

# **177<sup>th</sup> CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON**

## **LINEAGE**

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## **STATIONS**

Egg Harbor Township (Atlantic City), NJ

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **COMMANDERS**

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The Fire Fighters had received word about a month before that such an activation might occur. The official word was not received, , until 6 December 1990. The members had been preparing since that time, but there was still a feeling that there might be two weeks leeway before departure. That leeway translated into four days and caused the celebration of some early and abbreviated Christmas festivities. This included gift exchanges and traditional dinners the night following the call-up. On 7 December, the fire fighters went over last minute paperwork and

began packing for the trip south. Eglin is local near Fort Walton Beach in the Florida panhandle.

More than 40 members of the 177th Civil Engineering (CE) Squadron deployed to Royal Air Force Base Mildenhall, Suffolk, England for two weeks of annual training July 22 to August 6. The deployed Airmen were a cross-section of the entire CE career spectrum, including heavy equipment operators, firefighters, HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning), explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), structures, power production, readiness and electricians. 177th CE Deploys To RAF Mildenhall Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PAM Geoff Harrison, RAF Mildenhall Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning and Tech. Sgt. Ernie Scott remove a nozzle on gas bottle. Senior Airman Lynne Dettloff 177th CES and Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Neal Clark, 100th Civil Engineering Readiness prepare a container for loading. Left to right: Senior Airman Stephen Lee directs while Master Sergeants' Paul Nieczpiel and Raymond Gordon lower a fence post at the new gazebo. Except for Readiness, EOD, HVAC and the firefighters, the majority of the 177th team were assigned three projects: the dismantling and reassembling of a gazebo at a different location; grading and leveling the 60-acre site and the finishing of the Self Help kitchen. The other CE Airmen were dispersed to various locations across the base. The firefighters served as backfill for the base firefighters who are serving in Iraq. The HVAC Airmen performed emergency repairs and preventative maintenance on systems throughout the base. While the Readiness Airmen assisted the 100th ARW CE Readiness shop studying potential threats that would affect deployed CE troops, the two-member 177th EOD team arrived at RAF Lakenheath just in time for the base's operational readiness inspection. After resting the weekend, the 177th Airmen finished the projects prior to returning to New Jersey

Through the State Partnership Program, New Jersey's Citizen Airmen and Soldiers have travelled to the Republic of Albania to train their counterparts. In turn, Albania has sent Soldiers and Airmen to New Jersey to receive specialized training. Lt. Col. Richard Reitberger and State Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Francis, Joint Force Headquarters – Air and Master Sgt. Anthony Boccelli, a Fire Chief with the 177th Fighter Wing, visited Albania in September 19-23, 2010. “The State Partnership Program is an exchange of ideas among equals and will continue to be a benefit for both Albania and New Jersey,” said Reitberger. The mission's focus was on joint Air Guard – Albanian Armed Forces training, combined officer/NCO training and wildfire prevention – an issue important to arid Albania. The Air Guard team met with Col. Arqile Kokedhima and Lt. Col. Halil Kucama, commanders of the Training and Doctrine Command and the Noncommissioned Officer Academy respectively. Providing the Albanian input on overall NCO training was Albanian Armed Forces Command Sgt. Maj. Proletar Panxha. Discussion centered on education, the possibility of New Jersey sending over instructors and combined training for officers and NCOs at the schoolhouse. The Air Guard contingent toured the schoolhouse during which, Reitberger addressed a classroom of newly minted NCOs. Driving to Tirana International Airport, the team met with Rinas Air Base commander Col. Raqi Qarri whom Boccelli presented a binder of materials that he had prepared based on his experiences preventing and combating wildfires. The Jersey Guardsmen then drove to Farke Air Base, where they met with base commander Col. Frederik Beltoja who proudly showed off the newly completed control tower and fire station, as well as the new construction at the base. The next day Reitberger and Boccelli attended wildfire meetings at the Interior Ministry while Francis traveled with Panxha to Kucova Air Base to meet with the base commander Col. Flamur Hoxha

who spoke about his wildfire concerns and how they could impact the base's mission. While some of the equipment at the base was not as modern as that found in New Jersey, the runway easily rivaled its American counterparts in length and size. Despite the visit's short duration, the team was able to identify numerous potential unit and individual training missions, as well as other needs that the Office of Defense Cooperation and possibly New Jersey might be able to address.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.