

DE-393-68  
15 April 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, AFRDRP  
THROUGH : Chief, Security Staff, OSA  
SUBJECT : Proposed Emergency Plan for Tagboard Operations

1. The following is a discussion of a proposed cover story (Attachment #1) to accommodate a possible mishap involving Tagboard operations which are increasing in number and complexity. So long as Tagboard operations continue to be conducted from Area 51, the primary cover requirement is to conceal the true purpose of the D-21 and the location and involvement of Area 51 with Tagboard operations in the event of an emergency landing or an inadvertent launch of the Tagboard Article resulting in some disaster. If and when Tagboard is transferred to Beale AFB, the cover story will require revision.

2. The aircraft filing procedures for Tagboard operations are the same as for other Area 51 operational aircraft (Boxer and Dutch). Under this arrangement, the aircraft claims to originate from Edwards Air Force Base and file for the S.O.A. Flight plans are also closed out using Edwards AFB from the S.O.A. This procedure is a proven one and should continue. It is considered necessary, however, to clear and brief a few key personnel at Edwards AFB such as the Operations Officer, Base Commander and PIO to a limited extent so that they will respond to any inquiries in the proper fashion. A responsible officer should be designated at Edwards AFB to serve as the coordinator for Tagboard matters. It is suggested that this officer be identical with the individual who coordinates similar cover arrangements on behalf of Project Oxcart.

3. Inasmuch as the mounted D-21 resembles an air to ground missile, it is suggested that advantage be taken of this resemblance. Where some explanation is necessary and in response to a direct inquiry, it is recommended that the story to be related by all concerned be as follows:

"This is an RED AGM undergoing testing under flight conditions at Edwards AFB. It is not armed and therefore is not 'hazardous'."

DE-393-68  
Page Two

The fact that the alleged AGM is not armed with a nuclear warhead should be stressed. This is done by describing it as "not hazardous". No comments beyond the above should be made concerning the D-21 and additional inquiries should be referred to SAFOI.

4. There are two situations which could arise; an emergency landing with the D-21 still mounted or an inadvertent launch of the D-21. The cover story referred to in paragraph 3 above should suffice for either. In the latter instance, it would be expected that the D-21 and payload would be virtually destroyed and unidentifiable. In the event an emergency landing is required with the D-21 mounted, the crew will make every effort to land at a SAC base which can accommodate a B-52. The crew will follow the emergency procedures as set forth in paragraph 7, AFR 55-14. Under this procedure, the typical call to the SAC control tower would be as follows:

"Explosive cargo, under right and/or left wings. Isolated taxiing and parking is requested. If explosives become enveloped in flames, detonation may be expected immediately if casing is damaged. (Appropriate number) personnel, all forward. (Appropriate number) gallons fuel remaining. (Nature of Emergency), special precautions, all personnel required to participate in firefighting and rescue operations must wear protective clothing and approved breathing apparatus due to toxic effect of burning agent. Apply emergency procedures accordingly."

5. The Base Commander of the SAC base will be requested by the Aircraft Commander to isolate the aircraft and provide Air Police guards to the extent possible. Shrouds are carried aboard the B-52 so that the D-21's can be concealed from the curious once on the ground. The cover story in paragraph 3 above will be provided to the Base Commander with a further request that no visitors be permitted and an admonition that no further information should be released since the item is highly classified.

DE-393-68  
Page Three

6. Normally, when an emergency is declared, FAA is the first to become aware of the situation. The FAA Controller then notifies the point of origin (Edwards AFB in this instance). EAFB in all likelihood might also be alerted by the base on which the B-52 intends to make an emergency landing so it is important that cleared personnel at EAFB are briefed on the existence of these flights.

7. During all flights, a Tagboard representative will be on duty in the Control Room at Area 51. It is proposed that this officer serve as the focal point for alerting interested parties in the event of a mishap with a Tagboard operation so that the responsibilities delineated in Attachment #1 can be exercised.



