

Watching, Waiting Men at Core Of Complex Air Defense Setup

BY SAUL PETT

(P) Newsfeature Writer
NEW YORK (P)—The air defense of the United States is composed of planes and plans, of radar antennas and ack-ack guns, of hot telephone lines and secret control centers. But mostly the air defense of the United States is composed of men.

Ordinary, non-electronic men with non-electronic nerves. For them, the possibility of an enemy attack in this seventh year of the atomic age has never become academic. They live with it every day.

Mostly, they watch and wait, at a variety of places many miles apart but each dependent on the other.

In Radar Rooms

They watch and wait in the eerie twilight of remote radar rooms; in the uneasy incongruity of anti-aircraft guns set up near American homes; in the thick boredom of pilot ready rooms; in an off command decision at huge plotting boards in strange, windowless buildings.

They watch 24 hours a day, Sundays and holidays included, in sunshine or snow, under fair skies or fog.

It's not all waiting. Several times a day, a little pin head of light pops up on a radar screen that can't immediately be identified.

Radar controllers jump for scramble phones, pilots break out of ready rooms, jet fighters streak off runways and race for the Canadian border, or the Pacific or Atlantic ocean, or inland points.

For every one of the 10 minutes or 20 minutes it takes from scramble to identify the unknown planes—the men involved have no way of being certain that this is not just another practice alert or a commercial plane off course or an enemy bomber.

No Guarantee of Future

True, no such bomber has been encountered yet in American skies. But the past is no guarantee of the future. The peaceful quiet of Saturday, Dec. 6, 1941, was no assurance of a calm Sunday at Pearl Harbor.

Added to the strain of waiting is the tantalizing fact that complete and perfect air defense is an economic impossibility, according to experts like Brig. Gen. George F. Smith, vice commander of the Eastern Air Defense Force.

Until 1949, air defense was relatively non-existent. Then, President Truman announced Russia had exploded an atom bomb.

Suddenly everyone was interested in air defense. It has been growing rapidly since. Today it is a network of radar, ground observer corps posts and intercept planes, bound by a well organized military and commercial communications system.

Defense Forces
The country is divided into three air defense forces: Eastern, with headquarters at Stewart Air Force Base, Newburgh, N. Y.; Central at Kansas City, Mo.; and Western, at Hamilton Air Force Base, north of San Francisco, Cal.

The operation of the three commands are substantially the same. They rely on the same component parts. A close look at the Eastern Air Defense Force will supply a good insight into the national picture.

Charged with the protection of 18 states, 88 million people and 50 per cent of the nation's industrial wealth above ground, the EADF headquarters might also request Navy fighters to assist its own planes.

That's the picture looking from the top down. Now let's look at

it from the bottom up.

Nowhere is the drama of waiting more evident than at the individual, lonely radar station. Unless intelligence can supply advance warning of an enemy attack, this little base will be the first line of defense. Its radar has a range of approximately 200 miles, above 20,000 feet.

Heavily Guarded Base

Out on Long Island near Montauk there is such a station. It's called an air defense direction center. This is a heavily guarded base, well hidden from the road.

The base is manned by more than 200 men and could be self-sufficient in an emergency. It has its own fuel and power and a months supply of food. Its communication room is located in a big underground bunker.

At one end, is a two-tier plotting board, where flights are tracked in illuminated grease pencil. Facing the board, like desks in a classroom, are rows of radar scopes. Each gives off a purple-blue glow, lighting up the face of the "scope dope," the airman assigned to watch it.

One Minute Deadline

Every "blip" on the board has to be reported. An identification man then has one minute to leaf through CAA flight plans and military flight logs.

If he can't find a flight plan showing that a particular plane should be at that point, he calls the controller, who has to decide whether to scramble—send planes up aloft to identify the unknown visually.

A radar center like Montauk funnels information to its air division which is authorized to call a yellow alert enemy planes presumably on their way, or a red alert, which means an enemy has reached the continental limits or is in close proximity to the target.

On spotting a "bogey," the men at the radar station have several fast calls to make. The first is to an interceptor base.

Out on Cape Cod, Mass., at a field etched out of scrub brush and sand, the scramble phones ring frequently. This is Otis Air Force Base, home of the 4707th Defense Wing.

Ready to Fly
Here, on the flight line, behind armed sentries and high wire fences, F-94 all-weather intercepter jets are always ready to go. They stand no more than 50 feet away from the pilot ready rooms. The planes are fully fueled, fully loaded with live ammunition for their 50-caliber guns.

But air defense, which is planned as defense in depth, is more than radar and pilots.

Army anti-aircraft artillery also must be alerted and the word has to be relayed to the next higher Air Force echelon.

Actually, anti-aircraft is the last line of defense. These are the boys who would have the last shot at an enemy before the bombs fell.

Now, let's follow the third call made from a radar station. This rings a phone at an air defense

control center, which is divisional headquarters.

Decides Strategy

Here the primary mission is directing the destruction of an enemy by following the big picture, by deciding which attack is a feint and which is crucial. This is the headquarters which might say, shift interceptor strength away from Portland, Me., to New York City, in an air battle.

The big picture is maintained on a three-tier plotting board about 19 feet high and 30 feet wide. It requires nine or ten men when in full operation.

Around the plotting board stretches a long balcony for tactical officers, eyes glued to the board, and other men hugging phones. Each has a specific job.

In the event of imminent attack, one man would alert the civilian ground observer corps, now maintained on a volunteer, standby basis. Ground spotters are required to take up where radar fails, and radar impulses can't go through mountains.

