

FORTIFIER



Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014

A supplement to the Army Contracting Command News Blast





FORTIFIER

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Cover: Left to right, Air Force 2nd Lt. Danny Monroe, Army Sgt. 1st Class David Grider, Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael McTague and Joaquin Tucker with the Army Corps of Engineers, lift a mannequin onto a litter during a medical evacuation exercise at the Medical Support Training Center on Fort Bliss, Texas.



Meet The Units of OCSJX-14

By Army Staff Sgt. Edward A. Garibay
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise, formerly called the Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise, has evolved and grown throughout the years, and OCSJX-14 is the largest to date.

With sponsorship from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, this year's exercise has brought more than 530 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines from around the world to the state-of-the-art facilities at Fort Bliss, Texas to practice their craft as operational contracting support specialists and train on basic military tasks in a joint environment. There were even British, Canadian and French participants. Also in attendance were professional civilians of industry and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

One of the units with the largest participation was U.S. Northern Command, who provide Department of Defense homeland defense efforts and coordinates defense support of civil authorities. They sent 43 service members from places such as Colorado Springs, Colo.; San Antonio; and Washington, D.C.

Besides Army North, which falls under NORTHCOM, the largest number of participants from the Army came from the Army Corps of Engineers, which provides environmental sustainability and maintains America's

infrastructure by providing military facilities where service members train, work and live. Their 30 Soldiers hailed from locations such as Winchester, Va.; Fort Worth, Texas; Washington, D.C.; Louisville, Ky.; Sacramento, Ca.; New York City; Savannah, Ga.; and Los Angeles, just to name a few.

The Air Force also had a strong showing of 138 Airmen, with each of their major commands from across the globe represented at OCSJX-14. The commands were Air Combat Command, Pacific Air Forces, United States Air Forces in Europe, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Education and Training Command, Air Mobility Command, Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Force Materiel Command, Air Force Space Command, Air Force Installation Contracting Agency and the Air National Guard.

The Navy and Marines may not have had a gigantic presence with nine and eight individuals present respectively, but their diversity more than made up for their lack of numbers. Of the 17 Sailors and Marines, 14 of them were from different locations such as Japan; El Paso, Texas; San Diego and Orlando, Fla.

With all of these different people from such a variety of places, it is easy to see how joint training benefits the participants of OCSJX-14. Planning for OCSJX-15 and -16 has already begun.



A multi-national group of contract support specialists prepare to be rotated 450 degrees in the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer allowing the troops to experience a serious vehicle accident in relative safety.

A different kind of survival training

By Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth G. Pawlak
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians line up, anxiously awaiting to ride one of the Army's finest attractions. This ride, however, requires helmets, body armor, eye protection and gloves.

These trainees from the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 were waiting for the High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer to experience the effects of a rollover in a HMMWV and a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle to develop the skills necessary during an egress or rollover situation.

"The purpose of the egress is for familiarization during an actual rollover," said Master Sgt. Babette Bell, vehicle rollover noncommissioned officer in charge with OCSJX-14. "The trainees are taught how to get out of the vehicle safely, get all of the sensitive items out, how to take care of any injured personnel and to perform security around the vehicle."

The HEAT allows teams to train on the necessary steps needed to survive a rollover. The HEAT is a training device that uses the body of a HMMWV or MRAP mounted to a machine that gives it

"It was an eye-opener for me, being my first joint operations exercise, to see how the different cultures operate"

-Marine Sgt. Christopher Clarke

the ability to rotate 360 degrees, allowing people to experience what it would be like in a rollover. It reinforces the importance of wearing seatbelts, the feeling of being disoriented and the efforts required to evacuate a vehicle.

"While the trainees are in the HMMWV during the rollover they become disoriented, which affects their reaction time," said Bell. "They also have to ensure their equipment is secured in the vehicle: any loose equipment could become a hazard during a rollover."

"This was my first time going through the rollover training. It was really educational," said Senior Airman Alex Wolf, operational contracting support specialist with 45th Contracting Squadron, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. "I learned the importance of communicating with all the troops, making sure everyone is on the same page. Through proper communica-

tion, we were all able to exit the vehicle safely and perform our security checks. Afterward, I felt like our entire team were professionals at rollover training."

As the trainees hear people shouting "Rollover! Rollover! Rollover!" from the simulation, one could see the nervousness in some faces as they were waiting to load up for their turn to be flipped over in the HMMWV. For others, the training was like a carnival ride, experiencing fear and excitement simultaneously.

"Being in the HMMWV rollover was like being on a rollercoaster," said Wolf. "It was weird. You became disoriented. I didn't know what's up, what's down, what's left or what's right. It really disorients you with all the stuff hanging around in there."

Some trainees were old pros at the rollover, having done the training several times in pre-deployment. For them, it was not the equipment that made the training, it was the company.

"I've done the HEAT trainer numerous times, but working with different people from the United Kingdom, Army, Air Force and civilians was a great training opportunity for me," said Marine Sgt. Christopher Clarke, operational contracting support specialist with Headquarters



Air Force Staff Sgt. A.J. Wojcicki assists a trainee with his harness, ensuring no one will fall out of their seat prematurely during the MRAP rollover training. As the trainees are sent end over end in the rotating cab, Army Sgt. 1st Class Mohammed Brown monitors the HEAT and its occupants for any unnecessary risks. Both Wojcicki and Brown are part of Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014, going through train-the-trainer sessions on HEAT days before the rest of the participants arrived.





Army Sgt. 1st Class Marquiesho Stevens, left, rollover instructor with Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014, briefs Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and civilians on safety before they enter a simulated Mine-Resisted Ambush Protected vehicle.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Barry Bredell, contracting specialist with the 56th Contracting Squadron on Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., exits the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer. "The HEAT training was what I was looking forward to the most," Bredell said.

and Service Battalion, Quantico, Va. "It was an eye opener for me, being my first joint operations exercise, to see how the different cultures operate."

