnel.	---	Guard by Garrison Battalion, R.A.A.F.

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Eastern Command (Cont.)

Aerodrome	Local guard available	Recommended	Present Measures.
Coff's Harbour	Police; rifle club 20 members. Permanently manned by R.A.A.F.	Periodical police visits.	R.A.A.F.
Nowra	Rifle club, 20 members	Emergency protection by club.	Nil
Moruya	Rifle club	Night caretaker when equipment installed.	Nil
Nabiac	Three rifle club, 20 members	Night caretaker when equipment installed.	Nil

NORTHERN COMMAND

Florn Island	Local workmen and Garrison Battalion	Guard in emergency	Nil; not required at present.
Cairns	Rifle Club	Increase guard in emergency	Garrison Bn. Guard.
Cooktown	Garrison Bde, V.D.C. & Rifle Club	Local guard on 'drome in emergency	Control room guard on hut; none required on 'drome.
Rockhampton	Garrison Bde., V.D.C. & Rifle Club	Local guard on 'drome in emergency	Garrison guard on fuel and wireless.
Coen	Not visited; no fuel stocks, no good landing; unsuitable R.A.A.F. Protection recommended in emergency.		
Bowen	V.S.D & Rifle Club	Night watchman now; local guard on fuel and 'drome in emergency.	Periodic police visits.
Mackay	V.D.C. and Rifle Club	Night watchman now. Local guards in emergency	Periodic police visits
Bundaberg	V.D.C. and Rifle Club	R.A.A.F. school may be established local guards in emergency	Caretaker sleeps in club building

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- 3 -

Seventh Military District

(Progress Report 4/2/'41.)

Aerodrome	Local Guard Available	Recommended	Existing Measures.
Millingimbi	Three Europeans 250 aborigines	No hangars; destroy fuel stocks in emergency	Regular visit by white population
Bathurst Is.	Three Europeans	In wireless communication with Darwin, 40 mins. flying time away.	Visits by whites
Groote Eylandt	Staff (12)	Not visited	Guarded by flying boat base staff with rifles & M.M.G.

Appendix F – Station Defence.

The *Air Board Memorandum No. 5 Station Defence* (1941) is divided in two parts:

- a. Active defence covered warning systems of stations and required armed aircraft to take off to defend the airfield. In the new memorandum changes were made as follows:
 - i. RAAF establishments within 50 miles of the coastline would be required to have Lewis and/or Vickers machine gun posts, thus Aerodrome Defence Flights,¹
 - ii. The new mustering of Aircrafthand/Guard was implemented to man the machine gun posts as part of the Aerodrome Defence Flights,²
 - iii. The defence of an airfield by ground forces outside the airfield perimeter would be conducted by the Army,³
 - iv. RAAF Commanding Officers were now required to have machine gun posts around the perimeter, with good fields of fire and mutual supporting fire,
 - v. All RAAF members would act as guards, to support Aircrafthand/Guards at entrance points around the airfield,
 - vi. A strategy for defence against glider-trooper or paratrooper attacks,
 - vii. The placement of obstacles on roads and gateways to slow enemy approach and on airfields to prevent hostile aircraft from landing,
 - viii. The Commanding Officer was directed to seek help from any military unit in the area as required, and then all machine gun posts were to be used to attack enemy paratroops or gliders,
 - ix. Defence against sabotage would require Aircrafthand/Guards at fixed points and foot patrols would secure the aerodrome.
- b. The Passive Defence part was set out in greater detail than in the previous memorandum and designed to reduce the extent of damage to a station or airfield from attack. Details to limit damage included:

¹ RAAF Headquarters and the Air Board had made the decision that any airfield or RAAF establishment outside the 50 miles of the coastline would not have to man machine gun defences. What this decision did do was to force the establishments close to the coast to man machine gun posts, therefore Area Headquarters stationed in Sydney were required to man machine guns. It can be seen with in the records that this caused many issues and some very heated discussions between Area Operation Commands and RAAF Headquarters.

