

823 RED HORSE SQUADRON



MISSION

The 823rd Red Horse Squadron, a heavy civil engineering construction unit that is self-contained and can rapidly deploy to support U.S. forces around the world. Squadron airmen are often the first DoD military personnel in a theater of operations and are prepared to meet all civil engineering challenges. These include bare base bed-down, rapid repair of battle-damaged runways, airfield, lighting, water purification, well drilling, and many other specialized skills relating to heavy construction and airfield operations.

LINEAGE

823 Installations Squadron constituted, 19 Jan 1956
Activated, 1 Jun 1956
Redesignated 823 Civil Engineering Squadron, 1 Jul 1960
Discontinued, and inactivated, 1 Oct 1961
Redesignated 823 Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair) and activated, 6 Apr 1966
Organized, 15 May 1966
Redesignated 823 Civil Engineering Squadron, Heavy Repair, 15 Oct 1969
Inactivated, 15 Jun 1971
Activated, 1 Jun 1972
Redesignated 823 RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron, 10 Mar 1989
Redesignated 823 RED HORSE Squadron, 1 Mar 1994
Inactivated
Redesignated 823d Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron and activated, 30 Apr 2013

STATIONS

Homestead AFB, Fla, 1 Jun 1956-1 Oct 1961
Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam,

Eglin AF Auxiliary Field 2, FL, 1 Jun 1971
Eglin AF Auxiliary Field 9, FL, 1 Jul 1972
Rota Naval Station, Spain

ASSIGNMENTS

823 Air Base (later, Combat Support) Group, 1 Jun 1956-1 Oct 1961
Pacific Air Forces, 6 Apr 1966
Seventh Air Force, 15 May 1966
1 Civil Engineering Group (Heavy Repair) (later, 1 Civil Engineering Group, Heavy Repair), 15 May 1967
Seventh Air Force, 16 Mar 1970-15 Jun 1971
Ninth Air Force, 1 Jun 1972

COMMANDERS

LTC Horace C. Smith, 1 Jun 1956
Cpt James B. Hoodenpyle, Sep 1957
Maj William J. Casey, 1958
Cpt Joseph N. Davis Jr., Apr 1960-1 Oct 1961
LTC Frank E. John, 1 Jul 1966-Jun 1967
Col Richard J. Coffee, 4 Oct 1967
LTC Leroy C. Porter Jr., Sep 1968
LTC Paul T. Hartung, Sep 1969
Maj Norman M. Sorensen, 2 Sep 1970
LTC James W. Culp, 15 Dec 1970-15 Jun 1971
LTC Herbert G. Campbell, 1 Jun 1972-Dec 1973
Maj Jason F. Mayhew (Acting), 19 Dec 1973
Col Carwin J. Pomeroy, 7 Jan 1974-Jul 1975
Col Richard H. Dunwoody, Jul 1975-Jun 1976
Col Thomas E. Colvin, Jun 1976-May 1978
Col Ansel T. Flowers, May 1978-Mar 1981
Col William L. Randall, Mar 1981-May 1983
Col Robert L. Bell, May 1983-May 1985
Col Henry C. Aulwurm, Jul 1985-Nov 1986
Col Frank A. Cirillo, Jr., Nov 1986-Jun 1989
Col Thomas F. Wilson, Jun 1989-Jul 1992
Col John H. Fraser, Jr., Jul 1992-May 1994
Col Susanne M. Waylett, May 1994-Oct 1996
Col Richard Fernandez, Oct 1996-Dec 1997
Col Clinton C. Woods, Dec 1997-Jul 1999
Col Edward D. Mayfield, Aug 1999-Aug 2002
Col Benjamin Anderson, Aug 2002-Jul 2004
Col James D. Lyon, Jul 2004-Apr 2006
Col Steven E. Hammock, Apr 2006

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Vietnam Air

Vietnam Air Offensive, 1966-1967

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II, 1967-1968

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III, 1968

Vietnam Air/Ground, 1968

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV, 1968-1969

TET 69/Counteroffensive, 1969

Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969

Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970

Sanctuary Counteroffensive, 1970

Southwest Monsoon, 1970

Commando Hunt V, 1970-1971

Commando Hunt VI, 1971

Defense of Saudi Arabia, 1990-1991

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait, 1991

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

1 Jan 1969-16 Mar 1970

17 Mar 1970-31 Mar 1971

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

May 1976-1 May 1978

15 Jul 1978-15 Jul 1980

1 Jun 1983-31 May 1985

1 Jun May 1987

1 Jun 1988-31 May 1990

3 Sep 1990-15 Mar 1991

16 Mar 1995-31 May 1996

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

Republic of Vietnam

Gallantry Cross with Palm

15 May 1966-15 Jun 1971

EMBLEM

Approved, 17 Jan 1967



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

During Vietnam, the 823d Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair) was activated on 6 April 1966 and organized on 15 May 1966. When the 823rd arrived at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam, in 1966 it reorganized into four self-sufficient units to complete urgently needed construction. By January 1967, deployed units were in place at Tan Son Nhut, Vung Tau, Da Nang, and Pleiku, while a unit remained at Bien Hoa.

