

RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association Newsletter

60TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

RED HORSE AND PRIME BEEF 60th ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION/REUNION, HONORING OUR VETERANS



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What a fantastic time we had in Las Vegas! Our 2025 RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association Convention and Reunion was nothing short of outstanding. The energy, camaraderie, and stories shared reminded all of us why this Association means so much. Whether you were reconnecting with old teammates or making new friends, it felt like coming home. Our theme, "60 Years of Leading the Way," guided us through a week rich with history and pride. From our opening icebreaker to the memorable banquet, we celebrated not only the legacy of RED HORSE and Prime BEEF but also the bright future of Air Force Civil Engineering. The day at Nellis Air Force Base, although curtailed by the Shutdown, was still a highlight.

We were also proud to recognize this year's Brigadier General Tom Meredith Scholarship recipients. These talented young individuals represent the next generation of excellence, and it's encouraging to see their drive and commitment to service. The scholarship program remains one of our most meaningful ways to invest in the future of our community.

Of course, we also took time to remember those we've lost in the past two years, including our dear friend and Board member John Burkett. Their contributions to the mission and to this Association will never be forgotten.

For those who couldn't join us, special highlights from the convention are available at RHPBA.com along with information about upcoming events, scholarship opportunities, and ways to stay connected throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we're already excited about our next gathering in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 2027. With the Air Force Academy, Peterson and Schriever Space Force Bases, and the beauty of the Front Range nearby, it promises to be another unforgettable reunion. Stand by for future details.

Thank you all for your continued support, your stories, and your spirit. Remember to tell a friend about the Association and bring them to the next convention.

Lead the Way!

Tony







RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association Board of Directors and Officers



Anthony (Tony) Davit, President president@rhpba.com tdavit@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Susannne Waylett, Vice President vicepresident@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Doug Wise, Secretary/Media secretary@rhpba.com dwise@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Timothy Dodge, Treasurer tdodge@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Donald (Don) Boone, Scholarship scholarship@rhpba.com dboone@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Richard (Dick) Aldinger, Newsletter Editor / Publicity raldinger@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



David (DC) Corbett, Convention Chair dcorbett@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Randy Eckert, Membership reckert@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



William (Bill) Eves weves@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Joe Green jgreen@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Henry Guidry, Sr. hguidry@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Tim Hulme thulme@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Robert McGloughlin rmcgloughlin@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Kevin (Monk) Monkman kmonkman@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Jason Nieves jnieves@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



Gilbert (Gil) Oliver goliver@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



Daniel (Dan) Raske draske@rhpba.com Term: 2025-2029



George Silva gsilva@rhpba.com Term: 2023-2027



HEARD AT THE REUNION AND FROM OTHERS

The 2025 RHPBA convention/reunion was one for the ages. Members of all ages attended this reunion including many who have seen and/or been a part of these reunions during the entire 60 years. Some of the memorable takeaways and stories from this year's participants are the following:

Some of the members of the first Prime BEEF and RED HORSE deployments were given less than a week to move their families before reporting to Travis AFB. This includes one NCO who was given three days to move his family with eight children from California to Texas before leaving for Southeast Asia.





Heard the story from one NCO whose grandson now was a firefighter in the Air Force. The grandson told his grandfather that he is now a member of a Prime BEEF team, and he thinks he knows what RED HORSE is.

Heard the story about a stripper in the mess hall and how a catholic priest said that he was going to excommunicate the mess hall.



Another member told the story about travelling via

commercial air with full combat gear including M-16 rifles as an advanced party sent to Tuy Hoa Air Base, Vietnam to keep vital construction materials from "disappearing" before the main party could arrive. After arriving at Tuy Hoa spent many

nights manning bunkers dealing with mortars, tracers and aerial flairs.

Various RED HORSE commanders in Vietnam during the 1960's were also mentioned. Col. Rose seemed to be one the favorites for being in the trenches with his men or driving a bulldozer. Col. Potter was another favorite when asked how dangerous Vietnam was, replied that it is "relatively safe".





We heard many favorable comments about the video *Air Force Civil Engineering*. By the way, that vehicle can be seen on YouTube along with many other videos about Air Force Civil Engineering. Just spell out

the words in the blank search space shown on the left and top portion of your YouTube screen.

Someone commented on how impressed they were with the flag folding ceremony. It was particularly impressive when you consider that it was a last minute add to the program because the government shutdown prevented us from



having a military color guard from Nellis AFB.

Time and time again we heard members thanking the senior NCOs for giving them important advice to keep them safe and out of trouble. As a senior NCO once told



a young Captain at U-Tapoa, Thailand. "You can have all the pipe in the world but without fittings it is not going to do you much good."



Several stories were told about the advantages of ice cream machines and what could be obtained if you had one. Other stories were told about RED HORSE squadrons stealing each other's horse emblems and

statues. There was also a "Mobil Oil" RED HORSE statue involved. Other stories were told about availability of hot water and swimming pools.



Several attendees mentioned how much they liked the quilt presentations especially seeing several of the "Originals" receiving their quilts. Especially noteworthy was Frank DeMartino (an original) receiving his at the same time as his son David DeMartino.

Keith Nguyen came to the reunion as a guest of George Silva. He was five when he escaped South Vietnam with his parents and



brother and slowly made his way to the United States via three or four countries. He is very thankful for his freedom and wanted to thank everyone.





Bill Ackley, original 554th told the story about the creation of the RED HORSE logo which has a red horse driving a bulldozer with an M-16 strapped to his back. He was a dirt boy assigned to 554th at Phan Rang. Col. Meredith (later Brig. Gen. Meredith) put out the word that he wanted someone to come up with a logo design that set the 554th apart from the Army and

other Air Force organizations. Bill volunteered as he had taken drafting in high school. He soon came up with the idea of a red horse on a bulldozer with an M-16 strapped

to his back. As soon as Gen. Meredith saw the design, he loved it and asked how long it would take to stencil the logo on all their trucks and other equipment. In a matter of a few weeks, it was stenciled everywhere on 554th property. Bill left Vietnam in December 1967and never gave the RED HORSE logos another thought

1990 when he saw it at a RED HORSE Association meeting.



Just so you (that didn't play golf) know, Don "Boom, Boom" Boone won the longest drive contest with a drive close to 300 yards which just shows you that we old guys still have it. For the women: Wendy Lee won the longest drive and Jan Mee won closest to the



Wendy



Dick congratulating

winning team.





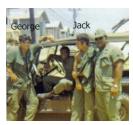
2nd Place Team

3rd Place Team

John Couch, original 820th, tells the story of being stationed at Minot AFB, ND and like everyone else stationed at that base, including the Base Commander, volunteered for Vietnam. He had a friend who worked in Administration who told him that he could volunteer for something called RED HORSE. No one was sure what it entailed but thought it might be Vietnam. John volunteered for RED HORSE and three days later he was headed to

Florida. As part of his training, he was dumped in the middle of the everglades and told to find his way out. Once in Vietnam at Danang AB he was selected as part of a twoman team and deployed along with a bulldozer to build a gravel and dirt runway in Laos for the CIA. Two months later he was sent back to Laos to build a second CIA runway. John Couch also remembers the "Hanoi Hanna" radio broadcasts and how the Viet Cong always claimed they were going to wipe out RED HORSE

A highlight of this 60th reunion was that it provided the opportunity for many mini reunions and is one reason it means so much to be a member of the RHPBA. One mini reunion, 50 years in the making, was between Felik Uhlik and Bob Garlow.



Another great reunion was that of George Silva who had spent 50 years searching for his friend Jack Daly through many avenues but to no avail. They had served in the 554th RED HORSE squadron in Danang, Vietnam and were close friends. As a

BOD member, he was so surprised when Jack's name appeared as a registered attendee for the reunion. It was heartwarming to see them back together after searching for each other for so many years.



JJ Grueter tells about his time in the 556th RHS. He was sent via military air from Florida to U-Tapoa Royal Thai Air Base Thailand. His commander, Col McCooe, who served in WWII was famous among the men for many guotes. One such quote was "if you have any doubt in your mind what your AFSC is, let me put your mind to ease. This is your AFSC as he pointed to the eagles on his collar." We took it to mean whatever it takes get the job done. Lead, follow or get the hell out of the way.

Soon after we arrived at U-Tapoa we all got our assignments. We boarded a C-130 and began flying a round robin dropping folks off at each base. Everything went really smooth as all the bases had paved runways except for the last one at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base. When we landed there I thought that we had crashed as we landed on PSP matting and we went bouncing down the runway. My first job there was putting down 80,000 plus cubic yards of soil cement. Most rewarding job in my 25+ years' career.

And such a great story that the benediction was led by Michael Haag, a self-proclaimed escapee from an assisted living facility in Colorado, aided and abetted in his escape by his brother Father Pio O'Connor, who brought him across state lines in the dark of night because he wanted to continue to be a part of the reunion he had been a part of in previous years.



Sign In











Silent Auction







Coins

Honoring John Burkett

Business Meeting

























Nellis AFB Tour





















This Newsletter Is Dedicated to Air Force Military Civil Engineers (RED HORSE and Prime BEEF) Past, Present and Future.



