



Fact Sheet

Wisconsin Air National Guard

Combat Readiness Training Center
100 Independence Drive, Volk Field ANGB
Camp Douglas, Wisconsin 54618-5001

Current as of 15 May 2007

READINESS SAFEGUARD Ability To Survive and Operate (ATSO) Training

Readiness Safeguard is Air National Guard directed and funded training that teaches Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Active Duty Air Force unit personnel survivability skills under realistic wartime conditions. The need to conduct realistic combat support training is a fundamental element of unit readiness for units tasked with worldwide deployments.

Mission

The mission of Readiness Safeguard ATSO Training is to provide Integrated Base Support and Flying Forces training under a realistic threat environment.

History

Salty Demo, a 1985 Air Force exercise conducted at Spangdahlem Air Base Germany, showed that even moderate forces attacking an air base could dramatically reduce its capability to operate successfully and generate sorties under either conventional or nuclear/ biological/ chemical (NBC) warfare.

It found that the "Air Base" could no longer be considered a safe haven from air and ground attacks due to technological advances in weaponry. Salty Demo further demonstrated that the "Air Base" is an essential element of the entire Aircraft Weapon System and its parts consist of the ground support personnel, equipment, and real estate. To be effective the entire system must be integrated and work together to achieve maximum survivability.

In 1987 the Air National Guard took the lead in the Air Force to develop an Air Base Operability Program under the Directorate of Engineering & Services.

The purpose of the program was to train units to deploy to a forward operating location and integrate their operation, maintenance, and support forces to prepare, defend, survive and recover from attacks as

they would in war. Since that time the Air Base Operability Program evolved into training directed towards the Ability To Survive and Operate (ATSO).

After extensive studies on equipment and facility requirements, Volk Field Air National Guard Base was chosen in October 1988 as the site to conduct this training under an Air National Guard exercise called "Sentry Endurance". The exercise was subsequently renamed "Readiness Safeguard". Volk Field was selected due to it being solely owned and operated by the Air National Guard, the on-hand landmass, and facilities that replicate a forward operating location.

The first exercise was conducted in April 1990 and, after the addition of a small fulltime Cadre in 1992, the exercises have continued at a rate of 8-10 per year. All exercises are conducted using a combination of fulltime Cadre and volunteers from all branches of the Total Air Force and take place at a variety of locations worldwide. From inception, eighty-four units and over 70,000 personnel have received Readiness Safeguard training.

The training has resulted in inspection scores of "Excellent" and "Satisfactory" for units attending the exercises, while comparable units scored "Marginal" and "Unsatisfactory" without the training. Due to the outstanding success of this unique program, Air Mobility Command (AMC) has attempted to duplicate various portions of the program at their Air Mobility Warfare Center.

Organization

The ATSO training is functionally assigned to the Exercise Plans Office (XP) of the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) and reports directly to the CRTC Commander.

The Exercise Plans office is responsible for planning, programming and execution of all survivability training and real world disaster responses.

Resources

A permanent cadre of five people plan, train, and execute the training. For each ATSO exercise, a Cadre of 80-100 senior ranking personnel is recruited from Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Active Duty Air Force units. These personnel augment the permanent cadre during exercises to assist in the training of the participating units. In-place war readiness equipment such as sand bags, concertina wire, tents, camouflage netting, runway repair equipment, and vehicles are available to units to further enhance their training. Hands-on training is provided prior to the actual exercise in classroom and field settings and stresses expedient combat skills. Realism is the key to the effectiveness of every exercise event which produces the most realistic training this side of actual war.

Future Plans

The Cadre has been involved since 1998 with the development and execution of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) exercises for both military and other nonmilitary government agencies. This type of training focuses on the integration of assets from many different levels of government to respond to and recover from WMD attacks occurring both overseas and in the United States.

Training events are continually revised, expanded, and updated based on new threats and intelligence. Specially designed, low cost facilities are constantly being altered to provide realistic contingency training. The Cadre has also Conducted "Joint Forces", Humanitarian relief, and "Air Expeditionary Force" type exercises when requested.