Clarke's diverse team of a British officer, an Air Force senior airman, a civilian and an Army officer were able to accomplish the task at hand with ease. The team's variety shows how OCSJX-14 is a joint contract readiness exercise -- participants include service members from four of the U.S. military branches, civilians and international Soldiers -- brought together from every corner of the globe.

"As the gunner, my team was able to

get me out with no problem," said Clarke after their session.

"We were able to get out of the vehicle as a team pretty quick and pull security with no issue."

"OCSJX-14 gave us the opportunity to train Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors to help them overcome fear and panic in a rollover incident," said Army Sgt. First Class Portia Hall, a rollover instructor with OCSJX-14. "There were a few who were not familiar with the system, but once they went through a couple times, they felt confident."

Hall added that after going through the



Marine Sgt. Stephanie Colon-Castro, contract specialist with Marine Corps Installation East Regional Contracting office, prepares to be a gunner during the rollover training during the OCSJX-14 held at Fort Bliss, Texas.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Slate operates the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT).

HEAT a few times, reacting to a rollover becomes second nature for anyone, giving the trainees the confidence and know-how to survive one of the worst kind of vehicle accidents.

It is also the type of experience that bridges cultural gaps.

"It was great that we had an opportunity to train professionals from all branches. It built confidence and esprit de corps among everyone training," said Hall. "Throughout the training, everyone was laughing, talking about their experience. They wanted to keep on training."



Nicholas Emanuel, contracting officer with the Army Corps of Engineers, New York district, opens the safety hatch of the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer "It's good to bring all the commands together and have a strong camaraderie of coalitions doing this kind of training," Emanuel said.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Donald Crabtree, contracting specialist with the 19th Contracting Squadron at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., successfully exits the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer. "I never experienced anything like this in my life," said Crabtree. "The technology is awesome down here."



A multinational group of contracting support specialists help one another exit from a simulated Mine-Resisted Ambush Protected vehicle at Fort Bliss, Texas.





Army Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Carter, an operational contracting support specialist with the 412th Contracting Support Brigade from Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas instructs Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 participants how to react to an active shooter incident.

Contracting professionals learn to respond to an active shooter

By Army Staff Sgt. Edward A. Garibay
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Run, hide, fight.

Those are the steps to deal with an active shooter. Run from the assailant first, then hide in a secure area, and as a last resort, fight if your life is in danger.

It may seem counterintuitive for service members to run and hide when bullets start flying, but it is important for military and other civilians caught up in a stateside active-shooter incident to allow police to handle the situation so there are minimal casualties, according to Air Force Master Sgt. John E. Campos, a contracting specialist with Defense Contract Management Agency in Dallas.

“Active shooter training is new to the (Department of Defense) – it’s not doctrinal yet, so you can’t hear enough ‘run, hide, fight,’” said Air Force Maj. Steven W. Vanden Bos, the commander of the 28th Contracting Squadron from Ellsworth

Air Force Base, S.D. “You can have an active shooter incident wherever you are, so the more times you hear ‘run, hide, fight’ the more it becomes automatic.”

Vanden Bos said these steps can be life saving measures both on and off duty, and can be especially useful for military contracting specialists and officers like him, who might find themselves in a similar situation while providing support to natural disasters.

“Say, for instance, we’re supporting a disaster and someone doesn’t get the help fast enough,” he said. “They don’t understand what the procedure is and decide to threaten you with force. The more your muscle memory says ‘run, hide, fight’ the more prepared we will be.”

While Vanden Bos and Campos might seem like seasoned professionals at this type of scenario, actually they just received active-shooter training at Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise

2014 as a part of a weeklong train-up to the exercise.

“This is really valuable training, especially in light of recent events like the Washington Navy Yard shooting,” said Campos, referring to the Aaron Alexis shooting in September 2013 that killed 12 people. “I work in a big office with 300 people, so it’s important to be aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an active shooter.”

The training also holds increased significance for participants of OCSJX-14 because most of them are preparing to respond to natural disasters and could find themselves in a situation like Vanden Bos described, said Army Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Carter, the trainer for the active-shooter class from 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

“If there was an active shooter and people didn’t know what to do, it would



Army Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Carter explains to OCSJX-14 participants the difference between handling an armed assailant while in a combat environment and back in the homeland. He expressed that federal Soldiers are not authorized to act in a law enforcement capacity within the United States and handling an active shooter should be left to police who specialize in those types of incidents.

be chaos,” said Carter. “By following these steps, it gives people a sense of ‘I know what to do. I know how to react.’”

The training at OCSJX-14 did not stop with just active-shooter training. Participants were also instructed on how to react to someone threatening them with less than deadly force during natural disaster assistance or people who might take advantage of a disaster and attempt to act out, according to Army Master Sgt. Andres J. Garcia, active-shooter training noncommissioned officer in charge.

“They had issues like that during Hurricane Katrina,” said Garcia. “So it’s good they all know how to go about those steps and the procedures that are out there. We have to keep our people safe. We have to know the proper ways to say, ‘hey, back away,’ and keep everyone safe.”

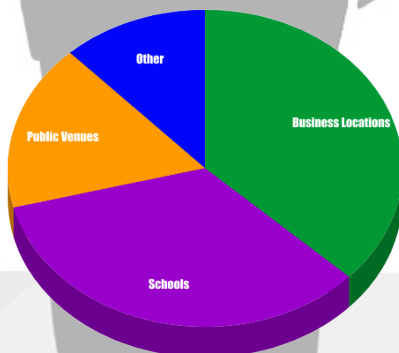
By understanding these procedures, these operational contracting support specialists and officers will be better suited to handle any sort of interpersonal dispute that could arise.