The 823rd, inactivated in 1971, was reactivated at Eglin AFB, Fla., on 1 June 1972, incorporating elements of the 557th CES (HR), which was inactivated at Eglin the same day. The 823rd became a TAC (later ACC) unit.

In 1975, members constructed a tent city at Eglin for 5,000 Vietnamese refugees. In 1990 the unit deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. In 1993 it deployed to Somalia in support of United Nations-sponsored Operation RESTORE HOPE. In 1995 it deployed to Bosnia to bed down Army troops supporting Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, and in 1996 it built tent cities at Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia, to accommodate the move from Dhahran AB following the Khobar Towers bombing.

In 1999, 823rd RHS personnel deployed to forward locations throughout Europe to support Operations ALLIED FORCE/SHINING HOPE. In 2001-2002 the 823rd completed major construction projects, including a \$9.1M aircraft ramp, at Al Udeid AB, Qatar, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and deployed to Southwest Asia on a regular basis beginning in 2003 in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The 823rd's newly-established Airborne RED HORSE team performed important explosive ordnance disposal work in southern Iraq and runway repair work at Baghdad International Airport during IRAQI FREEDOM.

In July 2004, more than three dozen members of the 823rd deployed to Camp Lemonier,

Djibouti, for 180 days in support of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. They executed over \$500K in humanitarian and contingency construction projects in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and performed valuable civil-military relations work.

Non-wartime operations performed by the 823rd have included runway construction on Ascension Island, road building and harbor protection in the Azores, and disaster relief following Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew, Opal, and Ivan. In support of the New Horizons program, construction teams from the 823rd have completed projects in Haiti, St. Kitts, Jamaica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru.

The 823rd RHS is an Air Combat Command asset, assigned to Ninth Air Force, and operates out of Hurlburt Field (previously Eglin Auxiliary Field #9). In addition to operations at Hurlburt Field, the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron's Detachment 1 operates the Silver Flag Exercise Site at Tyndall AFB, Florida, providing combat support training to more than 5,600 civil engineer troops from active, Guard, and Reserve Air Force units, plus the Army, Marine Corps, and allied nations.

As the active duty squadrons decreased in number at the end of the Vietnam War, RED HORSE capability expanded to the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. The 307th RHS was originally organized in July 1971. Detachments 307 and 308 were located at Ellington AFB, TX, and Barksdale AFB, LA, respectively. In 1976, the Ellington unit relocated to Kelly AFB, Texas, and was designated the headquarters. The Barksdale unit remained on location but was re-designated Detachment 1, 307th RHS. The 307th deployed to Central America in both 1999 and 2000 to drill several water wells and provide medical assistance as part of the New Horizons humanitarian exercise. In 2003, the squadron deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. It is assigned to the 610th Regional Support Group, Air Force Reserve Command.

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The 823rd Red Horse Squadron, a heavy civil engineering construction unit that is self-contained and can rapidly deploy to support U.S. forces around the world. Red Horse airmen have supported operations in Vietnam, Desert Storm, Somalia, and Bosnia. Squadron airmen are often the first DoD military personnel in a theater of operations and are prepared to meet all civil engineering challenges, in keeping with their motto "Can Do, Will Do, Have Done." Hurlburt is also home of Air Combat Command's 823rd RED HORSE Civil Engineer Squadron. The squadron rapidly deploys worldwide to support DoD combat construction and peace time disaster response needs. These include bare base beddown, rapid repair of battle-damaged runways, airfield, lighting, water purification, well drilling, and many other specialized skills relating to heavy construction and airfield operations.

In 1993, a 19-member team from the 823rd RED HORSE deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia. The team installed nearly 2.5 miles of revetment materials to protect Army Blackhawk and Cobra helicopters.

"Fire in the Hole — Fire in the Hole — Fire in the Hole" sounds loudly just before a thunderous detonation. Another day at "the office" is underway for the RED HORSE Special Capabilities Cadre located in Area 2, in the high desert area north of Las Vegas, Nev. Providing explosive demolition certification for the entire RED HORSE community who posture the 4F9HJ unit type code is just one of the many mission tasks of the 820th RED HORSE Squadron at Nellis AFB Nev.

MSgt Thomas Cranville and TSgt Mark Ordway currently spearhead this RED HORSE special capability certification course, which packs quite a bit of extensive mathematical calculations,

charge size requirement data, proper placement lessons, and — most importantly — safety into its two-week length. Since its maiden class in the mid 1960's the course has had an incident-free history.

