

155 CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

155 Civil Engineering Flight
Activated, 16 Nov 1969
155 Civil Engineering Squadron
155 Civil Engineer Squadron

STATIONS

Lincoln, NE

ASSIGNMENTS

155 Mission Support Group

COMMANDERS

Maj Kenneth G. King, #1981
Lt. Col. Gary J. Krupa, 2007
Lt. Col. Robert E. Hargens, 12 Jul 2009
Maj. Barry R. Veen, 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Civil Engineering began 31 Jan 51 as the 132 Installation Squadron commanded by 1LT William M. Fenton. His record clerk and later 1st Sgt was Harold L. Gustafson who is today LTC Gustafson of state headquarters.

After the Wing returned from active duty 31 Dec 53, the air installation squadron was commanded by Lt William L. Deneke. Lt Deneke commanded the unit until 1958 when he left the NEANG to serve on active duty in the National Guard Bureau. He became chief of the air civil engineer division and retired as a colonel in 1976.

The 132nd Air Installation Squadron was dissolved in 1960 and was integrated into the combat support squadron, with Fenton as CE chief.

On 16 Nov 1969, the civil engineers were reorganized as the 155th Civil Engineering Flight. This reorganization was part of the organization of "Prime BEEF" teams in the Air Guard. The first unit commander was Lt Kenneth King with SMSgt John Polk as NCOIC.

Through the 70's the unit deployed several times to support construction projects on USAF installations, and 155 CEF was the first ANG unit to deploy to a regular Air Force base. In 1970, the unit went to Nellis AFB; in 1973, to Wright Patterson, AFB; in 1974, to Eglin AFB (where the dormitory we use today was disassembled and shipped to Lincoln); in 1975, to Castle AFB; in 1976 to March AFB.

Less than six months after completing a 90-day deployment in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Civil Engineering Squadron hit the road again. This time, however, the deployment wasn't for three months, but rather for three days. According to Capt. John Burhmann, deployment commander for the 155 CES, 46 members of the Lincoln-based squadron deployed by KC-135R Nov. 21 to the high desert of March Air Reserve Base where they conducted a variety of team-building and individual exercises designed to keep their mobility skills at a high level. Burhmann said that the Air Force requires that Air National Guard civil engineering squadron deploy to a regional training site at least once every 15 months to work on the various tasks they would be required to fill in the event of a major deployment. "In our career field, our

number one objective is to be able to do what they call bare base set up and support structure,” said Burhmann. “If we can’t deploy somewhere and set up for ourselves, how can we deploy somewhere and set up for others? It doesn’t work that way,” he added. Burhmann said that regional training sites, such as the one at March, are designed to give civil engineering squadrons the opportunity to work on projects with equipment they normally don’t have access to back at their home bases. For example, during the course of the weekend-long exercise, the Nebraska Guardsmen built practice B-1 Bomber revetments, set up an aircraft arresting system and air field lighting generators. They also worked on large equipment like bulldozers and road graders. “Regional Training Sites have equipment that we don’t have,” said Burhmann. “It’s very important for people to do hands on (training) on these types of equipment because it’s so much different than the videos we have to watch to keep up-to-date. You can only watch the video so many times before you have absorbed every bit of content.” “In the real world, very different things can happen,” added Burhmann. “(Here) you get an opportunity to figure things out, to see what works and what doesn’t.” Master Sgt. Craig Anderson, structures shop supervisor, agreed. “By going to these RTS’, they get their hands on some of this special equipment and get the knowledge that they need so when they deploy, even short notice, they’ve got that knowledge to be able to do their job in the forward location,” Anderson said. Anderson said that the exercise was essentially split into two sections. After arriving at March, the squadron divided into teams and worked on setting up temper tents, providing convoy security and work party security skills. They also had the chance to conquer an obstacle course and a team challenge course designed to give the unit’s younger noncommissioned officers the chance to work on such skills as communication, team building and group problem-solving. The second day, the squadron endured 55-mile-per-hour winds that coated them with thick, gooey dust while they worked on their individual skills. For example, Anderson’s structures shop worked on building the B-1 revetments. Anderson said that even though his shop has built revetments before, it was still a relearning process. “It was something we normally only see at Silver Flag exercises. So there was some good refresher training going on,” he said. “We had a few problems getting started,” Anderson said. “Once we kind of took a step back and looked at it again, we were able to figure out what we needed to do.” Just getting to California provided the squadron with valuable lessons in real world deployments and the need to remain flexible, said Burhmann. “The day before we were scheduled to take off, our flight plan and training schedule changed four times between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.” Originally, more than 60 Air Guardsmen were to have traveled to California. Problems with the unit’s airlift, however, meant that around 20 airmen had to stay behind. That had a ripple effect, he said, that was not unlike real life deployments. “They quickly realized that, ‘Okay, this isn’t by the book anymore. This is real world. How are we going to this done?’” Burhmann said. 2003

