



No 1 Security Forces Squadron

Motto: First to Defend

No 1 Security Forces Squadron forms part of No 95 Wing of the Combat Support Group, Air Command. With its headquarters located at RAAF Base Williamtown, the Squadron provides security and air base defence in support of domestic operations across all permanent RAAF bases in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The Squadron also deploys to provide security and air base defence for expeditionary operations. The Squadron's badge depicts a crossed sword and rifle overlaid by a crocodile in an aggressive attitude. The Squadron's motto is: *First to Defend*.

No 1 Security Forces Squadron's origins can be traced to the Security Guards Unit which formed on 1 October 1942 under the command of Flight Lieutenant Charles H. MacKinnon, at Livingstone Airfield south of Darwin. Previously, aerodrome defence sections and flights had been formed within Base Squadrons and units, as aerodrome defences were implemented.

Security Guards Unit's role was to establish training standards and to provide trained guards to airfields in northern Australia and the South Pacific. The Unit also managed the rotation of guards between tropical and southern areas. On the Unit's

formation, guards from aerodrome defence sections at operational bases, advanced operational bases, radio stations and non-operational units were posted to the Unit, giving Security Guards Unit a posted strength of eighty-seven at Livingstone and 218 at remote sites.

By the end of October 1942, the Unit campsite had been established, four non-commissioned officers had been appointed as instructors, and the first training course had commenced. The students graduated in mid-November and were allocated for duty at Batchelor and Darwin Airfields, and with No 5 Fighter Sector. The Unit moved to the camp at Nightcliff, a Darwin suburb, on 12 June, where it experienced its first air raid on 20 June but suffered no casualties. The Unit's first casualty, Aircraftman 1 Ronald J.C. Kelly, was accidentally killed during a Bren Gun demonstration on 3 July 1943.

As further guards were trained and deployed to operational units and bases, Security Guards Unit's strength exceeded 1 000 guards. However, an order issued on 29 October 1943 made Air Officers Commanding responsible for the protection of all installations under their command. Accordingly, the First Tactical Air Force formed a Defence

Pool independent of the Security Guards Unit at Noemfoor in December 1944. When No 80 (Fighter) Wing deployed to Morotai at the end of 1944, it also included guards. Other First Tactical Air Force Wings did likewise. Security Guards Unit assisted by deploying mobile air defence instructor teams to train guards and guard trainers during 1944. In early 1945, a detachment from the Noemfoor Defence Pool arrived at Morotai where it established a camp for the Defence Pool's main party.

On 7 April 1945 Security Guards Unit was renamed No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron's, and in May 1945, thirteen Squadron members returned after five months service with Z Special Unit. This Z Special Unit had operated behind Japanese lines, mostly on Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies, providing valuable intelligence for the planning of the Allied capture of Borneo under Operation *Oboe*. As the end of hostilities in the Pacific approached, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron's numbers declined, although the Squadron continued to provide guards for service with other units. In August 1945, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron guards attached to other units were posted to those units, leaving the Squadron a residual strength of forty-eight. On 22 September 1945, the Squadron moved to No 2 Reserve Personnel Pool at Winnellie camp and was disbanded on 19 November 1945, after completing one final operation at Merauke, in Netherlands New Guinea.

Between 5 July 1951 and March 1953, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron enjoyed a brief reactivation under the command of Flying Officer Kevin J.P. Myers as a National Service Training unit at RAAF Base Mallala, South Australia. After No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron was disbanded on 24 March 1953, independent RAAF airfield defence units ceased to exist for the next three decades. However, the RAAF retained aerodrome defence officers and instructors. The airfield defence guard mustering was revived in 1965, although airfield defence guards were not formed into squadrons. Airfield defence guards served in Malaysia, Thailand and South Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, RAAF airfield defence guards provided security for air bases at Vung Tau and Phan Rang in

South Vietnam from where Nos 9 and 2 Squadrons operated, respectively. After the Vietnam War, airfield defence guards were organised into independent rifle flights until No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was reactivated in March 1983.

