

# ARMY RECOGNIZES RED HORSE, PRIME BEEF AIRMEN

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**SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFNS)** -- Eighteen Airmen, assigned to the 557th Expeditionary Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron (RED HORSE) and 577th Expeditionary Prime Base Engineer Emergency Forces (Prime BEEF) Squadron, were awarded an Army Commendation or Achievement Medal for their support of the 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery (1-43 ADA) on 9 April 2013.

The expeditionary Airmen, who partnered with the Army Soldiers from 1-43 ADA, were responsible for the start of construction of one of the U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM's) top priorities at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia. The project, which took seven months for the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Airmen to complete, finished four months earlier than projected by an outside contractor, said Air Force Capt. Ben Thomas, 557th ERHS construction site officer-in-charge (OIC).

"This was a great example of a very successful integration of RED HORSE and Prime BEEF capabilities along with the Army," Thomas said. "To establish a remote installation, with everything from roadways to the infrastructure, was just amazing."

The Airmen and Soldiers, who endured austere conditions during construction, moved more than 36,000 metric tons of dirt, constructed more than three miles of roadway and set up a 36-acre site, all while being geographically separated from their supplies.

"It was a great challenge to bring everyone together, and the earthwork alone was a huge undertaking for us," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Darren Zimmerle, 557th Expeditionary Rapid Heavy Squadron (ERHS) noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC) of heavy equipment.

"We had to make do with what we had because we were apart from our maintenance depot and had to keep the equipment running. From the Airman on the ground to the NCOs, we had to come up with solutions to accomplish the mission."

To accomplish the task given to them, Thomas said they leveraged the experience of Prime BEEF Airmen, who specialize in bare base operations.

"It was a lot of work, but I got to learn a lot more about new construction while also assisting RED HORSE with what I know," said Air Force Senior Airman Justin Costa, 577th Expeditionary Prime Base Squadron (EPBS) structural journeyman.



The ability to work with the Air Force on this project was important to the Soldiers of 1-43 ADA, as well as the Army as a whole, said Col. Randall McIntire, 69th ADA Brigade commander. A joint environment is necessary to be successful in the U.S. CENTCOM area of responsibility.

"This was a great partnership that was absolutely huge for us," said Army 1st Lt. Michael Meehan, 12th Missile Defense Detachment operations site OIC. "The RED HORSE AND Prime BEEF Airmen provided us daily feedback, and without that teamwork the mission would not have been a successful as it was."

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*Above, on 9 April 2013, Army Col. Randall McIntire, 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade commander, awards Air Force Capt. Ben Thomas, 557th ERHS construction site officer-in-charge, with an Army Commendation Medal for his team's support of the 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery while in Southwest Asia. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Steven Modugno, 69<sup>th</sup> ADA Brigade)*