RAS:jmp

PROPOSED COVER PLAN FOR TAGBOARD OPERATIONS

1. B-52 Crash Involving Severe Damage and Death

- A. If a crash occurs involving the Tagboard B-52 and a press release is required, it is proposed that Edwards AFB serve as spokesman for the Air Force and that standard procedures be used in the search and rescue operations, notification of next of kin, etc. If it is determined that the D-21 has been destroyed and is unrecognizable, no mention should be made of special operations or classified mission. The press release should be confined to the following concerning its mission:

"A B-52 aircraft operating out of Edwards AFB has crashed. The aircraft was on a routine flight for the purpose of checking out on-board equipment."

2. Safe Emergency Landing with D-21 Mounted

- A. The story to be provided to officials at a base where a safe emergency landing takes place should be confined to the following:

"This B-52 aircraft is operating out of Edwards AFB and is involved in the Research and Development of a new Air to Ground Missile (AGM). This

AGM is unarmed and not 'hazardous'. The item and other details concerning the mission of the B-52 are classified."

- B. The Base Commander should be requested to:
1. provide isolated parking for the aircraft
  2. provide air police protection to prevent unauthorized personnel from approaching the aircraft
  3. release only that information set forth in paragraph 2A above to other base personnel who might require some explanation and instruct such personnel to refrain from further dissemination of the information.

3. Emergency Landing Involving Severe Damage and Possible Deaths of Personnel

- A. If the crew is unable to inform the Base Commander of the cover story or where there is doubt that the story has been communicated to the Base Commander, the Tagboard officer on duty at the Area 51 Control Center will immediately telephonically relay the text of the story set forth in paragraph 2A above to the Base Commander at the emergency landing site and request that the Base Commander make no further statement until such time as a Project representative arrives to take charge of the situation.

B. The Base Commander should be provided with the telephone number of the Area 51 Control Center  so that he has an immediate point of contact with Project officials until such time as a Project representative can get to the scene.

4. Launch of a D-21

Should the launch of a D-21 bring about some need for a press release due to a disaster or for some other reason, Edwards AFB should serve as the spokesman and relate the following:

"An unarmed, 'non-hazardous' Air to Ground Missile carried aboard a B-52 operating from Edwards AFB broke loose from its B-52 pylon and crashed. The AGM was undergoing a routine in-flight checkout."

5. It is recommended that the following responsibilities be established as indicated:

A. Area 51

1. The Tagboard Officer on duty at the Control Center will initially serve as the focal point in the event of an emergency situation. He will immediately notify the following concerning the details of any mishap:

- (a) Program Director
  - (b) Commander, 4200 Support Squadron
  - (c) West Coast Security Officer
  - (d) Tagboard Coordinator at Edwards AFB
  - (e) West Coast Representative of Tagboard  
Program Office
  - (f) Area 51 Security
2. Area 51 will provide such support and assistance to the recovery team as might be prudent within the bounds of good security and cover.

B. Edwards AFB (Tagboard Coordinator)

- 1. Arrange for release of the appropriate cover story as delineated above based on the circumstances surrounding the emergency.
- 2. Brief key Tagboard approved personnel at Edwards AFB on the situation and the cover story which they are to use.
- 3. Arrange for backstopping personnel involved in recovery operations.

C. Commander, 4200 Support Squadron

- 1. Assume responsibility for all aspects of the recovery operation
- 2. Initiate action to notify next of kin if appropriate. Wives will be provided the same story as

set forth in paragraph 2A and provided with a point of contact at 4200 Support Squadron Headquarters for further contact. They should be specifically informed not to discuss any matters concerning the 4200 Support Squadron with the press or other unauthorized persons.

3. Activate recovery operations. Personnel who will be involved in the recovery operations will be briefed as to the cover story released and will be instructed to indicate in response to specific inquiries that they are temporarily based at Edwards AFB so as to be consistent with the cover story. They will be specifically admonished not to discuss the Tagboard mission or details of the emergency situation with anyone.

D. West Coast Security Office

1. Provide a Security Officer(s) to accompany the 4200 Support Squadron recovery team and serve as security advisor to the Commander.
2. Coordinate between 4200 Support Squadron, the West Coast Program Representative, Headquarters, Area 51 and Edwards AFB on release of information and use of support personnel in recovery operations.



**E. Program Director/Project Headquarters**

1. Serve as coordinator and focal point for all matters not of immediate concern to field elements as delineated above.
2. Establish liaison with appropriate Headquarters level agencies to obtain support and restrict the release of information pertaining to the mishap to an absolute minimum.