² The term Aircrafthand/Guard was first used at the end of 1939 when the mustering was established under the Aircrafthand trade. This was changed, with the removal of the term Aircrafthand, and thus the new name would be Guard, however, recruitment records show different titles being used all over Australia. Titles like: Guardsman.

³ It must be noted that the joint defence of establishments of the Navy and RAAF were the responsibility of the Army, however, this was from the external fence line outwards, and for anti-aircraft defence. The Navy and RAAF were responsible for the defence of their installations and the internal security.

- i. The dispersal of aircraft around the perimeter of the airfield,⁴
- ii. Moving aircraft to satellite airfields if attack was heavy or sustained,
- iii. Aircraft shelter pens were to be constructed and aircraft housed in them,
- iv. Stations or establishments within a Grade B area (greater than 50 miles from the coast) would not normally be camouflaged, but they were to take every advantage of natural camouflage.

⁴ However, if a Commanding Officer thought an attack was imminent and he wished to disperse aircraft to other areas, he must first gain permission from RAAF Headquarters or their Area Operational Command, if there was no time or RAAF Headquarters or the Area Operation Commander was unavailable, then the Commanding Officer could make a decision to move the aircraft.

Appendix G – No. 25 Operational Bases.

Listing of the current on strength Guards, hours to be worked and the total number of extra Guards need to fulfil full airfield defence for No. 25 Operational Base. (NAA, A1196, 25/501/6 Part 1).

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APPENDIX "A"

No. 25 OPERATIONAL BASE - CAIRNS

LIST OF GUARD POSTS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.

POST	NO. of MEN ON DUTY.	HOURS ON DUTY.	TOTAL MEN REQUIRED
1. <u>Main Gate</u> - Entrance to drome (C.O. suggests 2 men)	1	24	3
2. <u>Side Entrance</u> Turnstiles - Leads straight into dispersal bays for fighter aircraft.	1	24	3
3. <u>Southern Entrance</u> Road leading on to S. end of drome.	1	24	3
4. <u>Bomb Dump EDMONTON</u> 14 miles from CAIRNS. R.A.A.F. staff working during hours of daylight	2	Hours of darkness.	6
5. <u>Bomb Dump Operational Base</u> (1 man inadequate to guard properly.)	1	24	3
6. <u>Power Plant</u> For R.A.A.F. aeradio No staff on duty.	1	24	3
7. <u>R.A.A.F. Transmitter</u> Duty Staff 2 men 0800-1600 hrs. 1 thenceforward others sleep nearby.	1	Hours of darkness.	2
8. <u>Aeradio Transmitter</u> 300 yards from R.A.A.F. buildings. No staff on duty	1	Hours of darkness.	2
9. <u>Aeradio</u> . Main installations. Staff on duty 24 hours. Close to Operational Base Buildings.	1	Hours of darkness.	2
10. <u>Tropical Theatre</u> transmitter R.A.A.F. Signals and Cypher Staff etc.	1	24	3
11. <u>Remote Transmitter</u> . (Redlynch) (some miles from Operational Base) R.A.A.F. Not in use. Not guarded Equipment valuable.	1	24	6
12. <u>Aerodrome</u> . Proper. Roving Patrol.	2	Hours of darkness.	4
13. <u>CAIRNS Wharf</u> . (Salvaged aircraft from NEW GUINEA etc. Crashed aircraft etc.	1	24	3
ADD			43
Allowance for Standdown 1 in 7.			6
" " Leave sickness			2
<u>Total Security Guards</u>			51
Machine Gunners 7 posts			14
Establishment asked for			65

Notes:
- 1 man for 24 hrs. - 1 man for 24 hrs.
- 1 man for 24 hrs. - 1 man for 24 hrs.
- 1 man for 24 hrs. - 1 man for 24 hrs.

Appendix H – Station Defence Squadron.