“I can definitely see this training coming in handy if you have something like a looting situation,” said Campos. “Say there’s a mass-scale looting of medical supplies. Medical supplies are crucial, so you want to stop the looting as quickly as possible.”

With all of the added value planned into OCSJX-14, one of the biggest benefits is the training on active-shooter situations and reacting to threats that can actually be applied to just about anywhere they go, said Carter.

“This training gives you a sense of awareness,” he added. “You have to go into your mind to have a plan of action. This situation could happen at any time, so you need to be prepared.”

ACTIVE-SHOOTER INCIDENT LOCATIONS



Buisness Locations	37%
Schools	34%
Public (Outdoor) Venues	17%
Other	12%

*Statistics according to J. Pete Blair, Ph.D., "United States Active Shooter Events from 2000 to 2010: Training and Equipment Implications," Texas State University

Mayor's cell hard at work

By Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth Pawlak
16th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The mayor's cell plays an important role in the success of any military training exercise. They have to ensure everyone participating has a place to sleep, food to eat and transportation to get to work.

To that end, the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 mayor's cell has in-processed more than 500 service members, Department of Defense civilians and coalition forces onto Fort Bliss, Texas, from Jan. 6-14.

"The mayor's cell does everything they need for life support, so the trainees can focus on their training," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Patty Troutman, mayor cell operations noncommissioned officer for OCSJX-14. "We take care of their barracks room, provide linen, provide a vehicle so they can attend training, and provide a shuttle service when a vehicle is not available."

As soon as someone walks into the mayor's cell, they are greeted at the front door and start their in-processing at the first table. Then they move to the next table and sign for a barracks room and receive linen.

Next, they make a turn and sign up for the ice breaker social. If they are an officer-in-charge they sign for a vehicle at the next table. At the last table, they are given information about sexual assault, suicide awareness and religious information.

Going through all six stations with speed and efficiency has become a point of pride for many of the staff.

"We have been able to process people through the cell very quickly, maybe no more than 15 minutes," said Army Lt. Col. Sylvia Farmer, mayor of OCSJX-14. "They can get settled into their rooms and make sure everything is fixed prior to training, so their mind can be focused on their training."

During OCSJX-14, service members and civilians will be able to challenge each



Army Maj. Jundi Williams, right, contract management officer with the 905th Contingency Contracting Battalion, receives his rental car packet from Air Force Senior Airman Wyatt Williams, a mayor cell operations specialist, while in-processing for the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014.

other through joint exercises. One challenge everyone must learn about is sexual assault, which is why everyone must see Shirley Herwig, sexual assault coordinator with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"This is a diverse exercise; we have people here from all branches... people from Britain and Canada," said Herwig. "This training exercise will provide an opportunity for them to learn different skills from each other."

"In-processing has gone pretty smoothly, only hiccups are when we didn't know someone's flight schedule," said Senior Airman Wyatt Williams, mayor cell operations. "We have been able to adjust as the schedule changes; we go with the flow."

Even during the busiest times, the mayor's cell was able to handle the logistics of picking people up from the airport and in-processing them.

"We had our biggest day on Sunday: we processed over 200 people," said Troutman. "It went very well for that many people. We ran two shuttles with three baggage vehicles to the airport, the Airmen working with us were fantastic; they made it happen."

The polar vortex may have rearranged flights, but it could not stop the mayor's cell ability to adapt by maintaining a crew

of eight personnel at the airport until everyone reported.

"The weather has caused a minor setback," said Herwig. "A lot of flights had to be rescheduled so some people took longer to get here but we have a crew at the airport 24 hours a day waiting to pick people up."

The mayor's cell job does not end after everyone has been in-processed. The staff will take people to sick call, handle work orders on the barracks and shuttle people to training sites throughout OCSJX-14.

"Life support is a daily challenge, the biggest is the maintenance of the barracks," said Troutman. "Keys get stuck, broken or lost ... that challenge is not in our control."

The staff of the mayor's cell did not want a logistical nightmare of people worrying about their room, food or transportation but wanted them to focus on the objective of the OCSJX-14, which is to grow the next generation of operational contracting support leaders.

"We want them to remember their training, not go back saying it was a bad training exercise because their room had no heat or water," said Farmer. "We want them to go away saying they've learned plenty from this exercise, they met other contacts and learned new processes and techniques that will help them."



The Medical Support Training Center
Saving lives with first aid



Left to right, Air Force 2nd Lt. Danny Monroe, Army Sgt. 1st Class David Grider, Joaquin Tucker with the Army Corps of Engineers, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael McTague lift a mannequin on a litter as they practice carrying casualties as part of a medical evacuation at the Medical Support Training Center on Fort Bliss, Texas.

By Army Sgt. Robert Golden
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Approximately 200,000 adults and children could be saved each year if cardiopulmonary resuscitation was performed early enough, but few people get the basic first aid training needed.

In the event of an accident or natural disaster, knowing first aid could save lives before first responders are even dispatched to the scene.

First-aid training is also vitally important within the military since an injured person could be hours from a doctor or hospital, so their life depends on aid administered by someone on their team.

The Medical Support Training Center of Fort Bliss, Texas, provides training for both medical and non-medical personnel. The MSTCs are designed to better prepare Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and even Department of Defense employees for the application of medical interventions under the most extreme conditions.

The MSTC, pronounced “mystic,” is provided through the Army’s Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation with funding for real medical supplies through the Army Medical Department. It combines cutting-edge simulators with experienced Army medics and civilian contractors to make battlefield medical treatment seem as real as possible.

