

## 820 RED HORSE SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

820 Installations Squadron constituted, 23 Apr 1956

Activated, 1 Jun 1956

Inactivated, 1 Jan 1960

Redesignated 820 Civil Engineering Squadron, and activated, 7 Feb 1961

Organized on 1 Apr 1961

Discontinued and inactivated, 15 Sep 1964

Redesignated 820 Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair), and activated, 12 Jan 1966

Organized, 8 Apr 1966

Redesignated 820 Civil Engineering Squadron, Heavy Repair, 15 Oct 1969

Redesignated 820 RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron, 10 Mar 1989

Redesignated 820 RED HORSE Squadron, 1 Mar 1994

#### STATIONS

Plattsburgh AFB, NY, 1 Jun 1956-1 Jan 1960

Plattsburgh AFB, NY, 1 Apr 1961-15 Sep 1964

Tuy Hoa AB, South Vietnam, 8 Apr 1966

DaNang AB, South Vietnam, 28 Feb 1969-15 Apr 1970

Lake Mead/Nellis AFB, NV, 15 Apr 1970

#### ASSIGNMENTS

820 Air Base (later, 820 Combat Support) Group, 1 Jun 1956-1 Jan 1960

820 Combat Support Group, 1 Apr 1961-15 Sep 1964

Seventh Air Force, 8 Apr 1966

1 Civil Engineering Group (Heavy Repair)(later, 1 Civil Engineering Group, Heavy Repair),

15 May 1967  
Seventh Air Force, 16 Mar 1970  
Twelfth Air Force, 15 Apr 1970

### **Commanders**

Col Rolf E. Nymo  
Col George C. Tuttle, 1 Aug 1980

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Vietnam  
Vietnam Air Offensive 1966-1967  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II 1967-1968  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III 1968  
Vietnam Air/Ground 1968  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV 1968-1969  
TET 69/Counteroffensive 1969  
Vietnam Summer/Fall 1969  
Vietnam Winter/Spring 1969-1970  
Southwest Asia:  
Defense of Saudi Arabia 1990-1991  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait 1991

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device  
5 Sep 1966-20 Jun 1967  
1 Jan 1969-16 Mar 1970

#### **Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

[15 Apr 1970]-25 Sep 1971  
1 Jun 1973-31 May 1975  
1 Jun 1981-31 May 1983  
1 Jun 1983-31 May 1985  
1 Jul 1986-30 June 1988  
1 Jul 1988-30 Jun 1990  
3 Sep 1990-15 Mar 1991  
1 Aug 1992-30 Jul 1994  
1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997  
1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
8 Apr 1966-15 Apr 1970

### **EMBLEM**

Approved, 28 Mar 1967



### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

This unit completed nearly 50 percent of all construction at Tuy Hoa, including 170 aircraft protective revetments, 120,000 square feet of wooden buildings, and 175,000 square yards of AM-2 mat. The unit moved to Da Nang AB on 28 February 1969. It was reassigned to Seventh Air Force on 16 March 1970. The 820 returned to the United States on 15 April 1970, with station at Nellis AFB, NV, as a Tactical Air Command (now Air Combat Command) asset, assigned to Twelfth Air Force. It was redesignated the 820 RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron on 10 March 1989. In 1990, a contingent from the unit deployed to support the coalition effort during the Gulf War. It was redesignated the 820 RED HORSE Squadron on 1 March 1994.

In 1999, 820 RHS support to Joint Task Force Shining Hope during Operation ALLIED FORCE included critical road and bridge repairs and construction of a new 1,000-foot taxiway at Rinas Airport, Tirana, Albania. In 2002 the 820 completed the largest construction project assigned to RED HORSE since the Vietnam War, a \$17.6M MILCON ramp construction project at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The 820 joined the regular rotation of RED HORSE units to Southwest Asia in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, performing important construction work throughout the theater.

The 820 REDHORSE Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nev., on Feb. 15 helped open New Horizons Nicaragua, a US Southern Command readiness and training exercise held in the village of Santa Teresa. Fifty-eight members of the 820 built a new school and clinic. Construction projects,

performed across the region, provide realistic joint and combined training for USAF, Army, Marine Corps, and reserve engineers, medical personnel, and support troops. 2007

Another day at "the office" is underway for the RED HORSE Special Capabilities Cadre located in Area 2, in the high desert area north of Las Vegas, Nev. Providing explosive demolition certification for the entire RED HORSE community who posture the 4F9HJ unit type code is just one of the many mission tasks of the 820 RED HORSE Squadron at NellisAFB Nev.