Booster Club Burger Burn at Nellis







Banquet Night

















Elvis











Quilts























Silverton Casino Hotel











































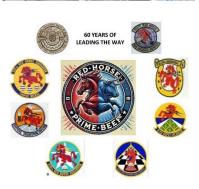
<u>Future RHPBA Members?</u> Lake Highland Prep School, Veterans Day Salute



(Source: Instagram, #VeteransSalute)

A huge thank you to our contributing Sponsors for your continuing support.







RHPBA 2025-2026 BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM "TOM" MEREDITH HONOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

We're happy to announce another great achievement within our Association this year in awarding \$2,000 college scholarship awards to four tremendous applicants! Our 2025 Brigadier General Tom Meredith Award Winners are Anthony Mottola, Cole Lundsten, Kaial Hajik, and Joey Greene.

This year we received nine applications for this award, and as we experience every year, reaching a final decision among the candidates is extremely competitive, a direct reflection and tribute to our RHPBA families.

Take a look at these remarkable young people, their credentials and achievements...and enjoy a few excerpts from their applications, letters of reference and personal essays:

Our Scholarship Committee, celebrating our 15th year, is privileged to review and assess scholarship applicants seeking financial support for their academic programs. Although the applicants present diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences, they collectively and magnificently represent the aspirations of our membership core values, focused on integrity, service before self and excellence in all they do.

We hope every member of this Association shares our level of pride in being able to provide some small part in supporting our remarkable family members pursue their academic and career journeys.

Don Boone, Chair RHPBA Scholarship Committee









ANTHONY MOTTOLA

APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- ★ Resides in Allentown, NJ
- ★ Anthony's Great Grandfather was Charter RHPBA Member John Burkett who passed away this year
- ★ Attends Stockton University in Galloway, NJ
 - Major in Biology
 - Expected graduation in May 2028
 - Dean's List, Fall 2024
- ★ High School
 - National Honor Society
 - Outstanding Academic Achievement 2022-2023
 - High School Wrestling four years
 - Most Improved Wrestler Award 2022
 - Wrestling Unsung Hero Award 2024
 - High School Football two years
 - Industrial Arts Best Technical Skill Award 2024

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REMARKS:

- ★ Your insightful essay revealed a deep and mature interest in a veterinarian career, stating, "From growing up surrounded by animals, to caring for my lemon of a dog, and gaining hands-on experience at an animal hospital, every step has further affirmed that I am destined to save animals."
- ★ Mr. David Olszewski wrote a magnificent Letter of Reference, defining so many remarkable qualities he's observed in you, including, "Probably most importantly though, it gives me pleasure to speak of Anthony's trustworthiness. He is an honest, dependable and reliable young man. I trust Anthony completely to help maintain my farm and my business in my absence."
- ★ Anthony wasn't able to participate in our Convention Zoom Call introducing several of our Award winners to the audience, however he recorded and forwarded a video thanking the RHPBA for his selection in addition to honoring his recently deceased great grandfather, John Burkett. His awesome recording is available for viewing in our website (www.rhpba.com).



COLE LUNDSTEN

APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- ★ Resides in Rockton, IL
- ★ Cole's Dad is RHPBA member Brett Lundsten residing in Rockton, IL
- ★ Grandfather James Lundsten was original member of 555th RED HORSE Squadron, Vietnam
- ★ Attends Carthage College in Kenosha, WI
 - Majors in Accounting and Data Analytics
 - Expected graduation in May 2029
- ★ High School
 - Four-Time High Honor Roll (4.0 GPA)
 - AP Scholar with Distinction
 - Two-time Business Student of the Month
 - Four-time Soccer Sectional Scholar Athlete
 - Two-time Soccer Defensive Player of the Year
- ★ Activities
 - Four Church Mission Trips: 2021 (Gilbert, SC);
 2022 (Toledo, OH); 2023 (Mission, SD); 2024 (Dublin, Ireland)
 - Volunteer Youth Soccer Coach
 - Church Confirmation Class Mentor (August 2021 May 2025)



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REMARKS:

- ★ Your insightful essay, "How Passion Adds Up To A Career", exposed your career journey starting in your childhood, stating, "While I thought my hobbies and enjoyment of math were fun activities at the time, little did I know I was fueling a growing passion to understand systems, data, and how both intersect in making strategic business decisions."
- ★ Your business philosophy also caught our attention, stating, "The camp also helped me to understand that successful businesses operate like a team; every person behind the scenes has an important job, every decision matters, and success is achieved through aligned strategy and communication."
- ★ Jaime Cross wrote an excellent Letter of Reference, defining several qualities he's observed in you, including, "He has taken time to engage the homeowners, who many times are less fortunate than others, on their level to have a meaningful conversation with them about the project, life in general, and his faith in Jesus Christ."

KAIAL HAJIK

APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- ★ Resides in Panama City Beach, FL
- ★ Kaial's dad is RHPBA member Joe Hajik II, residing in Panama City Beach, FI
- ★ Attends University of West Florida in Pensacola, FL
 - · Major in Mechanical Engineering with a focus on Aerospace Studies
 - Expected graduation in May 2028
 - GPA 3.3 (Fall 2024 Spring 2025)
 - AFROTC:
 - AF Physical Assessment Fitness Awards and 2 ribbons
 - Superior Performance (2024 and 2025)
 - Warrior Spirit Ribbon for Superior Performance (Fall Semester 2024)
 - College Scholarship Recipient Awards and two ribbons
 - AETC Award for Basic Cadet of the Month Award (Spring 2025)
 - Constructed and awaiting guidance for placement of U.S. Flag retirement box





KAIAL Continued:

- ★ High School
 - Coordinated two school wide STEM events as a member of National Honor Society (2020-2024)
 - Naval Sea Cadet Corps (2017-2021)
 - AF JROTC (2020-2024):
 - Commander of Delta and Bravo Flight, then Cadet DO (2021-2023)
 - Selected as Group Cmdr. (Cadet Colonel highest ranking cadet)
 - Constructed and donated flag retirement box to store tattered U.S. Flags (2023)
 - Initiated and coordinated School U.S. Flag Retirement Program (2021-2024)
 - Recipient of Nomination to the USAFA presented by Florida Senator Rick Scott
 - Varsity soccer team (2022-2024)

★ Activities

- · Boy Scout Program
 - Achieved Eagle Scout (age 13)
 - State of Florida Eagle Scout of the Year Award (VRW sponsored) (2021-2022)
 - U.S. National Eagle Scout of the Year Award (VFW sponsored) (2021)
 - Senior Patrol Leader and Chaplain (2017-2020)
 - Constructed six U.S. Flag retirement boxes in various locations in Bay County
 - Coordinator for long leaf pine planting planted 845+ longleaf pine trees at Panama City Conservation Park (2010-2020)
- Owner and sole cleaner of PCB Beach Access #61 (2019-Present)
- Participated in and supervised Salvaged Santa Bikes building for underprivileged children in Bay County (2018-2021)
- Constructed and showcased lifesaving device receptacle called the Life BoKx
 - Prototype of an emergency kit to prevent drownings on PCB, FL beaches
 - Attracted attention of local news network, local lifestyle magazine, and worldwide news internet outlets (CNN and Fox News) (2019-2023)
- Spearheaded and championed project to install blinking lights and crosswalk at drop-off and pick-up locations at Bay High School (2022-2023)

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REMARKS:

- ★ You revealed a deep respect for and appreciation of military and personal values from your parents, relatives, junior military organizations, and scouting.
- ★ Your essay revealed a mature understanding of leadership... "I know that in order to be a great leader, I must be a good follower, and that resonates with me every day."
- ★ Professor and retired USMC MSgt. William Hess magnificently echoed your understanding of leadership, stating, "He is talented, intuitive, dedicated, and focused on all his pursuits; he consistently seeks constructive feedback to understand better the notion of following to lead, a rare concept and an impressive quality for a young man."

60TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



JOEY GREENE

APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- * Resides in Panama City Beach, FL
- ★ Joey's dad is RHPBA member AF CMSgt. Joseph Green residing in JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK
- ★ Attends Johnson University, Knoxville, TN
 - · Majors in Business Administration
 - Expected graduation in December 2025
 - May 2024 Graduated with AS from Johnson University in Orlando. FL
 - Selected as Top Student in American Sign Language
 - · Varsity basketball:
 - Johnson University, FL two years (voted Most Improved first year and Captain second year)
 - Johnson University, TN two years (Captain second year)



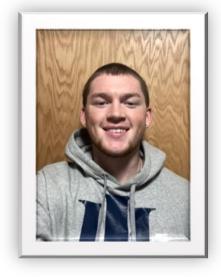
- Varsity basketball four years
- · Varsity football two years
- Top student in American Sign Language Program Senior Year

★ Activities

- Panera Bread Team Lead on night shift for two years
- Head coach for co-ed flag football and for co-ed 5-on-5 basketball programs
 - Seven co-ed football championships and three undefeated seasons
- Country Cascade Waterpark Resort Supervisor, Manager and Executive Intern

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REMARKS:

- ★ The Committee was impressed with your aspiration and drive to succeed, as you discussed. "Along with all this I have been able to do what my passion in life is and that is shoes/fashion. This year I have started my own reselling/clothes business called "RisenSoles". My goal is to make RisenSoles a nationally recognized name in the next decade, one that blends style with purpose and spreads God's message through creativity and culture. I want people to feel seen, inspired, and reminded of God's presence through something as simple as what they wear."
- ★ You share our Association's culture in respect for and appreciation of family, stating in your essay, "After graduation, I plan to serve in the military as an officer, building a career that honors and surpasses the legacy of my father, who recently earned the rank of E-9. His journey has inspired me to dream bigger, work harder, and give back even more."
- ★ Mr. Bryan Bevard wrote an excellent Letter of Reference, defining so many remarkable qualities he's observed in you, including, "He has always been my hardest and most dependable player I have ever coached. From being the first to practice and the last to leave. Being an extension of the coaching staff and mentoring the younger teams."
- ★ Joey wasn't able to participate in our Convention Zoom Call introducing several of our award winners to the audience, however he recorded and forwarded a video thanking the RHPBA for his selection. You can view his terrific recording in our website (www.rhpba.com).