For the third time in two months, a major Nebraska Air National Guard organization has changed commanders. This time it was the 155th Mission Support Group, which saw Lt. Col. George Skuodas taking command of the organization Feb. 7. The change of command came on the heels of two similar changes to the 155th Air Refueling Wing in January when Col. Steve Adams took command of the wing and Col. Jon Fago assumed command of the 155th Operations Group. Skuodas, who had commanded the 155th Military Personnel Flight,

replaces Col. Alan Malone, who retired in March after 30 years of military service. According to Adams, both leaders have served the organization proudly. The 155th Mission Support Group consists of slightly more than 400 Airmen assigned to six organizations. Skuodas, in assuming command, said he was awed to be placed in such an important position. He has served as the commander of the 155th Mission Support Flight since September 1998. January 1991 to become the 155th Civil Engineer Squadron commander. He also served as commander of the 155th Military Personnel Flight before assuming command of the 155th Support Group in September 1998.2004

2005 During her first ever two-week deployment, Senior Airman Tracy Roffers, received experiences she could not have in Lincoln. The Nebraska Air National Guard firefighter and 12 of her colleagues spent 11 days at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, late last autumn working with new aircraft, people and equipment. "I loved the experience. As a girl from the Midwest who never traveled a lot, I learned so much on and off the job," said Roffers, a member of the 155th Civil Engineering Squadron. "I found the most important thing to me was the training I received, including learning new aircraft and firefighting apparatuses." "I also met great new people," she said. Tech. Sgt. Michael Hines said he and his colleagues received valuable training on how to protect F-16 and F-15 fighters, and A-10 attack aircraft. The Nebraskans worked alongside Air Force and Nevada Air Guard personnel. "In one shift we probably went on about 25 calls back-to-back, including an in-flight emergency on an F-16," Hines said. "We made several emergency medical calls, though we didn't really have anything life-critical. Twelve calls were false fire alarms, many of which were activated by smoke detectors." Hines said the deployment also proved valuable to the Air Force. "Our presence there allowed their people to get a day or two off," Hines said. His colleagues agreed that probably the biggest training advantage of the deployment was the opportunity to support different aircraft. According to Senior Airman Justus Foged, the different airplanes offered a myriad of challenges. "That's what I like about deploying...for the experience, the different aircraft, the types of calls we get and working with different people," said Foged. In addition, the firefighters worked 24 hours on, 24 hours off, and 13 on a shift — something the traditional Guard members don't normally get the opportunity to do during unit training assemblies. Hines said not only was the training good, he and his colleagues appreciated the work of the noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Master Sgt. Mike Stroud. "He did an excellent job of taking care of us and making sure we were fed, housed and had a good time," said Hines. For Stroud, it was his first time being the in-charge during a deployment. The fire protection supervisor and assistant chief of fire operations said the deployment presented an excellent training opportunity for the Airmen. "Being overseas is challenging," Stroud said. "We got to the base only to find our billeting had been cancelled. We had to line up billeting and car rentals." "We received training on aircraft that we can't get at home," he added. "We also trained on fire trucks we don't have at home and worked as an active-duty and Guard-integrated unit." The Germany deployment also gave the fire fighters the opportunity to train on equipment they will soon be receiving in Lincoln while the junior sergeants had a chance to be in charge of a fire truck — something few ever get the chance to do in Lincoln. "Being in charge of a fire truck means being responsible for crew members and actions taken," said

Stroud. "You have to take care of your vehicle and make sure it's always in working order. It's a responsibility that people look up to."

