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## Special effects bring realism to medical training

Hollywood style and techniques used for casualties

**Spc. Jon Soles**  
210th MPAD

Swift strokes from a powdered brush and daubs of gluey red paint turn a perfectly healthy Soldier into a living casualty. It's the stuff of Hollywood horror, but this is far from entertainment—it's realistic training that save lives on the battlefield.

Artists train Soldiers at Global Medic to inject a dose of realism into medic training. These artists are skilled in moulage, which is the art of injury simulation using make up and paint.

During training in Mannequin Ville on the morning of June 8, the sight of vivid fake blood, purple bruises, and crusted burns, all simu-

lated with the help of Soldiers who volunteered, raised adrenaline and helped Soldiers see the value of realistic training.

"This improves the training 100 percent," Maj. Reba Williams said, an officer with the 4224th U.S. Army Hospital out of Des Moines, Iowa. "I think it heightens everybody's sense of role play."

Soldiers from the 4224th gathered around four tables, each table served as a station where an assortment of powders, gels, and liquids were used to paint wounds. It was the first step before the Soldiers would practice the technique on each other or mannequins.

The training began with Bruce Gallant, a moulage artist and instructor, as he applied a reddish powder with a brush to the arm of Maj.



Photo 1 Jonathan Lessen

Bruce Gallant, a moulage artist, applies makeup and paint to Maj. Billy McKay's arm to simulate a war wound. McKay is with the 4224th U.S. Army Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa.

Billy McKay. A dash of darker powder gave the splotch of color the appearance of a bruise. But make up can only go so far, Gallant reminded the Soldiers.

"You've got all these things to work with and you have your imagination," Gallant said. "That's the key."

Gallant moved down to

McKay's forearm and squirted fake blood, which he noted had the same consistency as real blood. Brown powder that resembled ground cinnamon was added to simulate dirt thrown into a wound, possibly by an explosion caused by an improvised explosive device. Charcoal powder

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## Electronic patient administration saves lives

**Sgt. KaRonda Fleming**  
210th MPAD

Army Reserve Soldiers across the United States attend extensive training and classes during the Global Medic annual training exercise June 8 – 20, 2008.

This medical training event has numerous selections of classes that Servicemembers attend before venturing out into the joint operations field training exercise. The Global Medic training exercises duplicates the exact medical operations that would be conducted in Southwest Asia.

"If something new breaks out tomorrow, and they (servicemembers) have to go to war as soon as tomorrow and they are going to have this equipment, then I want them to be very prepared," said Delia Ortiz-Reed, an instructor for the Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care.

There are four MC4 instructors

that help the Reserve joint services in training as they prepare for real life wartime scenarios by giving them this formal classroom training followed by training in the field, she said.

"We are here at Global Medic but we also support other exercises like the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, La., we go to the units home stations, or we meet them here at the Readiness Training Station medical sight where they have all the equipment and facilities readily available."

"This (MC4 class) is a great advantage because it will help in more ways than none," said Spc. David W. Cooke, a licensed practical nurse with the 396th Combat Support Hospital, from Vancouver, Wash.

He said that since Reserve Soldiers only attend drill one weekend a month, then they don't have the chance to actually learn all the

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### MC4 Provides: Servicemembers...

Secure, accessible, lifelong electronic medical records

Easier access to VA medical benefits

Better-informed healthcare providers

Peace of mind

### Deployable medical forces

Quick, accurate access to patient histories and forward casualty resuscitation information

Automation tools facilitating:  
patient tracking  
medical reporting  
medical logistics support



# Global Medic gazette

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Photo | Jonathan Lessen

Navy Cmdr. John Hardham and Lt. Karen Allison of Operation Health Support Unit Great Lakes prepare a mannequin to be a simulated casualty for Global Medic at 'Mannequin Ville'.

## Effects

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was added to suggest charring caused by the heat of a blast.

"As you get better at it, you have more fun," Gallant said. The fake blood, the same used by professional make up artists on movie sets, was mint flavored. But the purpose of the training was dead serious. Medics can be a Soldier's lifeline on the battlefield, and realistic training helps prepare them for saving lives.

