

158th CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

LINEAGE

158th Civil Engineering Flight
158th Civil Engineer Squadron

STATIONS

Burlington, VT

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Joel A. Clark
LTC Eugene A. Sevi, 5 Apr 1992
LTC Alec G. Tuscany 1996

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Construction projects in the Burlington area usually involve the men of the 158th Civil Engineering Flight when they are not out of state working on Air Guard or Air Force projects. In 1972, for example, they renovated the Boy Scout headquarters in Essex Junction and, as part of the VTANG's "good neighbor" policy, aided the South Burlington Jaycees to construct a

recreational park, including a basketball court, parking lot, skating rink, and a civic arts and crafts center, saving the city thousands of dollars. During Summer Camp, the VTANG Civil Engineering Flight sent about 30 men plus heavy equipment to the old Leo O'Brien Sr., homestead on Patchen Road to help create South Burlington's first neighborhood park.

1978 On May 1st, ground was officially broken for the new clinic addition which was entirely a Civil Engineering project from draft design through construction.

1978 In what, at that time, was proven to be the largest single Air Guard project ever undertaken in Vermont, 12,000 cubic yards of cement were laid at the Guard's facility on the south side of Burlington Airport, to form a three acre area, nine inches thick, for a new aircraft taxi ramp. The ramp, completed in October, and the new Headquarters building completed on November 30th, were two of twelve construction projects in various stages of completion at the end of 1978.

1980 A 47 man Prime BEEF team from the 158th Civil Engineering Flight deployed to Montgomery, Alabama, on 12-27 April to construct a 1800 square foot metal building and five additional building projects.

1985 March saw CE deploy to a decidedly warmer location at Howard AFB, Panama.

In February and March 1986, the 158th Civil Engineering Squadron deployed to Camp Blanding, Florida, for two weeks of training. While at Blanding, the 158th renovated a WWII barracks, constructed a maintenance building, installed a water line, cleared several acres of land and performed numerous additional smaller projects. The deployment consisted of 59 Civil Engineers and six cooks from the services flight, and was significant because it marked the 45th Anniversary of the first visit of Vermont Guardsmen to Camp Blanding. In 1941, the 172nd Regiment of the Vermont Army National Guard trained at Blanding before going to the Pacific Theatre.

On January 20th, 1990, the 158th Civil Engineering Squadron became the first Air Guard unit to provide humanitarian aid to the island of Jamaica, hard hit by hurricane Gilbert in 1988. The deployment team consisted of 56 members led by Major Eugene Sevi. They made repairs to four schools and delivered a pallet of donated school supplies. The 158th Civil Engineering Squadron had the privilege of being the first unit to provide humanitarian aid to the Island of Jamaica. They served as the vanguard for four, two-week deployments, starting January 20th. In 1988, Jamaica had been hit by Hurricane Gilbert. The destruction was massive and at the request of the Jamaican government through the American Embassy, humanitarian aid was arranged. The aid came in the form of brick layers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians and many willing hands of the four Air Guard units. As the first unit, Vermont had the responsibility of setting up camp for the units who followed, as well as, accomplishing their assigned construction projects. The deployment team consisted of 56 members, led by Maj. Eugene Sevi. The team set up their campsite at Lucea on the northwest coast of the island. The camp was located outside of an abandoned high school. Six tents comprised the living quarters; a field shower, kitchen tent, and one room in the old school used for eating completed the camp. Four schools were scheduled for repair by the 158th. This involved fixing roofs, walls, floors,

installing lights, kitchens, stoves, cupboards and building bathrooms. Along with building material, the unit also took along a pallet of donated notebooks, pens, books, paper, construction paper and any other odd variety of items that we take for granted in American schools. The school supplies were donations from Burlington area residents and members of the Vermont Army and Air National Guard.

Federal activation came for twelve members of the Fire Department for Operation Desert Storm on December 4, 1990. Their assignment took them to Plattsburgh Air Force Base, New York.

The 158th Civil Engineering Squadron dedicated its new building on December 14th. Fifty-two members of the CE Squadron deployed to Panama on a humanitarian mission in January of 1994. They constructed a six-room masonry block school building and a single story wood frame building to be used as a hospice by the local hospital. 1993 Also, on December 14th, after ten years of planning, the 158th Civil Engineering Squadron dedicated its new building.

During July of 1997, the 158 Civil Engineering Squadron opened and maintained a command post to coordinate flood relief in the devastated town of Montgomery, Vermont. The Air Guardsmen served under the command of Colonel Alan Nye of the Vermont Army National Guard. The flood washed out all of the roads and bridges that led into the town and the joint Guard force restored highway access. Air guardsmen also sponsored a collection of food, water, and supplies for distribution through the churches in Montgomery.

