

ARNORTH Monthly

July 2009



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Ardent Sentry

ARNORTH tests disaster response ability

Hurricane Response

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Aloha Exercise

Region IX DCE aids Hawaii during hurricane exercise

ARNORTH Strong

Soldiers, civilians launch fitness program



Red Dragon

The Nation's largest CBRNE exercise, pg. 14



CG Sends

This year marks the 233rd year of American independence. No matter where we may be, we take the time to celebrate and contemplate the freedoms we take for granted every day. As our fellow Soldiers and civilians are helping people in other countries gain some of those freedoms, it is even more evident how lucky we are to be living in this great country.

Enjoy the events of summer and the celebrations surrounding the birth of our nation. Please be careful in the heat, drink water, and give special attention to the hazards inherent in the use of fireworks.

I thank you for your outstanding efforts during Ardent Sentry. We continue to show why we are the “Go To” headquarters for Homeland Defense and Civil Support. I am proud of all of you. Have an enjoyable accident-free holiday and safely enjoy the rest of the summer with family and fiends.

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U.S. Army North Public Affairs Office

Director of Public Affairs: Col. Barry Johnson

Editor: Sgt. Joshua R. Ford

Managing Editor: Don Manuszewski

If you would like to submit stories or photos please contact Sgt. Joshua Ford at joshua.r.ford@us.army.mil or at phone number (210) 221-0793. You may also contact Don Manuszewski at don.manuszewski1@us.army.mil or at phone number (210) 221-0754.



July 1 CANADA DAY

*Battle of Gettysburg
July 1-3 1863*

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July 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY

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*U.S. Army Air Corps
established 1926*

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NC Force Protection Conference
July 6 - 10

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Quarterly Recognition Ceremony

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July 13 - 17

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JULY 2009
4TH OF JULY SALUTE TO THE UNION
SATURDAY, JULY 4
11:30 A.M., POST FLAGPOLE
STANLEY ROAD

Disaster Response

Ardent Sentry gives ARNORTH opportunity to test responsiveness

U.S. Army North participated in a June exercise intended to test its ability to respond to natural and manmade disasters.

The exercise, Ardent Sentry 2009, was part of the national exercise program designed to rehearse the capabilities of the Department of Defense and other federal and state agencies to respond to homeland defense and civil support scenarios.

With several different moving pieces in play, the command began 24-hour operations June 17 to react to notional biological and chemical events, radiological incidents and floods.

Starting as a foot-and-mouth-disease outbreak in the Midwest, the scenario developed as an “agro terror” incident, in which someone had deliberately introduced the biological threat.

The scenario transitioned to an anthrax event and chemical threat. Other events in-

cluded a sabotaged train derailment and a potential nuclear weapon threat.

A number of the command’s working groups practiced their roles during the week-long exercise.

For example, the Environmental Information Working Group participated in its role to visualize and assess incidents or events for command planning and response efforts.

Maj. David Foster, the group leader, said that it is important to assess impacts on the population, infrastructure, and the environment to identify what sort of response may be required from the ARNORTH team. The G3 Engineer Operations Officer boiled it down to a simple adage: “Know the past, anticipate the future, show the way.”

The Future Operations Center also brought together representatives of each staff section to identify capabilities needed for the notional response.

Maj. William Rose, G3 Plans Officer, said the group validated its processes during the intense exercise.

“Army North is ready and capable in

“Army North is ready and capable in terms of planning, coordinating, resourcing and responding to the needs of the homeland”

terms of planning, coordinating, resourcing and responding to the needs of the homeland,” he said. “Everyone did a great job.”

Overall, the Army North staff accomplished its goal of validating or improving its processes, said the command’s lead training officer.

“It was a great exercise,” said Col. James Larsen, G7 Assistant Chief of Staff, “We had some rust to shake off, but it was an overall success.”

(by Sgt. Jonathan S. Ostertag, ARNORTH PAO)



Photo by Patti Bielling

ARNORTH military personnel and civilians stay busy in the ARNORTH operations center during Ardent Sentry. The command established 24-hour operations to react to notional biological and chemical events, radiological incidents and floods.

Vital Assets

FEMA says National Guard essential to hurricane response

The National Guard is essential to hurricane response, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency told lawmakers recently.

And the National Guard and U.S. Northern Command stand ready to support civil authorities during the 2009 hurricane season, added NORTHCOM's director of operations, Army Maj. Gen. Frank Grass.

"The National Guard is a key component of any state governor's ability to respond to a variety of disasters," the Hon. Craig W. Fugate, FEMA administrator, said. "They are a force multiplier for the ... state responders. [The National Guard] is a key component of our national defense strategy."

Mr. Fugate said one of the first visits he made after he was sworn in May 19 was to Gen. Craig McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"We have a very strong statewide mutual aid system under [the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and] we leverage that with the National Guard," Mr. Fugate said.

The National Guard is "the first responders in support of [civil authorities] and the governor, so they're going to be there first," Maj. Gen. Grass said. "It behooves us at NORTHCOM to understand their capability and look at their response times, because if they're successful at the local level, that's less federal assets we have to put forward."

National Guard, NORTHCOM and FEMA leaders were joined by state and county officials at a hurricane workshop in South Carolina earlier this year, Maj. Gen. Grass told lawmakers.

"We walked through ... how the locals would be responding, how the state would respond [and] then the National Guard gave us a lay-down by state of where their shortfalls were," Maj. Gen. Grass said. "Then FEMA came in and explained what capabilities it may be requesting."

"The biggest shortfall this current hurricane season probably is in the brigade structure of the National Guard, because of the number of brigades deployed," Grass said. "Even though it's a shortfall in certain regions, it's not a short-

"I don't care what uniform you wear or what component you're with. Your number one mission should be defense of the homeland and providing response capability to the citizens of the United States"

fall across the nation. It's a matter of reallocating forces, and the National Guard is working very closely ... with the state adjutants general to identify those forces that can fill those shortfalls."

Maj. Gen. Grass said a similar situation exists with rotor-wing aircraft, where a shortage in a particular state can be ameliorated with equipment from other regions. Also, additional rotor-wing capability is available from the active force when requested by the states and approved by FEMA and the Department of Defense.

A third challenge is aeromedical evacuation, Maj. Gen. Grass said. "We've improved greatly since last hurricane season on the ability to identify patients, ... move [them], how to receive them," he said. Defense and Federal Coordinating Officers are working with local officials to improve communication before a storm.

Any hurricane response will be a joint effort by military forces supporting civilian authorities, Maj. Gen. Grass said.

"We've looked closely at the active component - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard - ... to see where their assets would be available," Maj. Gen. Grass said.

National Guard Bureau and NORTHCOM leaders talk daily to coordinate efforts, Maj. Gen. Grass said.

"Between NORTHCOM and NGB, we're all watching the continental United States and

the states and territories," Maj. Gen. Grass said. "If we see something out there ... we immediately make contact with each other."

NGB's command center and the NORAD and NORTHCOM command center work together closely, and whenever National Guard forces are deployed domestically, "we're prepared to back them up," Maj. Gen. Grass said. "The key point in this response - whether it's a local Guard unit or it's a federal force being called in because the governor said he has a shortfall - is that we're always in support of a civilian agency on the ground that needs help, and we owe it to the taxpayers - to our citizens - to use the best asset that we have the quickest."

During Hurricane Katrina, Maj. Gen. Grass was the deputy director of the Army National Guard. He then served abroad in U.S. European Command, returning last year to take up his position at NORTHCOM. That previous hurricane experience plus time abroad has given him a perspective on the nation's current hurricane preparedness.

"To see the changes, it's night and day," Maj. Gen. Grass said. "NORTHCOM has matured. The Guard has matured in their relationships with the states and with Northern Command. Just the fact that today there are five Reserve Component general officers serving full time at Northern Command and there are three traditional Army Reserve and Air Guard and Army Guard generals serving at Northern Command.

"When you look at a total reserve force of over a million, and the National Guard at over 460,000 Army and Air Guardsmen, there's no reason the National Guard Bureau can't make that response happen through [emergency management assistance compacts] - and we would be prepared from Northern Command to step in and help if there were gaps."

As is increasingly the case throughout the Department of Defense, NORTHCOM is a truly joint environment, Maj. Gen. Grass said.

"I don't care what uniform you wear or what component you're with," Maj. Gen. Grass said, "your number one mission should be defense of the homeland and providing response capability to the citizens of the United States."