***“We do this all the time,
so we are able to provide a
better product than some-
one who just does a CLS
class once a year.”***

***-Army Staff Sgt.
Kenneth Lafnear***

“We do 15 to 16 combat life saver classes per year, and when you do anything repetitively, you get better at it,” said Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth Lafnear, a combat medic and noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Fort Bliss MSTC. “We do this all the time, so we are able to provide a better product than someone who just does a CLS class once a year.”

The training provided by the MSTC staff helps military leaders ensure their unit is fully trained and ready for deployment.

“As noncommissioned officers, what we do is instruct and lead, so coming here as an assistant instructor to teach classes and go over the skills gives us a chance to gain confidence. When we go back to our units, it is easier to conduct training,” said Army Sgt. Michael Allen, a medic with 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Bliss, Texas,

tasked to MSTC as an assistant instructor.

The MSTC, through PEO-STRI, has the funding and staff to provide Emergency Care Simulators; training dummies that simulate human bleeding, breathing and other responses for medical training; and the Multiple Amputation Trauma Trainer, with dummies that bleed from amputated leg wounds. All designed to give hands-on experience to trainees.

“I think this facility is a great asset that gives medics the opportunity to train with things they wouldn’t normally get to, like the



One of the training exercises performed at the Medical Support Training Center is learning how to insert a nasopharyngeal airway.

mannequins that respond to treatment,” said Allen. “You can’t get that in a battalion or company environment. The training here is the closest you can get to real-world medical patients and treating casualties.”

The facility is accredited through Army Medical Department at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The AMEDD evaluates and certifies the schedule and training conducted by the MSTC, so the site is able to provide two-year recertification for the 1,328 medics at Fort Bliss and host the base Combat Life Saver class, but the quality of training provided by the MSTC attracts customers from many branches of military and even civilian agencies.

“We have Air Force, Marines and even some of the El Paso (Texas) SWAT and Homeland Security come through here to see how the Army does medicine,” said Lafnear.

The Operational Contracting Support Joint Exercise 2014 command is the most recent group to take advantage of the realistic training by sending approximately 160 of the participants through a two-day course of classroom and hands-on training.

The participants learned how to assess a casualty, apply emergency trauma dressing, combat gauze, and tourniquets, how to clear an object from the throat and insert a nasopharyngeal



An instructor observes as service members apply tourniquets to stop a mannequin from bleeding during medical training held at the Medical Support Training Center, Fort Bliss, Texas.



Navy Lt. Ben Li, a contracting officer with Fleet Logistics Center at Puget Sound, Wash., performs cardiopulmonary resuscitation chest compressions during medical training held at the Medical Support Training Center.



Army Spc. Emma Stevens, a healthcare specialist, speaks to service members taking part in OCSJX-14 as she conducts a first-aid class on how to apply a combat gauze to a casualty with the use of mannequins at the Medical Simulation Training Center. Stevens is assigned to Company C, 123rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, Texas.

airway to restore breathing. Participants also learned how to fill in a casualty care card, evacuate a casualty using a litter, request medical evacuation and relieve tension pneumothorax from a collapsed lung.

"They learn how to do it all in the classroom, then perform it on the dummies," said Lafnear.

While the joint exercise is focused on improving the contracting process a federal emergency response, the medical training helps to prepare operational contracting support specialists with extra skills in the event of a disaster.

"For the mission we are on, the in-depth training definitely prepares us," said Air Force Master Sgt. Amber Hale, a contracting specialist with Naval Facility Support Fleet, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. "(In the event of) an actual disaster, we would be better prepared to do our jobs. We could be traveling somewhere and if our medic gets injured, then one of us will be able to step up to provide aid."

The level of training at the MSTC is not normally available to contingency contracting officers and specialists at their home

stations, so coming to Fort Bliss for OCSJX-14 gave them an opportunity to save money by getting extra training.

"We are much smaller and our assets are more limited, so being able to come here and get this level of medical training is invaluable in preparing us with skills we need," said Army Maj.

Matthew Davis, team leader of the 726th Contingency Contracting Team at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J.

The medical training builds on the skills that OCSJX-14 participants have to better prepare them for emergencies, skills learned that can be called upon at

any time to help save a life.

"This training makes us realize that while we are contracting officers, we are still military service members," said Davis. "We can't detach ourselves from having these necessary skills to perform our military functions, so they are tied together to make a whole contracting officer into a better service member to ensure the mission gets complete."

"Even at home station, accidents happen all the time, so I feel this training is very beneficial," Hale said.

"The training is beneficial because it gives them hands-on practice if they ever have to save their battle buddy's life."

-Army Spc. Emma Stevens



Right; Malcolm Carlyle, a technical instructor/trainer instructs service members and civilian contracting specialists on how to evaluate a casualty with the use of a mannequin at the Medical Simulation Training Center. Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 will concentrate on deployment readiness, mobilization and contingency contracting support to joint forces in the event of a natural disaster or contingency operation.



Military and civilian contracting professionals work together to place a mannequin on a litter at the Medical Support Training Center at Fort Bliss, Texas.



An Airman applies a tourniquet to a medical-training mannequin during medical training held at the Medical Support Training Center.

The 'go to' guy

By Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth Pawlak
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

His attention to detail amazes his supervisors, his calm demeanor energizes his subordinates and his capability to accomplish the mission regardless of the obstacles in the way astounds his peers.

He started his Air Force career on the flight line, putting in long hours of hard work and paying attention to the smallest of details to be one of the best Airmen in the contracting specialist field. His attention to detail earned Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Scott LeBlanc, contracting support specialist with AFICA, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, the 2013 Air Force Installation Contracting Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

"I was taken aback when I found out I won the award. It is a super amazing honor to win," said LeBlanc. "I know most of the people I was competing with. They are absolute professionals. The fact that they were able to recognize me as the top professional for this organization was a real honor."