The Station Defence Squadron proposed on 10 January 1942 at a meeting which took place between Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles S. Burnett, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Bostock, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Commodore Bladin, Director of Operations Group, Captain Hely. (NAA, A1196, 15/501/75 PART 1).

PROVISIONAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATION DEFENSE SQUADRON.

Establishment No. 1
 Date: 10/10/1940

Policy: 10
 Authority:

Branch or Trade Group	Description	Personnel										Total S.A.C. personnel	Civilian staff	Remarks
		Air Marshal	Air Vice-Marshal	Air Commodore	Group Captain	Wing Commander	Squadron Leader	Flight Lieutenant	Flying Officer or Pilot Officer	Other Officers	Total			
	SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS													
ADD (a)	Defence Officers						1	1	2				2	(a) P/O Station Gas Officer.
V	Warrent Officers, Men.								1				1	
V (b)	Aircraft Bands											2	2	(b) Sgt. Qualified Gas Instr.
IV	Clerks, General											1	1	S.A.C. for respiration maintenance.
III	*Drivers, M.T.											2	2	
V	Office Schoolies											1	1	
II (c)	*Wireless Ops. (S.)											1	1	(c) For duty as visual signaller.
	TOTAL SQUADRON PERSONNEL						1	1	2	1	1	7	9	
	(d) MACHINE GUN FLIGHT													(d) Crews for 30 Machine Guns.
ADD	Defence Officers						1	1					1	
V	Guards										3	30	60	90 90
	TOTAL FLIGHT:						1	1			3	30	60	90 94
	(e) FIVE RIFLE FLIGHTS													(e) Includes per Flight:-
	*Defence Officers						2	2					2	1 P/O or 1 P/Sgt. Flight Command.
	*Airmen										3	5	15	1 Sgt. and 10 Cpls. per Flight 1 per section.
	TOTAL FLIGHTS:						2	2			3	5	15	150 165 165
	BOMB DISPOSAL FLIGHT													30 A.C. per Flight 10 per section.
ADD	Bomb Disposal						1	1					1	1 A.C. Despatch Rider
II	Armourers (Bomb Disposal)										1	2	5	5 A.C. Visual Signaller
	TOTAL FLIGHTS:						1	1			1	2	5	9 10
	TOTAL STATION DEFENSE SQUADRON:						1	2	2	1	4	30	70	109 109
	* MECHANICAL TRANSPORT													To be detailed by Sta. Hqs. - NOT INCLUDED IN TOTALS.
	(f) Tenders, Heavy													(f) 1 Heavy for use by bomb disposal squadron.
	(g) Tenders, Light													(g) 1 Light Tender for bomb disposal squadron; 2 for Defence Squadron.
	TOTALS:													

By: J. G. (G.V.)
 10/10/1940.

