

3770 TECHNICAL TRAINING GROUP

MISSION

LINEAGE

3770 Technical Training Group

STATIONS

Sheppard AFB, TX, 30 Apr 1976

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

In 1979, Sheppard's computer training courses at the 3700th Technical Training Wing came under critical scrutiny. Sheppard had been, since the relocation of comptroller and communications courses, deeply involved in computer operator training. Its courses had evolved with the technology, and had been models of their kind. Unfortunately, both Keesler and Sheppard hosted mainframe computer training, and such redundancy did not go unnoticed in an era of budget cutting. In a drive towards greater efficiency, the Air Force decided to combine its computer operator training at Keesler.

The loss of the computer training courses was but a temporary setback. Technology had changed rapidly, and microcomputers began to proliferate in the Air Force. Each training center consequently began to rely, to a greater or lesser extent, on the capabilities of the new computers. Sheppard helped to lead the way, both in technical and medical training, in harnessing the new computer systems for training.

Technical training also concentrated on readiness issues in the 1980s. One of the more interesting and important programs for the Air Force was the Harvest Bare training conducted by the 3770th Technical Training Group. Harvest Bare trained civil engineers on the construction and maintenance of deployable airbases. With Harvest Bare, so-called "bare bases" around the world could be turned into viable air bases in a matter of hours.

By definition, a bare base consisted of a usable runway and taxiway parking area, equipped with a potable source of water. Each site was designed to support aircraft with landing/recovery surfaces and other mission support services, including an infrastructure of personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies. The requirement for highly flexible and mobile air bases developed simultaneously with the close air support doctrine formulated in World War II.

By the 1970s, bare base support had evolved into two equipment deployment packages: Harvest Eagle and Harvest Bare. The former consisted of soft-walled shelters and support equipment capable of being deployed for short periods. Harvest Bare, conversely, was a hardwalled structure capable of supporting a 4,500person wing for an extended period in a combat zone.

Designed to operate in temperatures ranging from -25 F to 125 F, these advanced bases were a far cry from the old tent cities used in World War II. Harvest Bare technology utilized aluminum honeycomb structured walls in expandable buildings which were custom-made to meet all air base requirements. They consisted of four subsystems: shelters or light modular expandable units to be used for living quarters, food services, maintenance, support and storage; utility equipment to provide power generation and distribution and water purification; airfield and remote area lighting vehicle and base maintenance equipment; and support subsystems for laundry and heating! air conditioning units. Even chapels could be housed in these prefabricated buildings.

In April 1983, representatives from the Air Force Engineering and Services Center, the 12th Air Force, and the 4449th Mobility Support Squadron, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, met with officials from the 3700 Technical Training Wing at Sheppard to identify equipment, manpower, and facilities required to support formal training. They identified a need for 17 Harvest Bare courses: 13 new resident courses to train civil engineering and services AFSCs; an existing course for refrigeration and cryogenic technicians taught in the 3700th Technical Training Wing; two contract courses for instructor qualification training; and a course taught by a mobile training team dealing with Harvest Bare equipment management. These courses were needed to support training for 1,223 technicians annually by the end of September 1985.

During the summer of 1986, training officials at Sheppard obtained approval of training plans for all of the Harvest Bare initial training courses. They received delivery of required Harvest Bare training equipment and completed the modification of training facilities needed to house Harvest Bare courses. They also began course development on five follow-on refresher training courses for the Harvest Bare cadre, to be implemented 18 months after the start of initial training courses.

The impact of these developments upon Sheppard AFB were substantial. Base officials had to provide housing to accommodate future increases in permanent party and student population. The 3750 CMS

fabricated 15 different types of trainers, comprising 24 individual trainers in all. In order to meet Harvest Bare training requirements, the 3750 CMS downgraded its production schedule for other courses. Of the six buildings identified to house classes or laboratories--249, 1060, 1926, 1927, 2012, and 2013--only 1927 required no further modification.

On 10 June 1986, the 3770 Technical Training Group conducted the first Harvest Bare class, instruction in mobile water treatment systems. Students used a reverse osmosis water purifier located at the old Officers' Club pool. During the next several months, the 3700 Technical Training Wing added additional Harvest Bare courses, such as the maintenance of diesel fueled boilers and power production units that supply the heat, hot water, and electricity for Harvest Bare sites. By the end of 1986, seven courses dealing with all the important elements of bare base site activation were on-line. With the exception of actual site development, still taught at Holloman, all Harvest Bare training was now conducted at Sheppard. The total cost for new equipment, training devices, and facility modifications required for Harvest Bare instruction at Sheppard was \$4.5 million.

The value of Harvest Bare training was not fully realized until 1990. Operation Desert Shield/ Storm relied utterly on the Air Force's ability to rapidly mobilize to Southwest Asia with whatever equipment it needed to set up an active air base. In but a few weeks, the Arabian Peninsula was teeming with Air Force facilities.

Community Relations

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Sustaining the Wings, A Fifty-Year History of Sheppard Air Force Base (1941-1991). Dwight W. Tuttle. Midwestern State University Press. Wichita Falls, TX. 1991.