LeBlanc, who has served in the Air Force for more than 21 years, spent 10 months preparing for Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 by coordinating all the Air Force participants, doing the purchase request packages for the regional contracting centers and bringing in people from outside of contracting, such as the communications support team.

"He is self-motivated, has unlimited initiative and he is extremely good at working with other individuals," said Air Force Col. Renee Richardson, director with the Air Force Installation Contracting Agency.

With LeBlanc's work ethic and open personality, he is not afraid to talk to anyone. He can tackle any problem thrown at him regardless if it has to deal with contracting. He has the ability to work with people to overcome the dilemma and accomplish the mission, said Richardson.

"He comes at every problem he encounters with a very good attitude. For instance, we were trying to get our assignments team to brief our officers, but at the last minute they were not able to come down to Fort Bliss, (Texas)," said Richardson. "So, I identified a location and he used his phone to connect to the audio equipment, and his personal computer to hook up the audio and visual equipment, and we were able to deliver the information to the officers and the assignments team. It was obstacle after obstacle after obstacle and, in every case, he figured out a way to make it work."

He is the type of leader any officer would want on their team, according to Army Lt. Col. Robert Mathews, commander of the 901st Contingency Contracting Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas.

"I have received a lot of feedback from both officers and NCOs



from different services saying this guy really represents all that we would want in a senior NCO," said Mathews. "It is his experience in exercises like OCSJX-14 and his real-world involvement that makes him the force multiplier we want in our seniors."

"Not only is he a subject-matter expert in his field, he is helping others to be that as well," Mathews added.

LeBlanc has had a demanding career, from relief efforts in the Philippines where Typhoon Haiyan made landfall to his deployment to Fallujah, Iraq.

"My job, in addition to preparing for the OCSJX-14, was to coordinate the operational relief through Pacific Command with the Marines on the ground to ensure they had everything they needed to carry out their mission," said LeBlanc. "We assisted over

15,000 people."

LeBlanc said some of his best memories are from working with the Marines.

"I was the only Air Force contracting officer who was part of the Marine contingency when I deployed to Fallujah in 2008," said LeBlanc. "Being the only Air Force person on a Marine installation, you were almost treated like royalty in a sense because you stood out and they weren't used to seeing an Air Force individual tied to them."

"It is one of the memories I will take with me forever," added LeBlanc.

LeBlanc's career into the future could be limitless: seniors and peers alike look up to him. They see an Airman who is exceptionally meticulous and professional, said Mathews.

"Senior Master Sgt. LeBlanc's next career move should be to serve as a superintendent in a large contracting organization," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tommie W. Rogers, chief enlisted manager with AFICA. "The superintendent role will allow our Airmen maximum exposure to his professional skills and leadership abilities. He is always willing to tackle the toughest tasks and seeks out opportunities to excel."

Just being in LeBlanc's make-shift office at the Mission Training Center on Fort Bliss, Texas, one could see his diligence and attention to detail. He was the guy everyone relied upon: the go-to-guy.

"His ability to think strategically while maintaining focus on the smallest details is commendable," said Rogers. "Additionally, his self-improvement efforts and community service efforts personify the whole-person and make him a role model to emulate."

LeBlanc said his plans for the future include taking the test for chief, staying in the Air Force about four more years and possibly transitioning into a civilian job in the contracting sector with the Air Force.



Contracting specialists Airman 1st Class Colton Abermathy, right, 341st Contracting Squadron at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., and Marine Sgt. Joshua M. Higginbotham, Headquarters Support Battalion at Camp Pendleton, Ca., conduct marksmanship training side by side on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000.

EST 2000 replicates range for OCSJX-14 contracting specialists

By Army Staff Sgt. Edward Garibay
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

There is only one way to keep basic military skills sharp: practice.

But what happens when units don't have the time, money or resources to train? That's where the new age of digital simulation training comes in handy.

The Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 allows service members to replicate marksmanship experience quickly, with instant feedback on performance and none of the added costs of expendable supplies normally associated with similar training.

With a large screen that interacts with training aids and displays a multitude of training scenarios, it is easy for troops to receive the most realistic practice possible, said Jerry S. McKinney, a senior instructor for the EST 2000 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

"In today's military, simulation is the key because we don't always have money for these different things," said the retired Army veteran of 22 years. "We didn't have this kind of stuff when I was in the military. There is absolutely nothing that comes

closer to live training than the EST 2000."

Unfortunately, not all service members are stationed in an area with such training facilities, so when approximately 450 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines came to Fort Bliss for Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014, the EST 2000 easily found its way onto the training calendar, said Army Sgt. 1st Class Tariq J. Malveaux, a contracting specialist with the 634th Senior Contingency Contracting Team in Mobile, Ala.

"We don't get a lot of time to go to ranges, but coming here (to OCSJX-14) allows us to stay proficient," said Malveaux. "The closest installation to us is Fort Rucker in Colorado, so we'd have to go (on temporary duty status) to train anyway. So it's not a real added benefit if you're going TDY for just one basic task."

Even though the OCSJX-14 focus was natural disaster relief, the added training value of the EST 2000 was a cost-effective way to fulfill all of the participants' annual training requirements, build camaraderie and prepare them for any assignment they might receive, said Army Lt. Col. Bryan K. Preer, a contracting officer with the Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans.



Left: Air Force Staff Sgt. Daniel Martinez, a contracting specialist with the 436th Contracting Squadron at Dover Air Force Base, Del., glares down the sights of an M-16 rifle specifically designed for with the Engagement Skill Trainer 2000.
Below: Air Force Master Sgt. Amber J. Hale, a flight chief for Naval Facilities Support Fleet at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, glares down the sights of an M-16 rifle specifically designed for with the Engagement Skill Trainer 2000.



