

# 557<sup>th</sup> EXPEDITIONARY RED HORSE SQUADRON



## **MISSION**

### **LINEAGE**

557<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair) constituted and activated, 5 Feb 1968  
Organized, 10 Feb 1968  
Redesignated 557<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron, Heavy Repair, 15 Oct 1969  
Inactivated, 1 Jun 1972

### **STATIONS**

Eglin AF Auxiliary Airfield #2, Fla., 10 Feb 1968  
Osan AB, Korea, 30 Aug 1968  
Eglin AF Auxiliary Field #2, 10 Dec 1969-1 Jun 1972

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Tactical Air Command, 5 Feb 1968  
Fifth Air Force, 30 Aug 1968  
Ninth Air Force, 10 Dec 1969-1 Jun 1972

### **COMMANDERS**

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

None

## **Campaign Streamers**

None

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

## **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

[10] Sep 1968-15 Dec 1969; 1 Jul 1970-1 Jun 1972

## **EMBLEM**

On a disc per bend sinister Or and as the flag of the United States in dexter, a horse rampant and couped Gules, hooved Azure, eyed of the first, charged with a banner of the like detailed and bridled with reins as thunderbolts fesswise all Sable, in sinister from a pole sinister wise Argent, bordered of the third, a flag with a field of the last charged with four full and one partial mullet all of the fifth above alternating stripes curling to dexter of the like and of the second; all within a narrow border White. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow White border and inscribed "557TH EXPEDITIONARY RED HORSE SQ" in White letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The horse is symbolic of all squadrons for whose mission the acronym stands. He is depicted in raised, rampant position, representing a quick-acting, aggressive and powerful force whenever and wherever needed. The horse is shown with the American flag curled around its body. (Approved, 25 Apr 1968)

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 557th activated on 5 February 1968, organized on 10 February 1968, and deployed to Osan AB, Korea, in April 1968 to assist in the buildup resulting from seizure of the USS Pueblo. The unit had a permanent change of station to Osan AB effective 30 August 1968. The 557th was based at Osan, but had active detachments at Kwang-ju, Taegu, Kunsan, Suwon, and Kimpo.

During its 18-month stay in Korea, it was involved in constructing aircraft shelters, modular facilities, revetments, and other mission-essential facilities to support the additional U.S. Air Force flying units in country. The 557th left Korea in 1969 and was stationed at Eglin AFB, FL, until its inactivation on 1 June 1972. Nearly 33 years later, on 22 April 2005, the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron was activated in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Transient Village: Airmen of the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron are finishing construction of "All American Square" at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. It is a facility designed to

temporarily house the US military personnel pouring into the base as they redeploy out of Iraq during the US troop withdrawal from the Mideast nation by the end of 2011. Balad is serving as a major hub for removing the troops and their gear. "All American Square will give them a place to stay as they come and go and it is co-located with the passenger terminal, so this is going to be a great benefit," said Capt. Ben Knost, 557th ERHS site officer in charge. Construction began in January and is scheduled to conclude in mid-May. 2010

Throughout 2008, Air Force civil engineers continued to provide exceptional support to combatant commanders around the globe. From Iraq to Afghanistan, from Romania to Peru, they were involved in operations, deployments, and contingencies in support of American, allied, and coalition forces. Unfortunately, 2008 was also a deadly year as civil engineers lost two members to improvised explosive devices.

The tempo of operations continued at a high pace for Air Force civil engineers in FY08 as they filled the various requirements by Combatant Commands. CENTCOM's Joint Sourcing Solution (formerly "in lieu of") taskings remained a large percentage of the Air Force's total contingency requirements.

In FY07, Air Force engineers supported "The Surge" by constructing basing facilities for the buildup of Air Force, Army, and Marine forces in Iraq. During FY08, they continued their efforts on the various bases, but their focus was often on a different aspect of the operation: working with Iraqi civilians to improve their everyday living and working conditions and with the Iraqi military to improve their facilities and train Iraqi engineers and firefighters.

