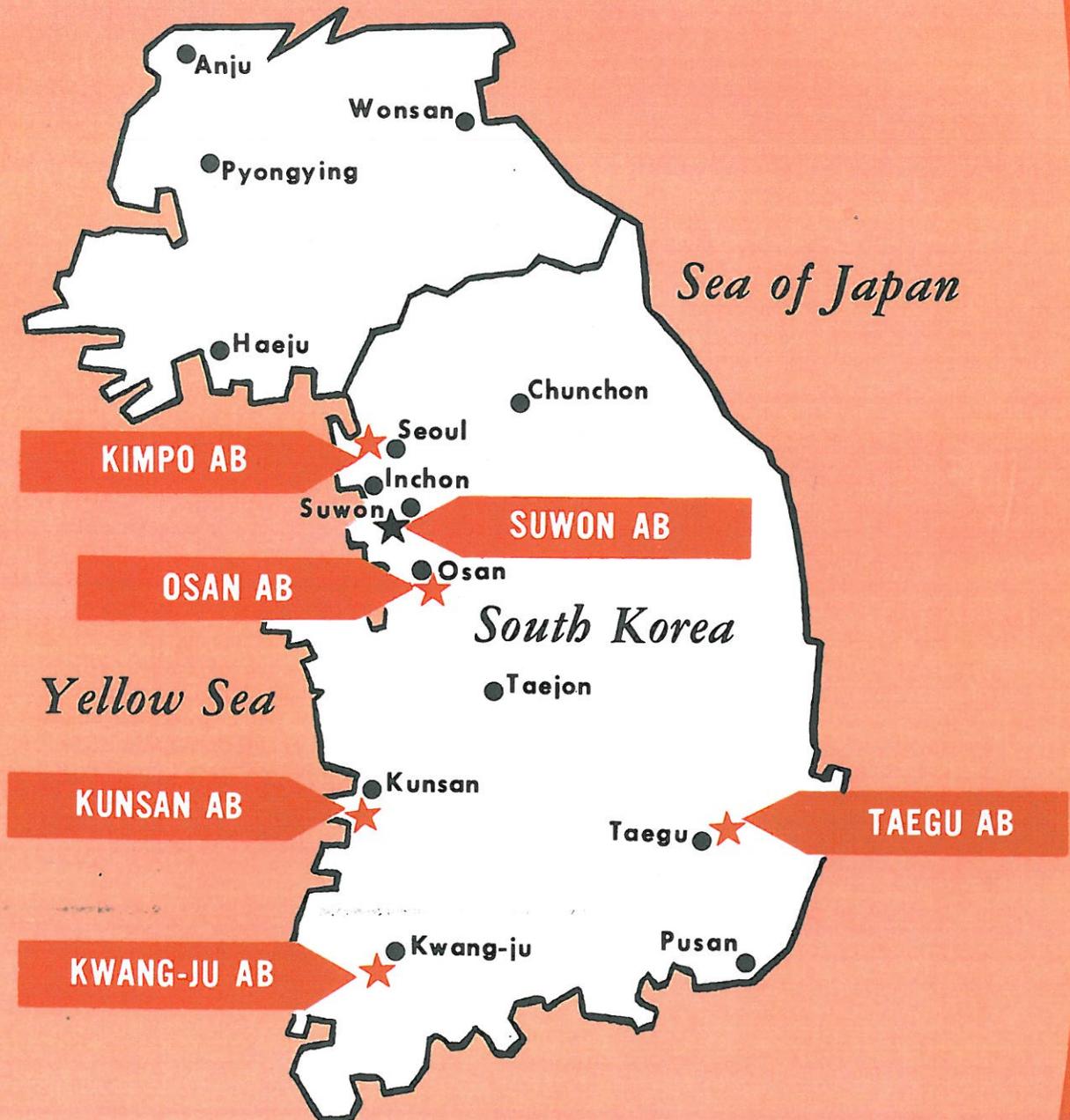


Operation COMBAT FOX



Editor's Note: Regardless of whether they were members of a Prime BEEF team, a RED HORSE squadron, the Base Civil Engineer's force or the Regional Civil Engineer's office, Air Force Civil Engineers met every requirement levied against them during the Korean buildup. It was total involvement by the men of Air Force Civil Engineering and the following is a report of how they succeeded in meeting the challenge.

