



ANNEX 3-34 ENGINEER OPERATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEER OPERATIONS

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Air Force civil engineer forces establish, operate, sustain, and protect installations as power projection platforms that enable Air Force and other supported commander core capabilities through engineering and emergency response services across the full mission spectrum. Air Force forces generally operate from fixed bases, yet are mobile enough to project combat airpower worldwide from both enduring and non-enduring bases. To support this concept, Air Force civil engineers organize, train, and equip to rapidly respond as part of the [air expeditionary task force \(AETF\)](#) performing comparable functions in peacetime and during contingencies. Engineers enable combat forces to operate across the range of military operations.

Engineer operations are increasingly being conducted in joint, interagency, and multinational environments. The forces involved require operating and maintaining both built and natural environments, including bases, facilities, infrastructure, and lines of communications for sustainment. Air Force civil engineers possess distinctive skills to provide engineering support throughout all phases of military operations, from airbase opening, establishing operating locations, receiving and bedding down forces, sustaining operating locations, recovering operating locations, to closing operating locations.



The importance of engineers arriving at a deployed location before aircraft has been stressed since World War II. A 1946 report of a board of officers on aviation engineers stated, “In any new theater of operations aviation engineers must arrive early in the theater to ensure the prompt build-up of combat units.”

Col Fritz Stehling, the Pacific Air Forces Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Engineering, summarized this in 1967 during the Vietnam War: “The most obvious and repeated, yet often overlooked, lesson learned, is that we can deploy airplanes much faster than we can build air bases.”