2006 from building dorms and creating new roads and bridges to operating heavy equipment and supervising security details in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the past year has been a busy one for the members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Civil Engineering Squadron. "Generally we know what we are doing and where we are going," said Senior Master Sgt. Craig Anderson, 155th CES chief of operations. "You can always count on some surprises though." Busy is a mild understatement when it comes to the 155th Civil Engineering Squadron. During the past year, the missions the Air Guard civil engineers have been called upon to complete have been vast. The work started last October when the unit sent 45 members to Nevatim Air Force Base, Israel, to help with several construction projects. "There are a set of four dorms for Americans there and we brought them up to almost completion," said Anderson. While at the Israeli base the Nebraska engineers also started construction on a munitions maintenance facility, created a box culvert and did many smaller jobs such as painting, surveying and site layout for a new medical facility. A box culvert is a type of bridge that is created by creating boxes of concrete for the base of the bridge. A road is then laid on top of it. "I wouldn't be surprised if they poured in excess of 100 cubic yards of concrete," said Anderson. 100 cubic yards of concrete is equivalent to about 50 average size driveways. In the two weeks that the unit was in Israel, the Airmen spent over 2,500 labor hours on the different projects. Almost two thousand of those hours were spent building the dorms, culvert and munitions facility. In order to prepare for such challenging missions with up to-date equipment not readily available in Lincoln, the unit typically combines the November and December drill weekends and goes to one of the Guard's regional training sites. "The Air National Guard has set up five areas throughout the country where we can train," said Anderson. "They have a lot of the heavy equipment we need to train on, but the Guard can't afford to have at every base." "It provides a setting and an area so you can focus on training," he added. The opportunities to train together as a unit also allow the members to develop a better rapport. "(The training sites) provide an area (with) all the equipment, the housing...everything's just right there so (everyone) can concentrate on learning on the specifics of their (Air Force Specialty)," said Anderson. In addition to its mission in Israel and normal training activities, the unit has also sent numerous volunteers around the world for a variety of operations. Two of those were Staff Sgt. Ben Foster and Master Sgt. Jeff Koehly who deployed in support of security in Iraq. "They provided security support for the Air Force of Third country nationals," Anderson said. Koehly was put in charge of military escorts, which included being the noncommissioned officer-in-charge for over 400 people. Foster was a supervisor for one of the work crews. When the Air Force's Air Expeditionary force began running short of civil engineers, Master Sgt. Maybre Johns stepped up to fill in as a heavy equipment operator. The deployment began in March and lasted approximately 60 days. Maybre said he found it hard to just hand down orders instead of actually getting his hands dirty. "As an E-7 I wasn't able to do too much, but I was able to help when they needed it. Active duty personnel sometimes had a small problem allowing a senior NCO to do a physical job when an Airman will do just as well. The experience – doing any job – was something I will never forget and will be forever proud of," Johns said. One of the biggest

challenges faced by the deployed Guardsmen is ensuring everything back home is being taken care of. Like all units, the civil engineering squadron ensures that every Airman within the unit has their financial affairs in order before they leave. Still, this doesn't account for the everyday problems that can be faced by Guardsmen's families during a deployment. "We try to be there for their families when they are gone," said Anderson. "We have members of the unit volunteer to check on spouses to ensure they are coping well, including getting grass cut or providing other assistance where needed." 2006