Tunissha Marshall, a contracting officer with Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., concentrates on her aim while using the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 marksmanship simulator Jan. 17. At first, Marshall was having significant trouble grouping her shots together, but once she was able to see the instant feedback of her mistakes on the EST 2000, she was able to group her shots together with no problem.



Cynthia Vorachack-Hogan, a contracting officer with Naval Supply Systems Command in Jacksonville, Fla., uses the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 marksmanship simulator. This was the first time Varachack-Hogan ever handled anything even remotely close to a weapon, so at first she was missing the targets completely, but with the help of Army Staff Sgt. Clyde L. Collins, a contracting specialist with the 918th Contingency Contracting Battalion at Fort Carson, Colo., she was able to start hitting her mark.

“In a real-life scenario, you will have to be trained before you can deploy to wherever you’re going,” said Preer. “By going through this training now, you’re getting it out of the way, speeding up response times.”

Those contracting specialists can arrive anywhere in the world and start working as soon as they get there, he added.

“Preparation – that’s really what we’re doing here,” said Preer. “Even if they had to take this training again for some reason, they will already be practiced and will spend less time.”

For some OCSJX-14 participants, this was their first time ever getting to use the EST 2000, and the feedback was very positive.

“For all the places I’ve ever been stationed, we’ve never had these types of facilities,” said Navy Lt. Ben M. Li, a supply corps officer for the Fleet Logistic Center at Bremerton, Wa. “It’s awesome. A 10 out of 10. There was a huge variety. They had a moving target, popup target, flashing target, things you can’t do with a paper target.”

Beyond that, there was also a huge advantage to bringing all of the different military services together to train as one, Li added.



Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines conduct marksmanship training side by side on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000. The service members were at Fort Bliss, Texas, for Operational Contracting Support Joint Exercise-2014, which brought contracting specialists from all over to train together and learn how each other operates. The week before the exercise formally started, they were afforded the opportunity to train together and practice many of their basic military skills at Fort Bliss’ state-of-the-art facilities.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Tariq J. Malveaux, a contracting specialist with the 634th Senior Contingency Contracting Team in Mobile, Ala., gives a safety brief on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 to service members participating in Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014.

“Everybody has different skill sets,” he said. “If I never had my counterparts in the Air Force and Army, then I would probably never have learned all of the things I know now. Being here, I learn something new each day.”

Perhaps the true benefit of OCSJX-14 and all of the training accompanied with it is the joint-force training experience each service member receives, said McKinney, who has witnessed three iterations.

“The benefit is that you have every force here, and everybody is doing the same exact thing,” said McKinney. “You just don’t get a chance to do that at your brigade or at your unit. By everybody coming here, they get to interact with one another, so when they deploy, they deploy as a team.”

When all was said and done, every OCSJX-14 service member received a chance to use the EST 2000 and refresh their military craft by utilizing Fort Bliss’ training facilities, before switching gears to hone their operational contracting support skills during the formal OCSJX-14 exercise the following week.

“The exercise as a whole, including the warrior tasks training, is a huge benefit, especially to newer contracting specialists,” said Malveaux. “This is my fourth time here, and I always leave feeling more confident.”





Army Capt. Matthew Basil, public affairs officer with the 16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, conducts an Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 media relations class at the Mission Training Center at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Learning effective communications

By Army Staff Sgt. Richard Andrade
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

For deployed service members the mission will always come first, while dealing with the media will not be so important.

In the event of a natural disaster or contingency operation, the media may show up to provide on-the-scene coverage. If a reporter asks a random service member about the mission and he or she doesn't know how to properly relay information, then all of his or her hard work may not reach the public's ear.

That is why, as part of Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014's pre-deployment training, almost all of the contract specialists received a block of instruction on public relations.

The indoor class included videotaped interviews with feedback from the instructors afterward. The public relations class was one of many training scenarios military and civilian controlling commands will go through during the annual exercise.

"The public affairs piece is vital to the mission, because we need to teach everyone how to communicate to the external public," said Army Col. Martha K. Brooks, Expeditionary Contracting Command's public affairs officer.

The classroom was quiet as multiple instructors provided good and bad examples of public relations ... quiet because most had never taken any type of media relations

training before. Brooks helped instruct the class to better prepare military and civilian contracting specialists for effectively telling their story, so the public could know about their contracting mission.

"I've never had formal public affairs training before," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Caryann Thomas, assigned to the 771st Enterprise Sourcing Squadron based out of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. "I am ready to learn and glad to be working in a joint environment during this exercise, because if we deploy it will probably be a joint environment. I think this exercise is going to give me a lot of knowledge to bring back to my unit."

During OCSJX-14, Thomas will be acting as a contingency contracting officer. She said there are civilian, Air Force, Army and Marines elements as part of her team. The native of West Palm Beach, Fla., added she had never thought about how the media could take what she said on-camera and use it in a negative manner.

Marine Corps Sgt. Jose Gil, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Okinawa, Japan, said OCSJX-14 is a great concept and an excellent training opportunity.

This was Gil's first time training in a joint environment and he said he looked forward to working with other members of the military. He added it was his first time taking part in a public relations class, calling it an "eye-opener."

"It was a great class. In the event that a reporter does

come up to me, I will be better prepared to answer their questions,” Gil said. “I love my job. Having the opportunity to be a good steward of taxpayer’s dollars is something I could be doing in the future and even when I leave the military.”

The first year Brooks took part in the annual exercise, she provided a one-hour class on media training. For OCSJX-14, she had four hours to educate the contracting professionals on public relations. This extra time allowed for half of the class to be spent on practical exercises, namely creating command messages for OCSJX-14 and conducting on-camera interviews.