RHPBA NEWS ITEMS

DVIDS: PACIFIC AIR FORCES CIVIL ENGINEERS HAVE A VISION: WEAPONIZE CONSTRUCTION IN THE INDO-PACIFIC.

Headquarters Air Force, Office of the Director of Civil Engineers, 07-23-25, story and photo by Jared Harral.

Hawaii, United States: In May 2025, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Civil Engineers advanced their "weaponizing construction" in the Indo-Pacific (WCIP) Working Group," vision with a three-day working group that brought together industry partners. The event focused on improving military construction by addressing challenges across planning, design, and execution while enhancing collaboration with industry partners.



Headquarters PACAF Civil Engineers led the effort in coordination with the Air Force Installation Contracting Center Operating Location PACAF, the 766th and 722nd Enterprise Sourcing Squadrons, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center Requirements and Acquisitions Division, and Air Force Contract Augmentation Program V civilian contractors.

Over three days, participants from Fluor Intercontinental, Inc.; KBR Services, LLC; Environmental Chemical Corporation; Amentum Services, Inc.; IAP Worldwide Services, and V2X, Inc. analyzed the current landscape and explored obstacles contractors face throughout the project lifecycle, what PACAF/A4C refers to as the "Engineering Kill Chain," from planning and programming to design and construction. Discussions brought forward contractor perspectives on risk assessment, cost structures, and contracting procedures, with analyses of past project difficulties.

1st Lt. Jessica Kinman, a member of the Washington Air National Guard deployed with the 240th Civil Engineer Flight, currently assigned to PACAF/A4C, served as the facilitator for the WCIP Working Group. She emphasized the importance of such forums, noting that industry partners bring invaluable, experience-based perspectives

that are critical to successfully executing multi-location construction projects.

"Our industry partners enabled us to proactively identify process inefficiencies and emerging challenges at new sites that could impact military contract fulfillment, facilitating early intervention," said Kinman. "The diverse working groups were fundamental to fostering optimal brainstorming and rapid problem-solving."

To illustrate how this integrated approach can drive results, participants examined a case study on the U.S. Navy Seabees' implementation of the "Whole of Engineering" concept at China Lake, California, following the devastating earthquakes of 2019, as well as the successful airfield ramp construction project at San Clemente Island, California, in 2022.

Building on these lessons, PACAF engineers are pioneering their first "Whole of Engineering and Industry" strategy through the 513th RED HORSE Squadron's adaptive rehabilitation of Tinian North Field, utilizing insights derived from both China Lake and San Clemente Island.

The latter part of the workshop focused on unlocking new opportunities through strengthened partnerships. Attendees pinpointed areas where increased collaboration and closer teamwork could streamline processes and deliver significant benefits, envisioning the application of these principles to future joint efforts. Strategies and best practices for effective military-contractor partnerships were shared, including communication protocols, risk-sharing models, and contracting regulations.

The event concluded with the development of action plans and the definition of key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of future collaborative efforts, solidifying commitments and outlining next steps for execution.

"The team successfully documented opportunities covering a wide range of areas – programming, design, contracting, regulations, and construction processes – all of which are projected to deliver considerable value and benefits to the team," Kinman said.

"While some represent 'quick wins' that can be addressed immediately, others are strategic, medium- to long-term actions requiring congressional waivers or approvals to optimize operations at new construction locations. Our next steps involve allocating these tasks and designating the appropriate parties to drive their realization."

PACAF Command Civil Engineer Col. Kevin Osborne underscored the need for strong industry partnerships to operate at the "Speed of Need" as we drive to weaponize construction in the Indo-Pacific through the implementation of superior technologies.



"This working group demonstrates our proactive approach to leveraging industry expertise to enhance warfighter readiness and reestablish deterrence through superior capabilities," said Osborne. "Our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific demands that we constantly adapt and evolve as we continue to set the theater."

WEAPONIZE CONSTRUCTION IN THE INDO-PACIFIC, Continued

CONSTRUCTING A CAPABILITY: PACAF CIVIL ENGINEERS HELP LAUNCH RAAF'S FIRST AIRFIELD DAMAGE REPAIR (ADR) TRAINING SITE

DVIDS, 11-17-2025; Headquarters Air Force, Director of Civil Engineers. Story and photos by Jared Harral. U.S. Air Force photos by Jared Harral.

Queensland, Australia: Deep in the rugged expanse of northern Queensland, a runway came to life through asphalt and engineering precision. The inaugural Exercise Bronze Croc marked a turning point for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), as engineers conducted airfield damage repair training on their home soil for the first time, shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. Pacific Air Forces and Royal Canadian Air Force partners. What began as a shared vision is now solidified in the Outback as a first-of-its-kind ADR site in Australia.

The exercise, held at Townsville Field Training Area and hosted by the RAAF's 65 Air Base Recovery Squadron, brought together personnel from PACAF's 554th RED HORSE Squadron and the RCAF's 2 Wing. The exercise was the realization of a multi-year vision and the beginning of a new era in expeditionary civil engineering for the RAAF.

"We've been working with the 65 ABRS for a while now," said Capt. Celyn Rogers, Silver Flag Flight Commander, 554th RED HORSE Squadron. "They've trained with us in Guam before, and over time, conversations with them and PACAF Civil Engineers led to the idea of helping Australia establish its first dedicated airfield damage repair site."

What followed was a coordinated, multinational engineering effort. In early 2025, the 554th RED HORSE Squadron sent an advance team to TFTA to begin survey work and coordination efforts with the RAAF. Later, the 513th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron deployed to execute the construction phase by excavating soil, laying a new base course, and paving a 2,000-meter asphalt strip that now serves as the RAAF's first purpose-built ADR training pad.

In addition to the ADR training, the exercise included familiarization with other expeditionary air base recovery areas including expedient fabric shelter construction, troop lodging setups, and a water purification system. These capabilities support a full spectrum of air base recovery functions, though the primary focus of Bronze Croc remained firmly on developing ADR proficiency.

For the RAAF, the significance of the project can't be overstated. Squadron Leader Ben Whyte, lead planner for Exercise Bronze Croc, was involved from the earliest stages, guiding the concept from an idea to a fully operational training site.

This dedicated ADR training area is a milestone that represents a major step forward for the RAAF's engineering trades. As head of planning within RAAF Headquarters' Air Capability Enablers (ACE) branch, Whyte views the site not only as a professional achievement, but also as a critical investment in the Australia's readiness.

"Bronze Croc has been developed by ACE branch within Air Force Headquarters to enhance the RAAF's air base recovery capability," Whyte said. "It's aimed at force generation training for 65 ABRS, in line with the National Defense Strategy and the RAAF Chief of Air Force's intent, which acknowledges ADR as a critical capability of our preparedness."

Leading the ADR training was the 554th's Silver Flag cadre, who provided technical instruction and introduced key USAF systems and concepts to their RAAF and RCAF counterparts. Among the tools taught was the Geo Expeditionary Planning Tool, which enables airmen to assess airfield damage and prepare for rapid repair actions.

"GeoXPT is a unique capability that the 554th and, specifically, engineering assistants bring to the table," said TSgt. Andrew Van Cleave, a Silver Flag instructor. "We're helping to teach and integrate it with the RAAF."

USAF working alongside RAAF and RCAF engineering counterparts strengthened joint capabilities while creating an environment where each nation could learn from the other's methods and experiences. RCAF Master Corporal Dave Lowe of the 192nd Construction Engineering Flight highlighted the value of exchanging knowledge and building relationships that will benefit future operations.

"The significance of sending a Canadian team down here adds to our joint capability to get together and produce an excellent team environment," Lowe said. "It allows us to get experience from the way they do things compared to the way we do things, combining a lot of great learning skills. The members are great to talk to, they have so much information to give us, and they take information from us as well. I'm enjoying every minute of it."

This new site is expected to serve as a regular training hub for the RAAF and its partners. In future iterations, the RAAF hopes to evolve the site further by inviting more partners and expanding into regional coalition exercises.



As the dust settled on the first iteration of Bronze Croc, participants reflected on what the exercise had built: not just in asphalt and shelter systems, but in trust, resiliency, and capability.

"We're trying to get away from just cooperating; moving to interoperate with each other," Whyte said. "If we get the same training that the U.S. Air Force Silver Flag team is providing to their airmen, then we can plug and play one of our aviators into a RED HORSE team, and they'll be expected and understood to perform."