2007 For the members of the 155th Civil Engineering Squadron it was their opportunity to help the nation fight the War on Terror. Over 40 members spent two weeks last July working in hot and uncharacteristically rainy Arizona while helping the U.S. Border patrol by improving roads, creating new barricades and improving lighting. According to unit officials, the squadron was originally scheduled to go to Yuma, Ariz., a few days before they were to leave, those plans changed. "We were going there to build walls for defense, but there weren't materials there to do that," said Capt. Rob Nickeson, 155th CES readiness officer-in-charge. The change of site wouldn't be the only challenge the group faced in the Tucson area. While in Arizona, the Air Guardsmen were responsible for ensuring local Native American tribes customs and culture weren't violated, protecting wildlife from being injured, dealing with sudden monsoon rains and working with equipment that was often inadequate for the jobs the Nebraskans had been assigned to. Along with those challenges, the Air Guardsmen also had to deal with housing issues. When they arrived in Tucson they learned they wouldn't be staying in Tucson, but rather would instead be traveling each day to get to job sites at San Miguel and Nogales, Ariz. "From Tucson to San Miguel was an hour-and-a-half drive," said Master Sgt. Janelle Priest, 155th CES electrical supervisor. "So we split the people... half went to San Miguel and the other half went about an hour down to Nogales." Nogales, Ariz. The city of Nogales is situated on the border with Mexico about 70 miles south of Tucson. Here the team was tasked with installing lights, working on roads, and cutting and welding barriers along the border. The road project in Nogales created many challenges because of the landscape of the area. "This is a fairly mountainous area and there are just trails through there where the Border Patrol could drive through... they weren't really high speed roadways. So if something was going on a mile down the road it would take them a while to get there," said Nickeson. "So an architectural firm designed a set of plans that would make a straighter road for the area," he said. "When you build a straighter road, you're going to have to fill in some areas to bring them up and shave some areas down." The original goal was to remove 20 feet of earth from a mountain. Unfortunately the equipment needed to complete this wasn't available yet, so the group led by Staff Sgt. Tandon Vanscyoc, 155th CES heavy equipment operator, had to come up with a different plan. "We came to the point that the equipment couldn't handle what we were doing, so we moved on to trying to widen the road," Vanscyoc said. While on the ground, the road crew was able to level and pave a helicopter pad, grade and excavate the existing dirt road, haul dirt and crushed rock, and improve culvert drainage. The Airmen said Mother Nature was often their greatest enemy, washing out many of the same roads they had just finished widening, forcing them to perform the same job more than once. "The way it works down there is the water washes everything away," said Nickeson. The rain also made it difficult to get the gravel trucks into the area

because of how muddy the roads became. "There was also the lightning that prevented you from doing anything. Everything stopped once the lightning was within one-eighth of a mile," said Vanscyoc. The welding group, led by Senior Master Sgt. Craig Anderson, 155th CES superintendent, spent over 340 hours installing over 2,100 feet of temporary vehicle barriers. "We would take 30 foot sections of railroad track and cut them into 15-foot sections and then six-foot sections. Then we would weld those sections together," said Senior Airman Nate Norton, 155th CES structures journeyman. The sections would then be welded into a cross with a 15-foot section welded horizontally through them. The Border Patrol had been having a problem with the border crossers breaking the welds in order to get through the barriers, so rebar was wrapped around them in order to secure them in place. One major accomplishment that was made while the welders were working on the project was a cage that was created to allow the huge acetylene tanks to be transported right onto the site in their trucks. The cage made the welding more convenient because they could wait to do many of the welds once the barricades were set and in their proper location. "In order to bend the rebar we had to have oxyacetylene tanks. So the cage kept the tanks from rattling out of the truck and no one could bend or break the gauges," said Norton. In a hilly part of the border, the Border Patrol had been having a problem with people jumping over the fence, so they had requested to have a light put up to make it easier to see what was going on. The lighting was about halfway complete from a previous unit. Tech Sgt. Daniel Clark, 155th CES electrical craftsman, was able to use the available supplies and take it almost to completion. "I took it from half-way done to almost 100 percent," said Clark. "It's pretty hilly there and they (Border Patrol) wanted to highlight the area. They had a lot of jumpers." Clark said he could have had it completed before his tour was up, but they ran out of parts. He also worked with the local contractors to bring some of the previously installed lights to specifications. "The contractor didn't like the way someone had installed some of the lights previously, so we just went back and changed them to meet their specs." San Miguel, Ariz. The Tohono O'odham of today is a nation with a population of more than 24,000 people. They live on four separate land bases totaling more than 2.7 million acres. The main reservation is located in south central Arizona where the city of Sells serves as the tribal capitol. While in the area the civil engineers had to be more careful with how they handled themselves in order to not disturb the Indian reservation. Along the road they were traveling the Guardsmen could often see ancient pottery and artifacts that they couldn't upset. The Guardsmen were accompanied on every trip by a member of the tribe and a biologist to ensure the habitat wasn't being disturbed. The San Miguel crew performed many important projects including improving and grading roads, welding and installing barriers, and spreading out the bollards—a single pipe measuring about 6-12 inches in diameter. The road crew started out fast and was able to accomplish much work at the beginning of the mission. , like in Nogales, when the rain came, it often meant having to start over again. "It was frustrating because they would do such a good job on the road and then the rains would wash them away," said Priest. "They still got over five miles of road completed." The barricade team made a lot of headway by drilling and installing barrier posts for a rail fence, putting up approximately 440 feet of rail on post by the time they were finished. Initially, the Guardsmen installed bollards in the ground that was secured by spreading the steel into the ground and filling them with concrete forms. One big challenge for the crew was learning how to use the equipment needed to install the bollards.

