

# The RED HORSE Way:

## Training for Tomorrow by Making a Difference Today



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Since 1965, RED HORSE engineers have continuously found a way to accomplish their mission in deployed environments. The large scale contingency construction and repair projects they accomplish require specialized skillsets and equipment not traditionally found in base-level civil engineer squadrons.

To ensure they are mission-ready and the combatant commander consistently receives a quality product, RED HORSE squadrons undertake troop training projects on a scale similar to those they are called to accomplish while deployed. As such, the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron has undertaken some of its largest and most complex troop training projects in recent years at Hurlburt Field, Duke Field, and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla.; Fletcher Field Airport in Clarksdale, Miss.; Shaw AFB, S.C.; and Andersen AFB, Guam. The projects at Shaw and Andersen were some of the largest horizontal and vertical RED HORSE projects, respectively, of this past fiscal year.

### Shaw AFB

In April, 65 engineers deployed to Shaw AFB in South Carolina to repair and widen Patrol Road, the 3.2-mile arterial road that connects the main base to the Army Central Command Headquarters. More than 5,000 vehicles per day travel the road, including the vast majority of the installation's commercial traffic. To minimize disruption, the 823 RHS decided to work on the road in several phases —

approximately half-mile, single-lane sections with temporary work zones established to protect the work crews.

Three crews worked 24-hour shifts, 7 days per week. All milling and paving work was conducted at night to alleviate as much impact on base traffic as possible. The project really tested the extent of RED HORSE capability. It involved constructing super-elevated and compound curves, working with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and base environmental office on a new drainage plan and stormwater permitting as well as shifting the crown/centerline of the road using variable milling, widening intersections and adding dedicated turn lanes suitable for commercial traffic, mitigating pumping soil, demolishing large sections of the existing roads and installing culverts and guardrails.

Large portions of the Patrol Road work were atypical of contingency construction. However, the RED HORSE engineers on site rose to the occasion, leveraging the experience of the crew leads and the senior military and civilians at the 20th Civil Engineer Squadron at Shaw. The outcome was a superior product that significantly improved the mission and quality of life at Shaw AFB, while saving an estimated \$900,000 through using troop labor in lieu of contracting.

The Patrol Road project was completed in early August, one month ahead of schedule, leaving the engineers on site the flexibility to accomplish three other projects on Shaw: 1) demolish an abandoned taxiway; 2) construct a 2.5-mile perimeter aggregate-surfaced road for anti-terrorism and force protection; and 3) repair and widen roads in

the munitions storage area while correcting site drainage to alleviate existing flooding issues. Each of these projects had unique challenges for site leadership to handle, but all were successfully completed ahead of schedule and under budget. The projects provided the 823 RHS CEs with well over 50,000 man-hours of vital pavements and heavy equipment training. Overall, it was a tremendous training opportunity for our "Dirt Boyz" as well as the four other career fields participating.

### Andersen AFB

Several vertical trades also had the same type of opportunity at Andersen AFB, working on a \$2.46 million project. In March, 67 engineers from the 823 RHS and 39 engineers from the 556 RHS, both from Hurlburt Field, deployed to Guam to construct three masonry buildings for the relocation of the Silver Flag site from Japan to the Pacific Air Forces Regional Training Center on Guam. Work included constructing facilities for expeditionary kitchen training, command and control training and a student shower and latrine. The more than 100,000 man-hours in construction and training were vital to preparing the Silver Flag site for the arrival of the first class, scheduled for October. The engineers on site faced some adversity, constructing facilities in a high wind and seismic prone area as they dodged two tropical storms, often had to wait on materials and equipment and worked on a TTP closely resembling a deployment with austere living conditions. Through it all, they remained resolved and committed to delivering a quality product.

Many of the skills learned over the past year will directly translate to 823 RHS requirements forecasted for the near future. For example, the techniques and lessons learned on Guam will directly translate to the squadron's deployment

next year to build masonry schools and clinics in support of Exercise NEW HORIZONS in Honduras.

### Troop Training Projects

For RED HORSE squadrons, it is a three-fold challenge each year to scrutinize the project list to select next year's TTPs. Each squadron must select projects that provide training for each of the trades to maintain all of required skillsets and capabilities. Squadron leadership must exercise judgment and strategic vision to prioritize the identified projects in order to provide, maintain or improve a capability needed or requested by combatant commanders. Leadership must balance all of the commitments placed on the squadron from various entities and projects with available resources.

Centralization of project selection and funding for TTPs has shifted to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center. Using the integrated priority list, or IPL, CE can now align a project's prioritization with value-added military labor training opportunities. This provides RED HORSE squadrons the opportunity for valuable training, while bases reap the benefits of reduced costs for quality work.

Regardless of the challenges ahead, the engineers of the RED HORSE squadrons remain committed and motivated to making a difference.

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*Below and previous page: Civil engineers from the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., work on a road project at Shaw AFB, S.C., as part of a troop training project. (U.S. Air Force photos)*