Immediately after the seizure of the USS Pueblo on 23 January 1968, the Air Force deployed several fighter squadrons to bases in Korea. The task was cut out for the civil engineering elements of Fifth Air Force: to provide essential facilities for aircraft, crews and support personnel. Civil engineering manpower and facilities were in existence at Osan AB and Kunsan AB, and Kimpo AB had limited facilities. None could support any greatly increased operations, and the only immediate source of manpower was from the Prime BEEF teams. A PACAF team, composed of men from nearly all PACAF bases outside Southeast Asia, was the first deployed. Immediately following, seven teams arrived from the ZI, in accordance with the AFOCE operations plan for such situations. Later operational expansions justified the requirement for two additional Prime BEEF teams, and required realignment of those teams already in Korea.

Initially, aircraft forces were moved into Osan, Kunsan, Kimpo and Suwon. Later, Air Force operations were expanded to Kwang-ju and Taegu. Considerable work on a crash basis was required to get facilities, including tents, at these additional locations ready for their projected missions. The work was handled through a combination of Prime BEEF, RED HORSE and O&M projects by contract.

Personnel Moved into Gyms, Clubs

During the immediate post-deployment period, it was possible to accommodate the initial influx of people at Osan, Kunsan and Kimpo by doubling up in living and administrative facilities and by moving people into gyms and clubs until interim accommodations could be provided. At other locations, the only way to get shelter was to modify and rehabilitate facilities loaned by the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) units, and to immediately erect tents from Harvest Eagle kits, so that personnel could sleep under cover on the night of their arrival.

Harvest Eagle kits are stores of materiel items needed to feed, house and transport personnel while carrying out their duties in support of deployed forces. Each kit contains a wide variety of equipment, vehicles, tools and supplies. Tents are the basic structure, with equipment to adapt them for use as latrines, kitchens or operational facilities. The kits, kept in ready status at strategic locations in the PACAF area, were flown in by priority airlift to provide the primary means of logistic support during the immediate post-deployment period.

A top priority operational requirement was erection of BAK-12 aircraft arresting barriers, upon which work was started immediately. Dispersion and protection of aircraft were equally urgent operational needs, but were hampered seriously during the early period by the lack of adequate pavement for aircraft parking as well as revetment construction. Work also was concentrated on maximum possible protection for operational facilities and personnel with sandbag bunkers.

During the first weeks, Prime BEEF teams were occupied with erection of critical facilities, rehabilitating water supply and sewerage systems, installing flooring and hardbacking tents, and modifying and rehabilitating

existing buildings until better facilities could be provided.

Although the original TDY period for Prime BEEF teams was for 90 days, it was necessary, in most cases, to extend this TDY when plans for replacement of permanent manning could not be completed in time. The teams and their home bases are listed in Figure 1.

By the time the teams left Korea they had erected 700 tents for billets and almost 300 for other uses. They dug wells, erected frame buildings, laid airfield matting, installed aircraft arresting barriers and sandbag bunkers, and accomplished building and utility system rehabilitation. Most noteworthy accomplishments were the erec-



While the area is being prepared, the first modulux dormitories lie stacked and ready for assembly at Kunsan AB.

tion of Type B aircraft revetments and pre-engineered steel buildings. When revetment materials arrived in April, they took priority over all other work because of the urgent need for aircraft protection. To expedite this work, a special Prime BEEF team from PACAF resources was assembled with men who had previous experience in revetment construction. Detachments of this team were placed at each base to help manage the erection operation.