(by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill, NGB)

Air Defense

'Amalgam Dart' tests NORTHCOM's air defense

Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors tested months of planning and preparation, June 18-20, with a major U.S. Northern Command air defense exercise.

National Guard members from four states deployed to Oregon for Exercise Amalgam Dart '09. Other servicemembers and civilian employees from around the country participated in the exercise as part of Joint Task Force-America's Shield.

Soldiers from the South Carolina National Guard's 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command deployed to Oregon and set up a Joint Air Defense Operations Center. Located in tents set up at Camp Rilea, the JADOC served as the command and control element between an Army air defense unit on the ground and the Continental U.S. NORAD Region, which provides airspace surveillance and control.

South Carolina's 2nd Battalion, 263rd Air Defense Artillery, deployed with the Army's Avenger air defense system. Equipped with

two Stinger missile pods carried atop a modified Humvee, Avengers are deployable Homeland Defense assets.

Avengers were set up around Camp Rilea, near historic Fort Stevens State Park.

During the exercise, the unit practiced detecting, identifying, tracking and intercepting potentially threatening airborne missiles or aircrafts.

Rhode Island Air National Guard's 282nd and Georgia's 283rd Combat Communications Squadrons deployed to provide communications support to the Soldiers.

From their Air and Space Operations Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., the CONR commander, Air Force Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow and his staff, directed Air Force, Army and Navy assets, ensuring the air sovereignty and air defense of the continental United States.

The Western Air Defense Sector, based at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., practiced detecting, identifying, tracking and scrambling fighters if intercept unknown or threatening airborne objects.

A U.S. Navy Aegis-equipped destroyer,

the USS Shoup patrolled off the Oregon coast tracking and destroying enemy targets.

An Air Force E-3 Sentry from the 552nd Air Control Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., operating from McChord Air Force Base, provided all-weather surveillance, command, control and communications needed by air defense forces.

Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing F-15 Eagles and California Air National Guard's 144th FW F-16 Fighting Falcons served as interceptors during the exercise.

C-21s from the 311th Airlift Squadron at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. and the Air Force Flights Standards Agency in Oklahoma City, Okla., along with Cessna 172s from the Oregon Wing of the Civil Air Patrol served as high and low-level "targets."

During Amalgam Dart '09, officials said CONR, the Joint Task Force, and all other units involved demonstrated a rapidly deployable air defense system that could protect high-profile national targets against cruise missiles and other low-flying threats.

(by Al Eakle, CONR PAO)

Security

Disjointed security threats are new normal, commander says

The threats that face the United States are more amorphous today than at any time in history, and the commands responsible for defending North America must maintain vigilance, Air Force Gen. Gene Renuart said here today.

"People believe we are getting back to something like normal after Sept. 11," the commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Command

said during a recent briefing to members of the Capitol Hill Club. "I will tell you that that normal will never return."

NORAD is a joint U.S.-Canadian command charged with early warning of threats. Formed 51 years ago, the command was aimed at defending North America from aerial threats from the Soviet Union. It has morphed into a command looking at threats from the air, space, land and sea.

The threats facing the United States take on many faces: terrorists and terror groups, nation states, drug cartels, uncontrolled immigration and natural and man-made disasters.

"We have to continue to grow our ca-

pabilities to ensure that we are prepared to defend the nation, anticipate the threats we may face and then defend the nation from these kinds of actions," Gen. Renuart said.

The enemy seeks to attack the seams and gaps in American defenses, the general said. These seams are between areas – such as the boundary between U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command; agencies like those between the departments of Defense and Homeland Security; and domains such as space and maritime.

"We have to be prepared to deter those threats and we have to be prepared to defeat them if they materialize," he said.

(by Jim Garamone, AFPS)

ARMY NORTH

SSI conference voices warning over new security threats



Transnational crime, drug trafficking, homeland security, natural disasters, and health pandemics were all voiced as major concerns facing the Western Hemisphere in the next decade during a recent conference co-sponsored by the Army War College Strategic Studies Institute.

More than 100 military officers, government officials, academics, and policy makers representing the United States, Canada, and Mexico gathered for the conference in Kingston, Ontario June 10-12 to discuss regional security threats.

“North Americans face a complex and changing security environment. Where enemies of the past were relatively predictable, today we face a range of threats extending across multiple domains,” said Lt. Gen. Thomas R. Turner, commander of U.S. Army North.

Lt. Gen. Turner participated in a panel discussion on North American security perspectives and described the developing threats and mutual security concerns.

“Many of today’s threats, including terrorist use of WMD, illicit drug trafficking, threat of pandemic influenza and other natural and manmade disasters, attacks on information and space systems, are unpredictable, diverse, decentralized, and yet increasingly networked,” said Lt. Gen. Turner.

SSI share studies with international partners

In co-sponsoring the event, SSI contributed research and analytical expertise to the dialogue: Col. Douglas Lovelace, director of the Strategic Studies Institute, and research professors Dr. Max Manwaring and Col. Alex

Crowther.

Army War College faculty member, Dr. Paul Kan, participated as a panel chairperson as well.

Both Dr. Manwaring and Col. Crowther presented studies that outlined new security threats for the region.

“War has changed from the unilateral dimension to the multilateral dimension of the social, political, and economic paradigm,” said Dr. Manwaring.

“Most of the threats we, the United States, and much of the rest of the world face today are transnational in nature and require transnational solutions,” he said.

Manwaring encouraged the three countries to work together consistently and face the new threats as a united front.

“All of the elements of power must be applied to solve these challenges. And we need not just a whole-of-government approach but a multilateral, hemispheric approach,” said Dr. Manwaring.

During a panel on building security in the Americas, Col. Crowther discussed difficulties that must be overcome in order to curb drug trafficking from Latin America through Mexico and into the United States and Canada.

“In many of the Latin American countries the policing levels are very low, allowing for ships, aircrafts, trucks, and people to transport drugs,” he said.

Col. Crowther addressed the policing efforts and underlined the need for improved coordination from the U.S. and Mexico.

“With the support of several organizations, once the drugs reach Mexico they have a very well developed system. It’s very hard to control,” said Col. Crowther. “With mass corruption and threats, it’s very difficult to encourage local police to challenge the trafficking.”

Col. Crowther advocated supporting a police exchange program, where the units are assigned to another location in Mexico, far from their home. This would provide more protection for forces and their families, he said.

Working as partners, sharing information

Lt. Gen. Turner also focused on the growing ties between the United States and Mexico, where growing security concerns have led to increased U.S. engagement.

“It’s incredibly important to build our relationship, for us to work military to military and build our confidence to fight these threats,” said Lt. Gen. Turner.

ARMY-WIDE

Honduras-based U.S. troops not involved in coup, remain safe

American forces stationed in Honduras were not involved in the military coup over the weekend and remain safe, a Pentagon official said.

Some 50 miles northwest of the capital city of Tegucigalpa, where President Manuel Zelaya was apparently ousted, the situation is calm at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras -- home to a 600-strong U.S. contingent, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters today.

“The U.S. military is not involved in any of the activities down there and the situation is calm where those forces are located,” he said.

In a statement yesterday, President Barack Obama expressed concern at reports of the Honduran military detaining and expelling Zelaya from the country. News reports said the military ouster came in response to Zelaya’s attempts to extend his presidential tenure beyond the four-year term limit outlined in the Honduran constitution.

The U.S. forces at Soto Cano comprise Joint Task Force Bravo, which supports joint military exercises, enhances regional security initiatives and coordinates humanitarian relief efforts. Mr. Whitman said commanders there have taken “force protection measures.”

“As the United States is monitoring the situation, (the U.S. forces are) essentially holding fast where they’re at,” he said.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Master Resilience Trainers

The Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) course is intended to teach how to impart resilience skills to Soldiers, family members and Army civilians. MRTs are one component of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness which is the Army’s strategy to increase resilience and enhance performance

by developing the five dimensions of strength: social, emotional, spiritual, family and physical. This train-the-trainer course, currently civilian-based, is designed to instruct teachers on how to impart resilience skills in their students.

Being in the Army is about much more than being physically fit. It is about being balanced, healthy and self-confident while having the confidence to lead. CSF will train resilience and teach life skills allowing the Army to strengthen its focus on the overall assessment of wellness and promote post-traumatic growth.

The Army is currently in the curriculum-development phase of this train-the-trainer program. Phase Two will consist of implementation of an MRT school which will train leaders (squad leaders, platoon sergeants, etc.) on how to impart resiliency skills through daily education and training. Phase Three will allow for voluntary participation by family members and Army civilians.