No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron was re-formed at RAAF Base Tindal on 1 July 1992 under the Ready Reserve Scheme with only a small cadre of Permanent Air Force personnel. From 1992 through to 1996 the Squadron trained over 300 Ready Reserve members. Following a change of government in 1996, the Ready Reserve Scheme was abolished and a Ground Defence Reserve Group was formed. Subsequently, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron raised airfield defence guard rifle flights at RAAF Bases Pearce, Edinburgh, Williams and Support Unit Hobart, while the Squadron's headquarters remained in temporary accommodation at RAAF Base Tindal. To overcome its geographic isolation, on 1 January 1999 the Squadron's headquarters moved to Edinburgh.

In late 1999, when the ADF commenced operations in East Timor, high readiness reservists from No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron augmented Rifle Flights from No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron operating at Komoro Airfield in Dili. This arrangement enabled airfield security and protection operations to be sustained over an extended period. After these operations, the permanent airfield defence guard establishment was increased, with No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron personnel becoming a mixture of Permanent Air Force and RAAF Active Reserve. In 2007, the Airfield Defence Wing and No 3 Airfield Defence Squadron which had formed, were disbanded and their resources were consolidated into Nos 1 and 2 Airfield Defence Squadrons. The two squadrons were transferred to No 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing. After a further restructure, on 1 January 2010, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron moved to RAAF Base Amberley, and was tasked with being the primary air base protection capability for air points of disembarkation. The Squadron gained a significant number of ground defence officer, airfield defence guard and communications information systems controller positions.

In 2011, Air Force conducted an internal review of the force protection workforce, which led to a significant restructure. From 1 July 2013, the ground defence, Air Force security, Air Force police, air base protection and explosive ordnance disposal functions were integrated into forming three Security Forces Squadrons. These squadrons absorbed reservist security forces personnel from the 'City Squadrons'. Concurrently, No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron was renamed No 1 Security Forces Squadron and the Squadron headquarters moved to RAAF Base Williamtown.

The Squadron moved quickly to conduct bridging courses that would integrate its various functional areas into a cohesive, effective force, declaring initial operating capability in September 2014, and maturing to full operating capability in 2016. Concurrently, the Squadron satisfied operational taskings and supported RAAF as well as joint exercises. For instance, in January 2016, No 1 Security Forces Squadron personnel underwent force preparation ahead of deploying on Operations *Accordion* and *Okra*. While supporting external force preparation activities, the Squadron also conducted its own internal training program. In March, No 1 Security Forces Squadron personnel deployed to the Middle East.

In 2017 the hectic pace continued as No 1 Security Forces Squadron introduced the new Mk47 LWAGL (light weight automatic grenade launcher) and the eF88 (enhanced F88) Austeyr assault rifle, while also providing personnel to Exercise *Cope North 17* in Guam. The tension between competing demands from expeditionary operations, training, exercises and domestic security tasks continued as the Squadron took its turn moving into a very-short-notice-to-move state as the online squadron.

Operation *Accordion* remains an ongoing commitment for the Squadron. As part of joint Task Force 633, Air Force Security Forces teams

from Nos 1, 2 and 3 Security Forces Squadrons provide security at Camp Baird, the ADF's main base in the Middle East. In addition, they provide continuous security to aircraft movements to Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan. Concurrently, No 2 Security Forces Squadron participates in exercises and undertakes training to build and sustain the skills of its members. In 2020, security forces from Japan, Australia and the United States conducted combined training during Exercise *Cope North* at the Commando Warrior facility at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The seven-day training activity involved sharing tactics in weapons systems use and effects, military working dog security, and urban and jungle warfare. The training activity culminated in a field exercise where multinational teams worked together to defend an air base.

From 27 April to 14 May 2021, No 1 Security Forces Squadron conducted Exercise *Gathering Storm 21*, a live-fire training activity held at the Singleton Military Training Area, New South Wales. Personnel from across all the Squadron's security disciplines undertook a number of assurance activities to train and test the Squadron's existing capabilities across the range of environments in which they support Air Force flying units.



Precision Engagement Team members from No 1 Security Forces Squadron. Source: Department of Defence.