

442 CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

442 Installations Squadron constituted, 8 Sep 1950
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Oct 1950
Ordered to Active Service, 10 Mar 1951
Inactivated, 12 Mar 1951
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952
Redesignated 442 Civil Engineering Squadron, 1 Jul 1960
Ordered to Active Service, 1 Oct 1961
Relieved from Active Duty, 27 Aug 1962
Discontinued and inactivated, 17 Jan 1963
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Oct 1984
Redesignated 442 Civil Engineer Squadron, 1 Mar 1994

STATIONS

NAS Olathe, KS, 1 Oct 1950-12 Mar 1951
NAS Olathe, KS, 15 Jun 1952
Grandview (later, Richards-Gebaur) AFB, MO, 3 Apr 1955-17 Jan 1963
Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO, 1 Oct 1984
Whiteman AFB, MO, 1 Apr 1994

ASSIGNMENTS

442 Air Base Group, 1 Oct 1950-12 Mar 1951
442 Air Base Group, 15 Jun 1952-17 Jan 1963
442 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1984
442 Combat Support (later, 442 Support, 442 Mission Support) Group, 1 Dec 1986

COMMANDERS

Maj Joseph Herold
Maj Mark Davison

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jun 1987-31 Jul 1988

1 Nov 1989-31 Oct 1991

1 Oct 1997-30 Sep 1999

1 Mar 2003-28 Feb 2005

1 Mar 2005-28 Feb 2007

EMBLEM



442 CES morale patch

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

2002-Despite weather conditions which made the Cobra site on the east side of the base unusable, 442nd Support Group members practiced war fighting skills during their annual bivouac in October. 442nd Civil Engineer Squadron electricians had already rewired and installed new appliances in the Mobile Kitchen Trailer and 442nd Services personnel used the opportunity to break it in by cooking meals for the Group. Among other activities, Group members erected a temper tent and processed through the Contamination Control Support System in full ground crew ensemble.



Master Sgt. Roger Proffitt, 442nd CES Readiness Flight, gives decontamination pointers to Tech. Sgt. Steven Howard, 442nd CES. Oct 2002

2006-Out of sight, out of mind. That's how some of the firefighters of the 442nd Civil Engineer Squadron describe their 24-man team at Whiteman Air Force Base. But 15 of their members were anything but out of sight or out of mind during their 120-day tour of duty from September 2006 to January at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Citizen Airmen left a lasting impression at Kirkuk and, in turn, their efforts and experiences left a lasting impression on them, as they took care of their primary duties and helped other civil engineer units, medical personnel, wounded troops and civilians. The benefactors go on and on.

"The commanders there loved us," said Staff Sergeant Mike Booker, fire protection journeyman. Bringing a wealth of civilian and military experience to their Operation Iraqi Freedom mission, the Citizen Airmen were more than willing to help where needed. "Everything in a contingency environment is the mission," said Senior Master Sgt. Ralph Loar, fire protection assistant chief. "On a rest cycle, you may be stringing concertina wire, helping the rest of the civil engineer squadron, helping a mechanic repair a truck. It's different from peacetime. But in Iraq, we're trying to turn stuff over to the Iraqis and the Iraqi Air Force. We don't want to be there for the next 15 years."

Fortunately, the Airmen didn't have to tackle much actual firefighting, but Sergeant Loar said fast-moving grass fires, fueled by high winds, posed a constant and significant threat to the base.

“We had one fire in a weapons storage area that was caused by someone shooting at us during daylight hours. While most everything is protected, there are still expeditionary assets. That fire, for example, could have burned through a communications cable that controls a commander’s radar. You have to limit the risks,” he said.

Of all the jobs the Airmen helped with, the one that affected them the most was helping medical troops with their work. “We did a lot of medical dust-offs where we’d help unload wounded patients and get them into the hospital,” said Master Sgt. John Esser, fire protection crew chief. “Some of the helicopters had a hard time landing. I saw one almost veer off. There were 40-, 50-, 60- mile an hour winds hitting it.

“Many of our EMTs (emergency medical technicians) and paramedics would assist in mass casualty events. We’d have 20 or 30 patients at a time coming in. We even had guys helping in surgery suites, maybe holding down a leg or an arm. It was pretty eye opening.” “It was basically controlled chaos,” said Staff Sgt. Angela Doughty, a fire protection craftsman. “They treated more than our guys. There were Iraqi civilians, EPWs (enemy prisoners of war), Iraqi soldiers, kids, adult, whoever got wounded. The medical group was awesome.”

“They provided for our fire department, helping to spin up our EMTs, so we could help them,” Sergeant Esser said. “One EOD (explosive ordnance device) guy got shot in his butt and it came out his stomach,” Sergeant Esser said. “That was his second purple heart in theater. Seeing those things gives you more emphasis on training so we can be more efficient and hopefully do more for the wounded the next time we see them.

“That was quite a deal as far as our personnel working with the medical folks,” said Sergeant Esser, a state trooper with the Nebraska State Patrol. “It was chaotic as far as people running around, civilians running around, Army troops, interpreters, medical folks and my fire department guys. One guy they brought in had been wounded in an explosion, but his bodyguard took the brunt of it. I couldn’t tell you to this day if he lived.”

The Airmen said they saw major and minor injuries being treated. Some people lived, but some, unfortunately, did not. “You’re happy you get them stable so they can fly out,” Sergeant Doughty said. “But I remember watching them carry one casket out. I felt a tear running down my cheek and I wiped it away. I felt so bad that I dropped my salute to wipe the tear away.”

Even though the Airmen were working and living on a military installation, they said they had to practice the virtue of prudence 24-7. “You have to go off your gut feelings,” Sergeant Booker said. “If it doesn’t feel right, it’s probably not right.” “You have to get rid of your prejudice,” said Staff Sgt. Josh England, a fire protection journeyman. “Not everyone’s with the insurgency and wants to blow you up. But you never know who’s going to do what. “You’d see kids coming toward you taking their backpacks off (to show they weren’t laden with explosives) hoping we’d throw them candy or a bottle of water,” he said. “Maybe some cans of Spam. It’s sad to see that. Most of that stuff we’d hand to the chaplain and they’d distribute it.

“There’s a lot of shepherding out there and we’d see them get close to the fence,” Sergeant England said. “Then we’d be taking fire and we’d find out later that it was from the same guy who was shepherding.” The Airmen’s efforts pleased but didn’t surprise Chief Master Sgt. Bob McChan, chief of resource fire protection. “We have people who are firefighters in Columbia, Kansas City, Lees Summit,” he said. “There are people who are students, factory workers, workers at Wal-Mart and K-Mart, the whole gambit. It doesn’t make a difference, though, because when we’re here, we all do the same training.

“We have people who take this profession seriously, who know what needs to be done and are ready to do their job,” Chief McChan said. “We have to do the same training the active duty does and they have 365 days a year to do theirs. If you add up the hours, with all the ancillary training, there aren’t enough hours in the day. But we have to get it done.” The Citizen Airmen’s time at Kirkuk gave them much to think about regarding themselves, each other and their families.

“It helped our department,” Sergeant Booker said. “We got to do our job. You knew he’s going to help me and I’m going to them him.” “You find out what you’re capable of and how well we meshed as a team,” Sergeant England said. “I’d only been gone for four months, but when I got home and looked at my family and friends, I realized how much I missed out on,” Sergeant Doughty said. “I’m trying to be more positive and appreciative of what I have here.”

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.