

440th CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

440th Civil Engineering Squadron
Redesignated 440th Civil Engineer Squadron

STATIONS

General Mitchell ARS, Milwaukee, WI
Pope AFB, NC

ASSIGNMENTS

440th Mission Support Group

COMMANDERS

Maj Gwen Sheppard

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

2007 440th civil engineers build better life for Hawaiians during unit's final deployment Forty-four Civil Engineer Reservists recently flew to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, but the trip was far from a vacation. During a four week period, two teams of 440th Airlift Wing reservists put their skills to work building a new elderly daycare center at Helemano Plantation on the island of Oahu. Each day, the civil engineers drove 30 minutes to the construction site, where they worked from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. One of the electrical teams led by Senior Master Sgt. Paul Sackman, installed street lighting and conduits for the lighting circuits, and set-up wiring for the service entrances to some of the buildings.

They installed more than 3,000 feet of electrical wire underground, providing electricity to the light poles. The team also troubleshooted electrical problems in existing buildings, including a malfunctioning fire alarm that kept shorting out. "For a lot of our younger troops, the trip was excellent training," said Master Sgt. Tyler Coddington, who is an electrical lineman as a civilian, and electrical systems technician in the Reserve. "Typically we are not doing this type of training on a Reserve weekend, so it was their first opportunity for actual hands-on experience." While the electrical teams were burying cable, structural teams poured concrete foundations and framed interior and exterior walls for the dormitory style buildings that would be used by disabled adults and senior citizens.

"We placed the wooden forms for several building floors," said Tech. Sgt. Kevin Sampson, a heavy equipment operator. "Then we tied the rebar in place and poured the concrete." Sergeant Sampson estimated the CES team laid more than 3,000 square feet of concrete for the new buildings. Seven concrete trucks were needed to complete the job. The reservist also operated a back hoe, vibrating roller and skidsteer to prepare the foundations for concrete. The work was carefully planned around the frequent rain showers. "Believe it or not, the weather was a challenge," said Maj. David Phillips, a civil engineering officer and part of the structural team. "It rained on and off throughout the entire tour.

At times we had wind gusts of more than 25 miles per hour. When you're working with electrical power tools and trying to pour concrete, you have to really watch the weather." In one case, the electrical and utility teams worked closely together to solve an emergency situation in which a main water system broke. "First we had to figure out what the underlying problem was," said Master Sgt. Jack Vollriede, an electrician. "We discovered the control and safety systems weren't working correctly, and the result was a spike in water pressure that blew the pipe apart on an irrigation system." While Vollriede worked on correcting the electrical issue, Master Sergeants Michael Sendelbach and William (Bill) Lorenz replaced the ruptured water mains. They also installed a new relief system in the water main to avoid similar failures in the future. "Their combined efforts saved Helemano more than \$15,000 in repairs and their water bill," said Maj. Gwen Sheppard, 440th CES commander.

Some reservists used the deployment to step outside their comfort zone and try new roles. Such was the case for Master Sgt. Paula Trestik. Normally an information management specialist for the squadron, she helped the plumbers on the structural team, hauling lumber, pouring concrete and shoveling gravel. "I helped out wherever they needed me," Sergeant Trestik said. "It was a great experience because I got to serve outdoors and do a lot physical activity, which isn't normally part of the information management career field." Sergeant Trestik said the reservists met many of the Hawaiians who would be using the facilities. m "They were really excited to see

us out there working on their new buildings,” she said. “When we left, they gave us homemade cookies and Hawaiian ornaments as a thank you.” The six interlocking work centers on the Helemano Plantation provide the work and training sites for disabled adults, and a safe location for senior citizens to meet during the day

The program’s Chief Executive Officer Susanna F. Cheung visited the construction site every day, sharing her vision with the reservists making her dream come true. “Mrs. Cheung was grateful we were working on this humanitarian project,” said Major Sheppard. “And our Reservists felt proud of their work. We were helping our own people in our own country. This brought our tight knit unit even closer together.” The squadron’s first sergeant said there was a unique synergy on this deployment that he hadn’t seen in the past.

“We had all our AFSC’s working together. It didn’t matter if you were an information management specialist or heavy equipment operator or electrician,” said Sergeant Lorenz, who has been with the wing for 17 years. “When the concrete arrived, we all pitched in to pour the slabs, screed the concrete, and trowel finished it.” The civil engineers also knew the deployment would be their last one as a team before the wing moved from General Mitchell Air Reserve Station to Pope Air Force Base, N.C. Airman 1st Class Danielle Klitzke, a plumber with the 440th Civil Engineer Squadron, assists with building exterior walls on an adult daycare center. Reservists assigned to the 440th Civil Engineer Squadron work on a concrete pad for a camp facility at Helemano Plantation in Hawaii. The humanitarian deployment involved construction of an adult daycare center for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

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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.