The legacy of Bronze Croc could be not only a new capability for one nation, but a shared readiness for many.

"We are getting ourselves prepared for what is potentially coming," Whyte said. "That's what keeps me motivated every day."















This Newsletter Is Dedicated to Air Force Military Civil Engineers (RED HORSE and Prime BEEF) Past, Present and Future.



554th RHS, EPIC CRAB 2025: READINESS, RESILIENCE, AND REHM

DVIDS: 05-29-2025, Headquarters Air Force, Director of Civil Engineers. Story by Emma Barton, U.S. Air Force photos by Dominick Cremeans and Airman 1st Class Adasha Williams, 36th Wing.

Northwest Field, Guam: The 554th RED HORSE Squadron recently hosted EPIC CRAB 2025, an interoperable field training exercise focused on Rapid Explosive Hazard Mitigation (REHM). This field training exercise – in support of Headquarters Pacific Air Forces and shaped under the leadership of Chief Master Sgt. Michael Vallejo, PACAF EOD Chief – challenged Air Force, Marine, and Naval EOD technicians to implement new methods for identifying, disposing, and clearing diverse ordnance types. Notably, the 554th RED HORSE Squadron welcomed two EOD specialists from the Singapore Air Force, fostering multinational collaboration.



Participants of EPIC CRAB 2025 participate in a group photo on Northwest Field, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, May 1, 2025. EPIC CRAB is a three-day field training exercise focused on enhancing confidence and readiness in Rapid Explosive Hazard Mitigation. (Dominick Cremeans)

Master Sgt. Michael Alger, Section Chief, EOD Contingency Training and the principal trainer of EPIC CRAB, underscored the importance of interoperability in the dynamic Indo-Pacific Theater. "It's extremely important to involve our other branches and partner nations because they need to know what we're capable of – that we mean business," Alger emphasized. "It's a growing relationship that consistently needs work. We are a team, and we need to show them that we will work side-by-side with them for whatever they encounter, or hopefully, whatever we encounter should a challenge arise."

The training was meticulously structured in a crawl-walk-run format, gradually escalating complexity to bolster participant confidence as they navigated various scenarios, from theory-based classrooms to live-fire explosive drills. The cornerstone of EPIC CRAB 2025 was the development of competence in REHM, a critical concept within airfield damage repair primarily applicable to EOD units. However, the training extended to non-EOD participants as well, including RED HORSE engineers, who possess unique capabilities to clear runways impacted by ordnance using heavy machinery.

A major component of the exercise included hands-on interaction with the Recovery of Airbase Denied by Ordinance (RABDO) vehicle. This vehicle utilizes directed energy to detonate explosives from impressive distance. With very few RABDO vehicles in circulation, real-world, experiential training with the vehicle was an invaluable opportunity for all engineers in attendance to advance their operational readiness capabilities.

Beyond conventional EOD and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) operations, EPIC CRAB 2025 integrated comprehensive training through various elements. Participants were challenged on their Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) and CASEVAC protocols, executing day and night MEDEVAC operations, triaging and providing life-saving care to simulated casualties before transporting them via tactical vehicles to awaiting MEDEVAC helicopters.



U.S. Marine Corps Marines administer tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) with Singapore air force airman during EPIC CRAB 25 Exercise at. TCCC is trauma care administered in a tactical setting to reduce preventable deaths where time and resources are limited. (Adasha Williams)



U.S. Marine Corps' Marine awaits extraction confirmation. Helicopter emergency medical services are used for trauma evacuations, usually in remote areas or where required specialized care is not readily available. (Adasha Williams)



Guam presents unparalleled training assets and conditions, particularly evident at Northwest Field. This strategic location is one of few equipped to accommodate live explosive ordnance on runways, an indispensable feature for this specialized training. As controlled detonations damage the airfield, the 554th RED HORSE Squadron promptly follows with engineering support in rapid damage assessment and repair, thereby simulating real-world post-attack recovery scenarios.

Critical to the planning phases of EPIC CRAB is the central focus on year-over-year continuous improvement for training outcomes. The major influences on this year's exercise came from the rapidly developing Indo-Pacific Theater in which Guam finds itself. Across the Indo-Pacific, U.S. and allied forces work to set the theater and be prepared for new warfighting scenarios. With massive infrastructure projects underway throughout the Pacific, engineers' EOD counterparts aim to be ready and trained to protect the new and rebuilt runways. By utilizing modern tools and tactics like the RABDO vehicle and REHM, EOD technicians are maximally equipped to come into a space denied by ordnance and rapidly clear the dangers, ultimately enabling civil engineers to swiftly repair the runways without threat of unexploded ordnance.



EOD technicians place charges next to ordnance on Northwest Field, Guam. (Dominick Cremeans)



U.S. Air Force Airmen walk away from an explosive detonation. Explosive Ordnance Disposal locates, identifies and disposes of dangerous hazardous materials, improvised explosives devices and nuclear materials etc. (Adasha Williams).



U.S. Air Force Airmen, Marine Corps Marines, and Singapore air force airmen listen to safety briefing during EPIC CRAB 25 Exercise at Northwest Field, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, May 1, 2025. EPIC CRAB 25 Exercise's premise is to recover base of operations using service members from our partners, allies and joint services. (Adasha Williams)



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Rafael Torres, 36th CES, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team member, straightens gear. EPIC CRAB 25 Exercise's premise is to recover base of operations using service members from our partners, allies and joint services. (Adasha Williams)



MSgt. Jayson Wells instructs EOD technicians through a dry-run training exercise that focused on enhancing confidence and readiness in Rapid Explosive Hazard Mitigation. (Dominick Cremeans)



2nd CES CONDUCTS "EXERCISE PRIME BEEF"

DVIDS: 06-05-25, Photos by Airman 1st Class Aaron Hill, 2nd Bomb Wing.

Barksdale Airforce Base, Bossier City, LA:



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jorge Cotto-valladares, 2nd CES lead firefighter, simulates extinguishing an aircraft fire at a simulated crash site during exercise Prime BEEF, Base Engineering Expeditionary Force, at Barksdale Air Force Base. Fire teams ensure there's no fire hazards for explosive ordnance disposal to secure the area and begin rescue operations.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jorge Cotto-valladares, and Airman 1st Class Khrissell Lee, 2nd CES firefighter, use lifesaving equipment to free a simulated injured and pinned Airmen during exercise Prime BEEF. Fire teams and explosive ordnance disposal are the first to respond to any aircraft crash to ensure the area is secure before rescuing Airmen at a crash site.



Airmen with the 2nd CES assemble a small shelter system during exercise Prime BEEF, training Airmen to build emergency shelters and support facilities in areas with no existing infrastructure.



Airmen assigned to the 2nd CES remove the top of a small shelter system tent during exercise Prime BEEF. Airmen finished the exercise by taking down their forward operating base following notification of a simulated incoming attack.



Airmen assigned to the 2nd CES assemble a small shelter system during exercise Prime BEEF focusing on the readiness of CES Airmen's ability to build and sustain forward operating bases in austere environments.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ethan Begovich, 2nd CES electrical journeyman, disassembles a small shelter system tent during exercise Prime BEEF.





Airman 1st Class Khrissell Lee and Staff Sgt. Jorge Cottovalladares simulate carrying an injured Airman to safety during exercise Prime BEEF. Airmen were overseen by 10 Wing Inspection Team members, evaluating performance and describing scenarios for Airmen to address.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jorge Cotto-valladares, and Airman 1st Class Justen Zbranek, 2nd CES driver operator, and Airman 1st Class Khrissell Lee, simulate extinguishing a fire at a simulated crash site during exercise Prime BEEF. The exercise included building a forward operating base, responding to a downed aircraft, and locating ejected Airmen using land navigation.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Richard Boyle, 2nd CES explosive ordnance disposal apprentice, takes notes of a simulated crash site during exercise Prime BEEF. 2nd CES firefighters and explosive ordnance disposal worked together to clear the site and determine the safety of the area.



A simulated bomb fuse rests on the ground as Airmen from the 2nd CES mark down details of a simulated crash site during exercise Prime BEEF. The exercise included a simulated aircraft munitions delivery and crash with explosive ordnance disposal response.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Aiden Szulewski, 2nd CES explosive ordnance disposal apprentice, assesses the status of a rocket at a simulated crash site during exercise Prime BEEF. Explosive Ordnance Disposal's role is critical at crash sites due to munitions and explosive components like flares and ejection seats that could harm rescue Airmen.



Airmen assigned to the 2nd CES load a packed small shelter system onto a trailer during exercise Prime BEEF. The exercise included setting up a forward operating base, responding to simulated enemy attacks and a downed aircraft, and using land navigation to locate simulated ejected Airmen.





A morale patch for Prime BEEF is attached to an Airman's uniform during exercise Prime BEEF. Prime BEEF, Prime BEEF, is focused on overseas deployment readiness.

AIR GUARD ENGINEERS BUILD ROADS, SKILLS IN ASSATEAGUE ISLAND PROJECT

DVIDS: 06-16-25: From Tarmac to Terrain: Air Guard Engineers Train and Build at Assateague Island and New Hampshire National Guard, June 23, 2025; story and Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Bryan Hoover, 171st Air Refueling Wing.

