

506th EXPEDITIONARY SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

506th Air Police Squadron

506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron

STATIONS

Dow AFB, ME

ASSIGNMENTS

506th Air Base Group

COMMANDERS

Maj J. W. Shea, 9 Sep 1953

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Air Force Reserve security forces specialists have been heavily involved in supporting the Global War on Terrorism since Sept. 11, 2001, but a recent change in the way they are resourced to deploy is resulting in more predictability and sustainability for Air Force Reserve Command

members, their families and their employers. In the past, when Reserve security forces specialists deployed to the theater of operations, they would usually find themselves absorbed by the active-duty run security forces squadron at any of a number of locations — Balad Air Base, Iraq; Kirkuk AB, Iraq; or Bagram AB, Afghanistan. That all changed in July 2007 when AFRC mobilized 265 cops and sent them all to the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at Kirkuk. In essence, AFRC “bought the base” in northern Iraq.

“Total security forces manning at Kirkuk is about 300 people; so we now command and man the security forces operation at Kirkuk with the exception of the specialties we don’t have in the Reserve, like military working dogs, snipers and large weapons teams,” said Col. Jeffrey Ippolito, AFRC’s director of security forces. “After we deployed, four-fifths of the security forces contingent at Kirkuk was from the Air Force Reserve, including the commander, the operations group commander, the first sergeant, and other senior officer and enlisted positions. That was a big change for us because there hadn’t always been a lot of leadership billets available for security forces Reservists.” When the 265 Reservists from that initial deployment were nearing the end of their 179- day tour, a second group of 265 Reservists cycled in to take over security forces operations at Kirkuk. “Now we’re on our fourth rotation, and Central Command and the Air Force are very pleased with how everything is working out,” Colonel Ippolito said. “What this does is give the Reserve security forces mission more predictability and sustainability. Our people know exactly when and where they will be going, and we are able to provide them with site-specific training that allows them to hit the ground running at Kirkuk.”

The training Colonel Ippolito referred to is provided by AFRC’s 610th Security Forces Squadron at Carswell Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas. “The great thing is that nearly 100 percent of the instructors from the 610th are troops who have deployed to Kirkuk, some of them multiple times,” Colonel Ippolito said. “Our Reservists who are deploying to Kirkuk get 14 days of hands-on training from people who know exactly how operations there work. Site specific training is the way to go.” Lt. Col. Mary Ann Lutz, commander of the 610th SFS, was the security forces commander at Kirkuk during the Reserve’s first mass deployment to the base from July 2007 to January 2008. Today, she and a team of instructors work hard to prepare the steady stream of security forces specialists heading to the Persian Gulf region. “We train all of the security forces troops going to Kirkuk — active duty, Reserve and National Guard,” she said. They do this with a blend of classroom and hands-on training combined with a heavy dose of first-hand knowledge of what conditions are like. “We can tell our students exactly how the base is set up and what it’s like to patrol or work a tower because we’ve done it, and it’s still fresh in our minds,” Colonel Lutz said. “Ninety-five percent of our instructors have been to Kirkuk in the last year and a half.”

Colonel Lutz said the memories of her deployment to Kirkuk are definitely still fresh in her mind. “It was a dynamic experience,” she said. “At the time, it was extremely rare for a Reservist to have the chance to serve as the commander of a security forces squadron in the AOR. There were definitely some hurdles we had to overcome, but our Reservists did a wonderful job and gained some invaluable experience.” Now, they are determined to pass that experience on to their fellow Reservists. Colonel Lutz was in charge when one of her Reserve troops, Senior Airman Diane Lopes, was injured in a rocket attack. The explosion snapped the tibia and fibula of her left leg, slashed through 80 percent of the tendons in her right wrist, collapsed one of her lungs, burned the backs of her legs, perforated her right eardrum, and peppered her body with

shrapnel. Airman Lopes was immediately flown to Balad AB for treatment. She was subsequently transported to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and finally to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Most of the people in the squadron had never seen one of their fellow Airmen injured like this in combat," Colonel Lutz said. "But they rallied around her to make sure she got the care she needed, and they kept performing the mission we were there to do." On another occasion, right before their deployment ended, a young Reservist, Senior Airman Thomas Benincosa from the 419th SFS at Hill AFB, Utah, was working in a tower when it was attacked by small arms fire. "He didn't have a senior NCO or anybody else to ask what he should do," Colonel Lutz said. "He had to act based on his training. He took cover, acquired the targets and successfully returned fire. "Security forces Airmen going to Kirkuk will have an opportunity to experience most facets of our job, whether it's in a tower, control room or personnel and vehicle inspection areas.

