

# 755 EXPEDITIONARY CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON



## MISSION

## LINEAGE

755 Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron

## STATIONS

## ASSIGNMENTS

755 Expeditionary Mission Support Group

## COMMANDERS

Lt Col Kimberly A. Thompson

## HONORS

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## EMBLEM

On a disc Or, against a sky, a snow capped mountain range surmounted overall by two scimitars points up in saltire all Proper, all entoured by a gear wheel of sixteen cogs Sable, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "KAMYA BE DER HEMBASTAGEEST" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a

Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "755 ECES" in Black letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The gear encircling the emblem represents the essence of engineering: applying scientific principles and technology to practical ends. Its sixteen teeth represent the diverse Air Force specialties that mesh together to accomplish the unit's mission. The crossed scimitars represent the Squadron's commitment to the defense of liberty in any expeditionary environment. The mountains represent the steady base that the expeditionary engineers provide to mission accomplishment and are a reminder of the units' birthplace in the mountains of Eastern Afghanistan.

## **MOTTO**

KAMYA BE DER HEMBASTAGEEST--Victory In Unity

## **OPERATIONS**

Increasingly in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, U.S. Air Force Airmen are accepting "in lieu of" taskings to allow Army units an opportunity to recover. One such team that showcases the Air Force's core values on a daily basis is the Facility Engineer Team at Bagram AB, Afghanistan.

"FETs deploy during wartime to conduct Directorate of Public Works' base operations, environmental, and facility assessment missions," said Lt Col Gregory Cummings, 755th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron commander, deployed from Langley AFB, Va. "When we first received the task order for this deployment at our home stations, the term FET was unknown to us. However, once we got our boots on the ground and began operating within this organization, we proved the Air Force was part of the joint force team focused on the mission."

The 755th CES has responsibility for the FET, as well as for operational and administrative control of more than 80 Air Force personnel (including explosive ordnance disposal, fire, readiness, logistics, intelligence, and information management) spread across more than 20 locations in Afghanistan.

"We are Airmen filling requirements that combatant commanders need to execute their missions," said SMSgt Andrew Drummond, 755th ECES superintendent, deployed from RAF Lakenheath, England. "With the plethora of requirements out there, it is only right that we lift and shift to fill the breach."

Bagram's FET has accomplished many things during its time here, including networking the use of more than 60 escorts to support more than 300 construction contractors on a daily basis, and synchronizing more than \$300M worth of current and upcoming construction through bi-monthly meetings with more than 15 engineer and functional stakeholders. Members of the team mentor local engineers in honing their design skills, while producing functional products and leveraging design-bid-build and design-build capabilities for multimillion dollar programs. The program force-multiplies customer support, and meets timelines and gains project funding through solid justification.

"A lot goes into the projects we do," said SSgt Julio Morelos, a 755th ECES engineering technician from Eglin AFB, Fla. " Before we can do anything, we have to coordinate with outside agencies that are just as important to construction as the FET."

One of the most visible projects the FET team is working on is the expansion of Bagram, the primary staging hub for coalition forces entering and leaving the Central Asian States area of operations. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Minister of Defense and a U.S. representative recently signed an Accommodation Consignment Agreement to address force protection requirements, varied missions, and surges in population.

"This agreement enabled the United States to expand the base by a few thousand acres," said SSgt Rebecca Cook, a 755th ECES engineering technician from Eglin AFB who is the expansion project manager. "One of the unique processes added to the normal construction procedures here is that all construction areas must be cleared of mines and unexploded ordnance prior to starting work. All of our efforts are synchronized very closely with the Mine Action Center and their supporting coalition forces and contractors to ensure the safety of workers throughout the construction cycle."

Once finished, the expanded area will be used for Army support facilities for the receiving, staging and onward integration mission. Included will be a new gym, dining facilities, a multipurpose facility, a contractor village for large military construction projects, surge housing, war reserve material storage, a landfill with an incinerator, and a wastewater treatment plant.

"The [dining facility] will feed everyone on that side of the runway, stopping the mass transit requirement to get folks from one side to the other for breakfast, lunch, and dinner," said Maj Bruce Jones, 755th ECES chief of engineering from Brooks City-Base, Texas. "The movement of the current landfill will create safer air traffic, as the birds will not be so close to the end of the runway."

**755th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron** In the past eight weeks, more than 50 civil engineer specialists deployed from Wright- Patterson's 445th Civil Engineer Squadron have been putting together a training program to recruit and certify local workers for construction projects on base. The Training Afghan Craftsmen program, or TAC, also aims to build up job résumés for local skilled workers with the goal of getting them higher paying jobs. Staff Sgt. Mike Nelson, a readiness management specialist working as a structural craftsman who developed the training program, said the idea came a few months ago when a local worker providing unskilled labor told Nelson's unit that he was a skilled mason and could help on construction projects.