Army likely to play key role in new U.S. Cyber Command

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates signed a memo June 23, establishing a subcommand focused on cyber security, Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell told reporters recently.

Details about the new U.S. Cyber Command, which will report to U.S. Strategic Command, still are unfolding. But Sec. Gates reportedly plans to recommend Lt. Gen. Keith B. Alexander, director of the National Security Agency, to receive his fourth star and take on the additional responsibility of commanding the cyber command.

"This is not some sort of new and necessarily different authorities that have been granted," Mr. Morrell told reporters. "This is about trying to figure out how we, within this department, within the United States military, can better coordinate the day-to-day defense, protection and operation of the department's computer networks."

Mr. Morrell emphasized that the new command will focus solely on military networks.

Mr. Morrell called the standup of Cyber Command an internal reorganization that will consolidate and streamline its cyber

capabilities within a single command. The effort in no way represents any attempt by the department to "militarize" cyberspace or take over the responsibility for defending civilian networks, he said, noting that responsibility falls to the Homeland Security Department.

Economy boosts recruitment numbers

The economy and related factors have buoyed the Army's recruitment efforts for 2009, say officials with U.S. Army Recruiting Command and the 120th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception).

"We're running ahead of our goal in active and Reserve duty (recruits)," said Douglas Smith, spokesman for USAREC, based at Fort Knox, Ky.

Mr. Smith said that as of May 22, the Army had exceeded its year-to-date recruitment goals. Before summer officially started, the Army had bested its 2008 active-duty rolls by more than 1,800, enlisting 42,357. And its Reserve enlistments totaled 19,554 - a jump of 2,464 from a year ago.

'Back to basics' for Year of NCO

In keeping with this year's theme for the Army, "Year of the NCO," the Command Sergeant Major of U.S. Army Forces Command has a message for his enlisted troops: "Go back to basics."

Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis M. Carey, who is the top-ranking noncommissioned officer for more than 800,000 troops across the United States, said that mastering basic Soldier skills is as important now as it ever was.

"To me it's the reality-based part of the Army-being an NCO," Command Sgt. Maj. Carey said. "As an NCO you get a Ph.D. in people and a Ph.D. in Soldiers."

"We need to take some time to learn and teach those skills," Command Sgt. Maj. Carey said. "We need to go back to the core competencies and make sure we are proficient."

Some of the NCO skills he stressed were counseling and suicide prevention training.

Army chaplain, doctor comfort survivors of Metro crash



Several Walter Reed Army Medical Center staffers survived the deadliest accident in Washington Metrorail's 33-year history June 22.

Maj. David Bottoms, a Walter Reed chaplain and Col. Thomas Baker, chief of pathology, said they were both riding in the first car of the train that slammed into another stopped train during Monday's rush-hour commute home.

"I was reading and listening to my music, and I noticed the front end of the car was buckling and it was coming toward us. It looked like a wave ... it stopped three seats in front of me ... I was praying then," Maj. Bottoms said.

Col. Baker stood in the rear of the car. "It was very scary. Oh my God. It was a very surreal event," he said.

Col. Baker suffered a bruised forearm and Maj. Bottoms remained unscathed.

The two officers reassured other passengers in that first train car immediately after the impact. Maj. Bottoms led the group in prayer.

2009 Safe Summer Campaign

May 4, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center launched the 2009 Safe Summer campaign to raise awareness of the increased hazards associated with summertime, off-duty activities and to provide Soldiers, Army civilians and their family members the information they need to manage risk and reduce the chance of being

injured or killed in an accident.

The campaign runs from May through to September and emphasizes prevention and vigilance during the summer season and strives to ensure Soldiers, family members and civilians are aware of the hazards and risks involved when participating in the summer fun.

The campaign offers information on everything from grilling and food preparation, to water-related activities and ATV/ Dirt bike safety. Products supporting the Safe Summer campaign include: posters, videos and articles on topics affecting Soldiers' safety.

Videos, posters, feature articles and news releases on relevant summer safety related topics/areas of focus as well as links to additional resources can be found at www.safety.army.mil.

Army's increased emphasis on safety has reduced accidental deaths since 2005



In the past several years, Army efforts to increase safety has decreased the number of Soldier deaths due to off-duty activities such as motorcycling, officials said.

"We've made considerable progress in the last four to five years -- 2005 was probably our pinnacle ... in which we had the most fatalities and accidents as a military service," said Tad Davis, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, during a roundtable with bloggers, June 19.

Mr. Davis said that since combat operations began in 2001, the number of accidents resulting in deaths had climbed continuously -- peaking in 2005. That year,

the Army lost 299 Soldiers due to accidental, non-combat deaths -- 144 of those were due to loss of life in personally owned vehicles.

"Subsequent to that, we published the first-ever Army strategic plan for safety and occupational health -- bringing together those two important areas for the very first time, (and) establishing long-term strategic goals for the Army in a way that would resonate at every level for the command and require commands down to the battalion or installation level to develop their own safety and occupational health plan to focus on their own particular needs," Mr. Davis said.

Since 2005, Mr. Davis said the Army has made progress in decreasing the number of accidental fatalities. Since 2005, the numbers have dropped from 299, to 209 in 2008.

Army takes steps in H1N1 prevention

The Army is currently taking steps to help prevent and stop the spread of the H1N1 virus for Soldiers at home and abroad.

The Army has reported a total of 191 cases of the H1N1 virus, or swine flu, as of June 12.

The military is actively pursuing vaccine production for both the regular and H1N1, according to Col. Jonathan Jaffin, director of Health Policy and Services in the Army's Office of the Surgeon General. Soldiers will be vaccinated as soon as the medicines become available, he said during a blogger's roundtable.

"There has been significant news coverage about the H1N1 virus, and the Army is taking it seriously," Col. Jaffin said. "We want to illustrate why we feel like there is no cause for panic or alarm."

Col. Jaffin went on to state that all segments of the government, as well as international partners, are working together to stop the spread of the flu among members of the military.

"The best treatment for the flu is prevention," Col. Jaffin said.

Steps for prevention include washing hands and limiting contact with infected persons, surfaces and objects like door knobs.

The DoD is working with the World Health Organization's Emerging Illness

Network and the Global Emerging Infection Surveillance, which is a DoD program, in assisting with the prevention and surveillance of the virus.

Golden Knights seek candidates



The U.S. Army Parachute Team known as the Golden Knights is now seeking candidates for its 2009 assessment and selection, which will begin Sept. 8.

Soldiers interested in trying out for the elite parachute team are encouraged to submit applications immediately; deadline for submission is July 24.

To be selected to the team, a Soldier must be on active-duty status, have completed 100 free-fall parachute jumps and have a good military and civilian record. Those requesting a jump waiver should contact the operations section, officials said.

Soldiers submitting their packets for selection will attend a rigorous six-week assessment and selection program of training. Those who successfully complete the six-week training program will be knighted in a special ceremony as an official member of the Golden Knights.

Applications are available at www.usarec.army.mil/hq/goldenknights.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Africa Command focuses on extremists, drug traffickers

The top U.S. military officer with responsibility for Africa concedes he's wor-

ried about the threat of violent extremists taking hold there, particularly in Somalia, and said U.S. Africa Command is working to help regional governments prevent it.

“We clearly worry about the threat of violent extremists taking hold in any parts of the continent where there are spaces that are under-governed or not in full control of the government,” Army Gen. William E. Ward told National Public Radio yesterday.

“And so Somalia is, indeed, a place that we are concerned about,” he said. “In that regard, our policy is to provide support to those governments that are in position in various parts of the continent as they seek to maintain their control over their spaces.”

U.S. Africa Command also is a key player in a broader effort to crack down on narcotics trafficking in Western Africa, William Weschsler, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics and global threats, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this week.

“Although we are still defining the scope, we know that drug trafficking in West Africa is a major problem, it’s growing rapidly, and we expect it to grow over the coming years,” he said at the June 23 hearing.

Defense Department Prepares Quadrennial Defense Review

Defense Department officials are preparing a far-ranging report on current and future goals as part of a congressional mandate.

“It’s really the mother of all reports to Congress,” Amanda Dory, deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, said of the Quadrennial Defense Review in a “DoD-Live” bloggers roundtable yesterday.

Secretaries of defense have seized the reporting requirement “as an opportunity to articulate their vision for the department and to use it as a decision-making opportunity,” Ms. Dory said.