While work progressed, planning proceeded for management of the entire operation and for the major construction which would be required to support it. To provide the needed staff capability, a Prime BEEF Headquarters "H" team was established and manned

cont'd next page

Operation COMBAT FOX *cont'd*

with approximately 60 people, about one-half officers and one-half airmen. During the first several weeks, most of this team operated as the civil engineering staff of the advance element of Headquarters Fifth Air Force in Korea (5ADVON), and later became part of the staff of the 314th Air Division at Osan AB.

Osan, Kunsan and Kimpo Air Bases could not handle the large influx of personnel which descended upon them. Other existing bases had extremely limited facilities for U.S. Air Force use and were operated by the ROKAF which needed practically all existing facilities for its own use. Utility systems were inadequate to handle any additional load. Except for the three primary Air Force bases in Korea, the civil engineering operation had to be established from the ground up.

Although the TDY Prime BEEF teams were a lifesaver, it became apparent that a more viable in-house construction effort would be needed. The 557th Civil En-

gineering Squadron was trained at Eglin AFB, Florida on a crash basis and was in-country by April 1968. Its addition completed the lineup of major components of Air Force Civil Engineering forces, except for two special purpose Prime BEEF teams which were to arrive some time later.

Makeup of the 557th Civil Engineering Squadron, RED HORSE, included several men with previous RED HORSE and Prime BEEF experience. Originally, the Squadron was deployed for 179 days TDY. At the end of this period, the unit was transferred to Fifth Air Force, less personnel, and PCS replacements were then assigned. Initial PCS assignments for the personnel obviously would have been preferable, but the lead time was insufficient to arrange permanent personnel assignments.

RED HORSE Quickly Takes Over Tasks

As quickly as possible, the RED HORSE squadron took over tasks from the Prime BEEF teams, especially in the erection of the pre-engineered steel buildings and the revetments. Concurrently, the squadron began production of fill material on a big scale. The fill was used for such projects as aircraft and ammo revetments, and pavements and building foundations built in low areas. The squadron also began erecting a variety of urgently needed operational and support facilities such as the alert crew quarters, ammo storage and aircraft maintenance facilities and a new dining hall.

An initial bill of materials required for this bed-down and to initiate the most urgent work was shipped with the squadron's basic equipment.

After arrival of the unit, action was taken for procurement of an additional bill of materials (BOM) specifically defined to fit the follow-on work program for the squadron. This bill of materials was purchased and shipped by Headquarters AFLC outside of normal base supply channels and was a lifesaver in providing follow-on supply support after exhaustion of the initial orders of supplies and materials.

The squadron was fully occupied until expiration of its TDY period in August. PCS replacements for the TDY force began arriving in September and, except for about 75 men who were newly recalled Air National Guard members, consisted of regular Air Force personnel.

By the time of the personnel changeover, construction planning for the hardened aircraft shelters had been finalized. A special Prime BEEF shelter construction team was authorized to help with this task. By this time also, the decision had been made to use modular relocatable troop housing, with all work to be performed by RED HORSE, with the exception of the exterior utilities and road surfacing. Foundation construction was started in preparation for the arrival of the buildings. Additionally, RED HORSE was tasked with some 70 O&M and minor construction projects.

Planning for PCS replacement personnel to replace TDY Prime BEEF teams had to begin early in the operation. A manning package of approximately 100 Air Force personnel and 200 Korean nationals for each newly occupied base (Suwon, Taegu and Kwang-ju) with

While constructing modular foundations, collar forms are used, hung from cross arms which are shot in with a level.



modest augmentees for Osan and Kunsan, was developed and sent to higher headquarters. Also, a sizeable expansion of an existing contract maintenance operation was negotiated to augment the blue suit force at the three new bases.

In July a manning package approximating the original submittal was approved, and the PCS incumbents began arriving in August. These personnel were predominantly Air National Guard and Reserve troops recalled to active duty. As events worked out, it was not possible to have an overlapping assignment period at the time the Prime BEEF teams departed. This involved an inevitable loss of momentum on projects and the base maintenance effort. Work in the design and planning stages suffered the most because it was difficult to pick up the loose ends and determine what had been and what had not been done. Lack of materials delayed many projects because it took time for incoming personnel to find out what was ordered and what was not. Nevertheless, the new troops were a highly motivated group and soon had control of the situation.

