

# 188 CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

## MISSION

## LINEAGE

188 Civil Engineering Squadron  
Redesignated 188 Civil Engineer Squadron

## STATIONS

Ebbing ANGB, Fort Smith, AR

## ASSIGNMENTS

188 Mission Support Group

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## NICKNAME

## OPERATIONS

NOGALES, Ariz. In just two weeks time 39 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron completed construction on seven and one-half miles of roadway and constructed 600 feet of steel fencing along the U.S. Mexico border here. The all volunteer team from the Fort Smith based unit deployed to Ariz. For its two week annual training period from 16 Feb to 1 Mar 2008.

The engineers were working in support of Operation Jump Start in building infrastructure along the U.S. Mexico border. The scope of the engineers' mission included a variety of construction, repair and maintenance projects. The group was divided into teams to support the different projects. The first was to construct improvements to a two mile stretch of border road west of Nogales used for tactical support of border patrol agents. Improvements consisted of cut, fill and compaction of the roadway surface requiring the movement of 1,425 cubic yards of dirt and rock, as well as installation of over 17,425 square yards of erosion control matting on side slopes and the placement of approximately 4,000 sq yards of drainage channeling rock along slopes and ditches. The second team concentrated on road improvements along a four mile stretch of the Airport Road west of Nogales. This project also called for improvements consisting of cut, excavation, fill and compaction of roadway surface requiring the movement of 2,040 cubic yards of dirt and rock, and the cut and slope or road ditches and side slopes. A third team of construction and welding craftsmen built 36 fence sections measuring 16 feet high by 8 feet in length. These sections were welded and prepared for installation along the border where they will be installed to prevent personnel and vehicles from illegally crossing the border. A fourth team consisting of electrical power technicians and maintenance specialists performed repairs on 21 portable light carts. The portable trailer mounted carts are used to provide lighting for night time work along the border during the oppressive summer in Arizona where daytime temperatures routinely exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Repairs consisted of replacing radiators, oil seals, coil cords, injector pumps, water pumps, and alternators. Maintenance consisted of changing oil and filters, and pressure washing. Capt. Mark Mobley, commander of the deployed 188<sup>th</sup> engineers said, "The value of the training our Airmen receive on a project like this is unbeatable. They get actual experience hours operating equipment here that we don't get much of at home station." During the two week period the personnel from the 188<sup>th</sup> accomplished over 1,600 hours in training for heavy equipment operators; 880 hours for welding technicians and over 400 hours for power generation and maintenance specialists. For several of the new members of the CE squadron, it was also an opportunity to experience the operational pace of a deployment and desert conditions without visiting the middle East.2008

Members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron operate heavy construction equipment in construction of a four mile road project during their annual training deployment in February near Nogales, Ariz. The 38 volunteers of the unit, an element of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing were in Arizona for two weeks supporting Operation Jump Start, the mission authorized by President Bush in the spring of 2006 placing Guardsmen on the Southwest border with Mexico to aid U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service. During the two-week project 188<sup>th</sup> equipment operators moved over 12,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock, and constructed 600 feet of fencing to further enhance the tactical infrastructure such as roads and fences used by U.S. Border Patrol in their efforts to secure the homeland. Operation Jump Start-Arizona Public Affairs Arkansas Air National Guard Master Sgt. David Rich, of Evansville, AR, welds together a section of fence in a staging area in Nogales, Ariz., during the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron's annual training deployment to the Southwest border in support of Operation Jump Start. Rich, an electrician in civilian life, served as the unit's welding supervisor. The fence, part of the tactical infrastructure that supports the U.S. Border Patrol in their efforts to secure the nation, is being

