



AIR FORCE ENGINEERS SUPPORT SURGE

By Lieutenant Colonel Douglas D. Hardman

In early December 2006, the United States Air Force's 732d Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron stood up Detachment 3 to support the United States Army's 411th Engineer Brigade. Replacing the 803d Utility Detachment, the Air Force detachment completed seven major construction projects during its first rotation and handed over three more projects that were in progress when it rotated out of theater. It was a testament to the Airmen and their accomplishments as part of a joint engineer team. In order to support the surge of troops in Iraq, the Airmen were tasked to completely rebuild

a much-needed facility. Existing earthen berms were demolished, then replaced with HESCO Bastion Concertainer® units. Then new berms were built around the new perimeter and roads in the area were rebuilt and strengthened. In only 21 days, the detachment doubled the storage capacity of the largest facility of its kind on location, while allowing uninterrupted operations by the facility's personnel.

To facilitate the flow of horizontal construction materials to three forward operating bases in central Iraq, the detachment was tasked with the expansion of the base's transload yard.



Detachment 3 Airmen construct a landing pad and taxiway for the 3d Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade.



Airmen construct new headquarters facilities for brigade combat teams.

This expansion was integral to ensuring the safe flow of construction materials to units in the field. The Airmen completed Southwest Asia huts in support of local units. These facilities met a crucial need for troops operating in the area. With the standup of the new Multinational Division–Central and the arrival of the surge units, they were tasked to turn an existing warehouse into workspace. In only three weeks, the Airmen transformed the facility into what the

commanding general praised as “. . . a better facility than they have back at our home station.”

In addition, the Airmen pushed dirt in support of the incoming surge. In a short time, crews transformed a dry lake bed of several acres into usable land by raising the elevation of the site, ensuring positive drainage, and preparing the site to bed-down incoming troops. The detachment constructed multiple horizontal and vertical projects from scratch to support the incoming unit. The mission was again completed in a very short time, allowing the timely bed-down of the entire unit and its equipment. The surge of forces brought about the requirement for expedient command and control workspace to accommodate the incoming units. The detachment constructed tents as work centers for units supporting the incoming unit.

Finally, to improve the quality of life for maintenance personnel, the Airmen began work on projects to provide storage pads for local unit motor pools. This project will provide adequate space for vehicle maintenance personnel during adverse weather conditions.

The accomplishments of these Airmen had a direct impact on the successful execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom by providing outstanding mission support for combat units in the Iraqi area of operations. The dedication of the Airmen from Hurlburt Field, Florida; Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB), Idaho; Charleston AFB, South Carolina; McConnell AFB, Kansas; Ramstein Air Base (AB), Germany; and Aviano AB, Italy, are a testament to the Air Force’s ability to provide fast, top-notch combat support. 

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