It's our job to make sure they are as prepared as they can be when they arrive." Chief Master Sgt. Wendell Peacock, security forces manager for the 94th SFS at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., participated in the third rotation to Kirkuk. "The big thing for me was that I had the opportunity to deploy with my troops," Chief Peacock said. "For chiefs, there hasn't always been that opportunity." While at Kirkuk, Chief Peacock served as the superintendent of anti-terrorism and force protection. "Although the Reserve made up most of the security forces squadron, there was definitely a Total Force feeling to what we were doing," he said. "In anti-terrorism and force protection, we worked closely with security forces, OSI (Office of Special Investigations), intel and all the other organizations on base.

There was definitely a sense of one-team, one fight." Chief Peacock said the training provided by members of the 610th really helped prepare him for what he would encounter at Kirkuk. "What was really great was that some of our instructors actually deployed with us," he said. "They do an outstanding job of staying current with what is happening overseas and bringing that back to the training." With the most recent Kirkuk rotation, AFRC made one small change, sending 196 people instead of 265. "After doing this a few times, we now think this number is more sustainable for the Reserve," Colonel Ippolito said. The other 60-plus positions are being filled by the Air National Guard. "This template provides a Total-Force presence there," he said. "Three-fourths is still Reserve, but the other one-fourth is now a mix of active duty and Air National Guard." Brig. Gen. Robert Bailey, AFRC's director of Installations and Mission Support, believes the security forces operation at Kirkuk illustrates the Total Force at its best.

"The security forces mission at Kirkuk is an outstanding example of how active, Reserve and Guard components integrate into a fighting Air Force — all in to the joint fight," he said. Colonel Ippolito said AFRC is already planning the fifth and sixth mass rotations to Kirkuk, but he knows those plans may change. With the new presidential administration's plans for a deliberate drawdown from Iraq, Kirkuk's long-term future is uncertain. "That's the big unknown right now," he said. "But whether it's still at Kirkuk or at another location, we hope we can continue to deploy this way in the future. The deployed location benefits because we are able to provide troops who are trained and ready to contribute as soon as they arrive, and the Reserve benefits because we end up with a stronger, more experienced force throughout all the ranks." 2009

Security forces specialists, including Air Force Reservists, who stand perimeter guard at Kirkuk

Regional Air Base, Iraq, are safer on the job thanks to a self-help recycling and construction project. The project involved the installation of fortified guard towers made with multiple layers of Kevlar material to better protect security forces from attack. Previous towers were built with three-quarter-inch plywood. "These new towers have Kevlar installed in them and are as ballistic as we can make them," said Tech. Sgt. Shawn Quinn, NCO in charge of physical security for the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.

Sergeant Quinn is a Reservist from Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass. Members of the group's security forces and civil engineer squadron pitched in to accomplish the project. Senior Airman Hector Carbrera, a perimeter guard who is deployed to Kirkuk from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., said stepping onto the wooden towers almost felt like "rolling the dice of life." The new towers provide Airmen with more peace of mind. Sergeant Quinn said the old wooden towers didn't provide any protection from bullets, but the new towers will stop or fragment bullets fired at them. To ensure a stronger level of ballistic capability, the construction materials, including new bullet-proof glass, were subjected to multiple ballistic penetration tests.

The results yielded an 80 percent to 90 percent increase in safety. Civil engineers worked with security forces Airmen to design the new towers and produce them with surplus materials found on base, said Master Sgt. Jonathan Gambill, who helped with the initial design of the towers. Sergeant Gambill, who is deployed from Luke AFB, Ariz., serves as NCO in charge of the 506th Civil Engineer Squadron structures shop. "With the use of the materials found on base, the towers cost us about \$5,000," he said. "If we were to have the same towers built on the local economy, it would cost about \$100,000." In addition to being safer, the new towers include heating and air conditioning to provide guards a more comfortable environment. 2009