MSgt Thomas Cranville and TSgt Mark Ordway currently spearhead this RED HORSE special capability certification course, which packs quite a bit of extensive mathematical calculations, charge size requirement data, proper placement lessons, and — most importantly — safety into its two-week length. Since its maiden class in the mid 1960's the course has had an incident-free history.

Though not commonly associated with typical Air Force Civil Engineering tasks, demolition is a monthly or sometimes weekly recurring ritual for RED HORSE Demo "Dirt Boyz," as they are commonly called. RED HORSE's involvement with explosives dates back to its inception. Documents originating to the mid-1960's identify the need and use of explosives for use in quarry operations, base denial, and removal of large obstacles deterring construction and believe it or not removal of underwater debris for dock construction and harbor clearance.

Air Force civil engineer demolition teams are manned purposely using the 3E2X1 AFSC (Pavement and Equipment Operators). These teams are postured with the majority of RED HORSE squadrons across the globe, including Guard and Reserve units. To be indoctrinated into such a team is not easy; a very tough competition usually occurs within a RED HORSE Dirt Boyz section. In the words of retired CMSgt Gary (Dean) Bushnell, "You better have zero dings in your armor just to be considered," I finally scored a coveted slot in 1994.

CMSgt Bushnell was just one of the many RED HORSE demo team members to venture across the Kuwait border into Iraq during Operation DtsRT STORM. A combined effort of "blasters" from the 820 and 823rd and EOD performed base denial upon abandoned Iraqi air bases. The "wrecking crew," as they were coined, was the first RED HORSE team since the Vietnam War to utilize explosives against an adversary during times of war.

SMSgt Bobby Chandler, now retired, recounted the details of that base-denial mission. "It was a textbook operation, with team members using everything from their initial Nellis training, the same skills that are still taught to students to this day."

The most current chapter in the RED HORSE demolition history book was written during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM when the first-ever RED HORSE combat demolition team was tasked to aid the Army's 99th Engineer Brigade by demolishing two overpasses on Mam Supply Route Tampa in the vicinity of Baghdad; the overpasses had been severely damaged in three separate vehicle-borne IED attacks by insurgents. In less than three days, the demo team from the 557th

ERHS demolished and removed over 900 tons of debris to restore coalition movement on the supply route,

As RED HORSE evolves, this special demolition capability is evolving with them to enable construction as well. A quarry certification course, tied closely to the demo course, is another special capability taught by the 820 RHS at Nellis. In the near future RED HORSE will be able to posture a deployable Quarry UTC.

The quarry capability enables RED HORSE to self-provide products in order to establish horizontal and vertical construction. For example, to pave a road or build an airfield you need either concrete or asphalt and to obtain that final product in an austere environment you have to start from scratch. Rock for the desired mix is located, often in the side of a hill, which necessitates a series of demo blast operations to extract the rock. Next comes the rock preparation in several steps, which normally involves crushing into sizes required for particular mix designs. The prepared rock is then transported to one of two batching plants, either for concrete or asphalt, depending on the requirement.

In early 2008, AFCEA's Expeditionary Engineering Branch began developing a series of interactive multimedia training system courses to aid the 820 with training for this demo-quarry-batch (DQ8) capability. Scheduled for completion at the end of FY10, the DQ8 course is just one of the special capability computer-based training venues in the queue for RED HORSE. The DQ8 training will not only provide a prerequisite for the initial course at Nellis but will also provide refresher training focused on standards and repetitive commonalities for the RED HORSE warfighter.

As RED HORSE special capabilities strengthen, coordination with the civilian sector becomes more and more relevant. Explosive demolition is commonly utilized worldwide in many capacities by the private sector, and certification for the profession is quite extensive. The military's use of explosives in construction is based upon the worldwide industry standard. As RED HORSE ventures onward toward the deployable quarry capability, many pieces, including certification outside normal military boundaries, may be needed even more.