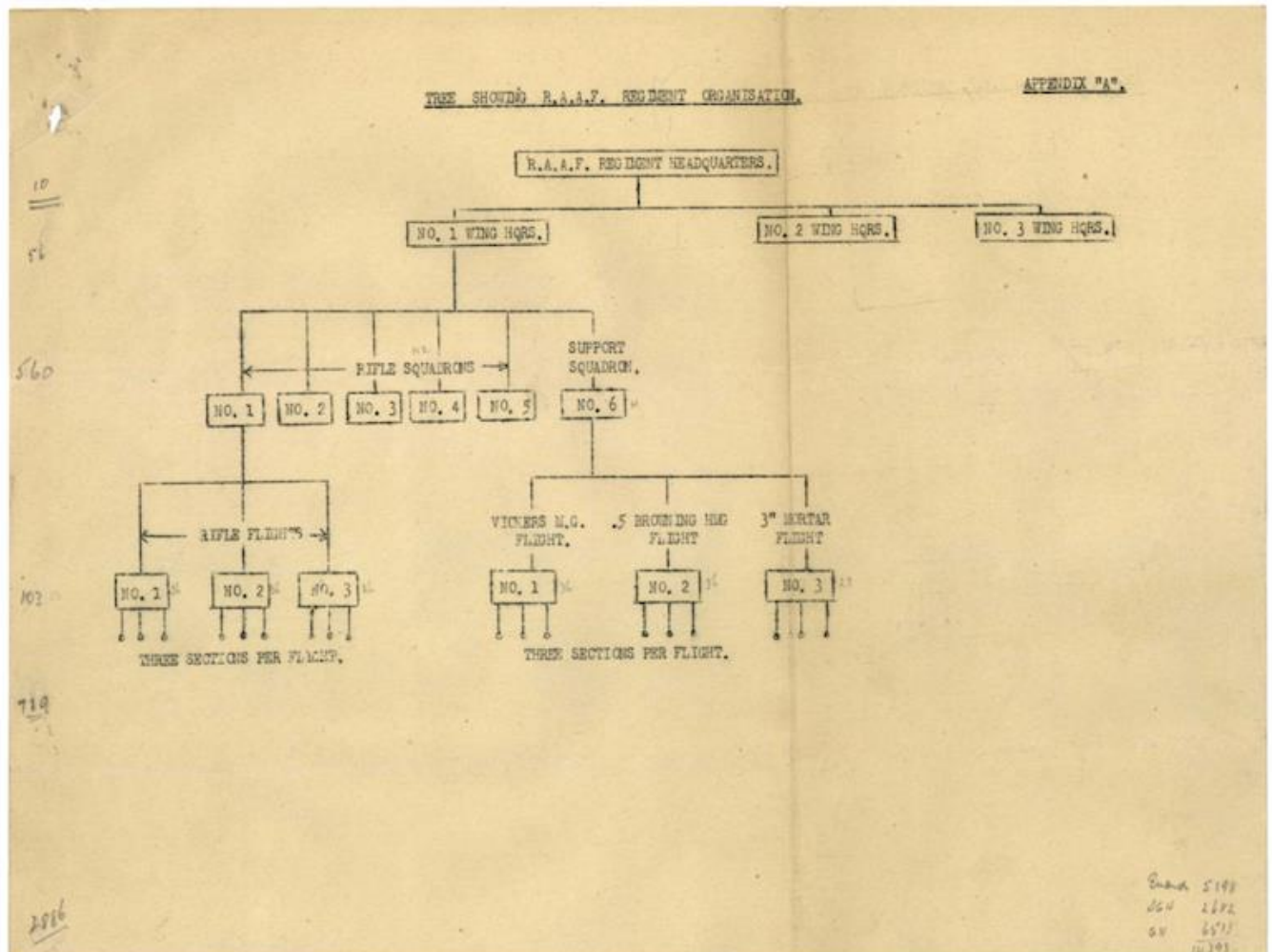
Appendix I – RAAF Darwin.

RAAF Station Darwin 1942 Defence Plan, with the siting of twin Vickers and Browning Machine gun posts around the station. The black circles with crosses are positions of twin Vickers and the red dots are Browning 50 Calibre Machine Guns. (NAA, A1196, 37/501/99).



Appendix J – RAAF Regiment.