Engineers often find themselves fulfilling three distinct but interrelated roles during contingencies: warrior, professional, and ambassador. In 2008, this was true for the members of the traditional CE units as well as the individual civil engineers deployed to Joint or specialty assignments. It was certainly true for members of the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron (ERHS).

In October 2007, traditional members of the 819th and 307th RED HORSE Squadrons (RHSs) deployed to Southwest Asia as members of the 557th ERHS. They were replaced by members of the 823rd RHS in April 2008. Augmented by deployed Reserve, Guard, and active duty Prime BEEF engineers, the 557th ERHS accomplished a great deal during FY08. During their six-month deployment, the more than 550 Airmen worked together in 14 locations throughout the theater and were responsible for approximately \$54M in construction projects. The unit worked in support of Multi-National Corps—Iraq (MNC-I) — the tactical unit responsible for command and control of operations throughout Iraq — and U.S. Air Forces Central (AFCENT) projects during their deployment.

As part of its MNC-I efforts, the 557th ERHS filled an approximately 400-person JSS tasking to provide direct combat engineering design, heavy construction, and general engineering support to the Army's Theater Engineer Brigade. A 150-person force from the 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group provided heavy construction support directly to AFCENT for completion of priority

airfield construction projects anywhere in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. During a typical month of 2008, the unit completed 19 projects worth \$3.26M, and had 40 projects under construction worth \$32M and 22 projects in design worth \$17.5M.

The construction of nearly SIOM of aircraft shelters, taxiways, and temporary shelters at Al Asad AB, Iraq, by the 557th embodied the "Joint" spirit. As MSgt Richard Kapp, 557th ERHS, described their work, "We're here working on a Marine base, taking on an Army job while using Navy parts."

In their role as ambassadors, the 557th began teaching construction classes at the Village of Hope vocational school in Hawr Rajab, Iraq. As peace and security were established in this area one that had been under the control of Al-Qaeda in Iraq forces and where nearly all economic activity had ceased — 557th engineers opened a school to teach Hawr Rajab citizens the basics of construction — skills they greatly needed. With the ultimate goal of encouraging activity in the village and recreating a normal life for its citizens, the engineers-turned-teachers offered both the classroom instruction and the hands-on training needed to rebuild the village's homes. A total of 210 students in four classes graduated from the Village of Hope School in FY08. TSgt Christopher Collins, a plumbing class instructor, summarized his feelings about the experience, "I've deployed five times but I've never had the chance to help someone change their life."

Consistent with fluctuating operations in deployed locations, the ability to quickly and efficiently build structures to house new missions is crucial. The 1st Expeditionary Civil Engineer Group here has specialized teams of Airmen who support projects to fulfill construction requirements. "When a building project is time and cost sensitive, the (Department of Defense) look for more efficient ways to complete it," said Capt. Nick Saccone, the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron engineering flight chief.

"That's where 1st ECEG comes in, particularly RED HORSE in this scenario. We are an all-military unit that can deploy to any site and build these same structures, but for half the time and half the cost of a civilian contractor." Recently, the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing acquired a new mission and RED HORSE was tasked to design and build a contingency aeromedical staging facility in compliance with a U.S. Central Command directive to have the facility up and running by January 2014, Saccone explained. "The CASF will provide continuous medical treatment, which cannot be provided in a forward deployed location until the member returns to his or her home unit," said Master Sgt. Franziska Ives, the 379th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron Emergency Room flight chief.

"The new building will provide more comfortable holding areas as well as increase the number of patients that can be treated and transitioned in the 12-to 72-hour period." Once the task came down to build the facility, the 557th ERHS immediately entered the design phase. "We have trained and knowledgeable Air Force engineers who work in a design planning cell made up of electricians, water and fuels systems maintainers, structures craftsmen, heating ventilation and air conditioning specialists and horizontal heavy repairmen," said Tech Sgt. Thomas Bryant, a 557th ERHS CASF project manager.