Next up was 1st Lt. Eric Frost, also of the 4224th USAH, volunteering to let lead moulage instructor Patrick Welch turn him into another casualty. First, Welch carefully drew a thin black line just behind Lt. Frost's hairline to show a head laceration. Welch then used a syringe to apply fake blood, which streamed down the lieutenant's head and face. But Welch wasn't done yet. He used gel heated to a liquid the consistency of melted candle wax and some more fake blood to create a thick past intended to simulate brain or lung tissue.

After moulage instructor Dave Meyer gave a class on simulating burns with melted latex, it was the officers' turn to try their hand at simulating the injuries.

The Soldiers said the vivid display of wounds added a sense of realism to the training.

Capt. Pam Hunt of the 4244th praised the moulage technique, which she said helped create a situation of urgency.

"I think it's very helpful and that it's very realistic," Hunt said. "This is what's really going on now and how you deal with it."

As role players, the Soldiers would be treated as patients by medics training for Global Medic. The skills they learned will help them create a more realistic training environment at their unit.

And the moulage artists, many of whom have medical backgrounds, have honed in their skills well enough to affect trained medical professionals. There is a pride in

being able to create realistic-looking wounds.

"We had nurses throw up from seeing the wounds," Welch said. "It adds realism to the training. When you've got blood dripping off a patient, it gets the adrenaline flowing."

Welch said the moulage training was added to help Soldiers customize specific injuries on the mannequins.

For Soldiers training to save lives, getting adrenaline flowing in training will make them more prepared to save lives in the future.



Photo | Jonathan Lessen

Patrick Welch, a moulage artist and lead instructor, draws a laceration on the arm of 1st Lt. Eric Frost of the 4224th U.S. Army Hospital located in Des Moines, Iowa.

**What is Global Medic** – It is the United States Army Reserve Command premier medical exercise. It provides units with an opportunity to plan, prepare and execute medical training as part of a deployed task force.

# Keeping the signal strong

## Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors maintain communication networks

**Spc. Jon Soles**  
210th MPAD

Any successful mission requires good communication, and with technology an ever-increasing presence on the battlefield, it's up to Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors to set up and maintain communication networks.

Army, Air Force and Navy units from across the country are responsible for the task of establishing the communication networks in support of Global Medic at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Lt. Col. Barry Birdwell, communications officer for Medical Readiness Training Command, said the signal mission for Global Medic is an essential component of the success of the exercise.

"We are here to provide

tactical computer and telephone networks for all intranet communications for all medical units on Fort McCoy participating in this exercise," Birdwell

35th Signal Battalion of Puerto Rico, the 198th Signal Battalion of the Delaware Army National Guard, the Air Force Reserve 934th

communication at all times."

But the signal mission is more than just support for Global Medic, according to Birdwell. The training aspect is also crucial. Units must be able to perform the same function in a deployed zone. By setting up communication networks at Global Medic, the same signal personnel are maintaining proficiency in their jobs – training and proficiency that will brought back to their units. They will also be able to train other units, Birdwell said.

"We also use this as an opportunity to train the communications teams and any communication personnel in those units," he said. "That's one of the primary missions — to train."

The important thing for me is to maintain 100 percent communication.

*Lt. Col. Barry Birdwell*

said. "We also provide external links to all other units participating in Global Medic."

In addition to Fort McCoy, Global Medic is going on at Camp Parks, Calif. and Fort Gordon, Ga. Communication lines are connecting all three posts, located in different parts of the country.

The Global Medic signal personnel include the

Communications Flight, Detachment J of the Navy Operation Support Command's Operational Hospital Support Unit. Birdwell said is to establish and maintain communication without any lapse in service.

"The important thing for me is to maintain 100 percent communication," Lt. Col. Birdwell said. "My job is to ensure they have

## Electronic

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aspects of their job throughout the weekend.

Cooke said, "We may learn various aspects of our MOS (military occupational skill) during drill, but we may not know how to function as a CSH, because as a medic or a licensed practical nurse, I can work in a fixed facility where I just go to work and go home from that facility."

However, being here with the CSH, he said that he is able to learn the specific on-the-job training techniques that can be utilized while downrange in a wartime environment.

Ortiz-Reed said that before this electronic version was used in the military, everything was paper-based. The main differences in the systems being paper based verses being electronic now include efficiency, legibility, and having the files centrally located.

"If servicemembers need to go back to the Veteran's Affairs and claim benefits, then there could potentially be a challenge because they would need legible medial records," Ortiz-Reed said.