Special Funding Authority Granted

From the start of the Korean buildup, most operations involved initial troop and aircraft bed-down activities. Construction programming had to begin, and the quickest way to obtain needed facilities of limited scope was through O&M projects within command approval authority. Special funding authority was granted to allow these to proceed immediately. Headquarters U.S. Air Force also authorized expedite procedures for P341 projects, allowing submittal and approval of projects by message. The biggest programming effort was to develop and support a package of major facility requirements for incorporation in the earliest possible Military Construction Program.

In addition to the urgency of obtaining facilities for dispersal, shelter and maintenance of aircraft, the pressing need existed to have suitable troop housing constructed before the next winter.

Based on initial deployment estimates, a construction package was completed and forwarded to Headquarters PACAF in mid-February 1968. This package was approved as the FY 68 Korean Supplemental Military Construction Program, and provided for urgent operational requirements, troop housing and messing facilities. Included were dispersed hardstands for aircraft, hardened aircraft shelters, essential utilities and communications facilities.

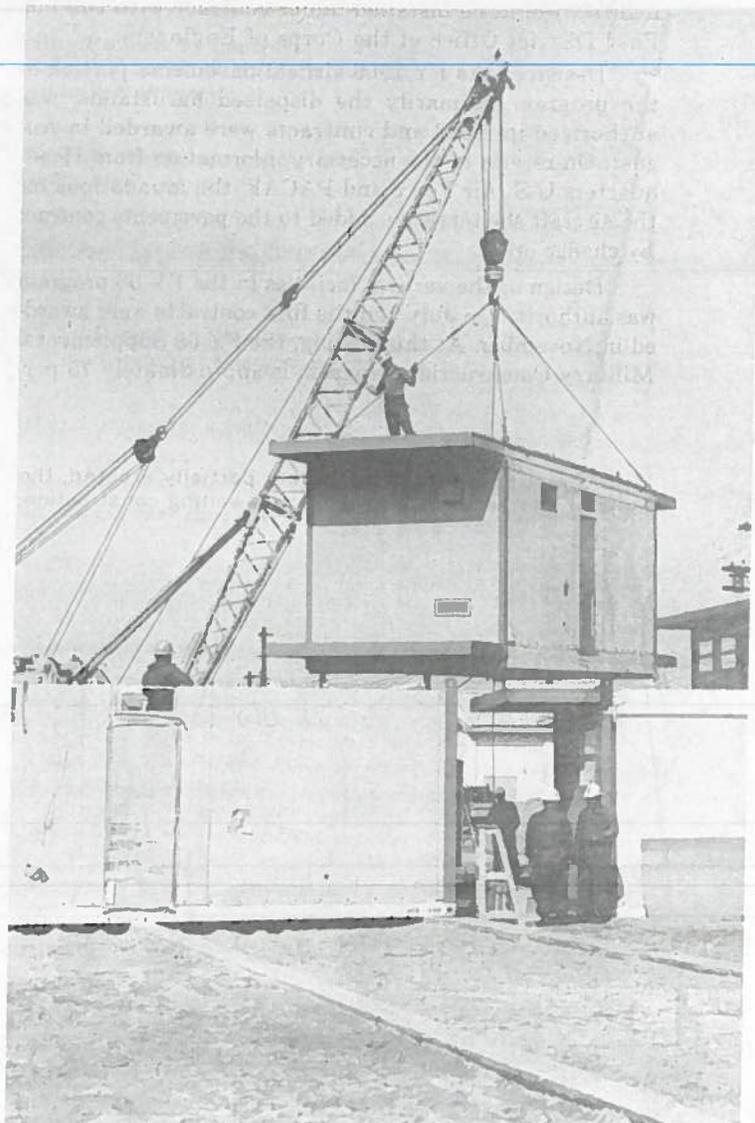
Engineering field studies covering base development planning and preparation of program development brochures for individual line items proceeded concurrently with the other actions to support the programmed items and to provide essential siting data. The program development brochures were a major undertaking and were initiated by A-E contracts. Siting proved to be a difficult task because of limited real estate at most locations and the need to preserve existing ROKAF facilities where possible.

