



**US Army Corps
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565th Engineer Detachment Unfurls Unit Colors

By Dino W. Buchanan, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 15-10) Colors of 565th Engineer Detachment, Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance (FEST-A) were unfurled for the Honolulu District-based unit on Monday during an activation and assumption of command ceremony at Palm Circle on Fort Shafter.

The occasion marked a new beginning for the team as it became a deployable U.S. Army field unit with the mission of providing responsive technical engineer planning and limited design capabilities in support of combatant commands and civil agencies for Full Spectrum operations.

The original 565th was constituted on Sept. 9, 1944 in the Army of the United States as the 3090th Engineer Service Detachment. On March 20, 1951 it was designated as the 565th Engineer Welding Detachment and allotted to the Regular Army and eventually, as the 565th Engineer Detachment on April 22, 1965. Since that date the unit has been activated and deactivated three times with the recent activation date of Oct. 16, 2007. The unit saw extensive action during World War II in Normandy and Germany and during the Vietnam War.

Activation of a military unit is a rare event for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and this activation was no different as the unit has been active since Oct. 2007 in compiling the necessary unit engineers and equipment.

“This special occasion marks a new beginning for this team as it recently officially went into its first deployable cycle since being reactivated. This field unit has the mission of providing responsive technical engineer planning and limited design capabilities in support of combatant commands and civil agencies for the Full Spectrum of Operations,” said Honolulu District Commander Lt. Col. Jon J. Chytka.

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2-2-2 565th ACTIVATION

The FEST-A staffing consists of a Detachment Commander, a Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge and six Department of Defense civilians who serve in the jobs of a geographic information system specialist/cartographer, a contract specialist, civil, environmental, mechanical and electrical engineers with other engineering disciplines available for augmentation depending on the mission.

The detachment provides technical engineering support to include but not limited to conducting: engineer reconnaissance, engineering design and planning of construction projects, construction management, limited contingency contracting support, and other general engineering tasks. One of the most valuable capabilities is the unit's ability to conduct reach-back support with experts in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other sources of expertise, when a problem in the field needs quick resolution. .

The team may be assigned to a Forward Engineer Support Team-Main (FEST-M), which is basically a district office, and directly supports another military unit or command, or U.S. department or agency.

Chytka said the evolution of an on-call, all-volunteer FEST-A to an established military unit was motivated by the Corps' No. 1 goal in its Campaign Plan, which is delivering USACE support to combat, stability and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach-back capabilities.

"The organization you see represented before you today is USACE's commitment to this goal," Chytka said. "The 565th has traveled to the Philippines, Palau, Marshall Islands, Germany, and to the Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand. Their training schedule continues to build, as does their experience and knowledge for future missions. Simply, this team is a great asset for any unit it is attached to but the meaning of the FEST can best be expressed by the people it supports."

As the Army's needs have changed since the Cold War, the FEST-A has become a vital asset. With military deployments to nations such as Somalia, Bosnia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Army and USACE discovered gaps in their ability to rapidly provide the facilities in these austere environments that U.S. service members need to conduct operations.

USACE responded by ensuring the top priority was executing the concept of field force engineering. It started in 1999 with the establishment of "Legacy FEST-As", and teams for logistics, environmental support, contingency real estate and infrastructure assessment. The Alaska District was the first FEST-A to go into Iraq in 2003. By 2009, field force engineering became a formal part of the Army.

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3-3-3 565th ACTIVATION

At the ceremony, Maj. Evan Ting, FEST-A commander, recalled numerous personnel changes and short-notice travel for training in the past 17 months - to Europe, Southeast Asia and several Pacific Islands - since he assumed command of the unit in March 2009.

“It’s been a whirlwind of activity since that day,” Ting said. “The 565th has traveled to the Philippines, Palau, Marshall Islands, Germany, and to the Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand. Our training schedule continues to build, as does our experience and knowledge for our future missions.”

Maj. Ting thanked everyone in the District who worked to build his team into one with a reputation for accomplishing the mission.

“We’re ready to serve the Corps, the Army and our nation – whenever and wherever they may need us.”

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