Assateague Island National Seashore, VA: Air National Guard civil engineers from across the country are rotating through Assateague Island in support of a months-long Deployment for Training (DFT), where they're building vital infrastructure while gaining expeditionary skills that directly align with the U.S. Air Force's Agile Combat Employment strategy.

Led by Senior Master Sgt. David Ledger of the 210th RED HORSE Squadron, New Mexico Air National Guard, and 1st Lt. Allen Wilson, project engineer from the 176th CES, Alaska Air National Guard, the project aims to construct 2.5 miles of paved roadway and develop 14 acres of parking on federal land managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service. The new infrastructure will support safe and sustainable access for more than 1.4 million annual visitors to the Assateague Island National Seashore for recreational purposes.

Throughout the project, eight separate two-week rotations of Airmen will support construction activities. Participating units include the 210th RHS, New Mexico Air National Guard; the 202nd RHS, Georgia Air National Guard; the 203rd RHS, Virginia Air National Guard; 200th RHS, Ohio Air National Guard, which is supporting three separate rotations; the 171st CES, Pennsylvania Air National Guard; and the 185th CES, and Iowa Air National Guard.



Air National Guardsman, Senior Airman Asa Henderson assigned to the 171st CES, operates an excavator to move riprap during a DFT, Assateague Island, Virginia, June 17, 2025. The 171st engineers are the 5th rotation of eight during the deployment for training on the island. The DFT has provided engineers with unique training consistent with installing a runway while creating a new road for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

While many of the Airmen come from the heavy equipment operator, or "dirt boy" career field, this deployment provides training beyond the scope of traditional job roles. Airmen from a wide range of Air Force Specialty Codes are participating in the project, often stepping into unfamiliar roles to support daily operations. This approach directly supports the Air Force's Multi-Capable Airman (MCA) concept.



A 171st Civil Engineer assigned to the Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, watches a dump truck deliver a load of riprap during the deployment to Assateague Island for training.

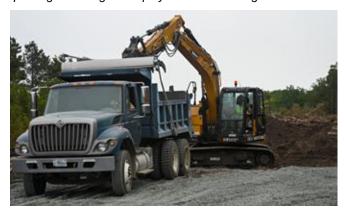
"This DFT is an example of the AFFORGEN model in action," said Ledger, referencing the Air Force Force Generation cycle, which prioritizes ready and deployable forces. "We're not just developing operators—we're developing Airmen who can function across disciplines and in unpredictable environments."



From operating bulldozers to managing fuel, logistics or site layout, Airmen are being cross-trained and empowered to support the mission in various ways. The result is not only more capable individuals but a more agile, mission-ready force.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsmen assigned to the 171st Air Refueling Wing spread and compact sand fill as a foundation for a parking lot during the deployment to Assateague Island.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, Senior Airman John Trimbath, assigned to the 171st CES, loads debris into a dump truck while operating an excavator during the deployment.

The training environment on Assateague Island also is highly relevant to today's strategic priorities. With sandy terrain, limited infrastructure and harsh weather conditions, the setting closely mirrors what Airmen may face in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Theater, where agile airfield operations and engineering support are essential in contested, remote areas.

"Most of our home stations are located at well-established airports—you can't exactly go out and carve roads through natural terrain," Wilson said. "Here, our teams are working in conditions that simulate real-world expeditionary operations."

Despite the scale of construction, no areas of the island have been closed to the public. Guardsmen are assisting with traffic control, standing watch at key access points and helping to ensure the safe flow of tourists and equipment across shared bike paths and roadways.

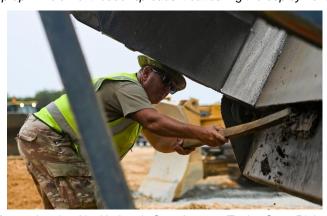
"Public access has been uninterrupted throughout the project," Wilson said. "That's a big win for both the mission and the community."



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, Master Sgt. Amanda Hilliard, assigned to the 171st CES, poses for a picture while the dump truck she operates is being loaded by an excavator during the deployment to Assateague Island.



A team of 171st Civil Engineers assigned to the Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, operate a dump truck to deliver a load of riprap while a front loader spreads it out during the deployment.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, Tech. Sgt. Richard Dorne, assigned to the 171st CES, cleans out debris from the back of a dump truck during the deployment.

The project was initially estimated to cost \$45 million, but was restructured. Reducing the scope of utilities to be installed and using military labor brought the cost down to about \$17 million. The savings are significant for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which previously spent about \$400,000 annually maintaining the area's eroding access points.





Tech. Sgt. Mary Connelly, assigned to the 171st CES, operates a road roller to create a compact driving surface for other vehicles during the deployment to Assateague Island for training.

The DFT began in April and is scheduled to continue through July. Project leadership, including Ledger, Wilson, and Tech. Sgt. Haley Suazo, a services specialist with the 210th RED HORSE Squadron, New Mexico Air National Guard, will depart after the sixth rotation. The final two rotations will fall under the direct management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "This deployment builds something far more important than pavement," Ledger said. "It develops multi-capable Airmen, strengthens joint partnerships and leaves behind a mission-ready force. That's the kind of readiness we need for the future fight."

WHAT'S THE BEEF

DVIDS: Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, United States; 07-17-2025; story and photo by Senior Airman Daniel Walderbach, 316th Wing.



U.S. Air Force Capt. Brennan Bosworth, 316th CES explosive ordnance disposal flight commander, participates in the individual movement techniques exercise during the Prime BEEF Olympics, at Joint Base Andrews, MD, July 3, 2025. The exercise simulates a real-world combat environment.

Joint Base Andrews, MD: Los Angeles, 1984. Atlanta, 1996. Salt Lake City, 2002. Joint Base Andrews, 2025. What do all these locations have in common? They've all hosted the Olympic Games—or in the case of Andrews, something close.

On July 3, 2025, Joint Base Andrews hosted its inaugural Prime BEEF Olympics, a skills-based competition designed to boost deployment readiness for Airmen assigned to the 316th CES.

The Prime BEEF unit consists of total force personnel with CE specialties and capabilities. These teams are designed to rapidly respond worldwide in support of agile combat employment to provide engineering expertise and emergency services required to establish, sustain, protect, and recover bases for the employment of joint, interagency, and multinational operations.

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Donald Armond, 316th CES heavy equipment superintendent, helped develop the event.

"The Prime BEEF Olympics is a readiness exercise designed to test and enhance the skills of our Airmen and their primary functions," Armond said. "It's a series of timed and competitive events that simulate real-world deployment scenarios, focusing on teamwork, rapid response, and technical proficiency."

Armond, a seasoned civil engineering Airman, drew inspiration from the Silver Flag Exercise and the Air Force's Readiness Challenge to create an exercise that increases the readiness of Airmen stationed here.

Similar to a decathlon, the Prime BEEF Olympics included multitude of events such as "Breach!" an integrated defense test; "Treat the Wounded!" a tactical combat casualty care event. Each event supports the squadron's monthly readiness objectives.

"In order to make sure that our Airmen are ready at a moment's notice, we're very intentional about our training," said Master Sgt. Phillip Rubalcava, 316th CES Prime BEEF superintendent. "If we don't do this, then we're not going to be ready for the next fight, the next conflict."

Airmen were split up into eight teams based on their Air Force Generation deployment cycle. Each team consisted of at least one Airman from every engineering Air Force Specialty Code.

The AFFORGEN model is a two-year cycle comprising of four six-month phases: reset, prepare, certify and deploy. According to Armond, the goal is to make the Prime BEEF Olympics a capstone event for the certify phase.

"We're really targeting the Airmen who have not deployed before," Armond said. "This gives them an opportunity to ask questions about what it's going to be like when they inevitably deploy."

During real-world deployments, Airmen are often called upon to perform duties outside of their primary career field. Lt. Col. Marie Harnly, 316th CES commander, emphasized the importance of developing multi-capable Airmen.

"Our job is to deliver engineer capabilities downrange, and that will differ depending on each individual's AFSC and skill set," Harnly said. "What we focus on is not only those Airmen combat skills, but also how we refine the skills for your particular career field in order to be able to deliver those capabilities."



The team that demonstrated the highest level of proficiency across 12 events was Alpha 2, led by Master Sgt. James Loveless, 316th CES electrical systems shop section chief.

Loveless was proud to lead team Alpha 2 to victory and said it feels good knowing he made an impact on his team.

"It is extremely important for us to always be ready as civil engineers, we are always answering the call and leading the way when it comes to deploying," Loveless said. "If you stay ready, there is no need to get ready, so we use our monthly Prime BEEF days to get after training while also finding new and creative ways to make training fun and exciting such as the Prime BEEF Olympics."

157TH CIVIL ENGINEERS HONE PRIME BEEF SKILLS

Pennsylvania, United States: 07-29-25, U.S. National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th Air Refueling Wing.

Fort Indiantown Gap, PA: Airmen assigned to the 157th CES conducted field training during a week-long Prime BEEF exercise July 27 to Aug. 2, 2025, at the 201st Regional Training Site, Fort Indiantown Gap, PA. The training enhanced mission readiness by focusing on the Air Force's Multi-Capable Airman (MCA) concept and reinforcing essential engineering skills to generate, recover, and sustain combat power at forward bases, contingency locations,



Engineers in the 157th CES Prime BEEF hone Prime BEEF skills during a week-long training at the 201st Regional Training Site, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, July 31, 2025.

