

285th CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

LINEAGE

Redesignated 285th Combat Communications Flight
Redesignated 285th Combat Information Systems Flight, 1 Jul 1985
Redesignated 285th Combat Communications Squadron
Redesignated 285th Combat Communications Flight
Redesignated 285th Civil Engineer Squadron

STATIONS

Kinghill, Virgin Islands St Croix

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 January to 31 December 1989

EMBLEM

Approved 20 April 2000

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The first unit of the Virgin Islands ANG, the 285th Combat Communications Flight, was activated at Christiansted, St Croix, on 7 May 1980. The ANG Headquarters was activated on 1 April 1983. At the end of FY92, the VI ANG had 34 officers and enlisted personnel to man three non-flying units.

Air Guard Unit Gets New Name and Mission: The US Virgin Islands Air National Guard's 285th Combat Communications Squadron is now the 285th Civil Engineering Squadron after a redesignation ceremony on St. Croix. Over the next two years, the squadron will convert to its new mission as a Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force, or Prime BEEF, unit. Squadron members will cross-train into new career fields and receive new equipment. "After two years, the unit must be ready to go to war, and is open for all Air National Guard and Air Force inspection cycles," said Capt. John Hult, squadron commander. Col. Jeffrey Buckley, the Virgin Islands Air Guard chief of staff, said the unit in its new role will "make sure there is running water when called upon. They'll build shelter where needed, and they'll fix roads and runways when required." The redesignation ceremony was on March 3, 2012

3/5/2012 - ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands (AFNS) -- A combat communications squadron that began the Air National Guard's presence in the U.S. Virgin Islands more than 32 years ago has transformed itself once again during a ceremony March 3.

The 285th Combat Communications Squadron, activated in 1980 to provide communications support to the U.S. Virgin Islands, was redesignated as the 285th Civil Engineering Squadron during a ceremony at the Virgin Islands Air National Guard facility on St. Croix.

According to the squadron's commander, Capt. John Hult, the unit was originally a victim of a reduction in the number of combat communications units within the Air Force Space Command. "The 285th was originally one of those units to be cut ... but leadership ... was able to secure the civil engineering mission for the Virgin Islands Air National Guard."

This new mission, according to Hult, will allow the squadron to develop, deploy and sustain expeditionary engineers to "protect, preserve and improve facilities and infrastructure." "This fills an Air National Guard and federal need for a more robust civil engineering community and will be more in line to (meet) territorial needs and requirements for hometown support," said Hult.

"The 285th (Civil) Engineering Squadron will turn on the lights when there are none," said Col. Jeffrey Buckley, the Virgin Islands Air National Guard chief of staff. To keep the unit relevant, Buckley said that leadership determined that a Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force, or Prime BEEF, mission was needed. "They'll make sure there is running water when called upon. They'll build shelter where needed, and they'll fix roads and runways when required. This is Prime Beef."

According to Hult, the unit has entered a reclassification process in which Airmen will receive new mission requirements, new equipment will be issued and the cross-training into various engineer career fields will begin. "The 285th CES will be in a two-year conversion window as directed by the National Guard Bureau," said Hult. "After two years, the unit must be ready to go to war, and is open for all Air National Guard and Air Force inspection cycles."

The unit began as a flight in 1980 and created the first Air National Guard presence in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The flight was upgraded to a squadron in 1996 and made a name for itself following the devastation of Hurricane Hugo to the region in 1989, when the unit and its installation became the heart of recovery operations for St. Croix.

Over the years, the unit has been involved in several contingency operations, to include Joint Endeavor, Uphold Democracy, Joint Forge, and both Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. They earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit award on four occasions: In 1989, 1990, 1991 and for the period of September 1995 to August 1997.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 7 Sep 2010

Updated:

Sources