



No 2 Security Forces Squadron

Motto: Defend the Eyrie

Battle Honours

Pacific 1945, Borneo 1945, Morotai, East Timor 1999 – 2000

No 2 Security Forces Squadron forms part of No 95 Wing of the Combat Support Group, Air Command. Headquartered at RAAF Base Amberley, the Squadron provides security and air base defence in support of domestic air base operations across all permanent RAAF bases in Queensland and the Northern Territory. The Squadron also deploys to provide security and air base defence for expeditionary air base operations. The Squadron's badge features a Wedge-Tailed Eagle set in front of a sword and rifle displayed saltirewise, with the motto: *Defend the Eyrie*.

The Squadron originated with the creation by the RAAF's First Tactical Air Force of a Defence Pool in Noemfoor, Netherlands East Indies towards the end of December 1944. The Defence Pool was organised by Squadron Leader Thomas T. McLaughlin, the Staff Officer Defence of First Tactical Air Force. Defence Pool's role was to provide close protection of RAAF installations under the command of First

Tactical Air Force. It was created following an order, issued on 29 October 1943, that made Air Officers Commanding responsible for the protection of all installations under their command, and comprised personnel drawn from within the resources of the First Tactical Air Force. Previously, all RAAF guards were on the posted strength of the Security Guards Unit, based at Livingstone Airfield near Darwin. The Unit's role was to train and provide guards to defend operational bases and airfields in northern Australia and the South Pacific. After October 1943, the Security Guards Unit deployed mobile air defence instructor teams to train guards and guard trainers at remote locations. In early 1945 a detachment from the Noemfoor Defence Pool arrived at Morotai where they established a camp ahead of the arrival of the Defence Pool's main body. On 28 March 1945, a decision was made to abandon the Defence Pool and instructions were issued to return all guards to their units. All barracks and equipment were handed

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over to No 11 Communication Unit, with only the Commanding Officer and a small staff of the Defence Pool remaining in camp.

On 10 April 1945, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was formed at Morotai and postings of headquarters and guards personnel followed immediately. Under the command of Flight Lieutenant John C. Fullerton, the Squadron established a Headquarters Company and five Rifle Companies and began training ahead of embarking in support of Operation *Oboe*, planned as a series of amphibious assaults against Japanese forces on Borneo and the nearby islands. A (Rifle) Company received training in weapons and mines military tactics and departed Morotai on Operation *Oboe One* in late April. In the meantime, B (Rifle) Company organised and prepared to deploy on Operation *Oboe Six*, while D (Rifle) Company did likewise in preparation for deployment on Operation *Oboe Two*. C and D (Rifle) Companies were detailed for duty as a garrison force for Morotai and for duty with No 80 Wing, respectively.

On 1 May 1945, A (Rifle) Flight participated in the initial landing on Tarakan Island off the coast of Borneo, under Operation *Oboe One*. In the early hours of 5 May, Leading Aircraftman Thomas J. Irvine became the Squadron's first casualty when he was killed during a skirmish with an enemy infiltration party while manning a guard post on the outskirts of the bivouac area for the RAAF construction units. Prompt action by other members of A (Rifle) Flight routed the enemy party killing three. During the remaining Operation *Oboe* landings at Labuan and Balikpapan, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron's Rifle Flights (also called Companies) protected vital Allied assets including aircraft, bulk fuel storage and principal headquarters. The Squadron also cooperated with the Army in providing broader airfield defence and protecting isolated sections such as airfield construction teams and radar posts. Following the end of hostilities in the Pacific in August 1945, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was disbanded on 29 October 1945.

The Squadron was re-formed in late 1951 at Western Junction in Tasmania to train National

Service personnel. However, it was disbanded on 12 September 1952 without becoming operational. No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron had been re-formed in July 1951 and was disbanded in July 1953. After both Squadrons were disbanded, independent 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 they were not formed into squadrons. Airfield defence guards served in Malaysia, Thailand and South Vietnam.

No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was re-formed at RAAF Base Richmond on 17 March 1983 under the command of Squadron Leader James B.H. Brown. Airfield defence guards flights at RAAF Bases Williamtown, Amberley and Fairbairn were absorbed into the Squadron as Nos 2, 3 and 4 Rifle Flights, respectively. The Squadron was highly dispersed, with elements at RAAF Bases Richmond, Williamtown, and Amberley. However, the Squadron soon moved into a routine of training and exercises, including participating in joint exercises with the Australian Army.

Between March 1987 and April 1988, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron personnel below sergeant rank were temporarily diverted from their operational role to perform as gate guards at RAAF Bases Richmond, Williamtown and Amberley. Squadron morale suffered significantly. Cultural and working differences adversely affected relationships between the Squadron and base security managers and personnel. There was relief all round when in April 1988 airfield defence guards flights returned to normal duties. Having spent more than a year without operational training and exercises, skills had deteriorated and required rapid remediation in order to meet exercise commitments.