Airmen from five civil engineering specialties: electrical systems, heavy equipment, structural, engineering assistance, and water and fuels systems, trained side by side to build, sustain, and recover essential base operations in expeditionary environments.



Airmen from the 157th CES Prime BEEF and the 219th CES pour 250 cubic yards of concrete at the 201st Regional Training Site, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, July 30, 2025. The large-scale concrete pour showcased joint efforts between New Hampshire and Montana Air National Guard engineers, reinforcing critical skills in airfield construction and multi-unit coordination.



Airmen from the 157th CES Prime BEEF smooth 250 cubic yards of concrete.

Master Sgt. Tom Demers, 157th CES superintendent, sweeps concrete off a section of completed airstrip during an early morning concrete pour. The engineers poured concrete and constructed an expeditionary runway while honing Prime BEEF processes and skill sets.





Staff Sgt. Darren Descoteaux, a water and fuels system specialist with the 157th CES, rolls a hose for the reverse osmosis purification unit water during the Prime BEEF training. The transportable, self-contained purification system is used by the engineers during contingency operations, emergency responses, and recovery missions.



Airman 1st Class Deborah Wembabazi, heavy а equipment specialist with the 157th CES, levels concrete during the Prime BEEF training. The engineers poured concrete and constructed an expeditionary runway while honing Prime BEEF processes and skill sets.



Staff Sgt. Collin Shanahan, an electrical engineer with the 157th CES, moves high voltage cables in a secondary distribution center during the weeklong training. Shanahan wore a 40 cal arc flash suit, insulated gear that covers the body from head to toe, including a helmet with a tinted face shield, to against protect him extreme heat, flying shrapnel, and blinding light caused bv electrical explosions.



Senior Airman Brent Lander, a water and fuels system specialist with the 157th CES, rolls a hose for the reverse osmosis water purification unit during the training. The engineers use the filtration system to convert raw water from sources like fresh, brackish, or saltwater into safe, potable drinking water.



Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Krafton, an electrical engineer with the 157th CES, crafts an elbow to connect high voltage equipment to a power source during the week-long training





Airman 1st Class Deborah Wembabazi, a heavy equipment specialist with the 157th CES, smooths concrete during the Prime BEEF training. The engineers poured concrete and constructed an expeditionary runway while honing Prime BEEF processes and skill sets.





Tech. Sgt. Aaron Katz, NCO in charge of heavy equipment with the 157th CES, Senior Airman Collin Small and Staff Sgt. Kyler Osbourne, engineers with the 157th CES, operate high power machinery during the week-long Prime BEEF training.

Senior Airman Collin Small, a structures specialist with the 157th CES, uses a plasma cutter to shape a steel plate. The week-long training prepared Airmen for rapid deployment operations by reinforcing core engineering tasks under austere, high-temperature conditions.

Staff Sgt. Kyler Osbourne, a structures specialist with the 157th CES, operates excavator during heavy equipment training. Five separate sections of the CES honed their Prime BEEF skills, ensuring readiness to open, sustain, and recover the base across contingency operations, emergency responses, and recovery missions.



Staff Sgt. Dristan Ramadan, a structures specialist with the 157th CES, uses a plasma cutter to shape a steel plate during the Prime BEEF training.



Tech. Sqt. Alan Bauman, structures NCO in charge with the 157th CES, grinds a metal plate. The Prime **BEEF** training sharpened expeditionary engineering skills in high-heat conditions. reinforcing mission readiness for rapid deployment environments.



60TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



PENNSYLVANIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD MASTER SERGEANT DIES WHILE SNORKELING ON TINIAN

Stars and Stripes: 08-07-25, by Joseph Ditzler and Wyoming County Press Examiner, August 7, 2025 by Eric Mark.



Master Sgt. Elizabeth Lohrmann, 45, of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, died August 3, 2025, according to the Wyoming County Press Examiner.

A member of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard died this week in a snorkeling accident on Tinian, in the Northern Mariana Islands, according to local news reports and the state governor's office. Master Sqt. Elizabeth Lohrmann, 45, of the 193rd Special Operations Wing, died Sunday, according to an online report Thursday in the Wyoming County Press Examiner. The newspaper cited statements from the wing and the Pennsylvania National Guard. Lohrmann, of Kingsley, PA, was deployed to Guam at the time, the report said. Spokespeople from the wing and Guard were unavailable by email or phone after regular business hours Wednesday in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro on Tuesday ordered flags in Susquehanna County, where Lohrmann lived, flown at half-staff in her honor and until her interment, according to a notice posted online that day by the state Department of General Services. "We are saddened by the loss of Master Sqt. Elizabeth Lohrmann, 45, who was deployed to Guam and died August 3 while snorkeling at Tinian Island," said Col. Robert S. Noren, commander, 193rd Special Operations Wing, Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The wing suspended all flying operations on Tuesday.

Tinian Island is part of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Along with Guam, it is the westernmost U.S. island in the Pacific.

The island has been featured in previous editions of this RHPBA newsletter as Civil Engineers are diligently working to restore Tinian Island's North Field's historic runways to operational status.

NIXON TAKES REINS OF THE 203rd RED HORSE

DVIDS: 08-09-25; story by 2nd Lt. Delmy Hernandez, 192nd Wing, Virginia Air National Guard. U.S. Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Eugene Silvers.

Virginia Beach, VA: The 192nd Wing, Virginia Air National Guard, held a change of command ceremony for the 203rd RED HORSE, August 9, 2025, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Col. Manal I. Burge, 192nd Mission Support Group Commander, presided over the event where Lt. Col. Carlos R. Nixon assumed command of the 203rd RED HORSE from Lt. Col. Eddie M. Abisaab. Nixon previously served as the Air Force Director of Civil Engineers' Readiness Division (A4CX) Branch Chief of the 235th Civil Engineer Flight, Maryland Air National Guard at Warfield Air National Guard Base in White Marsh, Maryland.

During the ceremony, Burge awarded Abisaab with the U.S. Air Force Meritorious Service Medal for his strategic vision and exceptional leadership during his tenure.

RED HORSE units are quick-responding, self-sufficient units that provide highly mobile civil engineering teams to support contingency and special operations worldwide. These units execute independent operations in remote, high-threat environments and are capable of designing, engineering, and building structures in a matter of weeks. The 203rd RED HORSE, the VaANG's largest squadron, is a geographically separated unit located at SMR in Virginia Beach.



The 203rd RED HORSE, holds a change of command ceremony August 9, 2025, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



Lt. Col. Eddie M. Abasaab



Lt. Col. Carlos R. Nixon assumed command



AIR FORCE BIRTHDAY: ENGINEERS LEAD THE WAY!

Source: soldiersangels.org website, 09-18-25.



On the Air Force Birthday, we honor Civil Engineers—the unsung heroes who build, protect, and sustain the foundations of air power around the world.

Today, as we celebrate the 78th Air Force Birthday, we want to honor the backbone of every base and every mission: The Air Force Civil Engineers.

Civil Engineers

When Americans think of air power, they often picture the roar of a jet engine or the silhouette of a bomber against the sky. Yet behind every takeoff, every runway, every deployed base across the globe stands the quiet, unshakable strength of Air Force Civil Engineers.

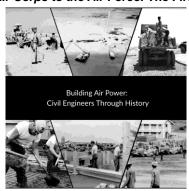


On the Air Force's birthday, as we celebrate the innovation of flight and the courage of Airmen, it is fitting to also honor those who build the very foundations of air power. Civil Engineers have led the way since the earliest days, transforming bare ground into operational bases and proving that without infrastructure, even the mightiest aircraft cannot take flight.

Fighting for purpose. Building for purpose. Sacrificing for a purpose. And in every mission, in every corner of the globe, we prove that purpose matters.

Our story is one of resilience, determination, and strength. For over seventy years, in disaster and in peace, in tragedies and in triumph, we have led the way. First in and last out—Warriors, Airmen, Civil Engineers—this is our story.

From Army Air Corps to the Air Force: The First Builders



Before the Air Force became its own branch in 1947, engineers in the Army Air Corps were already shaping the future of air power. In the Pacific, alongside the Navy Seabees, they carved runways from coral islands under enemy fire, turning bare ground into lifelines for combat aircraft. In Europe, they raced to repair bombed-out airfields so Allied planes could return to the fight. These "builders in uniform" were critical to victory as the pilots in the sky, proving that the foundation of air power has always been built by those willing to fight with shovels, steel, and unwavering resolve.

When the United States Air Force officially separated from the Army, Civil Engineering units remained at the heart of its mission.

They inherited the legacy of wartime ingenuity and carried it forward into a new era—an era defined not only by global conflict but by global presence.

Prime BEEF: The First to Respond





In 1964, the Air Force launched the Prime BEEF program, creating specialized teams of engineers trained to deploy at a moment's notice. Within a year, their readiness was tested as they supported U.S. forces in the Dominican Republic and later responded to urgent needs in Southeast Asia. The demand was immense, bases were overwhelmed with new aircraft, and parking them wingtip to wingtip left them dangerously exposed. That danger turned tragic in May 1965 when a chain reaction of explosions at Bien Hoa Air Base destroyed 40 aircraft and took dozens of American lives, proving the critical need for stronger defenses and better infrastructure.

