
ASCE January Meeting Minutes

Speaker: Major Paul Weskalnies – Operations Flight Commander 22nd Civil Engineering Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base

Topic: Lessons learned from Agadez – the largest Air Force military troop construction project building a base

Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Location: Farm Credit Bank Building
245 N Waco Ave., Wichita, KS 67202

President Scott Lindebak called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and opened with announcements.

Announcements

- Next meeting: February 1, 2023, Presenter: ASCE Region 7 Governor, Jennifer Jacka-Taylor, Location: Most likely the library, but we are looking at potentially having it at a local restaurant
- ASCE Scholarship recipient, Mason Ericson, was present today to accept his scholarship award.
- Jim Weber & Mark Borst were announced as ASCE life members.
- The 2022-2023 STEM Grant recipients are
 - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Vicki Schrant
 - Maize South Intermediate School, James Buchanan
 - Fowler Grade School, Corri McDowell
 - Kiowa County High School, Greensburg, Tonya Greenleaf
- We still need volunteers for the Hands on Engineering activity at the library
 - Occurs the first Saturday of every month, 10:30-11:30 am.
 - Talk to Daniel Mealiff if interested in volunteering
- Nominations for ASCE Kansas Section Awards are due next month. Applications are due Friday, January 20th, 2023 and can be found at asceks.org.

Vice President Layla McDaniel introduced the guest speaker, Major Paul Weskalnies – Operations Flight Commander of the 22nd Civil Engineering Squadron at McConnell Air Force Base. He is responsible for 134 military & civilians to repair & maintain buildings, structures, all property and equipment. Major is a Colorado native and received his B.S. in engineering from the Colorado school of Mines & his master's in business administration from Oklahoma State & a Master of Science in Architecture from the University of Colorado.



Presentation Notes

Agadez is a small city (2nd largest City) located in Niger Africa.

Air Force civil engineering is tasked with maintaining all the roads, buildings, utilities, etc. on Air Force bases, and usually have a craftsman to accomplish that. When a craftsman with the specific expertise is not available within the Air Force, they contract the work out to civilian contractors.

The Contingency Response Group had the mission to go to Africa & build a base for the Air Force to operate out of for the purposes of armed drone surveillance.

Air Force Civil Engineering is broken into 2 primary units, Prime BEEF – Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force and RED HORSE – Rapid Engineer Deployable Operational Repair Squadron Engineers. Prime BEEF has the operations in place to handle an emergency situation. Prime BEEF'S primary responsibility is to maintain what has already been built. RED HORSE primary handles the construction of new facilities (Pre-engineered buildings, paving projects, etc.).

Agadez's project goal was to build a base in the middle of Africa. The Air Forces has not built a project of this size before Agadez, even after Afghanistan. It is the largest Air Force military troop labor construction project ever. The project was accomplished, but not within budget or original schedule.

Why Agadez?

- The 2018 National Defense Strategy stated that the U.S. wanted to support our relationships in Africa, Counter Terrorism in Africa, Promote stability, build partnerships, deal with Human Trafficking, violent extremism, illegal arms trade with limited outside assistance.
- Human Trafficking came through Africa, collates in Agadez then heads north into Europe, so a base in Agadez would help mitigate the human trafficking into Europe.

Background

- Niger is a very long distance to nearest large city - 600 miles & nearest port – 1,200 miles (where equipment would come from)
- Niger had a lot of flooding issues due to the water not having anywhere to go
- There is an existing airstrip that needed be redone to handle the large Air Force craft

Timeline

- October 2013 – Base location chosen & “go-ahead” was made to move forward
- July 2014 – Survey team sent to Agadez to build the initial plans (15% design)
- February 2015 – Submit funding request to Congress
- October 2015 – 2nd Site Survey
- November 2015 – Congress approves funding request
- April-September 2016 – People start arriving for construction, but no equipment arrived because it was stuck at the port in customs
- January 2017 – Completed airfield design
- May 2019- Completed Airfield



Site Survey

- Soil analysis wasn't great – a lot of fine soils

Area Analysis/What went wrong

- Only one site survey was completed before creating a cost estimate
 - Moved too quickly to establish a proper estimate
- Needed to see the sight before designing & estimating a cost
- Local infrastructure was not as equipped as expected
 - Based local infrastructure off experiences building in Afghanistan, and there were a lot of differences

Beddown Planning

- Beddown location is 1.75 miles away from the airfield
- Unknown Terrain
 - Ended up being horrible conditions & vehicles were getting stuck all the time
 - Moving equipment was difficult task
- Location selected based on convenience & security
 - Less secure close to city, but more convenient

Logistics

- Port was Approx. 1,000 miles away from site location – had issues at customs
- Roads were not in good condition & created many vehicle relate issues
- Local Construction supply stores were not useful
- Fuel access

Construction Management

- Limited Expertise
- 6 different units involved created inconsistencies in the work
- Limited ability & knowledge for asphalt testing
- Weather
 - Hanger taken down by strong winds
 - **NO** drainage – water flowed everywhere because it had nowhere to go & wouldn't seep into the ground
 - Constructed drainage ditches to help water flow

Equipment & Fuel

- Couldn't lease equipment, so most equipment was shipped from the states
 - Generally got old equipment
 - Between weather & road conditions, the equipment broke down constantly and underwent a lot of maintenance work.

Communication

- None of the organizations took responsibility, so everyone was involved in everything
- Did not have a good communication plan in place



Meeting Attendees

1	Shane	Albritton	28	Kyle	Kerns
2	Mike	Armour	29	Alex	Lane
3	Eric	Armstrong	30	Scott	Lindebak
4	Debra	Ary	31	Dmitry	Lomachenko
5	Gregory K.	Baalman	32	Ky	Louanghaksaphone
6	Michael	Bailey	33	Layla	McDaniel
7	Scott	Bernhardt	34	Aubrey	Mealiff
8	Chris	Bohm	35	Daniel	Mealiff
9	Christian	Bohm	36	Dustin	Nickel
10	Jake	Borchers	37	Ron	Nuessen
11	Mark	Borst	38	John	Oswald
12	Jerrold	Bradley	39	Rohith	Panthangi
13	Eric	Broce	40	Jessica	Rhein
14	Scott	Canfield	41	Drake	Sawyer
15	Paul	Cater	42	Daniel	Schrant
16	Caleb	Coltrane	43	James	Shimp
17	Colin	Costley	44	Brad	Shores
18	Macee	Crowell	45	Jessica	Slavik
19	Mark	Dolechek	46	Dan	Squires
20	Mason	Erickson	47	Christopher	Taylor
21	Alan	Farrington	48	Tyler	Ummel
22	Harlan	Foraker	49	Tyler	Voth
23	Harlan	Foraker	50	James	Wagner
24	Angela	Gutierrez	51	James	Weber
25	Abdul	Hamada	52	Amy	Wegner
26	Andrew	Johnson	53	Paul	Weskalnies
27	Caleb	Jurey	54	Trevor	Wooten

Meeting adjourned by President Scott Lindebak at 12:59 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Macee Crowell.



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