

434 CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON



MISSION

Providing a civil engineering force capable of deploying anywhere in the world at a moment's notice is all a part of the civil engineering squadron's mission. The ability to provide support at other air force bases or "bare bones" deployment sites is what makes its mission unique. Throughout the years, the squadron has deployed to numerous locations throughout the world to work on various construction projects which have benefited both the Air Force and civilian communities.

LINEAGE

434 Installations Squadron constituted, 8 Sep 1950
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Oct 1950
Ordered to Active Service, 1 May 1951
Relieved from Active Duty, 15 Dec 1952
Inactivated, 1 Feb 1953
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Feb 1953
Redesignated 434 Civil Engineering Squadron, 1 Jul 1960
Ordered to Active Service, 28 Oct 1962
Relieved from Active Duty, 28 Nov 1962
Discontinued, and inactivated, 11 Feb 1963
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Dec 1986
Inactivated, 1 July 1987
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Aug 1992
Redesignated 434 Civil Engineer Squadron, 1 Mar 1994

STATIONS

Atterbury AFB, IN, 1 Oct 1950; Lawson AFB, GA, 23 Jan 1952 – 1 Feb 1953
Atterbury (later Bakalar) AFB, IN 1 Feb 1953 – 11 Feb 1963
Grissom AFB, IN, 1 Dec 1986 – 1 July 1987
Grissom AFB (later, ARB), IN, 1 Aug 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

434 Mission Support Group

COMMANDERS

Lt Col James C. Schluckbier
Maj Larry W. Alexander
Maj. Paul Brenner
Lt Col Timothy R. Kerrigan

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
1 August 1992 – 31 August 1993
1 Sept 1994 – 31 Aug 1996
1 Oct 2000 – 30 Sept 2002

Air Force Meritorious Unit Award
1 Oct 2017 – 30 Sept 2019

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Seventeen members of the 434 Civil Engineering Squadron got some hands-on combat skills training recently – and then got to put that training to the test. The civil engineers deployed to Dobbins ARB, Georgia for the Air Expeditionary Force combat support training certification center where they got an opportunity to be certified on a variety of equipment. “They teach you how to operate things you’d come across when deployed to a base environment,” said Master Sgt. Chuck Gill, 434 Civil Engineering Squadron operations superintendent. “It’s a very relaxed environment at the TCC,” said 1st Lt. William Swanson, deployment commander. “It’s a great place to learn. We trained on all the contingency equipment we’d get to use [during a deployment].” From there the 17 members were joined by two other unit members and put those newly acquired skills to

the test at Silver Flag, an exercise at Tyndall AFB, Fla. "Silver Flag is a requirement for civil engineers," Sergeant Gill said, "it puts all of us on the same page when it comes to responding to attacks and managing the equipment and resources we have as tools following those attacks." "This was a great training experience for our folks," Sergeant Gill added, "at the TCC they got hands on training, and then got validation of that knowledge at Silver Flag." "It was very beneficial," reiterated Lieutenant Swanson. "They throw everything at you during the exercise and let you work it all out." Six members were selected as superior performers during the Silver Flag exercise – including the entire four-man utilities team – something that was a first, he said. One scenario involved the sabotage of the reverse osmosis water proliferation unit, a life line in a deployed environment. The utilities team excelled in correcting the problem and ensuring fresh water was available. "Water and runways are our main factors in a bare-base environment," the lieutenant said. "Our utilities guys really excelled!" Other superior performers came from the carpentry and electrical fields. The two-week training may be over, but Lieutenant Swanson said it was very beneficial, and will be good for the unit as a whole.2007

Grissom's fire department's response capabilities got an upgrade recently with the arrival of a heavy duty rescue vehicle. The vehicle replaces a medium duty vehicle and made a big impact with those who use it. "This broadens our capabilities as rescues are concerned," said Wabash resident Howard Lawson, the captain of the vehicle known as Rescue 5. "We're able to respond just as rapidly as before, but we are able to carry more equipment on the truck with us," he said. "We perform just about every technical rescue with the equipment we carry on the truck with the exception of water rescues." The massive truck also handles better than the medium duty truck. "Way better," Mr. Lawson chimed in. "This is basically a fire engine without the water tanks and the pumps," said William Barton, fire chief. "All that area is now storage room for our equipment," Mr. Lawson added. In addition to carrying equipment for auto extraction, hazardous materials responses, high angle rescues and confined space items, the truck also carries medical supplies that rival basic life support ambulances – without the capability to transport. David Perryman of Greentown, Ind., is one of the drivers of Rescue 5. He said the big Detroit Diesel engine provides plenty of power to get them where they need to go, and through computer system it is smart enough to shut unneeded items down to power critical functions when required. One of those systems is lighting. "We can turn 3 a.m. into noon," Mr. Perryman said. The truck has a mast that rises into the air and can tilt and turn to angle the lighting as needed. "Having light at night makes a big difference," said Mr. Lawson. Rescue 5 has a crew of four, but can be operated with three people. The driver, captain, and two rescue men are all certified emergency medical technicians. The crew was recently credited for saving a life during a response in the local area. The crew responded to a local nursing home where a nurse was having respiratory distress. First responders were able to establish an airway and stabilize the person until an ambulance from the local area arrived. The truck wasn't originally destined for Grissom. It was scheduled to be sent to Gen. Billy Mitchell ARS, Wisc., but since that unit took a hit during the base realignment and closure, Air Force Reserve Command asked Grissom if they wanted it. "I couldn't say yes fast enough," Chief Barton said. The basic vehicle itself costs approximately \$500,000 — add to that the equipment on the vehicle and you're looking at \$800-900,000 total. "This vehicle is a great

asset to Grissom – and to the local communities,” he said. “We’ve worked hard and have an outstanding working relationship with the local fire departments. Having equipment like this to bring when needed enhances that relationship.”2007