Every four years since 1996, the QDR has outlined the department’s institutional vision for all elements of its operations.

Ms. Dory said law requires the Department of Defense to look 20 years into the future when evaluating the security en-

vironment to consider what capabilities it might need to address the challenges it would face.

“A second substantive element of the QDR is a national defense strategy that will explore what our strategic ends are, the ways we will endeavor to achieve those ends, and then the means we have available to pursue those,” Ms. Dory said.

Another key element of the report is how the department measures its required activity in response to “presidential tasking,” Ms. Dory told the bloggers. “That’s a key force-planning and force-sizing determination.”

The QDR has a major impact on troops on the ground, Ms. Dory said, because Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has placed special emphasis on making the department more responsive to meeting their current needs.

“It may seem that a congressional report would be a bit esoteric and not relevant to the troops on the ground,” she said. “But what makes it relevant to the troops on the ground really is the secretary’s injunction to the department that what we need to do is focus on succeeding in the conflicts that we’re in.”

The report also has implications in terms of the way the department uses its resources, Ms. Dory said. “It has implications in terms of how we relate to our interagency partners, how our allies and friends see us in the world, and how our potential adversaries see us,” she said.

The report is due to Congress in February.

Defense Department and National Institutes of Health Take on Substance Abuse in the Military

Improved recognition, treatment and prevention of substance abuse among servicemembers is the focus of a recent collaboration between the Defense Department and the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a senior defense official said.

“Readiness for the military mission is always our primary reason for existence,” said Dr. Michael Kilpatrick, the Military

Health System’s director of strategic communications. “The health of our men and women in uniform is really critical to sustain that readiness.”

Dr. Kilpatrick spoke about department programs to prevent substance abuse, provide counseling and study the causes for substance abuse in the military during a June 24 audio webcast, “Armed With Science: Research and Applications for the Modern Military.”

Law Gives Military Renters More Protection Against Foreclosures

President Barack Obama’s latest efforts to look after home renters gives military members additional protection if the homes they rent are foreclosed, a Defense Department official said today.

The President’s Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2009 was signed into law May 20. The legislation ensures that renters aren’t forced out of their homes if foreclosure occurs and a new landlord takes over.

Renters in every state now have more time to find new homes. The new law greatly benefits the military, as the vast majority of active duty servicemembers rent homes throughout the United States, said Army Col. Shawn Shumake, director of legal policy in the Pentagon’s personnel and readiness office.

While about 65 percent of the U.S. population own their homes, only about 25 percent of servicemembers are homeowners, so, foreclosure of rented homes potentially can affect most of the military, Col. Shumake said.

“We’ve got a lot of folks out there that find that they are in really difficult positions, because their landlords are foreclosed on,” he explained in a Pentagon Channel interview. “This law provides them a measure of security and protection they didn’t previously have.”

The legislation gives renters the right to stay in their homes throughout the duration of their lease, he said, unless the new owner is moving into the home or if the renter is renting under a month-to-month lease. Still, the new law gives

renters at least 90 days before they can be evicted, he noted.

Web Site to Open Sign-Ups for Post-9/11 GI Bill Transfers

It's official. The Defense Department signed off yesterday on policies and procedures servicemembers will use to transfer their unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to their spouses or children, a Pentagon official said today.

Eligible servicemembers will be able to register their immediate family members to receive those benefits when a new Defense Department Web site went live June 29, according to Bob Clark, the Pentagon's assistant director for accessions policy.

Defense officials are asking those whose families won't use the benefits for the upcoming fall semester to hold off registering until mid-July so applicants who need immediate attention get processed first.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill takes effect Aug. 1, offering a two-fold benefit, Mr. Clark said.

It gives the military a tool to help encourage recruiting and retention, while allowing career servicemembers the first opportunity "to share the benefits they've earned with those they love," he said.

To prepare for the anticipated response in the run-up to the Aug. 1 effective date, the department will launch a secure Web site next week so servicemembers can register any immediate family members to receive their unused benefits, Mr. Clark said.

The site, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/>, will be accessible using a common access card, Department of Defense self-service user identification or a Defense Finance and Accounting Service personal identification number.

Eligible servicemembers can register the names of any immediate family member they would like to share their benefits with, even designating how many months of benefits each person named can receive, Mr. Clark explained.

Defense Travel System to Modify Reservation Process

Minor changes are scheduled to take place within the Defense Department's travel reservation system later this summer to support the Transportation Security Administration's new pre-flight screening program, a Defense Department official said today.

Under the current format, when travelers arrange flight, hotel and rental car reservations online at the Defense Travel System Web site, the only personal information the site processes through to the vendors is the traveler's first name, last name and middle initial. But after the system and Web site modifications take effect, the traveler's date of birth and gender will be included to comply with the TSA's Secure Flight Program, said Pam Mitchell, director of the Defense Travel Management Office.

Defense travelers will be prompted by a pop-up screen from the DTS Web site to add the information, as well as to enter their name as it appears on their government-issued identification card. The change will be minimally inconvenient to the traveler, as the information will be entered only once then saved to their profile, Ms. Mitchell said.

NATIONAL GUARD

Virginia Guard conducts hurricane preparedness exercise

The Virginia National Guard conducted a four-day hurricane preparedness exercise June 15 to 18 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach with the goal of improving the Virginia Guard's ability to plan and carry out domestic operations in conjunction with state agencies and local first responders. This particular exercise simulated a major hurricane hitting the Hampton Roads area.

"The world has changed since 9-11 and Hurricane Katrina, and our citizens expect the National Guard to be ready

to respond in a time of crisis," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "The only way we can be properly prepared to respond in a time of need is to plan, train and exercise our procedures in coordination with our state partner agencies. This exercise is an important part of that preparation."

Approximately 500 Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force took part in the exercise with the focus being on the Virginia Guard's Joint Staff and the staff of the Richmond-based 91st Troop Command. In an incident response situation, 91st Troop Command becomes Joint Task Force 91 and provides command and control for Virginia Guard units taking part in the mission.

Chief names new ARNG deputy director



Gen. Craig R. McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, has announced the selection of Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy of Nebraska as the new deputy director of the Army National Guard.

As deputy director, Brig. Gen. Kadavy will be responsible for assisting the director of the Army National Guard in formulating, developing and coordinating all programs, policies and plans affecting the Army National Guard and its more than 350,000 citizen-soldiers.

WMD-CSTs certified for Guam and U.S. Virgin Islands

The Department of Defense (DoD) notified Congress yesterday that the Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST) of the Guam and U.S. Virgin Islands National Guard are now certified.

The 94th WMD-CST of Barrigada, Guam, and the 23rd WMD-CST of Saint Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, are fully ready to assist civil authorities in responding to a domestic weapon of mass destruction incident, and possesses the requisite skills, training, and equipment to be proficient in all mission requirements.

The teams certified today bring the total number of teams certified by DoD to 55, which completes the 55 authorized by Congress to ensure one team is fielded in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia.

Iowa CST responds to potential disaster



The 71st Civil Support Team from the Iowa National Guard responded to calls of train derailments and possible chemical hazardous material at Alter Scrap Processing, 1801 E. Euclid, Des Moines. This may sound like another disaster that the state of Iowa needs to recover from, after the floods of 2008 ravished small towns and permanently damaged some streets in Cedar Rapids. But this potential 'disaster' is just part of a nation wide training exercise called Vigilant Guard.

The purpose of the Vigilant Guard is to test in a regional type of response with

multiple levels of action, test the command of control at higher levels and to execute emergency response plans in our region, said Army Captain Derrick Moore, the operations officer for the 71st Civil Support Team (CST). This is the first Vigilant Guard exercise that the CST has participated in. However, for Capt. Moore, who is a native of Hudson, I.A., this exercise is all too familiar; Capt. Moore was a representative sent to Puerto Rico to observe one of Vigilant Guard's exercises.

The CST's mission is to support the incident command and advise them on actions and to help identify hazards associated with an incident. The team also has an active outreach program where they train with these responders and attend meetings and planning sessions

Army publishes first National Guard retirement guide

The Army has published a 56-page retirement guide for National Guard Soldiers and their families which covers subjects ranging from retirement point credits to how to apply for retirement pay.

The Army National Guard Information Guide on Non-Regular Retirement was a collaboration between the Army G-1 retirement services division and the National Guard.