cont'd next page

TEAM NO.	HOME BASE
PACAF	Kadena, Naha, Tachikawa, Yokota, Misawa, Itazuke
62	Eglin AFB, Florida
63	Andrews AFB, Maryland
64	Barksdale AFB, Louisiana
65	Fairchild AFB, Washington
66	Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
67	Lackland AFB, Texas
68	Vandenburg AFB, California
70	Lockbourne AFB, Ohio
71	Various

Figure 1: Prime BEEF Teams

With a little help from above, the second-story latrine module is hoisted into position as another dorm is raised.



Operation COMBAT FOX *cont'd*

A joint services construction agency was established under the Commander of U.S. Forces in Korea and empowered to exercise broad programming authority in execution of all service programs. Its primary functions are to insure uniformity, to comply with DoD instructions on austerity, eliminate duplication in the construction efforts of the services, and exercise program flexibility. The Army Corps of Engineers is the designated construction agent in Korea.

Several major construction policy decisions were made in the early stages of the program. Headquarters U.S. Air Force directed that pre-engineered modular steel structures, which included troop housing and dispensaries, should be used to the maximum extent practicable to minimize Gold Flow and to maximize recoverability of assets, should it be required to move these facilities at some future date. It was then determined that foundation construction, building erection, interior utility work, sidewalks and parking lots for these units would be performed by RED HORSE, and that exterior utilities would be installed under contract with the Far East District Office of the Corps of Engineers.

Design of the FY 1968 airfield pavements portion of the program, primarily the dispersed hardstands, was authorized in April and contracts were awarded in August. On receipt of the necessary information from Headquarters U.S. Air Force and PACAF, the foundations for the aircraft shelters were added to the pavements contract by change order.

Design of the vertical facilities in the FY 68 program was authorized in July and the first contracts were awarded in November. At this writing, the FY 68 Supplemental Military Construction Program is approximately 75 per-

cent awarded and completion of the bulk of the facilities will be in the July-October 1969 time period.

In order to properly discharge the AFRCE responsibilities in connection with the construction program, it was necessary to establish a Fifth Air Force AFRCE, with operating location in Seoul to work closely with the Korean office of the Far East District Engineer. The District itself effected a mass transfer of engineers from Japan to Korea in preparation for design activity.

The tremendous additional AFRCE workload in Korea caused a heavy drain on the limited number of personnel assigned to Fifth Air Force. A request for TDY assistance from the CONUS was met immediately by ZI commands in the form of volunteers.

BCE Efforts Recognized

Although not highlighted in this article, it was the planning and support efforts of the Base Civil Engineering forces at Osan, Kunsan and Kimpo Air Bases which made it possible for the deployed Prime BEEF teams and the RED HORSE squadron to concentrate their efforts on the many major construction projects in which they were involved.

The big unknown factor in the Korean buildup picture is the amount of construction to be approved in programs subsequent to FY 68. Regardless of what comes later, completion of the current program will put the Air Force in an infinitely better position for any subsequent deployment of forces to Korea. Air Force Civil Engineers did not need the Pueblo incident to prove that certain basic support facilities should be in place for a deployed unit to operate effectively, but it did give them the opportunity to find out from experience what it is like to get along without them. It also portrayed in a forceful fashion the value of the Prime BEEF and RED HORSE programs. Without the quick availability of those units, the task of getting ready would have been more difficult, costly and time consuming. If any additional proof of their worth was needed, it is evident in Korea. 

Onlookers wait patiently as the crane's cables are attached to a section of modulux being delivered at Osan AB.