installed along the Arizona-Mexico border. Photo by Sgt. Ed Balaban, Operation Jump Start-Arizona Public Affairs Members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron put finishing touches on erosion control aspects of a four mile road project during their annual training deployment in Feb. near Nogales, Ariz. The 38 volunteers of the unit, an element of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing based in Fort Smith, Ark., were in Arizona for two weeks supporting Operation Jump Start, the mission authorized by President Bush in the spring of 2006 placing Guardsmen on the Southwest border with Mexico to aid U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service. The unit provided engineering expertise to further enhance the tactical infrastructure such as roads and fences used by U.S. Border Patrol in their efforts to secure the homeland. The last day in January marked the first time in more than six months that many 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Civil Engineers had a chance to spend time with their families. Thirty-eight members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron returned 31 Jan from a six-month deployment to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, where they joined the 474<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. The 188 CES' primary function was to ensure the conditions at Camp Justice's expeditionary legal complex remained acceptable to facilitate optimum trial conditions. "They made sure billeting conditions were sufficient for the lawyers, media, human activist groups and dignitaries, who were involved in the trials of the detainees," said Maj. Joe Harrison, 188<sup>th</sup> Base Civil Engineer. "They were tasked with making sure the courthouse was up and running and that the air conditioning, power and things of that nature were operating so that there were no interruptions during the commissions. They also focused on the quality of life issues for the detainees." The 188 CES served as the lead unit during its deployment to Cuba. The 188<sup>th</sup> partnered with elements of the Maryland Air National Guard's 175<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Illinois Air National Guard's 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing and the New York Air National Guard's 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing during the tour. But it wasn't just Air National Guard units that the 188<sup>th</sup> toiled with during the deployment. Senior Master Sgt. Tim McConnell, a member of the 188 CES, who functioned as the operations flight noncommissioned officer in charge while deployed to Cuba, said the unit logged valuable experience while executing a diverse mission under unique circumstances. "It was a different kind of deployment and gave us the chance to do a lot of tasks and training in a real-world mission that we can't get anywhere else," McConnell said. "It was different in that we worked closely with the Navy, Marines and Coast Guard on a daily basis." The 188 CES helped maintain generators and electricity, provided carpentry skills, pest control services, utilities maintenance and heavy equipment operation. "We provided the bulk of the support, command structure and personnel while there," Harrison said. McConnell called the deployment "high-visibility" but added that it afforded 188 CES personnel the opportunity to encounter arduous yet valuable challenges under stressful circumstances. "We had to make sure that nothing went wrong and that the detention center was well represented from a civil engineering standpoint," McConnell said. The assorted tests didn't halt there. Harrison said during the final two weeks of the deployment the 188 CES worked with U.S. Army in migrant operations at the Joint Task Force to help with the Haitian relief efforts, erecting more than 100 tents in preparation for Haitian evacuees, following a 7.0 earthquake in Haiti Jan. 12 "We felt a slight tremble," McConnell said. "It wasn't long after the earthquake that things starting ramping up over there." McConnell said that many of the efforts to assemble the tents were mustered prior to the earthquake as part of an exercise that was slated for February. "We had the earthquake in

January so the exercise they were supposed to have turned into the real McCoy,” McConnell said. “We geared up for the possibility of migrants right about the time we were rotating out. They were talking about setting up about 1,400 tents before we left.” For the 188th CES, it was an experience they won’t soon forget. “We got to be around a lot of history while we were there and whether or not the place closes down eventually or it doesn’t, we know we were a part of that history,” McConnell said. The 188 CES last deployed to Kirkuk Air Base in Iraq for four months in 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of an Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation. The 188<sup>th</sup> was also the lead unit during its stint in Kirkuk Air Base in Iraq. The 188 CES experienced a surge of deployments in 2009. The 188<sup>th</sup> CES also had eight firefighters deployed to Kuwait for six months. They returned last September. Five CES members, including one CE officer, three heavy equipment operators and one power production specialist embarked on a year-long deployment to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan in Jul 2009.

LTC Denise W. Boyer outgoing commander of the 474<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron and member of the Arkansas Air Guard, relinquishes command to incoming commander LTC David M. Kennard of the Mississippi Air Guard, during a change of command ceremony held at Camp Justice, 28 Jan 2010. Thirty-eight members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron returned 31 Jan from the six-month deployment to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, where they joined the 474<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo

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Approximately 50 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron spent the holiday away from home. The Airmen departed their home station in Fort Smith, AR., 24 Jul 2009, to embark on a six-month deployment to Cuba where they joined the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. The primary objective of JTF Guantanamo’s 474 ECES is to handle construction issues at Camp Justice and the Expeditionary Legal Complex in support of military commissions at the naval station. The 188<sup>th</sup> joined with elements of the Maryland Air National Guard’s 175<sup>th</sup> Air Wing, Illinois Air National Guard’s 183rd Fighter Wing and the New York Air National Guard’s 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing. The four units replaced service members from the 130<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard. The 188 CES is one component of a team of engineers from the 474<sup>th</sup> ECES, which maintains generators and electricity as well as furnishing carpentry skills and utilities maintenance. The 188 CES also helps to provide pest control services, heavy equipment operation and liquid fuel support with assistance from administrative, work control and operations teams, which labor to coordinate all of the projects. The 474<sup>th</sup> ECES, which is also

known as the Base Emergency Engineering Force (BEEF), also labors to complete projects on the naval station and JTF to help upgrade the conditions for the service members and detainees. That recently included the installation of a new soccer facility, which resides in the recreation yard at Guantanamo's Camp 6. Members of the 188th assigned to the 474th finished that project Dec. 8. The final touches included the construction of new soccer goals. The project was the first step of a two-week construction plan to upgrade detention facilities, a strategy that will continue until the last detainee leaves GTMO. Navy Lt. Todd N. Taylor, Camp 6 officer-in-charge, said improvements to the detention facilities are made continuously. "While detainees are in our custody, we strive to enhance facilities in accordance with the safe, humane, legal and transparent care and custody of detainees," Taylor said. Taylor said detainees receive recreation daily. While many sports are offered, Taylor said the majority of the detainees prefer soccer. Taylor said the construction of the goals provides detainees with a more competitive game of soccer. "The soccer goals are built to regulation," said Tech. Sgt. Bailey M. Coleman, a heavy equipment engineer with the 188<sup>th</sup> attached to the 474<sup>th</sup> ECES. "The goals are sturdy and permanent now. It makes for a more realistic game for the detainees."

Until the last detainee leaves, GTMO will continue normal operations, modifying detention facilities to enhance the quality of life for detainees. Members of the 188 CES are scheduled to return from the deployment in January 2010

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Sources

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