Navy Lt. John Lina, assigned to the Fleet Logistics Center in Jacksonville, Fla., said he took part in the OCSJX predecessor, Operation Joint Dawn, two years ago at Fort Bliss, Texas.

He said this year the class was a great improvement from the last public relations training he took part in. Most notably, the practice interview will help the participants of OCSJX-14 interact with news reporters and know how to conduct themselves confidently and professionally during an interview.

After being behind the camera, the videos were played back so the group could evaluate what they did correctly during the mock interview and what they could improve upon.

“We added role-playing scenarios within the exercise to allow them to see if what they were taught works,” said Brooks. “This exercise has evolved into something that nobody can close their eyes to. They know this is an important mission.”

The military and civilians taking part in OCSJX-14 are not public



Army Col. Martha K. Brooks, Expeditionary Contracting Command public affairs officer conducts a public relations class to contracting professionals during Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014.

affairs specialists, but Brooks said she wants them to be the best subject-matter experts, able to talk about their contracting mission and keep the public informed if the media speaks to someone taking part in OCSJX-14. After the media training, she said she is confident they will be effective communicators.



Instructors, civilians and service members observe a video of a mock interview while participating in a public relations class during the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 held at Fort Bliss, Texas. More than 500 military and civilian contracting support professionals are participating in the OCSJX-14 until January 31.



Digital convoy simulation prepares contracting support specialists for reality

By Army Sgt. Robert Golden
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Surrounded by video and sound systems, crews inside a simulated High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle can look out onto a desert or along forested roads. All of their actions, from accelerating to turning and stopping, affect what they see on the 360-degree projection screen, while their vehicle doesn't move an inch.

The Close Combat Tactical Trainer at Fort Bliss, Texas, is a system of mock military vehicles combined with computers and video to create simulations of battlefield situations that enable service members to train on their equipment without the logistics cost of fuel, rounds and maintenance.

"We teach the Soldiers to use their equipment more effectively and adjust for what happens in the simulation," said Francisco Alba, a computer-based training specialist instructor at the CCTT. "If the radio goes down, or the vehicle is damaged, they know what to do."

The simulator saves the military and government money, said Alba. Since the imitation vehicles don't move and don't even have engines, they do not require the fuel that would be needed for a unit to take multiple vehicles on training exercises.

The simulated HMMWVs and other tactical vehicles in the CCTT also allow units the opportunity to conduct training in a realistic environment without using up valuable training time driving to a field site. Reducing the need to drive a bunch of large vehicles for training exercises may also reduce the chances of an accident occurring. During 2010, accidents made up 27 percent of deaths in the military.

"The cool thing about it is, if you flip a vehicle, then nobody gets hurt. It's a simulation," said Alba. "This is a safe way for them to retrain and practice."

The CCTT can also provide training for personnel and units whose mission doesn't normally include using vehicles like the HMMWV, such as the civilian and military contracting support specialists in Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014,



Air Force Senior Airman Brien Bruner, a contracting specialist with 1st Special Operations Contracting Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., sits in the gunner hatch of a simulated HMMWV designed for the Close Combat Tactical Trainer. The CCTT uses overhead projectors and surround sound audio to produce an extremely realistic simulated training experience.

who recently had the opportunity to train with the simulators.

Since the exercise participants only came to Fort Bliss for a contingency contracting exercise, they don't have any vehicles, but with the computer simulation, they are still able to have convoy training without borrowing vehicles from a local unit.

"The technology they have here makes it more realistic," said Marine Sgt. Joshua Higginbotham, contracting support specialist, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. "You can do a whole lot more than you can typically do in a field environment."

The OSCJX-14 is a joint military and civilian agency exercise that gives the participating agencies the opportunity to practice contracting for and providing supplies to help disaster recovery. This means their job may include traveling around a disaster area to work with vendors who will be contracted to provide supplies.

"Practicing convoy operations to know what to do in different situations helps us do our job," said Higginbotham. "We are



Above: Army Capt. Raven Cornelius, a contracting officer with the 413th Contracting Support Brigade at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, provides security during a simulated convoy exercise at the Close Combat Tactical Trainer.

Right: Air Force Master Sgt. Odell Sidberry, a contracting specialist with the 905th Contingency Contracting Battalion at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, uses his radio to communicate his simulated vehicle's position during convoy training.



actually going to have to go into the area where a lot of our work is going to be in order to get people the supplies they need, like food and water: life sustaining stuff.”

Although the CCTT was designed for deployment simulation, the civilian and military teams spent half a day taking convoy training to gain valuable experience to help better prepare them for a contingency mission after a natural disaster.

“We have a realistic simulator that we can go in and practice skills we haven’t used in a while or never used,” said Army Maj. Barry Williams, a contracting officer the Army Contracting Command at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md. “They can learn what they can do better and what they can sustain.”

For the convoy training, the contracting teams were given a tour of the facility by the instructors, and then briefed by their team leaders about the simulated convoy mission to drive four vehicles from Forward Operating Base A to FOB B. To do that, each team of five went to one of the four trailers housing the mock HMMWVs.

Inside the trailers, projection screens surround the real cab and hood of a tan HMMWV. The vehicles are equipped with everything a real HMMWV would have: the ignition to start the engine; a steering wheel for the driver; and radios to communicate with their commander and the other vehicles.

After receiving a brief overview of how to use each piece of equipment, the contractors took their places to start the mission.

“The simulators were really realistic,” said Cynthia Vorachack-Hogan, a contracting officer with the Naval Supply Systems

Command in Jacksonville, Fla. “It kind of gave you a view as if you were in that type of environment.”