Though not commonly associated with typical Air Force Civil Engineering tasks, demolition is a monthly or sometimes weekly recurring ritual for RED HORSE Demo "Dirt Boyz," as they are commonly called. RED HORSE's involvement with explosives dates back to its inception. Documents originating to the mid-1960's identify the need and use of explosives for use in quarry operations, base denial, and removal of large obstacles deterring construction and believe it or not removal of underwater debris for dock construction and harbor clearance.

Air Force civil engineer demolition teams are manned purposely using the 3E2X1 AFSC (Pavement and Equipment Operators). These teams are postured with the majority of RED HORSE squadrons across the globe, including Guard and Reserve units. To be indoctrinated into such a team is not easy; a very tough competition usually occurs within a RED HORSE Dirt Boyz section. In the words of retired CMSgt Gary (Dean) Bushnell, "You better have zero dings in your armor just to be considered," I finally scored a coveted slot in 1994.

CMSgt Bushnell was just one of the many RED HORSE demo team members to venture across the Kuwait border into Iraq during Operation DtsRT STORM. A combined effort of "blasters" from the 820th and 823rd and EOD performed base denial upon abandoned Iraqi air bases. The "wrecking crew," as they were coined, was the first RED HORSE team since the Vietnam War to utilize explosives against an adversary during times of war.

SMSgt Bobby Chandler, now retired, recounted the details of that base-denial mission. "It was a textbook operation, with team members using everything from their initial Nellis training, the same skills that are still taught to students to this day."

The most current chapter in the RED HORSE demolition history book was written during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM when the first-ever RED HORSE combat demolition team was tasked to aid the Army's 99th Engineer Brigade by demolishing two overpasses on Mam Supply Route Tampa in the vicinity of Baghdad; the overpasses had been severely damaged in three separate vehicle-borne IED attacks by insurgents. In less than three days, the demo team from the 557th ERHS demolished and removed over 900 tons of debris to restore coalition movement on the supply route,

As RED HORSE evolves, this special demolition capability is evolving with them to enable construction as well. A quarry certification course, tied closely to the demo course, is another special capability taught by the 820 RHS at Nellis. In the near future RED HORSE will be able to posture a deployable Quarry UTC.

The quarry capability enables RED HORSE to self-provide products in order to establish horizontal and vertical construction. For example, to pave a road or build an airfield you need either concrete or asphalt and to obtain that final product in an austere environment you have

to start from scratch. Rock for the desired mix is located, often in the side of a hill, which necessitates a series of demo blast operations to extract the rock. Next comes the rock preparation in several steps, which normally involves crushing into Sizes required for pattkular mix designs. The prepared rock is then transported to one of two batching plants, either for concrete or asphalt, depending on the requirement.

In early 2008, AFCESA's Expeditionary Engineering Branch began developing a series of interactive multimedia training system courses to aid the 820th with training for this demo-quarry-batch (DQ8) capability. Scheduled for completion at the end of FY10, the DQ8 course is just one of the special capability computer-based training venues in the queue for RED HORSE. The DQ8 training will not only provide a prerequisite for the initial course at Nellis but will also provide refresher training focused on standards and repetitive commonalities for the RED HORSE warfighter.

As RED HORSE special capabilities strengthen, coordination with the civilian sector becomes more and more relevant. Explosive demolition is commonly utilized worldwide in many capacities by the private sector, and certification for the profession is quite extensive. The military's use of explosives in construction is based upon the worldwide industry standard As RED HORSE ventures onward toward the deployable quarry capability, many pieces, including certification outside normal military boundaries, may be needed even more.

Within industry, the International Society of Explosive Engineers (ISEE) serves as the governing body for associated standards and certification. At the ISEE's 2010 conference, I met ISEE representatives to communicate the Atr Force message and discuss and learn about certification needs, including a newly developed federal certification which is founded upon basic demolition training (usually a state certification).

Members of the 823rd RED HORSE squadron from Hurlburt Field, Fla., spent two weeks at Maxwell AFB, Ala., renovating field training sites. The 17 visiting engineers demolished tents at Maxwell's Vigilant Warrior and Blue Thunder cantonment areas, erected semi-cylindrical shelters, and installed electricity, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. The RED HORSE crew was able to complete projects that base officials had to postpone for years due to fiscal and contractual constraints, said Lt. Col. John Blackwell, commander of Maxwell's 22nd Training Support Squadron. "It's a big deal for us and a big deal for them," he said. "This is a two-year problem they're solving in two weeks." Each year, some 3,200 Air University students will benefit from these changes, said Blackwell. 2012

Detachment 1, 823d Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron activated at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, 30 Apr 2013

Detachment 2, 823d Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron activated at Hatzor Airbase, Israel, 30 Apr 2013

Created: 29 Jul 2020

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.