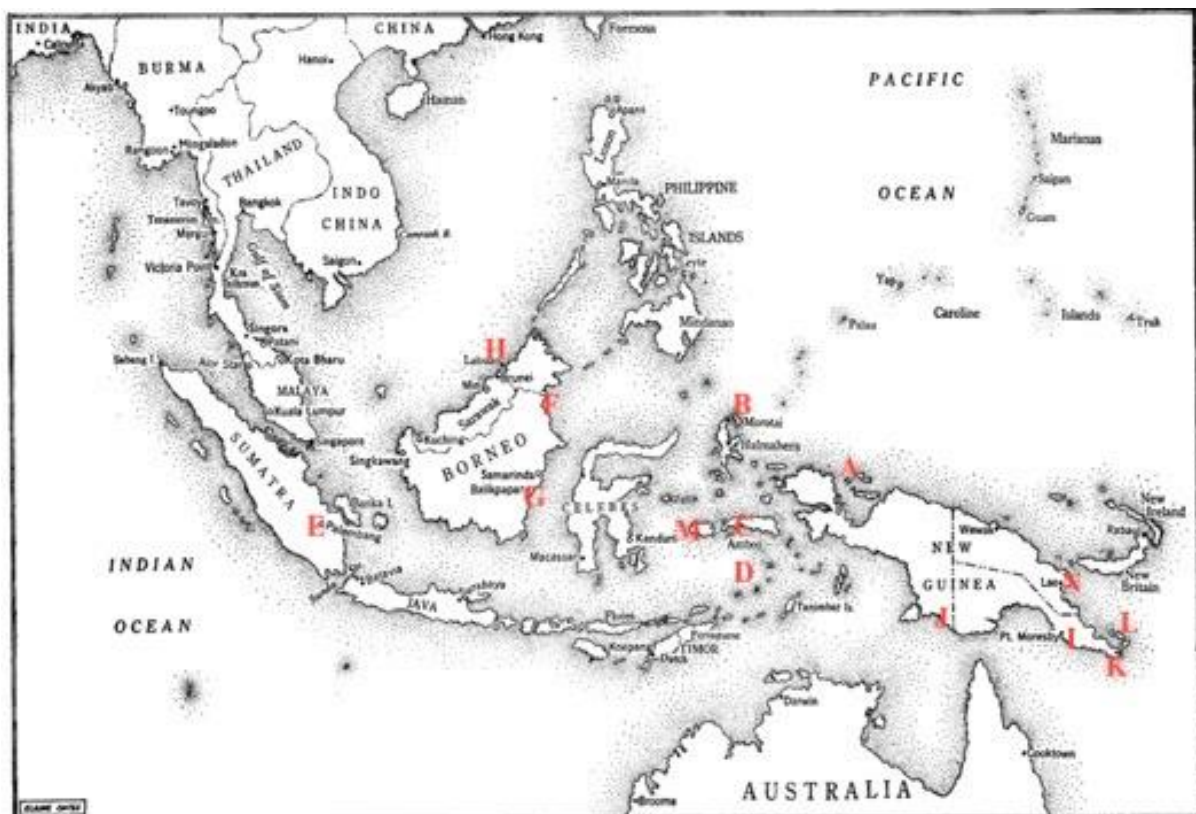
RAAF Regiment Organisation as detailed by Mocatta in 1945 (NAA, A1196, 15/501/258 PART 2).



Appendix K – South West Pacific Area.

Locations of deployments of Guards on operations in the South West Pacific Area from 1942 to 1945.

- a. Noemfoor Island
- b. Morotai Island
- c. Laha Aerodrome Ambon
- d. Seroea Island (Pulau Serua)
- e. Palembang
- f. Tarakan
- g. Balikpapan
- h. Labuan Island
- i. Port Moresby
- j. Merauke Aerodrome
- k. Milne Bay
- l. Goodenough Island
- m. Buru Island
- n. Nadzab



Appendix L – Noemfoor Island

Noemfoor Island where the Defence Pool of No. 10 Group/1 Tactical Air Force was formed for the protection of Kamiri airfield (George Odgers, *Air War against Japan 1943-1945*, p.236).



Appendix M – OBOE Operations.

Invasion of Borneo. The 9th Australian Division landings at Labuan and Brunei. The 26th Australian Brigade landed at Tarakan and the 7th Australian Division at Balikpapan (AWM Australian in the War of 1939-1945, Series One Army, Volume VII, *The Final Campaigns*, Chapter 16, p. 390).