In this instance, the simulated environment immersed the operational contracting support specialists into a desert base surrounded by mountains, not unlike Fort Bliss. They practiced with the controls and equipment before “driving” the planned route to the next village while keeping alert for obstacles and detours.

“(The convoy training) allows us to come back to some of our fundamental procedures that we sometimes forget as contract specialists,” said Williams.

Proper planning, preparation and practice are part of the doctrine that helps military operations run smoothly. Systems like the CCTT are used to help military and civilian personnel practice the skills learned they from exercises and real missions, said Williams.

“The training is excellent,” said Vorachack-Hogan. “It gives us the real-life simulation and practice that we need in case something unexpected were to happen. It gets us ready to go whenever we are called.”

For the military and civilian contracting specialists training to save lives and rebuild in the wake of a possible natural disaster, the simulated convoy experience can be programmed with maps and environments like the flooded roads of New York during Hurricane Sandy, to train them on “what if ...” scenarios.

“I think this is very relevant. Whether we are a contracting unit or a combat arms unit, we are going to need those skills,” said Williams.

Prepare for the worst

Contracting specialists train for a natural disaster



Army Sgt. 1st Class Serena Davidson, provides a status update on supplies and services in a notional regional contracting center during the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 held on Fort Bliss, Texas Jan. 28, 2014. More than 500 military and civilian contracting support professionals are participating in various contract-training and joint training scenarios during the OCSJX-14.

By Army Staff Sgt. Edward Garibay
16th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Whereas Hurricane Katrina killed 1,800 people, injured 17,000 and closed 30 hospitals, the double earthquake on the New Madrid fault line killed 3,500 people, injured 83,000 and damaged or destroyed 132 hospitals. Thankfully, the earthquakes are fictional, used as the basis of a scenario for Operational Contracting Support Joint Exercise 2014.

Preparing for a disaster such as this was the focus of the contracting contingency exercise, which brought contracting specialists from every military service branch together with different civilian agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to practice reacting to a disaster with contracting support.

The operational contracting support specialists were placed into a fictional scenario in which they had to respond to supply requests caused by two earthquakes in the same seismic zone. Since the De-

“In a natural disaster situation, we’re going to have many, many different players coming in – from the FBI to FEMA to homeland security and everybody is going to need some type of support”

-Army Sgt. 1st Class Andres J. Garcia

partment of Defense does not always have the exact equipment or personnel to handle the unpredictability of nature, contracting specialists reached out to multiple civilian agencies to find the best fit for the best price as quickly as possible.

“In a natural disaster situation, we’re going to have many, many different players coming in – from the FBI to FEMA to homeland security and everybody is going to need some type of support,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Andres J. Garcia, a contracting specialist with the 418th Contracting Support Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas.

“People are going to need to eat; people are going to need a place to sleep, and we can make that happen.”

This has been the fifth iteration of OCSJX and it has been so successful that the planning of next year’s exercise has already begun, said Brig. Gen. Theodore Harrison, commander of U.S. Army Contracting Command.

“We’ve been using contractors to support military operations since the Revolutionary War, but what we haven’t done is incorporate operational contracting support into our exercises. That’s what we’ve done with OCSJX-14,” said Harrison. “It’s a very efficient way to train our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians. It’s very efficient, very effective and great for the taxpayer.”

This year’s scenario made sure to prepare these contracting specialists for anything that might be thrown their way by simulating an unprecedented amount of damage.



Left: Canadian Army Lt. Col. Ian Alexander, left, a contracting officer with the Canadian Joint Operations Command in Ottawa, Ontario, is shown U.S. contracting procedures by Air Force Lt. Col. Jeff Donato, right, a contracting officer with Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., during Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014.

Below: Air Force Tech Sgt. David Jackson, services contracting officer explains a service contract's requirements to fellow contracting specialist Army Capt. Camille Morgan Jan. 24 at Fort Bliss, Texas. The team was practicing contracting support operations as part of the joint exercise to train and improve the contracting process that could be used after a natural disaster to provide life-saving and life-sustaining supplies and services.



Eight coastal states were heavily damaged with power lost throughout the region for months, water systems broken and fuel supplies limited. As requests for supplies come flooding in, the contracting specialists had to respond to multiple incidents at once. Often times they lost connectivity, forcing them to resort to filing paper requests. No matter what was thrown at them, they pressed on to complete the mission.

"Let's say one of the problems was debris removal," said Garica, explaining one of the many scenarios they encountered during the exercise. "So we cannot get to the epicenter of the earthquake to provide support because there is rubble all over the place.

"We don't have bulldozers, but we can contract out all over the United States to people who have construction companies and bulldozers and they can come over and clear all that stuff out."

All in all it was a great training experience, according to Army Col. Mike Hoskin, division chief of Operational Contract Support and Services at the Joint Staff, but perhaps the greatest benefit was that all of the different service branches

and civilian agencies got to work first-hand with each other – something they wouldn't normally get a chance to do at their home station.

"By mixing up with everybody, now we know how our sister services are doing contracting," said Garcia. "We're just becoming one united acquisition family among all the services – pretty much among all of the federal agents."

The six-day exercise accomplished several objectives: developing a framework and strategy for a stand-alone exercise, measuring readiness, and increasing senior leader awareness of contracting challeng-

es. It was a feat no single organization could have completed alone, according to Col. Tim J. Strange, OCSJX-14 exercise director.

"The exercise would not have been a success without the great partnership between the Joint Staff J-4 (logistics), the Air Force contracting leads, the Army contracting leads, the Corps of Engineers, the National Guard Bureau, the Northern Command J-4, the Army North G-4 and the other Army North staff elements all working together in a teaming environment," said Strange. "I'm so grateful that we were able to work together to execute this exercise."

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