

May Doctrine Paragon: Tinian

Published May 30, 2025

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This month, the LeMay Center highlights Tinian's North Field.

In March of 2023, an F-22 landed on Tinian Island. The brief presence of this fifth-generation fighter aircraft marked the beginning of a resurgence in airpower operations from this tiny patch of land 3,714 miles west of Hawaii. Though only 39 square miles in size, Tinian played a significant role in WWII as the home of the US Army Air Force's B-29 fleet and the world's largest airfield—its runways launched the first atomic bombing of Japan. However, Tinian's North Field was abandoned after WWII. The airfield's four 8,500-foot runways, along with its infrastructure for 40,000 personnel, were completely returned to tropical nature.



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As part of efforts to realize the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment (ACE) scheme of maneuver, the Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) squadrons were deployed to Tinian Island. Working alongside Marine and Naval engineers, RED HORSE carved North Field's four runways and numerous ramps back out of the jungle to help robust expeditionary combat capability across the Pacific. This

restoration of Tinian's North Field is the first rebuild of the abandoned WWII "air corridor" islands to support ACE operations and long-term efforts to strengthen Western Pacific combat generation capability. As a result of multiple RED HORSE squadron rotations through Tinian, its North Field is now a semi-permanent contingency location (SCL) for the main operating base on Guam.

This monumental work on Tinian's North Field is perfectly aligned with the RED HORSE mission. RED HORSE was developed in 1966 at the direction of then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Its construction teams provide mobile, rapidly deployable echelons to support force beddown. In addition, RED HORSE enables airfield and base heavy construction and repair with specialized capabilities that allow commanders to support missions as operations dictate at any level of global competition. Other notable RED HORSE accomplishments include the construction of facilities and hundreds of thousands of square feet of ramp to support combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2002 - 2014 at bases like Al Udeid in Qatar and Bagram in Afghanistan.

Why it matters today: To maintain credible deterrence in the Pacific and around the globe, the US and its allies require ACE capabilities, supported by rapid and successful engineering operations like that on Tinian. RED HORSE squadrons enable operations that complicate the enemies' targeting processes, create political and operational dilemmas for adversaries, and increase flexibility for friendly forces. For more information on Air Force engineering and RED HORSE, see [Air Force Doctrine Publication \(AFDP\) 3-34, Engineer Operations](#). For more information on ACE, see [AFDP 3-0, Operations](#). Also check out our doctrine podcast library on DVIDS, iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music, or at www.doctrine.af.mil.