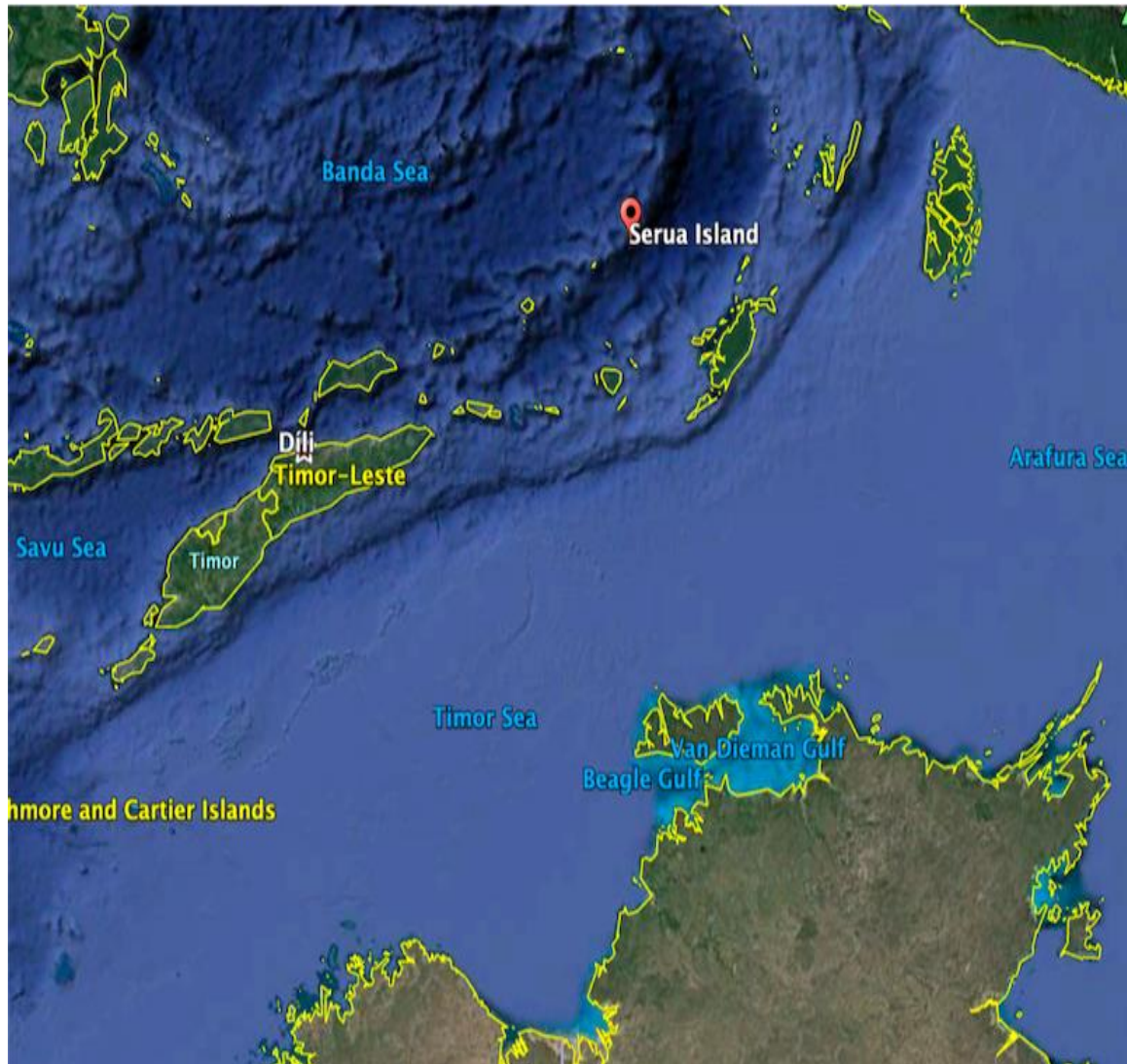
Appendix N – OBOE Six.

Borneo - Operation OBOE Six. Invasion of Labuan Island by 2/28 and 2/43 Battalions on Brown Beach; with the invasion of Brunei by the 2/15 Battalion on White Beach and the 2/17 Battalion on Green Beach. (AWM Australian in the War of 1939-1945, Series One Army, Volume VII, *The Final Campaigns*, Chapter 19 OBOE SIX OPENS, p. 460).