Additionally, the engineers – who normally are used to surveying and drafting – had to learn quickly how to run the spreader and secure the bollards. “These guys are engineers. They are trained on a whole different career field and they had to learn how to drive these vehicles,” said Priest. “By the end they were proficient in it.”

2008 Sixty-six members of the 155th Civil Engineering Squadron can breathe easier after recently completing a Silver Flag exercise this January at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. While the 155th CES trains throughout the year to ensure they are ready to support the 155th’s global mission, they are limited by time constraints and location. With the entire wing drilling simultaneously, and so many events occurring during the busy weekends, unit leaders say the squadron isn’t able to conduct the large scale training exercises where members are able to get hands-on experience completing critical tasks— tasks they may be needed to perform while deployed. That’s what made the Florida training so important, said Capt. Marna Neal, chief of operations, 155th CES. The 155th doesn’t have the resources, or the time, to train like this in Lincoln. To ensure readiness, members of the 155th CES are required to conduct a practice deployment every 40 months, said Neal. Together with 138 Airmen from Louisiana, Georgia, Wyoming, California and Washington, members got that hands on training. During the Silver Flag exercise, which lasted from Jan. 5-7, Nebraska civil engineers were given the chance to prepare for the unexpected by working on such tasks as repairing bomb craters, and planning and assembling the infrastructure for a forward operations base. Conducting vital repairs and operation of essential equipment such as generators, tents, latrines, showers, and environmental control systems are only a few examples of the training opportunities provided during the exercise. Neal said everything they needed was already at Tyndall. “All of the equipment we need to work with, or on, is already there,” she said. “We landed and assumed control of a vacant airfield that was in poor shape, and had to prepare that area for 640 people and eight aircraft,” said Neal. No detail was overlooked. Neal said that once the runway was repaired from earlier explosions, the crew had to repair it and then essentially build a town to house follow-on forces. They started completely from scratch, having to provide water, electricity, communications and housing for a group of people larger than most towns in Nebraska. In a deployed environment, Airmen may be assigned to other units. Because of this, said Neal, it’s vitally important to develop a strong working relationship with counterparts from throughout the Air Force. Working side by side with integrated teammates, members of the Nebraska Guard had to enmesh themselves with other units quickly in order to accomplish the task at hand. Teamwork was a critical aspect of this training. “This was a good opportunity for all trades to help one another and see the potential of each,” said Neal. With the 155th CES providing the nearly half of the total population, they were given command of the entire exercise. Lt. Col. Gary Krupa commanded not only Guard elements, but also those from active duty, and reserve units, said Neal. Training in an unfamiliar area, and working together towards a common goal, really helped to keep everyone driven and focused, she said. “This training allows us to start from scratch,” said Neal.