Air Force Reservists spend a minimum 38 days training and preparing to defend the nation, but anytime the training can be accomplished while helping improve ongoing missions, well that’s just a bonus. Members of the 434 Civil Engineering Squadron gave the Air Force that bonus when they deployed to Kunsan Air Base, Korea recently. Engineers performed two two-week rotations at Kunsan, located on the peninsula’s southwest coast 109 miles south of the demilitarized zone. The base is within easy reach of North Korean weapons capable of delivering chemical munitions. “This mission put us into a theater of war,” said Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gill, operations superintendent. “When we went there we went with full battle rattle because it still has a potential for attack” Kunsan was one of the many bases scheduled to close down, but the United States saw a growing need for the base and decided to keep it. “The base is in desperate need of services since it was neglected for so long,” said Sergeant Gill. “It has an aging infrastructure that provided areas of training for each specialty in civil engineering.” One of the major achievements of the deployment was the installation of an emergency backup generator in the water treatment plant, Sergeant Gill said. The installation of the generator, and increased the water plant electrical capacity 300 percent. During the two rotations 122 work orders were completed, while at the same time providing opportunities to complete over 750 upgrade training tasks. “All in all, the mission itself was a success,” he said. “It was a win win situation. We got the training and experience we needed and the base received much needed assistance.” 2007

Members of the 434 Civil Engineers Squadron know good training when they get it. They got that and the added bonus of helping Navajo families by constructing homes in Gallup, N.M. The training done is part of an innovative readiness program that allows military members to use their skills to benefit others. In this case, they’re helping the Southwest Indian Foundation. Military members have been making their way to Gallup since 1998 turning piles of wood and nails into modern homes. The homes are built in a warehouse and transported to a site for final set up. “With the hectic tempo of a unit training assembly, its hard to get time slots where members can work uninterrupted within the engineer career fields,” said Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gill, 434 CES operation superintendent. “This is a rare opportunity for us to apply our diverse skills in a team effort.” One hundred Grissom engineers have been working on the houses since late May. The last rotation will pack their tool boxes and head back to Grissom on July 20. They are working of a construction warehouse capable of holding three houses. By working on three separate structures in various stages of construction, the engineers have a valuable training scenario, he said. “When you are working on one structure and look over your shoulder to see how it will all fit together, it really adds meat to the training,” said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Bowden, 434 CES manager. In addition, members from different career fields get the chance to work side by side helping each other accomplish common goals. “Team building and multi-skill training are benefits quickly realized during these type of deployments,” Sergeant Gill said. “It’s heartwarming to hear the pride in a young Airman’s voice as he or she explains to another member how the plumbing works or why the breaker box is wired that way.” The engineers deployed to Gallup in 2005 for similar training.

“Without the military’s help, we would be forced to hire more people and we don’t have money to pay for that kind of manpower,” said Joe Esparza, director of SWIF. “By coming here they get the training they need and we meet the needs of families in the Navajo community.”

During this holiday season people around the world exchanged gifts, but few got a gift as special as the Grissom family right before Christmas. Five firefighters from the 434 Civil Engineer Squadron returned home to their family’s and friends Dec. 23, after being deployed for four months in Southwest Asia with the 405th Air Expeditionary Group. "This was amazing, and I didn't think it was going to happen," said Tech. Sgt. Aaron Dehner, one of the returning Airmen. "Our day (to return) was actually supposed to be Christmas day, and my daughter Lindsey said this would be the best Christmas present ever." Getting back two days before Christmas allowed the returning Airmen to settle in for the holiday season. Still, Sergeant Dehner said, in some ways, this Christmas had a different feel to it. "It was weird leaving 80 to 90 degree temperatures and coming home to Christmas two days later," said Sergeant Dehner. "It's like it was right out of the movies, a Norman Rockwell type thing." While deployed, the firefighters provided fire protection for an airfield and tent city at austere base in Southwest Asia. "The mission itself was getting the supplies to the war fighters," Sergeant Dehner explained. "It had a direct impact to the guys on the ground, and that was important." The sergeant also explained how proud he was of not only the Grissom Airmen he deployed with, but also with Airmen from other Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units that integrated seamlessly with them. "There were Airmen from eight different bases, and for our shift at the firehouse, we went four months with each other day-in and day-out, 24 hours a day," he explained. "We were able to melt together and form a team; it's a part of the Grissom spirit to get things done and mold together as one team."2011

The runway at Grissom ARB, Ind., will temporarily close beginning June 1 so civil engineers can undertake a \$3.2 million runway repair project. "The pavement heaves up during the summer time, so we are going to put in expansion joints in the pavement that allow it to move around and prevent an un-level pavement surface," said 434 Civil Engineer Squadron chief engineer John Robison in a release. "We are doing this to prevent buckling of the runway due to thermal expansion," he added. The project is slated to take 45 days. Air Force Reserve Command's 434 Air Refueling Wing will shift its KC-135 operations to an as-yet unannounced base somewhere in the Midwest, according to the release. Grissom's 12,500-foot runway was last closed for repairs in 2004, according to the base. 2014

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 23 Nov 2010

Updated: 11 Jun 2021

Sources

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.