Within industry, the International Society of Explosive Engineers (ISEE) serves as the governing body for associated standards and certification. At the ISEE's 2010 conference, I met ISEE representatives to communicate the Atr Force message and discuss and learn about certification needs, including a newly developed federal certification which is founded upon basic demolition training.

After arriving at Camp Atterbury, the team from Nellis received situation briefings, and bedded down in FEMA trailers, which, along with a stand-alone dining facility, and a small beddown area, became the RED HORSE base of operations during the exercise. Before leaving Nevada, Capt Jay Haugen and his team of 25 personnel from the 820 RHS and the 99th Logistics Readiness Squadron loaded 63 tractor trailers in two days to support the exercise. After in-processing, a team of 15 Airmen from the 820 spent the next 24 hours unloading the cargo

under the direction of MSGts James Toth and Keith Gedick, the squadron's cargo movement NCOICs.

Personnel began the process of setting up the unit control center and maintaining command and control of personnel spread over multiple locations. As command and control equipment arrived, TSgt Ramil Flores, 820 computer operations NCOIC, worked tirelessly to establish network and overall communications capability.

Over the next four days, exercise mission assignments (MAs) flowed into the RED HORSE TOC. Every MA drove deliberate planning at each level of the CCMRF command. The Army's 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., which served as RED HORSE'S direct headquarters, created fragmentary orders for each MA.

"At first we were focused on each unit individually, but we soon recognized that we could combine the core competencies of each unit to more effectively accomplish tasks," Maj Loren Hollinger, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Plans Officer stated. "It was a true joint endeavor."

"At any given time of day we had between 50 and 80 personnel on the road to sites or executing MAs," said SMSgt Scottie Spradlin, the 820's cantonments superintendent. "Over a four-day period, we had personnel simultaneously clearing roads of debris, grading land for FEMA trailers, neutralizing utility lines, constructing walls or sidewalks, and repairing camp infrastructure."

The most daunting task faced by the unit was to remove debris from two kilometers of roadway. After receiving a briefing from the incident commander, equipment operators, lead by the 820's TSgt Mark Ordway, unloaded earth-moving equipment from their tractor trailers. Marine EOD and Air Force Radiation Assessment Team technicians begin scanning the route for explosive or radiological hazards. Electricians and utility specialists wearing personal protective equipment checked for downed power lines and water-main breaks, and after determining that the electrical lines were dead and isolating one water main, the route was ready for heavy equipment.

After just a few hours on scene, more than 500 meters of debris had been cleared off the road and a "PAUSE-EX" was declared for the MA. The RED HORSE operators had to slow down; otherwise, there would not be any work left for the following day.

Members of the media and distinguished visitors at the site said they were surprised by how much of the road they were able to see again. TSgt Todd Mitchell, team NCOIC, briefed USNORTHCOM commander, Gen Victor Renuart, on the operation and TSgt Ordway fielded questions from the media, helping earn himself a "Joint Task Force-Civil Support Hero of the Exercise" Award.

"This is the kind of mission that we never want to have to execute, but we have to make sure that everyone in the country knows we're ready for," said TSgt Alfredo Perez, 820 RHS equipment operator, "if something terrible does happen, JTF-CS and the 820 RED HORSE will respond quickly to save lives, mitigate suffering, and facilitate recovery operations."

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Fourteen Airmen from the 820 RED HORSE Squadron drive up to a sight of utter devastation. The scenario: A nuclear device explosion has created untold destruction and loss of life. Massive debris stacked eight feet high, overturned vehicles, and live utility lines cover two kilometers of the landscape ahead, creating an impenetrable barrier for emergency response personnel.

This was just one of many scenarios rehearsed during a November 2009 Joint Service chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) exercise in southeast Indiana. Operation VIBRANT RESPONSE 10.1 at Camp Atterbury, Ind., was one of two comprehensive exercises directed by USNORTHCOM to prepare CBRNE Consequence Management Response Force (CCMRF) personnel for the worst of their planning scenarios — a nuclear device exploding in a major city.

CCMRF soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and civilians are on standby 24/7 to respond at the direction of the secretary of defense to any major CBRNE catastrophe in the NORTHCOM area of responsibility that requires DOD capabilities. The 820 RHS, Nellis AFB, Nev., was notified (in June 2009) of its support role in the CCMRF, and has 126 personnel and more than 800 short tons of cargo allocated to the mission.