The man on the balcony would alert ground observer corps filter centers, which, in turn, would route civilians out of their beds or offices and send them to the centers or observation posts atop hills, banks, schools, and countless other buildings. Some observer posts are located on high points in cemeteries, at monasteries and on the grandstand roofs of race tracks.

Warning Systems
Other men on the balcony would also be very busy. They'd have to alert civilian and military air raid warning systems, Civil Defense headquarters, the Civil Aeronautics Administration and the Federal Communications Commission.

The CAA would have to get all civilian planes out of the air. The FCC would have to shut off radio stations whose signal could be a homing device for enemy bombers. Some stations would be allowed to come back on the air for defense purposes all with the same frequency.

All these things would happen in the event of an air attack on the United States. Beyond that, neither man nor the science of electronics has any other weapon of defense. Except that men can pray — if there's time.

Angel Falls in Venezuela is 15 times higher than Niagara Falls.

Is your lucky number

Watch this newspaper for news about the biggest food sale ever

Waterproof Basement Walls Now

Also in Colors for Stucco, Blocks, Asbestos Shingles. Apply It Yourself, or Call

Surface Protection 3-1229 Evenings

Navy Reports Activities of Valley Men

The Navy this week announced the activities of three men from Salem and one from Mt. Angel. Serving aboard the heavy cruiser Los Angeles is David S. Kauffman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel B. Kauffmann of Salem Route 3. Roray J. Sandau is one of 51 men serving aboard the submarine tender Sperry who have been ad-

vanced in rate. His was to metal-smith second class.

A recent graduate of the aviation machinist's mate school at Memphis, Tenn., was Richard R. Wright, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy T. Wright of 2040 S. Commercial St.

Lt. Walter A. Poepping of Mt. Angel Route 1 is taking the communication's officer "short course" at the U. S. Naval School at Monterey, Calif. He is a 1942 graduate of Mt. Angel College.

Much of the trade of the eastern Mediterranean once passed through the Aegean island of Dhalos.

Pfc Brock Attends Radio Course in Japan

WITH U.S. FORCES IN JAPAN
—Pfc. Joseph A. Brock, whose parents live on Woodburn Route 2, Box 234, recently arrived at the Eta Jima Specialist School in Japan to attend a radio operators' course.

Upon completion of the course, he will be assigned to a unit in Japan or Korea as a high-speed radio operator. In civilian life he attended the University of Portland and Linfield College.

The Oregon Statesman, Salem, Ore., Sunday, May 18, 1952—9

Everything for Your Window ELMER THE BLIND MAN

Venetian Blinds, Drapes and Shades

*Traverse Rods *Bamboo Drapes and Shades *Columbia-Matic Screens *Cloth and Aluminum Awnings *Fireplace Screens and Accessories *Chapman Home Freezers *Verti-Vertical Blinds *Folding Doors *Transparent Plastic Store Shades.

We Wash, Paint, Slat and Retape Venetian Blinds
Free Estimates 10% Down Pay Monthly
3870 Center St. (formerly West Salem)
Phone 3-7328



ALWAYS BE CAREFUL DRIVING



White sidewalls optional at extra cost.

It gives this old familiar sign new meaning

WOULD you be interested in getting one gallon free with each tankful of gasoline you buy?

Then we can tell you this: It will certainly be worth your while to read this brief story of Buick's new Airpower carburetor.

Truth is—a skillful driver can just about double the bonus we mention, if he makes the most of what this year's ROADMASTER has to offer.

The reason you can get such a bonus traces to a pair of simple facts:

- (1) It's a mixture of gasoline and air that gives you power.
- (2) Buick engineers have come up with a four-barrel automatic carburetor that lets you use more gallons of air per gallon of fuel.

Most of the time, only two of these barrels are needed—and they feed such a thrifty mixture that you use less gasoline at 40 mph than you'd formerly use at 30.

But—when you want a quick burst of eager power—you can double the air supply as well as the gasoline feed—and come up with the highest horsepower that Buick's Fireball 8 Engine ever delivered.

Of course, any man who's buying a car as fine as a ROADMASTER wants a lot more than extra miles from a tankful of gas.

He wants the distinction of extra room, extra comfort, richer fabrics and all the other refinements that make a car truly fine.

He wants to ride with solid security, confident poise and lordly silence.

And, while he may not admit it, he yearns for a car that's full of fun.

All this, we promise you, and more will be yours when you take the responsive wheel of a ROADMASTER.

How about doing that—soon?

Equipment, accessories, trim and models are subject to change without notice.

Custom Built
ROADMASTER
by BUICK

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

Otto J. Wilson Company

388 North Commercial

Phone 2-3621

Roberts Bros.

177 North Liberty

Open Friday
Nites Til
9 P.M.



Suits of Du Pont Hukabuk . . . a new slubbed rayon plus NYLON! . . . With a matching hat at no extra cost!

A suiting fabric inspired by the fabulous Italian silk . . . made by Du Pont master men and fashioned into clever suits by Nan Buntly for thrifty-minded women, at only 17.95. Hukabuk is unique . . . for its slubbed texture is fabric new for '52. It's cool, feather-light, crease-resistant . . . and these are suits you'll live in this summer . . . vacationing, traveling, working. They come in Skipper Blue, Pink, Aqua, Beige, Luggage, White. Left Women's-Misses, 14½-22½ . . . Center Misses 12-20 . . . Right Juniors 9-15.

Fashions, second floor

Use our Will Call or Charge . . . to purchase your Nan Buntly Hukabuk suit! Inquire about them today.

\$17⁹⁵

Nan Buntly

We Give and Redeem S&H Green Stamps