Between December 1988 and January 1989, the dispersed parts of No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron moved to Amberley, where the Squadron came together for the first time. Both morale and discipline improved as a result. Intense operational training and exercises, including a deployment to Butterworth

for an exercise with their Malaysian counterparts followed, which resulted in an increased injury rate. Personnel with long term conditions were subjected to employment standards review, resulting in some discharges and re-musters. However, a focus on skills development paid dividends as No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron won the Gloucester Cup as the most proficient operational squadron for 1991, the first non-flying unit to do so.

In July 1992 an Airfield Defence Wing and No 1 Airfield Defence Squadron were formed to train Ready Reserve airfield defence guards and ground defence officers. While Nos 1 and 3 Airfield Defence Squadrons were formed as Ready Reserve units, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron remained a Permanent Air Force unit, re-equipping with the F88 Austeyr assault rifle in May 1992. On 22 April 1995, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron marched through the streets of Brisbane, after being granted the Freedom of the City by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane.

In 1999 the Squadron deployed to Komoro airfield in Dili, East Timor in support of Operation *Spitfire*, the protected evacuation of personnel from the United Nations compound in Dili. The Squadron remained in East Timor as part of Combat Support Group's contribution to Operations *Warden* and *Stabilise*. The Squadron was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for sustained outstanding service during those Operations. With the commencement of the War in Iraq in 2001, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron along with several other combat support units, supplied personnel for the three deploying Expeditionary Combat Support Squadrons.

During 2005 and 2006 No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron supplied detachments to several assistance operations, including Operation *Sumatra Assist* in 2005. In mid-April 2006, a rifle flight from the Squadron formed part of the ADF contingent that deployed to the Solomon Islands, providing security at Henderson Field in Honiara after widespread rioting broke out. Also in 2006, a No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron rifle section provided security for No 86 Wing aircraft at Islamabad, Pakistan during

Operation *Pakistan Assist*. No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron deployed a detachment as part of ADF Operation *Astute* in May 2006. The Squadron also provided protection in July 2008 during the Pope's transit through RAAF Base Richmond on the occasion of World Youth Day 2008.

In 2008, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron deployed twelve personnel on Operation *Slipper* attached to 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment as part of Security Detachment 13 over the period 08 March to 21 September 2008. A second rotation of twelve personnel were attached to 2nd Cavalry Regiment as part of Security Detachment 14 over the period 15 September to December 2008. These members were responsible for the security of the Australian Embassy and its staff in the Green Zone Baghdad, Iraq.

The Airfield Defence Wing was disbanded in 2007, and the three Airfield Defence Squadrons were consolidated into two under the command of No 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing. As the higher readiness squadron, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was manned with Permanent Air Force personnel. During 2007 and 2008, the Squadron was equipped with new Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles to enhance its quick reaction force and air base mobility capabilities.

On 19 May 2011, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was presented with the Squadron Standard by the Governor-General, the Honourable (now Dame) Quentin A.L. Bryce, AD, CVO, at a special consecration parade held at RAAF Base Amberley. From November 2012, the Squadron contributed to the seventy-strong Security Force which over the next eleven months protected the 7 500 personnel, infrastructure and assets at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt in Afghanistan.

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 a Security Forces unit. Three Security Forces Squadrons were formed which

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absorbed reservist security forces personnel from the 'City Squadrons'. Accordingly, No 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was renamed No 2 Security Forces Squadron with responsibility for securing RAAF personnel and assets during domestic day-to-day and expeditionary operations against the spectrum of security threats.

The Squadron frequently deploys personnel on operations taskings and exercises. No 2 Security Forces Squadron personnel have served on Operations *Accordion*, *Mazurka*, *Saville* and *Okra*. In 2018 the Squadron deployed on Exercise *Cope North* where they shared their security skills with United States, and Japanese counterparts. In 2020, No 2 Security

Forces Squadron personnel were among those who contributed to Operation *COVID-19 Assist*. Like other Air Force units, the Squadron also had to adapt to working within the COVID-19 distancing and quarantine requirements. While adapting its work and training arrangements, the Squadron continued meeting its capability requirements.

No 2 Security Force Squadron's Military Working Dogs Section won the Lady Hannah and Bill Perrett perpetual shield for 2020. Introduced in 1972, the award is named after Lady Patricia Hannah, wife of former Chief of the Air Staff Sir Colin Hannah, and recognises the best-performing military working dogs section in Air Force.



No 2 Security Forces Squadron personnel during Exercise *Morotai 19*. Source: Department of Defence