Also, by having paper based records, it can easily get misplaced, wet, or destroyed and therefore the records are gone. That could



Photo | KaRonda Fleming

(Ret.) Navy Corpsman Curtiss Hill, an instructor for the Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care, explains the computer system entry to Capt. Gregory J. Estlund with the Operation Health Support Unit Great Lakes Tuesday.

become a problem, especially if it's the servicemember's only record.

"But now, all of this information is going electronically into the patient's medical record," she said. "If it's at the VA, it's in your medical records. If you go to any military hospital all of this information is already in the records from downrange."

As on of the main objectives of the Global Medic training exercise, Soldiers will develop cohesiveness between the tactical and clinical operations while continuing to integrate joint and coalition medical forces. This is exactly how operations will take place when servicemembers are deployed in a war zone environment.





Photo | Jon Soles

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Sergio Cortez, 429th Multi-Functional Medical Battalion from Savannah, Ga., mans the turret during as he experiences convoy operations in a virtual environment.

# Shoot, move, communicate

*Servicemembers practice convoy techniques by using virtual reality*

**Spc. Jonathan Lessen**  
210th MPAD

***"Contact! Eleven O'clock!"***  
***"Victor One, give me a sitrep!"***  
***"Higher, this is Lower."***  
***"Request medvac, over!"***

Once the firefight is over and their convoy is safely out of harm's way, Soldiers of the 429th Multi-Functional Medical Battalion remove their virtual reality goggles and sigh with relief that another training mission has been completed using the Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer.

The VCOT, an asset of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, is an interactive video simulator that allows Soldiers to train for convoy operations in a virtual combat environment.

Instead of a classroom environment, you are reacting to direct fire, indirect fire, and IEDs," Staff Sgt. Chris Theis said, a VCOT Facilitator with 426th Regiment at the Wisconsin Military Academy. "It actually puts you in a real simulator."

The VCOT is enclosed within a trailer and has the ability to simulate up to a four-vehicle-convoy. Each vehicle has a driver and turret gunner. Two of the vehicles also have a third position for a troop commander equipped with radios for tactical communication with each vehicle as well as a headquarters unit.

The design of the VCOT has a large database of common Middle Eastern

structures and terrain maps which provide the background for risk assessment and proper response techniques. Convoy training includes snipers, rocket propelled grenade launcher, improvised explosive devices, as well as, suicide bombers.

The VCOT has seen more than 1,000 soldiers since it became operational in January. Even though the VCOT is an Army asset, Soldiers of the 426th have led a wide spectrum of military servicemembers with various backgrounds that have trained on the simulator. The skills developed are the same tactical communications that also forces Soldiers to make fast decisions under fire.

"It's nice when we see people fail here, it is better seeing them fail here than out there. No one does well on the first mission. It's that second or third mission when the communication clicks," Theis said.

The VCOT has an extensive list of scenarios and mission possibilities, and the accuracy and detail are taken from actual streets in Iraqi cities. The VCOT adds the unexpected, often lethal ambush by insurgents.

Another beneficial aspect of the VCOT is the playback capability. At the end of each scenario, Soldiers may review and critique each mission together on a large video screen. They can see their mistakes and hear their own communication, recorded moments earlier.

The VCOT is not without its limita-

tions, however. It has a few differences compared to the convoy live-fire exercises familiar to many recently deployed Soldiers.

The driving aspect of the simulator is its most prominent limitation, and also the radio chatter heard between the vehicles would not be possible in an actual convoy.

"The driving portion of it is more of a virtual thing. It helps you, but you're still looking at a screen," said Sgt. 1st Class Sergio Cortez from the 429th. "While the simulator is an effective tool, it can't replace live-fire exercises with real Humvees."

But the VCOT still has many practical advantages over organizing a live-fire convoy. A simulator eliminates the cost of using real vehicles, ammunition and saves the time it would take to set up a convoy.

Soldiers said a combination of virtual and live convoy training may be the best way to prepare for convoy operations. Both have their limitations but together, both methods of training supplement each other. Cortez said this combination follows the Army's training doctrine of "crawl, walk, run."

Towne said he has noticed that no matter how prepared a unit is prior to stepping into the trainer, each Soldier walks out more proficient; A direct testimony to the effectiveness of the simulator training. The Army will continue to embrace digital technology, such as the VCOT, to enhance training for Soldiers.