A major event affected the lives of Vermonters and the Vermont Air National Guard in 1998. An immense ice storm hit Vermont in January. The extensive damage prompted the state to call up more than 500 guardsmen from both the Army and the Air Force. With support for the entire fighter wing, the 158 Civil Engineering unit deployed into Franklin County to assist in recovery efforts around the towns of South Hero, Grand Isle, and Isle La Motte. The primary mission involved opening the roads to emergency vehicles. Many trees and power lines blocked the roads and the rain continued to fall as recovery efforts began. CES personnel also installed, ran, and serviced electrical generators allowing for emergency shelters to operate. Guard involvement gradually dropped off but CES personnel remained on duty until power had been restored by the electrical utilities.

Another important deployment for the Civil Engineering Squadron took place in the spring of 2000. Members of CES traveled to the country of Macedonia to provide construction training to the Macedonian Army Engineers. Hands-on training came while doing humanitarian aid projects over a nine week period. Vermont and Macedonia had a relationship under the ongoing Partnership for Peace program. Members of the Security Force Squadron, the Communications Flight, and the Services Flight rotated in and out of the camp to provide the necessary support services to keep the camp running safely and smoothly. The jobs include renovations to a clinic, the construction of a playground and the installation of a stormwater drainage system in the town of Krivolak. Also part of the deployment lay in the town of Pepeliste where workers constructed a clinic addition and a new playground at the local school. Members of the United States Navy Seabees and the US Marine Corps Engineers did construction in Pepeliste while under the supervision of the Air National Guard project officer.

Members of the Macedonian Army worked alongside of US personnel as equals and furnished their own engineer to act as co- project officer. As an additional project, volunteers from all the services worked on a new playground in the town of Negotino. Funding for the project came entirely from the private sector and CES personnel arranged and oversaw the bulk of the work and also installed the playground equipment with the assistance of the Marine Corps Reserves

SOUTH BURLINGTON, Vt. - The Civil Engineering Squadron at the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG) is back in the deployment mindset. Soon they will be traveling to an air base in Afghanistan to maintain, repair, and construct the airfield and utilities associated with it. Maj. Keith Hodsdon, commander of the 158th Civil Engineer Squadron, will deploy and assume command over both VTANG personnel and airmen from nine other guard units. The 158th CES will be the lead unit. "Much of our job will involve maintenance and repair of existing facilities. The largest construction projects will be designed and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our engineering officers will work directly with them to ensure designs meet Air Force standards and that we will be able to maintain those facilities when they are completed." This will be Hodsdon's first deployment to the CENTCOM area of responsibility, and he said he was looking forward to the challenge of commanding a group of nearly 100 men and women who will be tasked with making the base livable for all military personnel. Civil engineers make sure the airfield is adequate for aircraft launch and recovery, but are also the people who make sure electricity, plumbing, heat, and shelters are available for the entire base. Other than personal gear and individual weapons, the squadron will not be taking any VTANG equipment. However, Senior Master Sgt. Peter Noble, an engineering superintendent scheduled to go to Afghanistan, said the squadron's biggest asset isn't something that will be carried-on. "Being in the National Guard means that we all have civilian jobs and outside skills that we can also draw on for support during missions," he said. "I have seen how our airmen often use knowledge acquired outside the military to get a job done." Hodsdon agreed and said that was part of their contingency engineering training; they understand how to innovate in a deployed location without the ideal equipment. "In an austere environment, our men and women have demonstrated the ability to produce exceptional solutions despite resource limitations."

Members of the 158th Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron recently returned from a six-month deployment to Afghanistan where they worked with the Army in a joint service environment to maintain Bagram Airfield. While deployed from November through July, the Vermont Air National Guard's (VTANG) civil engineers worked on projects ranging from electrical and building maintenance to upgrading the power grid and removing snow from the flight line. The primary focus of the deployment was to ensure the base operated at maximum efficiency, said Chief Master Sgt. John Talcott, the chief enlisted manager for the VTANG civil engineering squadron who participated in the mission. When the airstrip was damaged by incoming fire the engineers would have to fill craters with gravel or concrete, replace the guide lights, and repair any electrical damage. Skill and training was essential for the crew to fix the runway quickly to avoid delaying priority flights. Another project was to upgrade and improve the electrical grid and balance the power requirements as some areas of the base did not have adequate power to meet their needs. "Security force members were using Humvees to power some of their gear," said Talcott. "We were able to go and hook them up with a generator or

use commercial power that was out there. Our plan in Afghanistan was to make a lasting difference on the base, and we were able to accomplish that." Ensuring that security forces could defend the base was essential as Afghanistan is still a hostile area. Every day airmen remained alert to the possibility of an attack and at night listened for the alarm of incoming fire. "We got attacked quite a few times," said Senior Airman Luke Wamsley, a military high-voltage lineman. "You'd hear the sound of the bombs being dropped and the shots as we returned fire." As their deployment ended, the engineers were looking forward to coming back to Vermont. Returning home requires adjustment as the service members work to settle back into their home routines and drill schedules. Taking an extended tour is a good experience for members of the Guard, Talcott said. It serves as a change of pace from the traditional drill weekend and allows Guardsmen a chance to apply their military career skills in the field. 2013

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Sources

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