"We published this guide as part of our efforts to ensure that National Guard Soldiers and their families receive the Army's full support before and after retirement," said John Radke, chief of Army G-1 retirement services.

"We see the commitment of National Guard Soldiers at home as they respond to disasters like Hurricane Katrina and abroad as they help fight those who seek to destabilize and destroy countries like Iraq and Afghanistan," Mr. Radke added. "We respond to their commitment by providing them with this retirement guide as they begin to plan for retirement from our great Army."

The guide is currently being distributed throughout the Guard. It is also available online at: <http://www.armygl.army.mil/retire>.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Secretary Napolitano announces Southwest Border Task Force

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano announced recently the formation of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) Southwest Border Task Force, a diverse group of national security experts charged with examining the Department's efforts along the U.S.-Mexico border and providing advice and recommendations directly to the Secretary.

"This task force, comprised of law enforcement, elected officials and national security experts from around the country, will advise the Department on key issues facing communities along the Southwest border," said Sec. Napolitano. "I have asked this group to present me with concrete recommendations to address the complex challenges we face in this region, and their collective expertise will be a critical asset as we work to secure the border while facilitating legal travel and trade."

The new task force underscores DHS' emphasis on Southwest border security in response to ongoing drug cartel violence in Mexico. Sec. Napolitano asked the 20-member group to focus on two major challenges: ensuring rigorous inspections processes at ports of entry while facilitating commerce; and assessing the practical consequences of border violence and DHS' response to communities along the Southwest border.

FEMA Administrator Briefs Congress On Preparedness For 2009 Hurricane Season

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate recently briefed members of the

VETERANS

VA begins stimulus payments to veterans

U.S. Senate's Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery about FEMA's preparedness for the 2009 Hurricane Season. In his first Congressional hearing as Administrator, he told the Committee that emergency response success will be determined by how the nation responds as a team.

Citing the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act Fugate said it significantly contributes to increasing FEMA's ability to manage all aspects of disasters and emergencies. "I will continue to work at building and empowering FEMA, and improving our ability to meet the needs of the American people in times of disaster," Mr. Fugate said.

With his experience as a former state Emergency Management Director, Mr. Fugate called for closer collaboration among partners to clearly define roles and responsibilities. He added, "Everyday we are working with our state, local, and federal partners to prepare for the next disaster. We are encouraging every governor to establish a state-led housing task force to ensure governments are empowered to determine the best housing options for post-disaster needs, and continue to hear directly from them on their needs moving into the 2009 Atlantic Hurricane Season."

In his testimony, the administrator told the committee that FEMA will continue to work with partners to ensure that we are prepared and continue to work with the public, encouraging them to taking necessary steps now -- like developing a family disaster plan -- before a hurricane or disaster strikes.

This year, FEMA has responded to 24 major disasters, five emergencies and issued 24 fire management assistance grants.



The first \$250 payments to veterans as part of President Obama's recovery plan were sent Monday, and officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs said all payments were scheduled to be distributed by June 30.

As part of the recovery plan, VA is making one-time payments of \$250 to eligible veterans and survivors to offset the effects of the current economy.

VA estimates \$500 million in payments will be made to approximately 1.9 million veterans and eligible beneficiaries as part of this measure.

To be eligible for the payment, VA beneficiaries must have received VA's compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, or spina bifida benefits at any time between November 2008 and January 2009.

Also, beneficiaries must reside within the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

No application is necessary. VA has requested that the Department of the Treasury make the \$250 payments to eligible veterans.

VA used its existing payment records to determine eligibility for the \$250 payment. Beneficiaries will receive their payments the same way they receive their monthly VA benefits -- either by direct deposit or in the mail.

This payment is not countable in determining eligibility for VA pension or Parents' dependency and indemnity compensation, VA officials said. The law allows one \$250-payment per person.

The payment is tax-free. VA beneficiaries who also receive benefits from the Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board will be paid through those agencies, and will therefore not receive the payment from VA, officials said.

VA will spend more than \$1.4 billion as part of President Obama's economic recovery plan to improve services to America's Veterans. VA's Internet site - www.va.gov/recovery - provides current

information about VA's work to deliver its portion of recovery act funds to benefit veterans.

VA Reopening Health Care Enrollment to Thousands of Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which now has nearly 8 million veterans enrolled in its award-winning health care system, is poised to welcome nearly 266,000 more veterans into its medical centers and clinics across the country by expanding access to health care enrollment for certain veterans who had been excluded due to their income.

"This incremental approach to expanding enrollment ensures that access to VA health care for a greater number of beneficiaries does not sacrifice timely access or quality medical care for those veterans already enrolled in VA's health care system," Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health, said. "Over the next four years, we hope to provide enrollment to more than 500,000 veterans."

Under a new regulation effective June 15, VA will enroll veterans whose income exceeds current means-tested thresholds by up to 10 percent. These veterans were excluded from VA health care enrollment when income limits were imposed in 2003 on veterans with no service-connected disabilities or other special eligibility for care. There is no income limit for veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities or for veterans being seen for their service-connected disabilities.

Veterans who have applied for VA health care but were rejected due to income at any point in 2009 will have their applications reconsidered under the new income threshold formula. Those who applied before 2009, but were rejected due to income, must reapply.

VA will contact these veterans through a direct-mail campaign, veterans service organizations, and a national and regional marketing campaign.

Consequence Management

Soldiers, civilians join together to combat 'Red Dragon' crisis

In the largest training exercise of its type in the nation, more than 2,300 Army Reserve Soldiers helped civilian authorities respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks.

Federal, state and local officials joined military personnel in "Red Dragon," a simulation filled with life-threatening scenarios spread across southern Wisconsin. At various points, the exercise involved more than a dozen hospitals and hundreds of civilian participants – along with hundreds of simulated casualties.

Most of the Soldiers that took part belong to chemical units, which specialize in such skills as decontamination and protection from weapons of mass destruction and hazardous materials detection. The exercise allowed them to place their skills into action on a large stage.

Brig. Gen. James T. Cook, who commands the 415th Chemical Brigade from



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Soldiers attend to role-playing "victims" during an emergency drill at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee on June 17. The drill was part of the two-week exercise Red Dragon where Army Reserve Soldiers practice assisting civilian authorities in case of a biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear incident.

Greenville, S.C., this marks a large step up in operations, comparing it to a "crawl-walk-run" process.

"This year, it's a sprint," he said.

In previous years, the exercise was held almost exclusively at Fort McCoy, Wis. Now the base is the center of operations, with units training here and travelling to cities as far away as Milwaukee.

Brig. Gen. Cook, whose unit oversaw the two-week exercise, said one of their key goals is to better assist – and integrate with – local emergency responders if the Army is called in to help.

"If something ever happens on our homeland, we are trained ... to deploy a unit to help the civil authorities and the National Guard of that state in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear event," he said.

There were a variety of worst-case simulated events conducted during Red Dragon, including the imagined detonation of a radioactive explosive at a crowded Milwaukee baseball stadium.

Soldiers and civilians worked together to protect and aid the public throughout the scenarios. In many cases, Soldiers acted the part of victims to help hospitals practice dealing with the large volumes of injured patients.

The exercise is part of the planned homeland security response to catastrophes, whether



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Spc. Edkin R. Garcia, a chemical specialist with 411th Chemical Company of Edison, N.J., role-plays an elderly contamination victim in an emergency drill at Waukesha Memorial Hospital in Waukesha, Wis. as part of Exercise Red Dragon on June 17. Spc. Shane D. Owen, a medic with the 7235th Medical Support Unit of Orlando, Fla., assists Garcia while in full protective gear.

natural or man-made, Col. James Murphy, the operation's lead planner and commander of the 457th Chemical Battalion from Greenville, S.C., said.

"Red Dragon is becoming one of the most important exercises in the Department of Defense," he said. "We face numerous threats. Those threats are proliferating."

Col. Murphy, who has worked in civilian emergency services for more than two decades, said exercises like this will help the response speed of the units and will also help the participating hospitals meet their own certification requirements.

A variety of agencies participated in Red Dragon, including the FBI, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, local police and fire departments, local hospitals, local governments, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the United States Coast Guard.

The reserve units spent a week of the exercise undergoing validation testing, with Army officials monitoring their mastery of the needed skills.

Brig. Gen. Cook pointed out citizen Soldiers conduct their military duties in addition to maintaining their civilian careers. He expressed his appreciation for the families of those Soldiers who make it possible for them to serve.