Prime BEEF teams answered that call with determination. From constructing thousands of feet of aircraft revetments to building housing, water systems, and vital support facilities, these small but mighty units turned chaos into capability. By the early 1970s, nearly 2,000 engineers had deployed to Vietnam and Thailand, laying pipelines, erecting buildings, and powering entire bases. Their work not only saved aircraft and lives, but it also cemented Prime BEEF as a cornerstone of Air Force readiness, showing that in every fight, engineers truly lead the way.

RED HORSE: Heavy Construction, Heavy Courage



As the Vietnam War intensified, the Air Force realized that quick-response Prime BEEF teams alone weren't enough; they needed a larger, more permanent heavy-repair force. The answer came in 1966 with the creation of RED HORSE (Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers). These squadrons were designed as self-sufficient, 400-person units, capable of building and repairing major infrastructure in some of the most remote and hostile environments on earth. Unlike any engineering force before them, they combined mobility, firepower, and construction skill, making them uniquely equipped to take on missions where even Army support wasn't available. Their distinctive red caps quickly became a symbol of toughness, expertise, and

unwavering dedication recognized across the Air Force as a mark of the elite civil engineer.

From the jungles of Vietnam to today's austere battlefields, RED HORSE has been the Air Force's sledgehammer capable of everything from runway repair and base construction to well drilling, demolition, and large-scale paving. Their role goes beyond warfighting; in peacetime, they train, support joint exercises, and even carry out humanitarian and civic projects that sharpen their skills while serving communities. Whether laying concrete under fire or building hope after disaster, RED HORSE embodies resilience and strength, proving that when the mission is toughest, engineers lead the way.

The Legacy of Civil Engineers in the Modern Air Force



Today's Air Force Civil Engineers carry a mission that is as diverse as it is vital. In peacetime, they manage infrastructure, utilities, housing, fire protection, and environmental stewardship at installations across the globe. But when called upon, they pivot instantly into combat-ready units capable of deploying anywhere in the world at a moment's notice.

Modern units like Prime BEEF and RED HORSE exemplify this dual mission. Prime BEEF teams provide immediate, short-term engineering support and base recovery, while RED HORSE units bring heavy construction capabilities to austere, high-threat environments where speed and self-sufficiency are critical. Civil Engineers are also at the forefront of disaster response and humanitarian missions, whether restoring power after hurricanes, building shelters after earthquakes, or drilling wells to provide clean water in developing nations.



From cybersecurity safeguards in utility systems to countering Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, the scope of their operations has expanded with the modern battlefield. Civil Engineers remain what they have always been: the builders, protectors, and problem-solvers who ensure that no matter where the mission takes the Air Force, the foundation is ready.

Remembering Those Who Paid the Ultimate Price



The sacrifice of Air Force Civil Engineers in modern conflicts stands as a quiet, but unshakable testament to their courage. These men and women deployed into some of the most dangerous environments on earth—not to fly aircraft, but to build the runways they would launch from, to clear the explosives hidden in the ground, and to ensure that missions could continue even in the face of chaos. Many gave their lives while constructing bases in hostile territory, safeguarding supply lines, or disarming threats that endangered others. Their sacrifice is often unsung, but it is the very foundation of air power. By facing threats head-on in every corner of the globe, Civil Engineers and Airmen construct and defend the foundations of freedom, ensuring that every mission in the skies can succeed.

Engineers Lead the Way!

Air power has never stood alone. From the Army Air Corps, which helped carve coral airstrips in the Pacific, to the Air Force Civil Engineers who construct and defend bases across the globe, America's strength in the skies has always been rooted in the work of those on the ground.

Prime BEEF. RED HORSE.

The men and women who turn nothing into something, who answer every call, and who take pride not in recognition, but in results. And to those engineers who made the ultimate sacrifice, we will always remember you.



Honoring the Legacy

As every squadron in the Air Force comes together to form air power, I'll admit my bias: Civil Engineers are the best in the Air Force. It's the pride, the brotherhood, the family that defines the Civil Engineer community. Work Hard. Play Hard. To be an Airman, to be an engineer, is to carry both honor and responsibility with every step on the ground.

To my engineers of the United States Air Force: I couldn't be prouder to serve alongside such a great group of outstanding individuals. Thank you for proving, every single day, that without you, there is no air power. Happy Birthday, U.S. Air Force and to Civil Engineers everywhere—Engineers Lead the Way!

About The Author



Mike Isaac-Jimenez is a 25-year U.S. Air Force Veteran based in San Antonio, TX. He currently serves as a Marketing and Communications Veteran intern with Soldiers' Angels, where he shares his passion for storytelling with his dedication to honoring military service. Mike holds a B.S. in

Technical Management (Project Management) from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, along with A.A.S. degrees in Mechanical and Electrical Technology and Mechanical Engineering. He writes to preserve the legacies of America's heroes and honor those who served and are still serving.



RHPBA NOTES, UPDATES and OTHER INFO

1. <u>2025-2026 Brigadier General William "Tom" Meredith</u>
Honor Scholarship Program:

Our Scholarship program, celebrating our 15th year, was created and remains focused on offering financial assistance to RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association members and their



immediate families seeking to further their education by attending an institution of higher learning (see By-Laws Article 2 – Purpose).

Awards of \$2000 were made to each of four outstanding individuals for the 2025-2026 school year; Anthony Mottola, attending Stockton University in Galloway, NJ; Cole Lundsten, attending Carthage College in Kenosha, WI; Kaial Hajik, attending University of West Florida in Pensacola, FL; and Joey Greene, attending Johnson University, Knoxville, TN.

Our Scholarship Committee is privileged to review and assess scholarship applicants seeking financial support for their academic programs. Although the applicants present diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences, they collectively and magnificently represent the aspirations of our membership core values, focused on integrity, service before self and excellence in all they do.

Funding support is solely acquired from donations, contributions and fund raisers throughout the year.

We hope every member of this Association shares our level of pride in being able to enjoy our talented and deserving family members pursue their careers through your continued support. Thank you.

Applications for next year will be available on our website: www.rhpba.com; click on the Scholarships tab; the link contains information, instructions and guidance for applying.

We competitively award scholarships in the following categories to students planning to attend or are currently attending accredited institutions of higher learning, including vocational and technical institutes:

- · Qualified high school seniors
- BGED recipients
- Home school students meeting the public high school graduation requirements for their respective state
- Undergraduate students with at least two semesters remaining prior to graduation

Don Boone, Chair, Scholarship Committee dboone@rhpba.com, 518-441-7639.







2. RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association's Website:

We are sharing our QR code to make it easier for you to find the RHPBA.com website. Use the updated "Membership" tab to complete your application for membership or pay your dues online.

We have gone back and located many of the old "Newsletters", some as old as 2005, and posted them.

Our "Subscribe" list is growing. Please subscribe to our website so you get notified when something is posted. Simply go to RHPBA.com and click Subscribe.

We added a "Contact Us" list to make it easier for everyone to contact us.

We now have 28 unit history posts. We tried to include as much as we could verify was correct in these histories. Much of the content was taken from The Air Force Civil Engineering History book, some was also taken from the Civil Engineering Weekly publications. We are now looking for input from our membership that is documented and can be verified, to ensure we have captured our histories accurately and completely. Please contact us with any feedback or information you may have at reckert@rhpba.com or dwise@rhpba.com.

3. The RHPBA Newsletter:

New RED HORSE and Prime BEEF articles are always appreciated and/or any comments or inputs you may have regarding the newsletter are always welcome. Please send articles (include photos if you have them) and any comments to Dick Aldinger at raldinger@rhpba.com Please add this newsletter to your Squadron Facebook page or through other social media to promote our organization.

4. 307th RED HORSE Christmas Social

Thursday, 11 December 2025, 5:30 – 9:30pm Ralph & Kacoo's Seafood Restaurant 1700 Old Minden Road Bossier City, La 71111

Dining choices will be a limited menu of their more popular dishes with separate checks allowed and a 20% gratuity. Menu is posted on our group Facebook page.

Estimated "head count" needs to be in by Dec 1st; so please reply to smccutcheon@att.net by then.

We are hosting a Silent Auction to support Operation Home Coming, Barksdale Company Grade Officer Group, to provide funds to help airmen travel home for the holidays. Last year we raised \$5000 and supported trips for eleven separate airmen. We're hoping to match or better that amount this year.

Please make donations via our Facebook "gofundme" link, bring a donation to our dinner, or mail check to me, made out to RED HORSE. Thanks, Steve McCutcheon, 5131 N Market St, Shreveport, LA, 71107.



5. RHPBA Membership Information:

Joining the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association is a mere \$10 for the first year. Have you considered becoming a Life Member? For most of us "old timers" (66 or over) the cost is only \$125 and you are then finished paying dues for life. You help us too in that we do not have to send you reminders for dues and you do not have to worry about them ever again".

This is one way that you can keep in touch with what is going on with USAF Civil Engineering Military Engineers today whether it be RED HORSE or Prime BEEF. See the new membership brochure on page 26 and the fillable membership application form on page 28; please send your application to Randy Eckert: 701 Center Drive, Palmyra, PA 17078, 717-269-3914, reckert@rhpba.com.

