

BEAR Base electricians Turn night into light

by Airman 1st Class
Vanessa LaBoy
49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Whenever a contingency operation arises there is one Team Holloman group that makes certain deployed locations are not left in the dark.

The Basic Expeditionary Airfield Resources Base, 49th Materiel Maintenance Squadron Electrical shop is responsible for distributing power throughout deployed locations and performing maintenance on distribution centers.

“BEAR base electricians are key components in setting up bases in deployed locations,” said Staff Sgt. Adam Kelley, electrical systems journeyman. “Our electricians set up the entire electrical layout for tents, chow halls, showers and anywhere else power is needed.”

The process to give all these stations power involves primary distribution centers, secondary distribution centers and power distribution panels. The centers and panels create a network that provides electricity throughout the base.

“PDCs are the main distribution center for a BEAR base,” Kelley said. “It creates 4,160 volts that go into a SDC, which has a transformer that feeds the power distribution panels, which feed assets like tents, showers and latrines.”

Along with setting up the electrical layout for a deployed location, electricians set up remote area lighting systems and emergency airfield lighting systems.

RALS are used to light up the camp perimeter during the hours of darkness and EALS can be setup as an emergency airfield at a deployed location in a few hours.

Electricians also do recurring maintenance on all of BEAR Bases electrical assets, including PDCs, SDCs, and RALS.

“As BEAR Base electricians we perform operational checks on all of our equipment to make sure that when it’s deployed, it’s fully functional,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Gray, electrical systems craftsman. “To make sure all of

our equipment is in compliance with the standards, we hook up it up to a power source that allows us to simulate what would happen in the field.”

According to Kelley, while setting centers up or performing maintenance, safety is the most important part of an electrician’s job.

“Working with electricity is very dangerous,” he said. “We have to work as a team to make sure we all keep safety in mind. All it takes is one mess up to injure or kill a person.”

As part of the only BEAR Base unit in the Air Force, members of the electrical shop deploy in support of nearly all contingency operations, which could account for up to six months out of the year.

“Despite frequent deployments, it’s a great feeling to know that our work directly impacts the mission,” said Senior Airman Joshua Boyd, electronics specialist. “Our maintenance and set up can be critical to a unit’s success at a deployed location.”



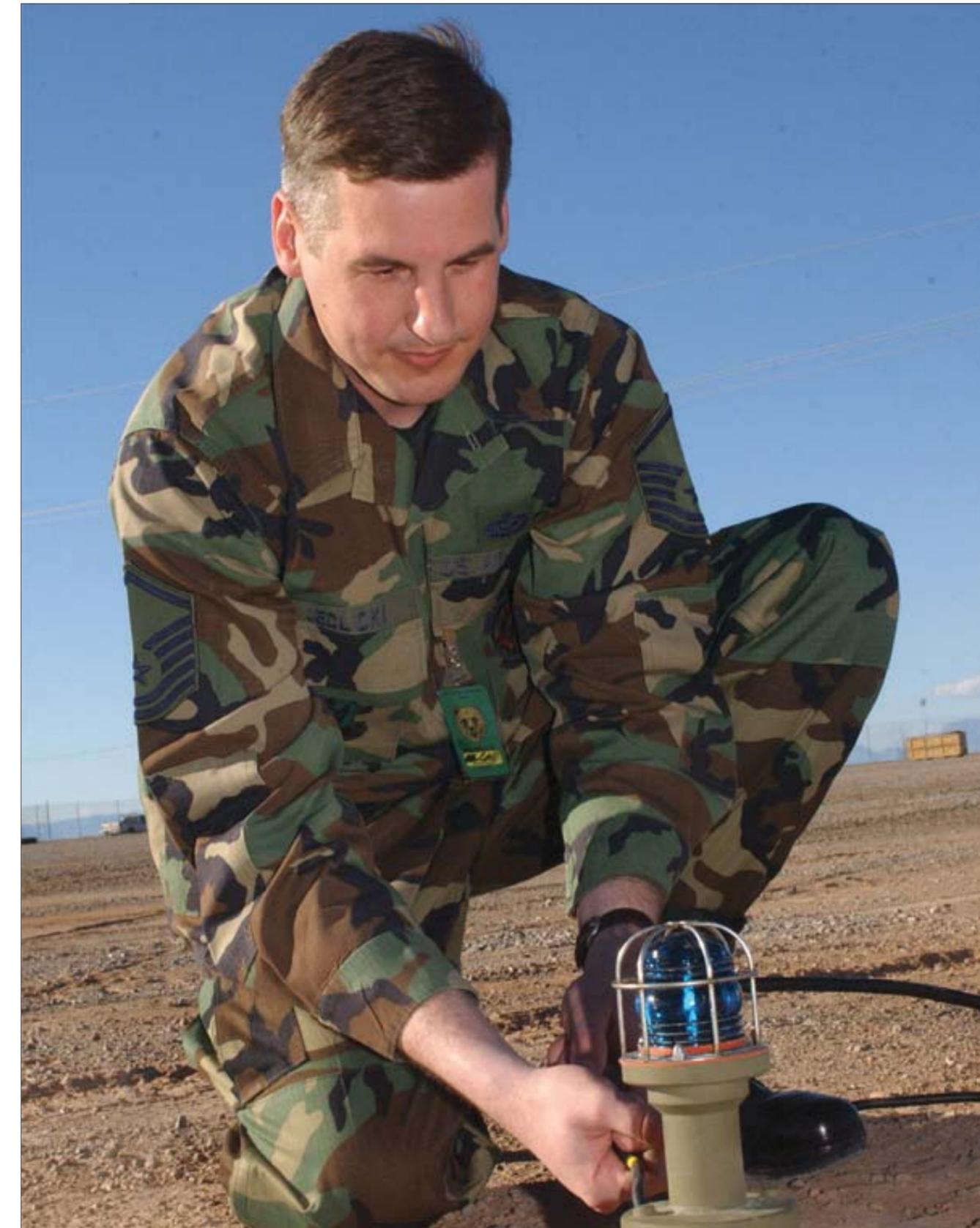
Staff Sgt. Adam Kelley connects a high velocity elbow to the primary side of a secondary distribution center.



Senior Airman George Afful fastens a fixture on a remote area lighting system. RALS is used to light up the perimeter of a deployed base.



Staff Sgt. Payton Barnett plugs a 60 amp cable into the SDC.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Vanessa LaBoy

Master Sgt. Allen Jedlicki connects an isolation transformer to a threshold light as part of an emergency airfield lighting system.