2008 ALI BASE, Iraq – Nine Iraqi firefighters graduated from the Basic Firefighter Skills Course conducted by the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Fire Department, March 24. The six-week course is aimed at teaching Iraqi students “the basics of fighting fires, search and rescue and

life saving skills,” said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Horne, 407th ECES fire chief. Horne is also the fire chief for the Nebraska Air National Guard. Hazim Nadoom, an Iraqi who has been translating the course for the firefighters since 2006, said the course is working. “We have a guy from two classes ago who was able to save a little baby and a 3-year-old in a house fire because of this training,” he said. Years before those children were saved, Air Force and Iraqi firefighters responded to a hospital fire. “(The Iraqi firefighters’) training and equipment were minimal,” according to an Enabling Forces Assessment, dated Nov. 24, 2006, a compilation of interviews and information about the need to form a training relationship between the two fire departments. The program was stood up by Air Force firefighters and has been continuing since. The program has two main agendas: to train the firefighters on the basics and to give the Iraqis equipment donated from fire departments in the United States. The Iraqis attend six, three hour training blocks, including courses such as basic fire principles, putting out live fires, or “live burns,” and medical training; all of which are found in a new recruit’s first weeks of training at the Department of Defense Fire Academy. “Out in town, these guys are just hired and then learn how to fight fires on the job. They don’t attend an academy,” said Tech. Sgt. Robert Bogle, 407th ECES Fire Department assistant chief of training. “Most of these guys have more than a year’s (worth of) experience fighting fires, but they may not understand exactly what they’re fighting or how to fight it safely.” So eight to 10 local firefighters, chosen from more than 1,400 in the area, travel by bus to attend the training in hopes they “take these skills back to those in the fire houses, so they can impact all the firemen that can’t make a class out here,” said Bogle, another member of the Nebraska Air National Guard fire department who is currently deployed in Iraq. As for the basic principle of firefighting, “we are using very old techniques still and it’s great to learn the latest techniques on how to save people and put out fires,” Hazim said. Although the Iraqis’ techniques may be old and their equipment nearly non-existent, this doesn’t mean the Air Force firefighters can’t learn from their foreign counterparts. “We both learn something from this,” said Horne. “We show them and they show us. They’re very resourceful with what they have.” The assessment detailed the cross-flow of information saying “Iraqi fire fighters utilize hand tools and have taught the U.S. Air Force firefighters very effective extraction skills using locally available tools when reacting to emergency situations.” “Locally available tools” and old techniques may put the fire out, but if a firefighter is injured in the process, he’s just another victim. “Air Force firefighters are taught to consider their safety first; if you become another casualty you’re in no position to help anybody else,” Bogle said. “(During the class) we spend a lot of time on safety and how to wear their gear properly, because they don’t have this at their fire houses. It’s all new and unfamiliar to them.” For safety reasons and so the Iraqis can utilize their new training, the Air Force firefighters here try to find departments back home to donate excess equipment. “They are fighting fires in coveralls and plastic helmets,” he said. “It’s the most important thing they need and they just don’t have enough for the 1,400 firefighters protecting the 750,000 people who live here.” “With the limited equipment and fire protection in buildings, it’s really an uphill battle for them,” the chief said. “That’s why we’re depending on local fire departments back home... the ones who get refitted with all new gear (to) send us their excess.” Although the Iraqis and Americans employ different skill sets and wear different cloths, a firefighter is still a firefighter. “It doesn’t matter what country you’re from, we’re all one family and the Iraqis come in here and joke and have fun just like the rest

of the firefighters,” Horne said. “This is a brotherhood, that’s all it is,” Hazim said.