6. RHPBA Membership Updates:

If you think you should be listed below and are not, please contact reckert@rhpba.com to make sure it was just an oversight in collecting this data and not an error in your file. We would like to welcome to the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association (RHPBA) these new members who recently joined our organization:

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Marko Antonio		Alex Klinski
John Balzano		Kenneth Knox
Edward Brough		Christian Leinhauser
Elsie Cencil		Brooks Lewis, Jr.
Michael Cleveland		Richard Meyer
Michael DeShon		Elizabeth Minton
Anthony Dunkle		Michael Murphy II
Alexander Earle, Jr		Richard Richardson
William Fink		Francisco Rios
Theodore Fotis		Justin Roak
James Goggin		Jack Sims
John Hoyt		Edward Smith
Randy Johns		Jerrell Turner
Lewis Jones		Nathaniel Weaver
Terry Kelly		Danny Wright

We also congratulate and welcome the RHPBA's newest Life Members.

Stephen Bond	Juan Sanchez
James Boseman	Scottie Spradlin
Alessandro Cappelli	Clilfford Theony
Raymond Chavez	William Thomas
David DeMartino	Donald Van Sickle
Michael Entsinger	Johnie Walker
Myles Gilbert	William White III
Joseph Hajik II	Aaron Wilt
Kimberlkin Holmes	Ray Woolever
Daryl Lareau	Jeffrey Young
Michael Mitchell	

7. Silent Hooves:

In reflecting on our sixty years, we honor all RED HORSE and Prime BEEF personnel that have gone before us. For a view of our Silent Hooves page on the RHPBA website, copy/type (https://rhpba.com/taps-2/) to your browser. We regrettably bring this current list of BEEFers and Horsemen/women who have passed away these past months. For a complete list go to our website and look in "Silent Hooves". Our "Silent Hooves" listing on the website is updated as we receive information.

If you hear of the passing of a BEEFer or Horseman/woman, please send an email to dwise@rhpba.com with the full name of the individual, units they served in, and their date of passing. Also, if you have their obituary, please provide the link.

Name	Unit(s)	Date of Passing
Alkire, M. Gary	Prime BEEF	3-Aug-25
Armstrong, Robert L., II	554th	18-Oct-25
Burkett, John	SCARWAF, 554th	19-Sep-25
Carden, George W.	557th	28-Mar-25
Conley, John A.	Prime BEEF	23-Jan-25
Corbett, Joe	820th	21-Aug-25
Corwin, John C.	Prime BEEF	13-Sep-25
Davis, Wayland B.	PB, 554th, 823rd	15-Oct-25
Ebright, Gordon (Gordy) A.	201st	23-Apr-25
Field, Chester	820th	7-Aug-25
Frederick, James (Jim) E.	820th, 410th, 812th, 22	nd 11-Feb-25
Gallagher, Thomas, Jr.	PB Tm #10, 555th	9-Sep-25
Gannon, David W.	823rd	26-Jan-25
Garcia, Joshua R.		28-May-25
Giudici, David	556th	1-Apr-25
Goff, Dave	819th	13-Sep-25
Johnson, Blaine J., 'Johnny'	554th	23-Aug-25
Lohrmann, Elizabeth	201st	3-Aug-25
Poulos, George A.	Prime BEEF	14-Oct-25
Rivera, Jorge	35th, 21st	28-Jun-25
Tyson, William J.	556 th	3-Jun-25
Wines, Carter L.	820th	11-May-25



John Warren Burkett, Master Sergeant, Retired April 24, 1935 – September 19, 2025

John Warren Burkett, 95, of Allentown, NJ, passed away peacefully on Friday, September 19, 2025 at the Serenity Hospice Unit at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in Hamilton.

Born in Lawrenceville, NJ, John attended Trenton High School before answering the call to serve his country.



He first enlisted with the U.S. Navy and later proudly joined the U.S. Air Force where he dedicated a total of 22 years to the military. He served in the 554th in Phan Rang in 1965, then the 560th and the 819th. John was especially proud be an original member of the 554th RED HORSE Squadron in Vietnam where he applied his civil engineering skills to serve with courage and distinction.

His devotion to his country and his service with RED HORSE were among the greatest honors in his life. In later years, John continued to give back to his brotherhood; serving on the board of the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association as a charter member and joyfully attending their meetings and reunions where he cherished the lifelong bonds he had built.

Beyond his service, John was a man of many talents and joys. He was an avid and gifted woodworker, often found in his workshop creating projects with patience and care. For many years, his woodworking became a shared endeavor with his beloved wife, Vada, who painted his creations and brought them to life with color. Even after her passing 21 years ago, John continued his craft, carrying forward the memory of their partnership with each piece he made.

He will be missed by all his friends in the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association.

Melvin Gary Alkire, Major General, Retired October 24, 1935 – August 3, 2025

Gary was born on October 24, 1935 in Cleveland, OH. The family moved to Baltimore, MD in 1942; but spend his summers growing up in Kenbridge, MD which he felt helped formed his future.

He entered the U.S. Naval Academy after graduating from high school in 1953. After graduating from the Naval Academy, he



selected the Air Force for a career in Civil Engineering.

During 32 years in the Air Force, he enjoyed challenging assignments at all levels of responsibility including three tours in the Pentagon, assignments in France and Germany, and a year in Vietnam supporting reconstruction of the civilian highway system, deciding it was a beautiful country. He was the Deputy Director of Civil Engineering 1982-1984 with a follow on assignment as Commander of the Air Force Commissary Service. He retired as a Major General in 1989. He was a lifetime member of the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association.

The enlisted personnel of the Air Force honored him with award of the Order of the Sword for Outstanding support to the Enlisted Corps. He was the first Air Force Civil Engineer to be so honored and the 126th person so honored by the Air Force at that time.

Also missed by all his friends in the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association.



RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association

The RED HORSE and Prime BEEF
Association is an organization
representing the professional and
personal interests of more than 600
Active Duty, Retired, Veterans, Air
National Guard and Air Force
Reserve of the United States Air
Force RED HORSE and Prime
BEEF units







Single-Service Orientation...

Our single-service orientation means we only work for YOU, the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF (RHPBA) community.

Fun and Keep in Touch...

Members reconnect with old friends and create new friendships by attending RHPBA gatherings in historic and memorable settings.

Camaraderie...

Cultivate and maintain good relations with community, foster patriotism, pride, and fraternity.

Scholarships...

Annual scholarships for members and their family.

Great web site...

Well maintained with current information and historic photos. Keep those "special memories" alive by finding airman from your previous assignments.

Informative Newsletter...

Membership includes semi-annual issues of our newsletter, with interesting articles and official notifications of planned gatherings.

Affordable...

Four categories of membership. Opportunity to become involved in committees, fund raisers, event planning and the RHPBA.

8. Creditable...

A professional, legitimate, active, involved, established and well working Association that is desirable to belong to.

Worthwhile...

Community programs that help those in need.

10. Or just because you want to join



10 REASONS

Why the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association should be your Military Organization of choice...



JOIN

US

TODAY



Semper Simul Always Together

RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Association

701 Center Drive, Palmyra, PA 17078, 717-269-3914 reckert@rhpba.com / Web Site: https://www.rhpba.com

Regular or Life Membership: Shall be open to all military members who have or are serving in the USAF Civil Engineer field, or in a USAF Civil Engineering unit, which includes the ACTIVE, AFRC, and ANG units, or their predecessor service; Aviation Engineer Force and SCARWAF Engineer Force.

Affiliate or Life Affiliate Membership: Spouses, children, parents or guardians of those persons, who are or were members eligible for membership, shall be eligible.

Associate Membership: Those persons, who do not qualify for regular membership, but have an interest in RED HORSE or Prime BEEF, may be considered for Associate Membership.

Please provide the following contact information:

Proper Name:

Nick Name:

Street address:

Address (cont.):

City:

Date of Birth:

Home Phone:

Spouse:

Spouse:

Stous:

State:

Stous:

State:

Address (cont.):

City:

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Unit	From	J	10	<i></i>	Base	Combat tour
Unit	From	_/	To	J	Base	Combat tour
Unit	From	_/	To	J	Base	Combat tour
Unit	From	J	То	/	Base	Combat tour

Please indicate the membership or renewal level

Regular Membership, First Year \$10

Regular Membership, Renewal \$20

Affiliate Membership (Dues will be equal to the sponsoring member)

Current Active Duty, \$10

E-mail:

Life Membership (please use the schedule at the right) \$

I would like to be considered for Associate Membership in the RHPBA

Associate Membership, First Year \$10.00

Associate Membership, Renewal \$20



Make it easier to read, complete this form on line.

Pay on line by credit or debit card at htts://www.rhpba.com.

DUES / FEES

Regular Memberships: First Year: \$10.00

Annual Renewal: \$20.00

Active Duty Military:

\$10.00 per year as long as you are on

active duty.

Life Memberships:
Age 45 and under: \$250
Age 46 to 55: \$215
Age 56 to 65: \$180
Age 66 and above: \$125

Associate Membership: First Year: \$10.00 Renewal: \$20.00

Applications received on or after August 1st will be credited to the next full year.

Please include your check or money order and mail to the address above.