



AIRBASE OPENING FORCES

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The Air Force has numerous capabilities and forces used to open air bases. The specific mix of forces for opening an airbase or a group of airbases is dependent upon the context of the particular situation.

- ✦ **Contingency Response Forces (CRF)** are the Air Force's standing initial airbase opening response force. These units are designed as organic, rapid response, initial airbase opening units. CRFs may provide support after initial airbase opening in support of partner nation engagement, among other activities.
- ✦ **Joint Task Force-Port Opening (JTF-PO)** facilitates joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration and theater distribution by providing an effective interface at the aerial port of debarkation and distribution node. The JTF-PO is a special force for airfield opening designed to combine specific Air Force and Army capabilities to provide the commander of US Transportation Command with a ready-to-deploy, jointly trained force for opening ports and establishing the initial distribution network.
- ✦ **Combat Communication Units** provide scalable "extend the net" communications support for military operations across the competition continuum, and provide communication capability for command and control reachback at and above the tactical level for a variety of Air Force and joint missions. Units can support anywhere from one to 3,000 users and deploy within 72 hours of notification. Services may include unclassified or classified networks (confidential/secret/allied/coalition), non-secure or secure voice networks, expeditionary mass notification systems, ground-to-air radio support, and engineering and site survey teams.
- ✦ **Air Force Special Operations Command Special Tactics Teams** are comprised of combat control, special operations weather teams, pararescue, and tactical air control party personnel. These teams may augment Army, Marine, and special operations forces during airfield seizures and provide airfield survey and assessment, air traffic control, navigational aids, tactical airfield lighting, weather observation and forecasting, battlefield trauma care, and marshaling services.

- ✧ **820th Base Defense Group** provides a fully integrated [force protection](#) (FP) assessment team to support expeditionary airfield opening. The unit is capable of airborne, air mobile, and airland insertion operations for 14-30 days and has the organic capability to provide airfield security and initial FP assessment of the airfield. The unit can link with initial entry or base seizure forces and provide a smooth transition to airfield opening forces.

- ✧ **[Prime Base Emergency Engineer Forces \(BEEF\) Teams](#)**. Prime BEEF teams provide the full range of engineering expertise and emergency services needed to establish, sustain, recover, and close bases for employing Air Force weapons systems or supporting joint, interagency, or multinational operations. Capabilities include light horizontal and vertical construction; managing and operating power, environmental control, water, and waste systems; rehabilitating critical infrastructure; the erection of specialized structures; pest management; environmental management; base master planning, design, and contract support; hazardous materials response; structural and aircraft firefighting; rendering safe and removal of unexploded ordnance; defeat of improvised explosive devices, weapons of mass destruction, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats; and base recovery after attack to include airfield damage repair and repairs to facilities or infrastructure systems.

- ✧ **[Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers \(RED HORSE\) Units](#)**. RED HORSE units are Air Force units wartime-structured to provide a heavy engineer capability that are mobile, rapidly deployable, and largely self-sufficient for limited periods. They provide engineer and force support capabilities that may be tasked to facilitate airbase opening immediately following seizure operations. Capabilities include dedicated flexible airfield and base heavy construction and repair capability, along with special engineering capabilities to include water well drilling, base denial, batch plant and quarry operations, automated building machine and ultimate building machine facility construction, and insertion engineer operations.

- ✧ **Civil Engineer Maintenance Inspection and Repair Teams** provide depot-level maintenance of major electrical power generation and distribution systems as well as mobile and fixed aircraft arresting systems at contingency locations (for more information, see Joint Publication 4-04, [Contingency Basing](#)), en route bases, or critical stateside bases. Team capabilities include routine calibration, emergency maintenance and repair, and major overhaul and repair of both real property and non-real property installed equipment. This team also provides technical assistance in conducting electrical system infrared surveys, troubleshooting electrical and mechanical system faults, and diagnosing problems and determining solutions.

- ✧ **Airfield Assessment Teams** perform site surveys to determine airfield suitability, clear debris, make expedient airfield damage repairs, and provide material requirements and initial assessment of required follow-on forces. Direct team support includes explosive ordnance reconnaissance, minimum airfield operating

surface selection, airfield lighting and marking, arresting system installation, and utility system repairs required to sustain or recover airfield operation capabilities.

- ✦ **Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams** may augment other airbase opening forces such as special tactics teams, CRF, and airfield assessment teams, when intelligence or threat analysis expects unexploded explosive ordnance contamination or if improvised explosive devices are suspected. Direct support includes the destruction of stockpiled and abandoned enemy ordnance, route clearance, post-attack investigation, and counter-improvised explosive device operations.

Open the Airbase forces complete site assessments and set up minimum cantonment functions such as FP, communications, sleeping, feeding, sanitation, and internal medical capability such as public health and advanced life support. These forces provide site plans and airfield survey information for development of the airfield suitability and restrictions report.
