

(2-19)

1. Submitted by: HQ AFSPA/SPSS, Kirtland AFB NM

2. Operation/event name: Sabotage to an A-7 Aircraft at Muniz ANG Base, PR, Mar 91

3. Keywords: Security/Sabotage

4. Title: Sabotage to an A-7 Aircraft at Muniz ANG Base, PR

5. Observation: Between 0310 and 0323 hours, 17 March 1991, a single A-7D aircraft was attacked by person or persons unknown, resulting in approximately \$100,000 damage to the aircraft. The aircraft was assigned to the 156th Tactical Fighter Group, Muniz ANG Base, at the International Airport, San Juan, Puerto Rico. The unit was equipped with twenty-one A-7D and one C-130B aircraft. It is HQ ACC gained and has a home generation mission. The attackers disembarked from a raft beached on a canal near the Muniz ANG base ready apron (this method of entry is also believed to be the method used during the 1981 attack). They cut a hole approximately 30 inches across in the taxiway gap fence (the weakest portion of the existing security system) and gained access to the ramp. At 0310 hours, the taxiway gap fence sensors alarmed and the alarm monitor in the tower shut off alarm. No assessment was made. (Closed circuit television system for the area did not cover the taxiway gap, nor was there a pan/tilt/zoom camera nearby which could have been used). The attackers crossed the ramp and stopped at an aircraft parked on spot 13, located near the taxiway gap. They poured Coleman lantern fuel on the tires and struts of the aircraft, fashioned a "Molotov Cocktail" device from a can of Coleman fuel and a rag, placed it near the aircraft, and ignited it. The attackers then exited the area, setting off the alarm at the taxiway gap again, and which was again ignored. Almost immediately thereafter, an explosion occurred and the aircraft parked on spot 13 was engulfed in flames. The SPs summoned the assistance of the airport police and fire departments. The tower operator did not report the fire and made his first log entry at 0336, some 13 minutes after the fire had begun. Three SPs on duty that night extinguished the fire using firefighting equipment located near the aircraft. No attempt was made to locate or pursue the suspects until after the arrival of the airport police and fire agencies. The subsequent search for suspects met with negative results. The unit was in THREATCON Alpha due to Operation Desert Storm. The five security police personnel assigned to mobile patrols were gathered at or near the break area to receive their evening meal which was being delivered by the SRT leader. The unit employs 63 security personnel for their base security protection program and a combination of hiring options is used to employ these personnel. The force consisted of 17 SPs mobilized for Operation Desert Storm (in place for duty), 18 AGR's (9 Title 32, state active duty), and 28 O&M (state civil service) security police personnel. Twelve SP personnel were on duty (8-hour duty day, 40-hour duty week) during the attack. Posting consisted of a flight chief, an SRT, two base patrols, a security controller, a tower operator, a flight line entry controller, a main gate guard, and three fixed posts external to the flight line area. Aircraft were enclosed with a 1,970 meter, dual chain-link fence perimeter. Sensors included: RACON microwave fence sensors and stationary cameras located at key entry points and between the fences, inertial guard and FPS-II commercial fence sensors on the inner fence and the taxiway gap, and a Vindicator annunciator was used in the guard tower with a redundant capability in the SRT vehicle and CSC.

6. Discussion: The NGB conducted a top-to-bottom review of the security practices at Muniz. A check of the sensor system found that it was fully operational, with the exception of the annunciator in the ART vehicle, which was functioning intermittently. The tower windows were somewhat fogged over, due to heat damage and "checking." The tower guard had not been issued binoculars. In addition, there was insufficient lighting to allow observation of a perpetrator from a distance at night. Although the unit's operational instructions required post rotation for the tower operator every four hours, it was common practice to post these individuals for the full eight hours. The tower operator was an O&M commonwealth civil service employee who had two years as a tower operator. Although he was nonmilitary, he was a former traditional guardsman in a non-SP career field; was known to abuse alcohol (no BAT was taken and the unit commander knew nothing of the past abuse); was recently divorced, and his wages were about 40 percent of the wages for the security controller on duty. Two AGR Security Police personnel, one civilian O&M guard, and two traditional guardsmen were relieved (fired). The unit's conversion to F-16s was delayed considerably.

7. (FOUO) Lessons Learned: The NGB looked long and hard at the system in place in Puerto Rico, and determined that the incident took place primarily as a result of the failure of personnel to perform their assigned duties. While replacement sensors are programmed for the base, there was in place at the time of the incident a working security system. The incident occurred during a period of heightened THREATCON as a result of the Gulf War. This should have placed the guard force in an even higher state of readiness and suspiciousness, yet it did not in this instance. It was determined that the in-place policies and equipment were appropriate.

8. Recommended Action: None

9. OPR Comments: None