"I want to thank the families for sacrificing their time and allowing them to do this profession," he said.

Brig. Gen. Cook spoke to assemblies of the participating troops about the importance of their mission and the skills they bring to the effort. He noted chemical units were not the only Soldiers who are participating in Red Dragon.

"They come from several different disciplines," he said.

Medical units, logistics, support, military police, chaplains and even Army firefighters are taking part, he said. National Guard units will be working with reserve Soldiers without regard to different service divisions, he said.

Brig. Gen. Cook said Red Dragon gives troops the practice that allows them to conduct their work as second nature and provides them a better communications framework with civilians during a crisis.

"We're able to speak the same language to help them out," he said.

(by Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD)



Photo by Spc. Daniel D. Haun

Pfc. Wesley Brinson, a chemical operations specialist with 371st Chemical Company from Greenwood, S.C., checks a role-playing "victim" for radiological particles in an emergency drill at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee on June 17. The drill was part of the two-week Exercise Red Dragon where Army Reserve Soldiers practice assisting civilian authorities in case of a biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear incident.

Aloha Exercise

Region IX DCE aids Hawaii during major hurricane exercise

It's a scenario that emergency responders in Hawaii hope will never happen.

A Category 4 hurricane with winds exceeding 135 miles per hour and a storm surge of 15 feet aimed directly at Oahu's southern shore. But, it's an event that experts believe will happen sometime in the future, and officials want to be as prepared as possible.

Local, state and federal agencies tested their plans, readiness and abilities during an annual hurricane exercise dubbed "Makani Pahili 2009" held June 2-4 in Honolulu.

Makani Pahili 2009 was an interagency exercise designed to test the coordinated efforts among all levels of government and private sector organizations. "Given the isolation of the island chain, we have to have dependency and reliance on each other so we can sustain and maintain life support for our residents following a disaster," said Col. James George, 196th Infantry Brigade commander at Fort Shafter. In support of Joint Task Force Homeland Defense, Colonel George also serves as the Defense Coordinating Officer for Hawaii.

Playing a pivotal role were members of two Defense Coordinating Elements, an organization whose mission is to support the state

and local communities prepare and respond to hurricanes or other disasters by coordinating requests for military assistance.

This exercise brought together members of the 196th Infantry Brigade, serving as DCE in Hawaii, with members of the Region IX DCE from Oakland, Calif. They coordinated their efforts with one another and through the FEMA Region IX Regional Response Coordination Center back in Oakland. The joint and interagency efforts at both locations included support from Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers and personnel from all key federal agencies.

The exercise was designed to test agencies to their limits and beyond. "We need to find out what our weaknesses are and use that information to build our ability to respond in the event of a real disaster," Col. George said. "We don't want to wait until an actual event occurs and then determine we don't have the resources to respond."

This training opportunity allowed U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Northern Command to synchronize operations much as they would during an actual event when they would each activate their respective DCO/Es.

During a disaster in the Pacific, the NORTHCOM DCO/E will operate from the Oakland RRCC and facilitate communications and

"Given the isolation of the island chain, we have to have dependency and reliance on each other so we can sustain and maintain life support for our residents following a disaster"

mission assignment processing until the Joint Field Office becomes operational, according to Lt. Col. Paul Gault, Reg. IX Deputy DCO.

"This was the first major opportunity we had to test a newly designed coordination concept of how our team in Oakland will support FEMA and the efforts of military forces responding to a catastrophic disaster in the PACOM Area of Operations" said Col. Mark Armstrong, Defense Coordinating Officer for Region IX.

"Similar challenges exist in the PACOM AOR as in NORTHCOM, when operating in the DSCA arena both higher headquarters communicate on the (classified) side adding a level of difficulty for the DCE to pass information to civilian agencies," Lt. Col. Gault said.

This year's scenario called for substantial damage not only to civilian property, but to military assets.

Key members of the Oakland-based DCE deployed to Hawaii to observe and help train the Hawaii DCO/E. "We had a rare opportunity to coach, teach and mentor another DCO/E," Lt. Col. Gault said. "We gained a different insight on doing our job and were able to discover many best practices and improve upon others."

The primary federal agency, FEMA, and the state of Hawaii along with all the other participating federal and state agencies had a unique opportunity during this exercise to validate the newly updated Hawaii Catastrophic Hurricane operational plan.

(Editor's note: U.S. Army, Pacific, Public Affairs contributed to this article)



Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Ballard

A Soldier updates staff on the damage from a fictional hurricane during the Defense Coordinating Element's participation in the state's annual hurricane exercise, Makani Pahili, June 2-4.

CST

Alabama Guard's 46th CST Trains with the US Coast Guard

Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9-11), local, state and federal agencies have broadened their training exercises to depict various scenarios that are an increasing threat to the U.S. democracy and its citizen's way of life.

Terrorist groups continue to upgrade and modify their weapons and execution methods while continuously searching for new and unexpected targets.

In recent news, pirates of Somalia hijacked the Maersk Alabama, an American cargo supertanker loaded with \$100 million dollars worth of oil. The commander of the ship, Richard Phillips, 53, surrendered himself to the pirates in order to save the lives of his crewmembers. Phillips was later rescued by U.S. Navy snipers.

In light of such attacks, it is imperative to implement training measures that counter these groups and their threats.

Soldiers with the Alabama National Guard's 46th Civil Support Team (CST) recently worked such a threat scenario with the 41st CST from Kentucky, the 43rd CST from South Carolina, the Alabama National Guard's Aviation Security and Support Detachment, the U.S. Coast Guard out of Mobile, Ala., and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The scenario revolved, which fulfilled two National Guard Bureau (NGB) training requirements, around a relief-in-place and maritime operations exercise held in Mobile, Ala.

"This is a great opportunity for us to learn from other agencies and to display what the CST is capable of doing," said 46th CST Commander, Lt. Col. Rick Pelham.

The scenario, Operation Flying Dutchman, was drafted and monitored by U.S. Army North command's Civil Support Readiness Group-East. The scenario overview stated that an international terrorist group boarded and seized control of the cruise liner, the State of Maine, which was heading to dry-dock for renovations and repairs.

After losing contact with the cruise liner, the

U.S. Coast Guard located the missing ship approximately two miles from U.S. Coast Guard Sector Mobile. The Coast Guard personnel were fired upon as they approached the ship to investigate.

The FBI had been monitoring correspondence from a domestic group with links to international terrorists over the past year. The FBI reported the group bragging about their acquisition of precursors for chemical warfare groups. These included small arms, bomb making materials, and radioactive isotopes.

With such information, the FBI immediately alerted the 46th CST, an FBI special weapons and tactics team (SWAT), and U.S. Coast Guard Strike team of the hostile situation at the State of Maine.

The 46th's objectives were to conduct ship-boarding operations safely and define standards, to establish ship boarding tactics, techniques and procedures, to build a working relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard Strike team, and to conduct deliberate relief-in-place operations safely and define standards.

Lt. Col. Pelham said he was very pleased

with the outcome of the training. "We've conducted exercises on the U.S.S. Alabama, so our guys were prepared to navigate such difficult spaces," explained Lt. Col. Pelham.

That evening the 46th was relieved by Kentucky's 41st CST. Lt. Col. Pelham says this was the first time for the 46th to work with the Kentucky team. "Our goal is to work with as many teams in our sector as possible," said Lt. Col. Pelham.

The Kentucky team was later relieved by South Carolina's 43rd CST on the next day.

According to Lennox Campbell, division chief for the Civil Support Readiness Group-East, the exercise was designed to enhance better working relations with other agencies, to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for shipboard or maritime operations, and to successfully conduct relief-in-place operations.

Mr. Campbell has been training with the 46th for seven years. "The 46th is very professional," said Mr. Campbell. "They take their job very seriously."

(story provided by Alabama National Guard)



Photo by Capt. Andrew J. Richardson

Master Sgt. David Heffelfinger (left) and Staff Sgt. Jimmy Mathis (right) don their protective gear moments before boarding the State of Maine, a retired U.S. Navy troop transporter, to perform decontamination procedures on members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Master Sgt. Heffelfinger and Staff Sgt. Mathis are part of the Alabama National Guard's 46th Civil Support Team (CST).

Soldiers, civilians launch ARNORTH fitness program

Army North's Health and Fitness Month kicked off in June in an effort to improve the health and wellness of ARNORTH staff members.

The program was put in place by the non-commissioned officers of ARNORTH for the benefit of the entire ARNORTH team.