2010 Snow blew into every nook and cranny that it could find, even under the heavy hangar doors at the Nebraska Air National Guard Base, home of the 155th Air Refueling Wing. Then came the bitter cold temperatures... and even more wind. Keeping the Nebraska National Guard air base up and running despite the difficult winter conditions quickly became a base-wide team effort. Snow removal crews worked extra hours and through the holidays to keep the base streets and aircraft ramp cleared. “During the December unit training assembly, the (155th) Civil Engineer (Squadron’s) traditional Guardsmen had worked to clear snow from an earlier storm, so that helped,” said Robert Doetker, a former member of the 155th Air Refueling Wing who is now working for the Nebraska Air National Guard as a temporary state employee. Doetker said on Christmas Eve day, when everyone else was released at noon, the snow removal crew kept working, clearing the base streets and sidewalks. That work extended long into the Christmas holiday. “On Christmas day, Senior Master Sgt. Craig Anderson, the civil engineer facility manager, Dan Ptacek, a grounds worker, and I came in to keep the road to the base open and the large parking lot clean so the University of Nebraska football team could leave for San Diego,” said Doetker. The snow removal crew worked extra hours and through the holidays to keep the base streets and aircraft parking ramp cleared. Cleaning the snow from the aircraft parking ramp proved to be quite another undertaking, said Doetker. While members of the 155 Aircraft Maintenance Squadron used walk behind snowblowers or a bobcat to clear the snow from around the unit’s KC-135R Stratotankers, the civil engineer members were cleaning the snow from the ramp. According to Doetker, the ideal way of cleaning the ramp is to move all the snow from behind the aircraft, push the aircraft back into the cleaned area and then clean the snow from the rest of the ramp. “We used both large snowblowers, two dump trucks and boss blades and a payloader to move the snow from the ramp,” said Doetker. Doetker estimated they moved more than 300 dump truck loads of snow from the ramp. He said the crews had to contend with three different kinds of snow. “We had the light powder, the blowing snow that packed, and packed snow from a previous storm,” said Doetker. “Each type of snow moves differently, so when it piles up the way it did, it became quite a task to clear.” Almost every member of the 155th Civil Engineer Squadron pitched in to help move the snow. Some of the members received an hour of training on a piece of snow removal equipment and then were put to work. “We used 18 different kinds of equipment, from the large snowblowers and plows, to walk behind snowblowers and many shovels,” said Doetker. Considering the number of continuous hours of operation the equipment had to endure, Doetker said it held up well. One snowblower kept blowing a seal, so they fired up a snowblower that was to be retired just to keep two of the large snowblowers clearing snow. The snow removal operation was a complete team effort according to Doetker. If a piece of equipment broke, vehicle maintenance employees would fix the equipment without asking any questions. The vehicle maintenance Supervisor also allowed the snow removal equipment to be stored inside so the hydraulics would stay warm, keeping the seals in good shape. “I believe this was the main reason we didn’t have equipment break down anymore than we did,” said Doetker. The base populace also proved to be extremely understanding, said Doetker, adding that the 155th Civil Engineer Squadron work control center didn’t receive many trouble calls, said Doetker. They base

populace knew the snow removal was the top priority, he added. Unit members also cleaned the snow from around entry doors of the different buildings so that a tractor with a blade could come in and clean away the rest of the snow from around the buildings. Units such as Aerospace Ground Equipment and Base Fuels also cleaned the snow from their respective areas so the civil engineers could concentrate on the other major areas of the base