The unit let the contractor demonstrate his skills and was surprised to find an untapped resource. "He did a great custom job that we could not have done," Nelson said. "He knew how to incorporate some of the local natural resources into the project. [After that] we realized we could use workers with these hidden talents as force multipliers on various construction projects." Sergeant Nelson said his unit saw an opportunity to help workers they had come to know through various unskilled labor projects - while also providing certified labor continuity for the next rotation of Airmen who could use their skills sets.

Rather than start a training and certification system from scratch, Sergeant Nelson decided to use the Air Force enlisted Career Field Education and Training Plan as a template. "The only thing that was missing was a verifiable system and training program," he said. "Now we're taking workers through a series of verifiable and quantifiable training events with core tasks just like in

the CFETP.” Sergeant Nelson said the new TAC program has four major phases. The application phase screens workers with at least some experience in a skill set from the pool of local workers who apply for work on Bagram.

After the screening process, Sergeant Nelson said the applicants are given a few days worth of safety and basic engineer skills training and taught basic English speaking for use in the workplace. “We teach them things like how to work safely, or how to use a tape measure ... basic skills they’ll need for any of the specialties we are training them in,” explained Sergeant Nelson. “We also teach them English words used at the workplace like hammer, safety or lunch.” The workers then go on to the upgrade training phase, similar to enlisted upgrade training in the Air Force. “We pair the workers up with one of our Airmen in the corresponding career field they’re interested in for 12 to 18 months,” he said.

“Like Air Force upgrade training, we’ll document their training and certify them on tasks for upgrade training on several different skill levels.” Sergeant Nelson said his unit then provides training certificates for the workers and also helps them write résumés in English and their native language, Dari, with the goal of fetching a higher paying contract job on- or off-base. “The skills and training we give them will help them more in the long run than if we just built something for them,” Sergeant Nelson explained. Tech. Sgt. Clay Bucy, a structural craftsman for the 755th ECES, is training three carpenter apprentices how to cut dry wall for the first time while building a new mortuary affairs facility here. “We’ve been showing them a few tricks of the trade,” he said.

“Once they’re trained, we give them their tools and let them go at it.” Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Lemaster, a structural craftsman for the 755th ECES, supervises six TAC workers working for a month to expand Entry Control Point One where local villagers wait in line each day for random job opportunities. “They’ve helped us with a lot of the big projects we’re working on here at Bagram,” the Independence, Ky. native said of his carpenter apprentices who have developed their own friendly handshakes when they greet each other.

“We’re doing our part to win the hearts and minds of the local population. We have developed great relationships with them.” While Sergeant Nelson said developing the program took a lot of effort - building up relationships with his workers and finding creative ways to make contacts and get the resources needed to implement the program - but it was all for a good cause. “It’s all about engaging the system for their sake and finding people who want to know how to make themselves better and taking the initiative to help them do it,” Sergeant Nelson explained. “If TAC helps these workers find a contractor who will pay them what they deserve, then I’m more than willing to put forth the effort,” he said. “We hope this program will have a long-lasting effect on the workers and their families.

When the commander of the 931<sup>st</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron packed his bags for deployment he only packed one hat but found himself wearing many at his deployed location. While deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, Lt. Col. Kimberly Thompson fulfilled five different roles during his assignment with the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group. Before departing on his deployment Lt. Col. Thompson spent some time with the Army down at Fort Sill, Okla. completing a 30 day Combat Skills Training course. “It was great training,” said the colonel. “I was sent there to see how the Army did things. The weather cooperated nicely for the CST class with the temperature (high) only dropping below 100 degrees on four of the 30 days. “It was hot there,

we had 10 consecutive days when the temperature reached 110 degrees,” said Lt. Col. Thompson. “It was good preparation for my deployment.” As the colonel sat on the tarmac and prepared for departure to the Area of Responsibility he thought about the coming months. “I knew I was going to have a lot of hats and knew it wasn’t going to be just an Air force mission,” said the colonel. “I went there prepared for seven day work weeks working 14 hours per day.” The colonel was presented with a lot of responsibilities, which began on September 23, the day the 931st CES commander arrived at Bagram Air Base. Lt. Col. Thompson was named Commander of the 755th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron. “This was actually an add-on to the original tasking,” said the colonel. Being a newly formed squadron, Lt. Col. Thompson had the honor of being the units’ first commander. “I really wanted to get the unit off to a good start,” said Colonel Thompson A squadron patch was created along with other things bearing the new image. We had a squadron patch created and some coins made over there as well,” he said. The colonel also had other titles and duties, serving as the Air Force Facility Engineer Team chief, Director of Public Works for the U.S. Army’s 23rd Area Support Group, Senior Engineer Liaison for the Corps of Engineers in the Afghanistan engineer district, fire marshal and also served as the senior engineer on station. “I wore a lot of hats,” said Colonel Thompson. April 3 rolled around and it was time to put the ‘hats’ back on the rack and head home. As Lt. Col. Thompson waited to begin his journey back to the United States, he thought to himself ‘there’s no place like home.’

---

USAF Unit Histories  
Created: 20 Sep 2021  
Updated:

Sources  
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.