The program offers a wide spectrum of physical improvement activities such as cardio and aerobic exercise to music, push-up and sit-up improvement, speed walking, jogging and running, and full body workouts all at low to medium intensity.

Also offered is a lunch time nutrition seminar focusing on healthy heart and eating habits.

Organizers say the program is a way to get a great physical workout while also having a good time.

"We would like to continue this – right now we are thinking of this as a pilot," said Sgt. Maj. Timmy Stampley, G-5 Plans Non-commissioned Officer in Charge.

ARNORTH civilian staff members are be-

ing encouraged by each other to join the ARNORTH military staff in the program. Command Sgt. Maj. George Nieves said the key is to spark interest.

"We want to continue with this process so that it will not just be for one month, then everyone stops and reverts back to the way things used to be," he said.

Some civilian staff members of ARNORTH said they are grateful for the opportunity to be included in the health and fitness training. They also voiced appreciation in working out alongside the military staff members.

"I get to learn how to exercise the proper way with military folks who have been doing it for quite a number of years, and I learn how to do it to avoid injury." Grace Avila, G-6 Chief of Customer Services Branch said. "I look at them as being the professionals and I appreciate their commitment to the military as well as their commitment to us civilians. I think it's a great program."

G-5 Plans Specialist Jose Torrens likes

the opportunity to stay in shape and to bring everybody together. "It is not just one group or another, it is everybody combined as one ARNORTH overall effort." Torrens added that he thinks the nutrition classes have been very helpful. "It's a great opportunity to work on your whole body," he said.

Gerri Calonge, G-5 Management Services Specialist, thinks it's a good opportunity for the civilians to be in contact with the military. When asked what she thinks could be improved upon she added, "I think it would be good for more civilians to come out and participate. I think it is going great."

Kurt Cutkelvin, G-5 Pandemic Influenza Planner, says he like the team building. "We also need to get the word out to the rest of the command that it is fun, and they are not out here to kill anybody. It is all at your own pace," he said.

Fitness month leaders include Sgt. Maj. Stampley, who covers the aerobic workout, and Staff Sgt. Jaime Villegas, G-7 Simulations NCO, who leads the jogging and run event. Sgt. Maj. Karen Bolden, Chaplain Sgt. Maj., and Staff Sgt. Lashawn Williamson, G-1 Human Resource NCO, conduct the speed and power walk event as well as the full body work-out. Master Sgt. Angela Bray, Operations NCO, and Master Sgt. Jeffrey Jackson, Chief Paralegal NCO, supervise an abdominal workout event.

Those interested in participating in ARNORTH Health and Fitness Month activities can learn more by contacting Sgt. Maj. Stampley by calling 221-1479 or through e-mail at: timmy.stampley@us.army.mil.

Sgt. Maj. Stampley encourages every member in ARNORTH to participate and spread the word.

"It is the goal of the NCOs of ARNORTH to maintain physical fitness standards and the well-being of the entire ARNORTH team, so we can be confident that the unit's Soldiers and civilian staff members are the best they can be in any situation," Sgt. Maj. Stampley concluded.

(by Sgt. Jonathan S. Ostertag/ARNORTH PAO)



Photo by Sgt. Jonathan S. Ostertag

Army North Noncommissioned Officers and staff conduct low impact weight training during their morning health and fitness session June 12 after completing exercises such as speed walking and a six mile run.

ARNORTH Hosts Credit Report Seminar

June 9 a team from Army Community Services visited ARNORTH and presented a class on personal credit reports. The lunch-time seminar, organized by the G-8 staff, was open to all ARNORTH staff and family members.

If you have ever applied for a personal loan, credit card or any kind of insurance you should be interested in your personal credit report.

Your credit report is a detailed report of not only your credit, but also your employment and residence history. It can, and most likely will be used by prospective employers, lenders and insurance companies. And it doesn't stop there. It also contains public records and collection items such as, but not limited to, bankruptcies, foreclosures, liens and overdue debt, some of which can stay on your report for up to 10 years or longer.

Lydia Rodriguez is the main educator at

the financial readiness program, and is contracted to train soldiers and civilians alike about the importance of their personal credit reports and other financial areas. Ms. Rodriguez researches daily, updating information in the financial sector to keep her teachings up to speed with the latest financial trends. With over forty years of experience in financial issues, her seminars are an excellent source of information, and she answers all of your credit report questions.

"Have a budget. It is the beginning of everything," states Ms. Rodriguez, when asked her best advice for persons just starting on their financial pathways.

Doris Planas is the Financial Readiness Coordinator for the program and offers classes through the Army Community Services on a wide variety of financial topics. Ms. Planas says, "We want to reach out to the units."

Addressing specifically the interests and well being of the Soldiers and DOD civilians are what they have in mind when offering these classes. "ACS and the Financial Readiness Program are here to help, inform and educate you," she added.

ARNORTH has initiated a series of lunch-time seminars to help improve the quality of life of its staff and family members. Past topics have included the Thrift Savings Program and the 9/11 G.I. Bill.

ACS is also available to provide further support. Financial classes are held Mondays and Tuesdays 2-4 p.m., and Thursdays 1-3 p.m. The ACS building is located at 2797 Stanley Road, Fort Sam Houston. For more information, call the Financial Readiness Program at 221-1612. Daily hours of operation are 7:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
(by Lydia Rodriguez/ARNORTH G-8)

ARNORTH Member Receives awards for outstanding work

What do you get when you take a wounded warrior with a work ethic above reproach and drop him into a career field he's never worked in before?

In the case of Sgt. 1st Class Kuoway Ho you get Army and Department of Defense level awards.

Sgt. 1st Class Ho served his country for many years as an infantryman and later after being wounded, became a participant in the Wounded Warrior Program. He is still serving his country, but now in the Financial Management field.

Sgt. 1st Class Ho, who provides Defense Travel Service Administrator support to over 500 travelers across the U.S., was recognized in the Financial Management field with the Army Resource Management Award and a Department of Defense Major Command Meritorious Award.

"Sgt. 1st Class Ho has never been in the ac-

counting and financial MOS field previously," said Cynthia Harris, the sergeant's U. S. Army North supervisor, "but has excelled because of his ability to learn rapidly and adapt quickly to a new field."

For example, during Hurricanes Gustav, Hanna and Ike, he ensured travelers received correct guidance for submitted travel vouchers.

With many ground movements in play for tracked ARNORTH members movements, his guidance ensured 100 percent of the vouchers were filed accurately and on-time.

Sgt. 1st Class Ho oversees in excess of 500 travelers who produce a monthly average of 782 travel documents. He also assists 29 staff Organizational Defense Travel Administrators, 12 Reviewers and 78 Approving Officials, in addition to flawlessly managing over 200 lines of accounting and 75 routing flows.

Ms. Harris said that Sgt. Ho's loyalty to the Army values reflect in everything he does.



Photo courtesy of Cynthia Harris
Sgt. 1st Class Kuoway Ho (right) is presented the Army Resource Management Award.

NCO call lets ARNORTH NCOs take a time out, develop comraderie

Army North noncommissioned officers got together June 12 for the quarterly NCO call. It was organized by Equal Opportunity Manager, Sgt. 1st Class Melanie Locklear, and Sgt. 1st Class Quinn Reed.

The event took place at the Mexican Manhattan Restaurant nestled in the corner overlooking a junction on the San Antonio river walk. After the lunch the NCOs enjoyed a riverboat cruise that took them throughout downtown, San Antonio while short history lessons were presented about the area.

The call's purpose was to get the NCOs of ARNORTH together so they could fo-

cus on things like getting to know each other better and overall strengthen unit cohesion.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nieves defines a great organization as, "One that everyone wants to be in," and attributes this to ARNORTH because of its professional core of NCOs. Amongst the professionalism he also added that, "It's all about getting together and having fun and getting to know each other better," he said about the quarterly NCO call.

Other ARNORTH NCOs had things to say about the call. Staff Sgt. Jamie Villegas, G-7 Simulations NCO, "I enjoy getting to see the faces and getting

to talk with the other NCOs outside of the duty areas," he said. "I'd like to see maximum participation," he added.

Headquarters Company 1st Sgt. Ramone A. Gomez said, "It's for the NCOs to get together and share some of our thoughts. It's to get to know each other more on a personal level instead of just professional."

The quarterly NCO call is put together by two NCOs each quarter, with one senior NCO allocated to help mentor in the process. The date and location for the next call are to be determined.