About 2,800 CCMRF personnel participated in November's exercise, which simulated a nuclear explosion near a large city. The 820 RHS deployed 122 Airmen and 758 short tons of cargo, which according to Air Force Civil Engineering's historian, Dr. Ronald Hartzer, is "the largest RED HORSE stateside deployment that I can find in my records."

"RED HORSE has the capability to project integrated Air Force Engineer capabilities anytime, anywhere with little to no notice," said Mr. Ron Clouse, from AFNORTH civil engineer operations. "NORTHCOM wanted DOD-controlled uniformed forces and knew that RED HORSE had the ability to provide what they wanted, an available first response heavy engineering capability."

Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions are not new to RED HORSE, but this one is different. "RED HORSE CONUS deployments in the past were ad hoc, with little time ahead to prepare," said Lt Col James Chrisley, 820 RHS deputy commander. "This is the first time we've had the opportunity to train as part of a large response force capable of responding to anything from a natural disaster to a terrorist attack."

Personnel assigned to CCMRF attend additional CBRNE training, hazardous material awareness training, weeklong command-post-of-the-future courses, convoy briefings, tactical operations center training, and NORTHCOM training for CCMRF and DSCA awareness. Training was followed by the two NORTHCOM-provided field training exercises. Thirty RED HORSE personnel attended the first exercise (VIBRANT RESPONSE 10.1) in August in Kansas, where unit leadership tested their tactical operations centers skills using realistic computer simulation software.

RED HORSE squadrons from around the globe are combining forces at Osan AB to improve the quality of life for military members and safety conditions for Airmen and aircraft in South Korea. Engineers from Osan's 554th RHS have worked closely with Guard, Reserve and active duty units from the 307th RHS at Barksdale Air Force Base, La.; 555th RHS and 820 RHS at Nellis AFB, Nev.; and the 254th CES from Andersen AFB, Guam, on several construction projects since April.

"In total, we have about 170 HORSE brothers and sisters supporting us and rotating through Korea from April through September (this year)," said CMSgt Jeff Slocum, 554th RHS operations chief. "Some are just doing their two-week annual tours, while others are staying on for a while, which helps provide additional continuity on the jobs."

"RED HORSE is all about diversity. Although considered a civil engineer unit, only two-thirds of the squadron personnel carry a (civil engineer) AFSC," said Lt Col Richard Sloop Jr., commander of the 554th RHS. "The remainder makes up the support element that allows RED HORSE to be a self-sufficient operation. With our Reserve and Guard component, we also pick up contracting, security forces and medical personnel." Completed projects across the peninsula include construction at air bases at Kimhae, Wonju, Suwon, Kunsan and Osan. "(At Kunsan), we replaced old expeditionary aircraft arresting systems," said CMSgt Slocum. "We (also) built access roads, drainage culverts and buildings to house the arresting engines. The new system is motor-driven and provides for a smoother, more controlled engagement.

Basically, it improves operational safety for any aircraft with barrier engagement capability, which better protects the aircraft and pilot during a barrier engagement." One of RED HORSE's primary wartime responsibilities is to provide aircraft launch and recovery capabilities wherever the Air Force needs it, said Osan project engineer 1Lt Theresa White. "It was great that we (had) the chance to upgrade Kunsan's barrier system. We got to hone our skills for war, and the 'Wolf Pack' [knows] they have a better system in place to more safely support sortie take off and landing operations."

Some of the many projects included two steel arch warehouse buildings at Kimhae that will provide security and weather protection for RED HORSE and war reserve materiel; 30 contingency cabins at Kunsan to support air expeditionary force rotations, joint exercises, and

operations; and a shower, latrine and laundry facility at Suwon which improves quality of life for deployed forces. "It's great to have such tremendous support from each of these units. We called for help, and they came running," CMSgt Slocum said. "The RED HORSE community is a very tight-knit family. The camaraderie among the people from all the units is fantastic. They work together, play together, and just blend very well to get the job done. Having all of us working together is definitely a production and morale booster."2006

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 16 Dec 2010

Updated:

#### Sources

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