124 CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

MISSION
The Civil Engineering Squadron is prepared to deploy within 28 hours, to provide engineering forces to support regional conflict missions, and to provide support for pre-attack, post-attack and passive defense measures. Engineering personnel include craftsmen, engineering officers and firefighters. CES will provide initial bed down support at a bare base, forward operations or follow-on sustainment for contingencies. In order to operate, participation in exercises are important; CES firefighters and command personnel participated in local Mass Casualties Exercise with a number of local civilian first responders.

LINEAGE
124 Civil Engineer Squadron

STATIONS
Boise, ID

ASSIGNMENTS
124 Mission Support Group

COMMANDERS

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

During this F-86L era Gowen Field's main runway, 28L/10R became equipped with a runway barrier system. This MA-1A barrier system was installed at each end of the runway to stop military aircraft from going off the end. Upon activation by the control tower this barrier would be quickly raised into the 'up' position to catch aircraft departing the runway. As the aircraft engaged the raised webbing, this action would lift a steel cable up high enough to catch on the aircraft's main landing gear struts.

Attached to each end of the steel cable were long sections of naval anchor chain, laid out along the edges of the departure path, providing a progressively increasing resistance to the arresting cable, and retarding the aircraft's progress into the runway overrun zone. The MA-1A was designed to minimize damage to the aircraft but still provide adequate deceleration. This MA-1 A and later arresting systems were the responsibility of the 124th Civil Engineering Squadron.

Converting to the RF-4C brought with it the need for more construction projects. The Director of 124th Support Services Ltc Vernard V. Cochran announced 14 projects as of July, and the Civil Engineering shop was busy riding herd on design and construction contracts These current projects were: Construct the new BAK-12 Runway Arresting System; the engine I&R shop construction; construct a hazardous storage facility; construct a new base supply, administration, and communication building; design a new Dispensary; construct a composite squadron operations facility; convert the radar calibration barn into an avionics shop; convert alert hangars to a fuel cell maintenance facility; build an industrial waste facility; build a 36,000 gallon fuel storage facility' and design or supervise construction on several other smaller jobs.

Presented with a wartime environment, austere conditions, and numerous combat civil engineering tasks, the 124th Civil Engineer Squadron successfully dealt with all the challenges of their 2012 version of Silver Flag at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., last month. The exercise was an important warmup for the squadron, which will send the majority of its personnel to Afghanistan for a six-month deployment this summer. “Many of us are repeat visitors,” said Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Keelin, 124 CES superintendent, “and some experienced their first CE fight.”

The seven-day field exercise demanded craftsmanship and expertise from dozens of civil engineer and services disciplines as 52 CES Airmen and 8 more from the 124th Force Support Squadron’s services flight demonstrated their ability to operate in a combat zone. With a majority of first-time Silver Flag participants, the 124 CES water, fuels and maintenance flight garnered accolades from the permanent-party training staff during the post exercise outbrief, just hours before the squadron’s return to Gowen Field at the end of February UTA.

During the outbrief evaluators declared Idaho’s WFM as the best they’ve observed in the past two years of Silver Flag. WFM flight focused on the tasks required to create a bare base in a forward operating location (known as bed down) and then sustain a war fighting posture

in theater using Basic Expeditionary Airfield Resources. “It was eye-opening and worth the effort” said Staff Sgt. Johnnie Jarnagin, an entomology specialist from WFM who completed his first Silver Flag. Alongside the civil engineers, services flight performed food service, lodging, fuel fired equipment, search and recovery operations, and limited recreation opportunities during Silver Flag.

“CE touches every aspect of the peacetime and wartime operations of our wing,” said Maj. Ken Williams, deputy base civil engineer. “Less than every four years, they ask us to prove our ability in the forward operating environment,” he said. During Silver Flag, 124 CES personnel had to coordinate their war fighting with civil engineer specialists from active duty units throughout the weeklong exercise—a practice they see whenever members deploy to current forward operating bases. “We demonstrated combat skills while we repaired damage to runways and taxiways, erected shelters and base facilities and stayed ready to respond to any emergency,” said Sergeant Keelin.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 6 Jan 2021
Updated:

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