2010 On a cool, crisp November morning, 84 members from the 155th Air Refueling Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron flew to a Regional Training Site near Fargo, N.D., for a Nov. 4-8 training exercise. According to Master Sgt. David Wieting, Prime Beef manager, "The civil engineer squadron has many Status of Resources and Training (SORTS) tasks that can't be accomplished on site." Some of this training includes the ability to repair bombed out runways. To accomplish this task, heavy equipment operators have to clear away debris from the bomb crater and properly fill in the hole. Structural specialists then bring in fiberglass mats to cover the hole and make the runways usable again. "All this needs to be accomplished as quickly as possible to keep the aircraft flying," said Wieting. " , the size of crater, type of aircraft using the runway, climate and types of material available used to fix the crater are all factors CE can't control." "What CE can control is organization, proficiency and skill levels, which is why this training is so important," said Wieting. The trick is, the training can only be accomplished at three sites in the United States. That's what made the North Dakota training so important. "The main goal for this training was to get the SORTS reportable tasks completed," said Lt. Col. Robert Hargens, 155th CES commander, "and to give CE a chance to deploy somewhere to work together and build unit morale." The training extended to nearly every area of the 155th CES. "The electricians are required to climb electrical poles a certain number of times to stay proficient. The RTS has all the poles with all the proper climbing gear available for electricians coming in for training that is not available at Lincoln," Wieting said. Members of the unit's power production element were also able to train on generators that also aren't available in Lincoln. The MEP-12 is a high voltage generator with enough power to provide electricity for an entire base. Senior Airman Philip Francis, a power production specialist, had recently deployed to Iraq. He said the North Dakota training accurately replicated the skills Airmen need to be successful during overseas deployments. "The training we are getting here is really good and is applicable to what we did in Iraq," Francis said. "This training is important so we can stay proficient at our jobs." "When we deploy, it is important we know our jobs because the other people we work with have the same skill levels and that makes the jobs go smoother without as many road blocks," Francis said. Even Hargens got into the act. "There was a ton of stuff that was new to me that I haven't had the opportunity to do," Hargens said. "I worked with the crews that set up the mobile aircraft arresting system and we ran the truck that actually caught the wire and brought it out, simulating what an aircraft would do." "I had the opportunity to actually get some hands-on training with the heavy equipment, which I haven't done before," Hargens added. "I watched the (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) folks blow some stuff up using C-4 explosives, which they aren't allowed to use in Lincoln, and I put on firefighting equipment and worked with the firemen during their structure training." The fire fighting training was particularly important. The firemen trained on an F-16 egress trainer, structural firefighting training, mobile aircraft arresting system training and fire truck driver training. "The firemen

received training in several different areas that proved very beneficial for everyone especially our new members,” said Tech. Sgt. Clay Parker, a fire department crew chief. Although the aircraft burn pit was closed for winterizing, the firemen were able to do egress training on an F-16. This type of training is not available in Lincoln since the 155th ARW is an aerial refueling unit. , when deployed, firefighters need to know how to egress pilots from fighter aircraft while dealing with ejection seats, he said. According to Tech. Sgt. James Iron thunder, another crew chief, the truck driving training is also important. “We needed refresher training on the P-18 Tanker truck and the P-19 Crash truck since we don’t have these vehicles in Lincoln, but these are the trucks we drive overseas when we are deployed,” Iron thunder said. Iron thunder added that some of the new unit members were able to train on trucks to help them get prepared for deployments. Firefighters don’t get driver training on the two types of fire trucks during technical school, so the North Dakota exercise gave them the opportunity to work with vehicles that they’re not yet licensed to operate. During the structural fire training, firemen put wooden pallets in a burn tower and lit them on fire to simulate a building fire. “We practice with a wood fire because it burns hotter than a propane fire,” said Parker. “That way everyone gets used to the heat and how fast the proper water stream starts cooling the fire.” “This training helps refresh some of the veterans and teach our new members about staying low, adjusting the water stream and proper firefighting techniques they don’t necessarily learn in the technical school,” added Parker, “which helps a lot when deployed overseas because we can see a lot of structural fires from rocket attacks.” Members of the squadron also practiced assembling Alaskan Small Shelters. These are small tent-like structures used for housing members when they’re deployed. Once the shelters were assembled, the electricians ran electricity while HVAC specialists installed heating and cooling units. The power production members assisted by setting up generators to provide power for everything. The utilities shop also set up a field deployable shower, shave and latrine structure. The training is required because civil engineers a new base in a remote location. Wieting also trained the CES members in combat skills training. Air Soft weapons were used to simulate real weapons. “It was like a big game of capture the flag,” said Parker. “It was a blast.”

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