With coordination from the hospital, this team of Air Force specialists was able to completely design the CASF from the ground up. "We coordinated every detail with the customer from

where to place the HVAC unit, to the color of the paint on the walls," Saccone said. "Only after the design was at 100 percent, did we then order materials -- the second phase." The 557th ERHS operations and logistics teams work together during the second phase to make sure all materials needed for the construction are shipped to the site to complete the project. The engineers have now entered the final phase, construction, and laid the foundation for the new facility slated for completion mid-December.

The construction of the CASF, worth an estimated \$1.3 million, will only cost \$691,000, saving the Air Force thousands. The 1st ECEG has components located in seven locations within the CENTCOM and U.S. African Command areas of responsibility where they support building and runway projects tasked down from the Combined Force Air Component Commander. "Since I've been here, we've had 33 building projects throughout the area of responsibility and saved the Air Force an estimated \$12 million," Saccone said. No one has the capability or mission set to support expedient construction like we (1st ECEG) do," Saccone said. "We can forward deploy to support missions in the AOR within 12 hours and because of that capability, I feel we are the premier engineering unit to support the CFACC's requirements for construction." 2013

Airmen with the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE squadron began work on a new concrete pad at al Udeid AB, Qatar, that will allow maintainers of the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing to work on aircraft under the cover of shade and on top of a surface more durable than asphalt. "Whenever an aircraft sits on asphalt for a long time, it leaks jet fuel that creates potholes and other imperfections, so we wanted to replace the pavement with concrete that will last a much longer time," said SSgt. Nathaniel Curtis, 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron crew leader, in a June 27 base release. The new 40-foot by 160-foot pad is slated for completion in August; it will be an extension of an existing concrete pad, states the release. It will be able to support the weight of aircraft such as KC-135s, which frequent the base, a hub of US air activity in the Middle East. 2014

The 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron consists of approximately 400 Airmen filling billets in lieu of Army engineers, working at a dozen locations throughout Iraq. It's big work. Hard work. On any day here, you'll find Airmen building a SEA (Southeast Asia) hut, erecting a clamshell tent, patching spalls on an aircraft parking ramp, paving a new stretch of road, conducting a combat logistics patrol outside the perimeter, fixing an engine on a Humvee, and more.

The work is mostly outdoors under the blue sky and hot sun. The tools are mostly big and noisy—jackhammers, bulldozers, nail guns, power saws, and .50-caliber rifles. Clearly, part of the satisfaction—and part of the fun—of being a RED HORSE CE is the variety of tasks assigned and the commitment required to complete them. It's hard not to be motivated when the work satisfies the strong urges to raise a ruckus and get dirty—though the real payoff is pride and sense of accomplishment.

The HORSE won't gallop without team-work. Every project is a group effort—3 or 4 or 20 Airmen with a common aim. Bringing people together from different units and expecting them to become a team could present a huge obstacle. "We had 30 to 40 days together [at combat skills and task validation training] before we got here," said Lt Col Pete Garner, officer-in-charge of a detachment of the 557th ERHS, deployed from the Virginia Air National Guard's 203rd RHF, Virginia Beach. "It's made things easier. We knew our capabilities, and we jumped right into

work.”

“We work in conjunction with the Army engineers,” Lt Col Garner said. A facility-engineering team “puts together a plan and comes to us for design and construction.” More than 35 active duty and ANG CE units contributed Airmen to the 557th. Half of the Airmen come from sister ANG units, the 202nd RHS from Camp Blanding, Fla., and the 203rd. Command and control of the 557th is at Balad AB under Col Jack Paschal, who commands the 202nd back in Florida. The rest of the manpower comes from active duty and ANG Prime BEEF units around the globe.

No one wears the home unit patch. “We’re all the same team,” Col Paschal said. “Unit designations don’t mean anything over here—you’re part of the HORSE.” The new rotation of the 557th ERHS has only been on the ground for a week, and it’s already charging ahead full-speed with the Army’s project list. “We’re here to improve the quality of life for the folks who have to go outside the wire—doing their part to stabilize the country,” Lt Col Garner said.

---

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 17 Jan 2011

Updated:

#### 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.

Maj Richard Sater. Air Force Civil Engineer, Vol 15, No. 1, 2007.