U.S. ARMY AIR DEFENSE IN EUROPE
(1948-1970)

GROUP A: DOWNGRADED AT 12-YEAR INTERVALS
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED

HQ, U.S. ARMY, EUROPE AND SEVENTH ARMY
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FOREWORD (U)

The United States Army has had very little combat experience in air defense since the end of World War II, and none at all within the European theater. Army antiaircraft units were seldom employed in their intended role during the Korean War, because enemy aircraft operated primarily over North Korean territory to intercept United Nations aircraft. Thus, U.S. Army air defense was more often used in a combat-support role to augment the firepower of infantry or armor. In the South East Asia conflict, U.S. Army units stationed in Vietnam had no opportunity of testing their air defense concepts against modern Soviet-built high performance aircraft.

The lack of operational experience to test the validity of post-war air defense doctrine made it necessary to develop the concepts of the U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR) on the basis of assumptions regarding potential targets, enemy aircraft capabilities, and the effectiveness of friendly defensive weapon systems. The projected wartime effectiveness of the U.S. air defense can only be estimated from the weapon capabilities demonstrated in peacetime test and training settings.

This study attempts to describe the decisions taken and to analyze the reasoning behind them in the hope that it will thus contribute to the further development of air defense doctrine. The author, Mr. Bruce H. Siemon, was assisted by the staff of the Military History Office. Research was performed in the USAREUR historical files, and gaps in the available records were filled by interviews with staff officers at this headquarters.

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