

506 EXPEDITIONARY CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

506 Installations Squadron
506 Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron

STATIONS

Dow AFB, ME
Kirkuk AB, Iraq

ASSIGNMENTS

506th Air Base Group

COMMANDERS

Maj C. H. Mansfield, 17 Feb 1954

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

2010 KIRKUK REGIONAL AIR BASE, Iraq — While many back home were enjoying a traditional Christmas Eve, several members of Kirkuk's 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron were

busy pouring concrete for a new construction project just underway. The team began the building project in early December. According to the project superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Franklin Barnes, a Reservist and structural superintendent with the 446th CES, McChord AFB, Wash., the building project will make the base more secure. The project seems a perfect fit for the deployed Reservist who is also a general contractor back home. He has been doing this type of work for a long time and understands some of the challenges that come with working in a deployed environment.

“We don’t always get the parts we need,” he said. “We had to build all the parts that we needed to do the form work. We don’t have all the parts or hardware we’d have in the States available to us here, so we have to adapt to what we would normally use and just make do with what we do have.” Those challenges, however, do not mean an excuse to cut corners. “I try to do everything the same here that I’d do back home,” the superintendent said. “I expect the same quality.” For Senior Airman Carol Clements, 506th ECES structural apprentice, these challenges are her ticket to future success. The Reservist, deployed from Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, Texas, said she has aspirations to one day flip houses and be able to do the work herself.

“I would have never gotten all this hands-on training just two days a month at my home station,” she said. “It’s helped tremendously. Time goes by fast, and that’s another reason I picked this career field. I sit at a desk back home, and eight hours feels very long.” Sergeant Barnes said the project has been a group effort involving many CE shops, including heavy equipment, electrical and utilities. He said everyone has worked really diligently and well together.

Airman Clements has taken pictures throughout the process and says she is just looking forward to the end result. Sergeant Barnes agrees and isn’t complaining about being out of the office. “I like being outside,” he said. “I’m an outside person so it’s nice to get away from the desk and the paperwork and actually go do something. It’s a big project and takes a lot of time, but when you build something like this, you get to see all the fruits of your labor. Two months ago, there was nothing here but grass. Now it’s starting to take shape.” The project is scheduled for completion in early February.

KIRKUK REGIONAL AIR BASE, Iraq -- Sitting at a well-crafted desk may not seem like a big deal to children in the United States or other more affluent parts of the world, but to the children of Kirkuk’s school provinces, it is. Thanks to several volunteers from the 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron at Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraqi school children will get to sit in the same style of comfort other children get on a regular basis.

One of those members, is Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Raschke, an emergency management apprentice deployed from the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron at Grissom. The idea for refurbishing the school desks sprang from a conversation Chief Master Sgt. Tom Pizzi, 506th ECES chief enlisted manager, deployed from McChord AFB, Wash., had with Stacy Barrios, public diplomacy officer, Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team, U.S. Embassy, Iraq. There are literally thousands of old broken desks in Iraq, Sergeant Raschke said. The idea was to take the old frames and have welders repair them.

Other members cut out wood for the tops of the desks and seats. Once all the wood was cut and sanded, the local nationals on base put them together for the final product. “There are a lot of people involved in this,” he said, “but the most important part was letting the local nationals

get a chance to build desks for their kids. Most of these children have very little, so an actual desk that they are able to write on goes a long way!” Sergeant Raschke, a Grand Rapids Michigan resident, also has gotten involved in another project that provides school supplies to the Iraqi children as well. The deployed unit takes donations from the states and packages pens, pencils, crayons, and paper and repackages that to hand out to the children. The Army normally distributes the bags, but because of his volunteer efforts, Sergeant Raschke and a few others were invited to go off the forward operation base to deliver them.

“This was an incredible experience and probably the most rewarding thing I’ve done in uniform,” he said. Volunteer projects such as the school packages and the desks are just some ways that deployed members work to make the country better. “I hope the fact that the Americans came in and took those beat up, broken down desks and rebuilt them and put them back in the schools will change the mindset of the children and the parents of how they remember the Americans. It’s leaving a legacy,” Chief Pizzi added.

“Those desks are going to live a lot longer in their minds,” the chief said. “I hope the fact that the Americans came in and took those beat up, broken down desks and rebuilt them and put them back in the schools will change the mindset of the children and the parents of how they remember the Americans. It’s leaving a legacy.” 2010

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Sources

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Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Base Welcome Guide. *Dow AFB, ME, 1954.*