(by Sgt. Jonathan S. Ostertag, ARNORTH PAO)

Retirement Awards



Photo by Sgt. Jonathan S. Ostertag
Six Soldiers stand in line to be commended for their service during a retirement ceremony. From left to right Col. Scott Netherland receives the Legion of Merit; Lt. Col. Mark Cravens receives the Meritorious Service Medal; Lt. Col. Daniel Jordan receives the Meritorious Service Medal; Lt. Col. Joanne McGovern receives the Legion of Merit; Lt. Col. Thomas Piasecki receives the Legion of Merit; CW4 Yolanda Friendly receives Meritorious Service Medal.

PCS AWARDS

The following Soldiers are receiving awards for their hardwork and dedication to ARNORTH.

(All listed received Meritorious Service Medals)



Lt. Col. David Dosier

Lt. Col. Glenn McRill

Maj. Todd Moe

Maj. Michael Long

Maj. William Modore

Maj. Roberto Perez

Maj. James O'Connell

Master Sgt. Keturah Roberts

JTF-N

Marines construct all-weather border security road

The U.S. Marine Corps' 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, based in Baltimore, Md., deployed last month to the historic southern New Mexico town of Columbus in response to a request for Department of Defense support submitted by the U.S. Border Patrol, El Paso Sector.

Columbus, site of the infamous attack on the town and the U.S. Army garrison ordered by the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa in 1916, is located 3 miles from the U.S. – Mexico border. The Marines' mission site was located directly on the border across from Palomas, Mexico, a well known staging site for alien smuggling and drug trafficking.

The Marines were tasked to construct a limited all-weather border road, continue the installation of border security lights along the recently installed border fence, and construct three low-water crossings. The arid and sandy border desert environment that the Marines encountered is similar to what they experienced during their Iraq deployments.

The unique engineering challenge encountered by the Marines involved the management of water flow that occurs during the rare Southwest rainstorms.

The mission is a continuation of the U.S. Border Patrol's efforts to gain greater control of the Southwest border through its infrastructure improvement program. The improved border road will dramatically decrease the agents' response time, regardless of weather conditions, and will contribute to officer safety. Border Patrol agents patrol the border area on a 24-hour basis every day.

JTF-North, which has no assigned forces, solicits volunteer Title 10, U.S. Code, active duty and reserve component units from all four branches of the Department of Defense to accomplish its homeland security missions executed in support of the Department of Homeland Security and Department of



Photo by Capt. Armando Carrasco

Sgt. Patrick Kruse directs Lance Cpl. Justin Ball on the bulldozer and Lance Cpl. Michael Hespeneide on the compactor during the construction of 0.31 mile border patrol road along the U.S.-Mexico border near Columbus N.M. U.S. Marine Corps' 4th Combat Engineer Battalion deployed from Baltimore, Md., to Columbus, N.M., to construct a limited all-weather border road.

Justice. In accordance with DoD policy, the military homeland security support missions must have a training value to the unit or provide a significant contribution to national security.

“Due to the climate and available natural resources found along the border area, the methods and materials we employed are different from what we are accustomed to on the East Coast. This made for a steep learning curve, but Marines are flexible and adapted quickly,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Howard, Marine Corps 4th CEB mission commander.

JTF-North engineer missions have proven to be highly beneficial for reserve units such as the 4th CEB. These missions allow the units to plan the mission, deploy from their home stations to unique environments, rotate their personnel for their two-week annual reserve training, and fully exercise their redeployment capabilities.

“We have built a road that is far superior to the combat trails and roads that our battalion would normally be tasked with,” said Mr.

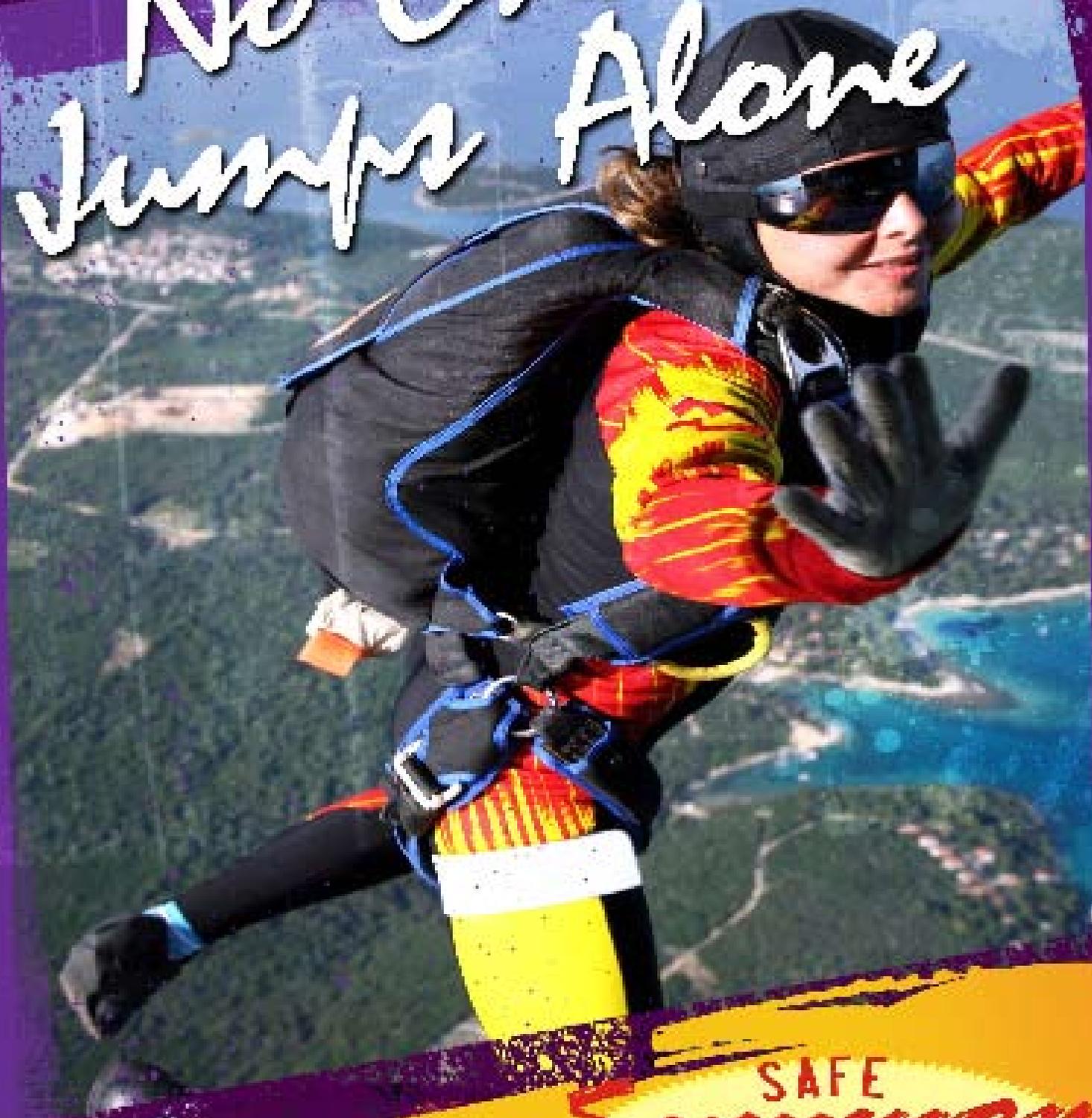
Howard. “It is a welcome change to have a mission that encompasses all of the skill sets that our battalion brings to the table in support of the US Border Patrol and their mission to secure our borders.”

JTF-North engineer support missions consist of: road construction and improvement, border perimeter lighting installation, border fence construction, vehicle barrier construction, and mobility construction. Engineer support missions are long-term operations that are planned one to two years before execution and can consist of multiple phase operations that may take several months or years to complete.

DOD restricts JTF-North engineering support to the Southwest border. JTF-North border engineer support missions have been conducted primarily near: San Diego, Calif.; El Centro, Calif.; Yuma, Ariz.; Nogales, Ariz.; Naco, Ariz.; Douglas, Ariz.; Columbus, N.M.; El Paso, Texas; Van Horn, Texas; Eagle Pass, Texas; Del Rio, Texas; and Laredo, Texas.

(by Armando Carrasco, JTF-N PAO)

No One Jumps Alone



SAFE SUMMER

Have fun and look out for each other this summer. Do your part to protect our Band of Brothers and Sisters.



ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG

