



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Contact:
Tracy Robillard, Public Affairs Specialist, 912.652.5450
Tracy.K.Robillard@usace.army.mil
Joyce McDonald, Corporate Communications Officer, 912.652.5777
Joyce.A.McDonald@usace.army.mil

Local civilian engineer team deploys to Iraq to aid US troops, provide construction support

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA – After months of extensive training throughout the country and the world, a team of eight local professionals with the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District](#) deployed to Iraq this weekend to provide specialized engineering support to U.S. troops and assist with construction projects.

The 542nd Engineer Detachment, known as a Forward Engineer Support Team – Advanced, or FEST-A, is a mobile, rapid-response team that deploys with Army ground units to solve technical engineering problems. The detachment is one of eight active-duty FEST-A teams in the country. One of the team's most critical missions is to assist with the transition as the U.S. military leaves Iraq and turns over continuing operations to the State Department.

"This highly-focused team represents the finest civilian and military expertise in the Savannah district and within the Coastal Empire's engineering community," said [Col. Jeff Hall](#), Savannah district commander. "The team will be instrumental in helping the Department of Defense prepare to draw down and leave a self-governing, independent nation as the State Department continues to strengthen the U.S.-Iraq relationship. The team will also assist our U.S. soldiers by deploying with ground troops to provide engineering solutions to the Army's 'boots on the ground.'"

While deployed to southern Iraq, the team will provide engineering, contracting, and quality assurance support to construct the largest consulate in the world, which will house 1,600 employees. The team will focus on expansion of the base camp, as well as advise and assist the private contractor working on the site.

Other types of FEST-A projects include water and waste water treatment plants, hospital renovations, provincial building renovations, court house construction, school construction, roads, culverts, bridge classification, electrical evaluations and distribution projects.

Stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, the team consists of an officer-in-charge and a non-commissioned officer, along with six civilians who specialize in mechanical, civil, electrical and environmental engineering, cartography (map making) and contracting.

While several of the team members have previous combat experience, this is the first time the group has deployed in support of Overseas Contingency Operations since it was [officially activated Feb. 9, 2010 at Hunter AAF.](#)

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In March, the 542nd Engineer Detachment was rated as one of the highest-performing teams to train at the nationally-acclaimed [National Training Center](#) in Fort Irwin, Calif., where the team provided expert advice and technical skill to a brigade combat team during simulated, full-spectrum operations.

“The training exercise was an extremely successful event for the team in preparation for our deployment to Iraq,” said Maj. Jared Runge, 542nd Engineer Detachment commander. “We applied our technical knowledge to work with soldiers from other units to ensure we were integrated into the mission, whether it was developing a scope-of-work for a contract, designing a waste water treatment plant, or engineering a solar panel street light system.”

The team also deployed to Korea in December to map and design a 5,000-man base camp that could be used in contingency operations for the 7th Air Force – an opportunity that broadened the team’s international portfolio and provided real-world experience with emergency operations planning.

“This team has undergone some of the most rigorous, extensive deployment training in the Corps and has demonstrated great success,” Hall said. “The strength of the Corps of Engineers is its civilian workforce. With FEST-A, we integrate the engineering expertise of our civilians with the operational knowledge of the Army’s ground force to build better, stronger capabilities.”

NOTE TO BROADCAST MEDIA: VIDEOS AVAILABLE IN QUICKTIME FORMAT, download at FTP site:
<ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/sas/VIDEOS/FEST%20DEPLOYS/>

Produced Soundbite from Maj. Jared Runge, 542nd Engineer Detachment Commander, runtime :39
B-roll, FEST-A team loads equipment for deployment at Hunter Army Airfield, runtime :32
For video questions, contact Sandra Hudson, 912-652-5760, Sandra.d.hudson@usace.army.mil

The 542nd Engineer Detachment members are:



(From left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Jason Stover, non-commissioned officer-in-charge;
Alonzo Lyford, civilian team leader and mechanical engineer;
Terry McFarland, contracting specialist;
Ivelisse Alvarez, electrical engineer;
Joel Fuchs, cartographer;
Bruce Myhre, environmental engineer;
Jeremy Miller, civil engineer;
Maj. Jared Runge, commander

542nd Engineer Detachment team members Alonzo Lyford (left) and Joel Fuchs load their equipment at Hunter Army Airfield.



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – SAVANNAH DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 889, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31402-0889
WWW.SAS.USACE.ARMY.MIL