Appendix O – Island of Serua.

The Island of Serua is where RAAF Guards protected the Island as a forward base for operations by sea planes. (Google Earth Image, 19 March 2019).



Appendix P – Threat Assessment.

RAAF Intelligence Threat Assessment against Air Force Installations 1964-1969. (NAA: A703, 564/8/2 PART 6).

Locations	Ground Defence by Army		Local Ground Defence by RAAF		
	Attack by Land Force	Attack by Minor Body	Partisan	Civil	Sabotage
War with China:					
Butterworth	L	L	L	L	L/M
Ubon	M/H	H	H	S	M
Vung Tau	M/H	M/H	H	S	M
New Guinea	N	N	N	I	I
Australia	N	N	N	N	N
War with Indonesia:					
Australia	N	N	N	N	I
Thailand/Vietnam	N	N	N	N	N
Malaya	L	L	M	S	L/M
New Guinea	S	S	L	S	L
Limited War:					
Butterworth	N	N	N	S	S/M
Ubon	S	N	N	I	S
Vung Tau	L	L/M	M/H	S	L/M
New Guinea	N	N	N	N	I
Australia	N	N	N	N	I
Peace:					
Peace Bases	N	N	N	N	I
War Bases	N	N	N	N	N
New Guinea	N	N	N	I	S

Legend:

N: No Defence,

I: Insignificant level of defence required,

S: Slight level of defence required,

L: Low-level of defence required,

M: Moderate level of defence required,

H: High level of defence required.

Peace Bases = All bases in Australia during peace,

War Bases = All operational overseas bases in peace for war.

Appendix Q – USAF Air Police.

This is the Appendix 'C' of Flight Lieutenant Brough's report, dated April 1966, highlighted the USAF Air Police strength on air bases in Vietnam. (NAA: A703, 564/8/2 PART 7).

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APPENDIX "C" TO
HQOPCOM 16/28/AIR
DATED 29TH APRIL 1966

USAF AIR POLICE STRENGTHS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Table of Approved or Projected Air Police Personnel Establishments 1 Jan 66

Air Force Base	Air Policemen Establishment			Total Base USAF Personnel Establishment	Remarks
	Offrs	EM	Dogs		
PHAN RANG	9	679	66	-	1. USAF Base 2. Projected establishment for three fighter squadrons and C130 turnaround
CAM RANH BAY	9	737	66	-	1. USAF Base 2. Projected estab.
BIEN HOA	9	523	57	3159 plus some TDY	1. VNAF Base 2. Approved estab.
TAN SON NHUT	9	690	64	8315 plus some TDY	1. VNAF Base 2. Approved estab.
DA NANG	9	518	68	2695 plus some TDY	1. VNAF Base 2. Approved estab.
BINH TUOY	4	195	28	-	1. VNAF Base 2. Projected estab.
NHA TRANG	5	253	23	1619 plus some TDY	1. VNAF Base 2. Approved estab.
PLEIKU	4	223	28	-	1. VNAF Base 2. Projected estab.
TUOY HOA	-	-	-	-	Assessment not complete
HQ 2 Air Div	10	10	-		1. Includes one US Army officer and one pilot for disaster control duties. 2. Does not include two Air Police officers with HQ MACV.
Approved Total	42	1994	212		
Projected Additions	26	1834	188		
Total	68	3828	400		

Notes: 1. The ratio of officers to enlisted men is extremely low for the type of security operations required in SOUTH VIETNAM.
2. The breakdown between guard dogs and sentry dogs is not known.
3. TDY = temporary duty, ie, attached.

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Appendix R – Phan Rang Airbase.

Phan Rang Airbase topographic map (Images provided by M. Bryson).

Legend:

Arrow direction to Claymore Hill.

Red dots/circles are other ambush site.

