



The Defender



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The quarterly newsletter for the 20th CBRNE Command

December 2023

Premier CBRNE command supports ROK-US Alliance

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The U.S. Department of Defense’s premier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) formation continues to support the Republic of Korea-United States Alliance as it marks its 70th anniversary this month.

American Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command deploy to South Korea for exercises and send a Chemical Corps company to support rotational forces.

The 181st CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) “Double Dragons” returned to Fort Cavazos, Texas, in July.

The “Double Dragons” were replaced by the Fort Drum, New York-based 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) “Mountain Dragons” in South Korea.

Soldiers from the 59th CBRN Company serve near the Korean Demilitarized Zone, the world’s most heavily guarded border, in support of the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army.

The command’s 1st Area Medical Laboratory and Nuclear Disablement Teams have also forged partnerships with units in South Korea this year.

The 1st Area Medical Laboratory met with counterparts in the ROK CBRN Defense Command and ROK Armed Forces Medical Command.

The Nuclear Disablement Teams also trained with their counterparts in the ROK Nuclear Characterization Teams on the Korean Peninsula.

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, the 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians and CBRN specialists, as well as the 1st Area Medi-



Maj. Nicholas A. Magno (right) from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory performs hands-on training in the Republic of Korea CBRN Defense Command field analytical biology laboratory. Soldiers from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory trained with South Korean troops from the Republic of Korea CBRN Defense Command at their headquarters outside of the South Korean capital of Seoul. Courtesy photo.

cal Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, five Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.

From 19 bases in 16 states, American Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians take on the world’s most dangerous hazards in support of military operations and domestic authorities.

Forged in the fire of war, the ROK-U.S. Alliance was officially established by the Mutual Defense Treaty that was signed on October 1, 1953.

The ROK-U.S. Alliance has provided the security and stability that enabled one of the greatest success stories of the 20th century – the meteoric rise of South Korea from the ashes of war to become one of the

world’s leading economic and cultural powers.

Maj. Steven M. Modugno, the public affairs director of the 20th CBRNE Command, said the multifunctional command contributes to security on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia.

“The 20th CBRNE Command supports many allied, interagency and joint partners during operations around the world, but few partnerships are as strong as the ROK-U.S. Alliance,” said Modugno, a native of Santa Clarita, California. “Working with the ROK creates opportunities to train and deepen the expertise of all Soldiers involved. We are proud to uphold our nation’s legacy of service on Freedom’s Frontier.”

[Read full story](#)

From the Command Sergeant Major

We are extraordinary professionals who lead, care, train, and maintain resources. We have described what it means to be an extraordinary professional. Next, we'll draw on the insights of Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22 to discuss the importance of leading and caring, and what love has to do with all of it.

Leadership goes beyond simply giving orders and expecting them to be followed. True leadership is intimate and involves caring for those under your guidance, inspiring them to reach their full potential, while creating an environment built on trust and respect. In the Army, where Soldiers face immense challenges and risks, leading with love becomes even more crucial. When it comes to leading, your heart must be in it.

Love forms the foundation of a strong leader-soldier relationship. Genuinely caring for Soldiers' well-being fosters an environment of trust and loyalty. Soldiers who feel valued, trust their leaders, and commit to the mission. Loving leadership creates a culture where Soldiers feel safe to express themselves, share ideas, and seek guidance. Compassionate leaders inspire their Soldiers to be motivated and committed to their duties. Caring instills a sense of purpose and passion, motivating Soldiers to go above and beyond. When leaders genuinely care about their Soldiers' personal growth and success, they become role models, encouraging the same level of dedication from their subordinates.

Investing in personal development is vital. Leading requires devotion of time and effort into understanding Soldier's strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations. Providing personal guidance and support allows Soldiers to grow professionally and personally. Our Soldiers face immense stress and pressure. Leaders who prioritize the emotional well-being of their troops recognize creating this environment allows Soldiers to express their emotions. Leading with empathy and compassion empowers Soldiers to cope with the challenges they face and promotes mental resilience. Retired General Paul Funk described leadership as a contact sport. It is that contact time that makes good leaders approachable. Invested leaders actively listen, engaging in open and honest communication. Leaders who understand their Soldiers' thoughts, concerns, and ideas, make better decisions for the unit. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22 provides a framework for leadership that aligns with the principles of leading with love. This publication emphasizes the importance of empowering subordinates and fostering a climate of trust.

By empowering Soldiers and trusting their judgment, leaders show they value the expertise and capabilities within the formation. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Leaders who delegate responsibility, allow Soldiers to develop their skills and gain confidence. This enhances the unit's overall effectiveness and demonstrates trust, the foundational bedrock in which relationships are built. Through open communication, transparency, and fairness, leaders create a climate where trust flourishes, enhancing unit cohesion and morale.

By cultivating a culture of trust, inspiring motivation, growing commitment, emphasizing personal development, nurturing emotional well-being, and building strong connections, leaders create an environment where Soldiers thrive, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the Army and ensuring the well-being of our Soldiers, civilians, and families.



Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva
Command Sergeant Major
20th CBRNE Command



The Defender

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Army EOD unit return home to Fort Carson



Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva welcomes home Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers from the 764th Ordnance Company (EOD) during their layover at BWI. Courtesy photo.

FORT CARSON, Colo. – Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers returned from a deployment to the U.S. Central Command area of operations in time for Thanksgiving.

Soldiers from the 764th Ordnance Company (EOD) returned to their home base of Fort Carson, Colorado, following their deployment in support of Command Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve, Nov. 18.

The Army EOD company is part of the 242nd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, decades in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Capt. Cameron M. Clark commands the company and 1st Sgt. Josue Sandoval serves as the senior enlisted leader.

Col. Gregory P. Hirschey, the deputy commander for 20th CBRNE Command; Maj. Mitchell A. Lokker, the deputy chief of the Commanders Initiatives Group, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader, met the Soldiers during their layover at BWI airport on their way home to Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Silva said it was an honor to meet the returning EOD techs as they made it home in time for the holiday season.

“Soldiers from the 764th EOD Company have served with distinction downrange,” said Silva, a Master EOD Technician from Long Beach, California, who has deployed seven times and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. “Welcome home, warriors.”

[Read full story](#)

Chaplain's Corner

I heard the bells. The approaching holiday gives many the opportunity to enjoy unique aspects of the season. Whether it's Christmas, Kwanzaa, Yuletide or Hanukkah, this is a special time of year filled with interesting traditions and customs. One familiar custom is the singing of Christmas carols. Several years ago, I discovered an old carol, which was popular generations ago, entitled *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. Having served in Europe two times for a total of five years, I grew to appreciate the ringing of church bells. These were real bells cast in bronze centuries ago, not a recording played over a loudspeaker. In my most recent tour in Italy, as I enjoyed my post PT cup of morning coffee on our terrace, I could hear the bells of three different churches ringing at about the same time. Locally, the bells ring at the hour and half hour. Additionally, at several times of the year, such as Easter, certain national holidays and of course Christmas, the bells would ring for much longer. Throughout history, prior to radio, television and social media, the ringing of church bells was a key means of communication in villages and cities. In addition to announcing the start of a church service and the time, bells would also signal the birth of royalty and warning of impending danger or disaster. The bells would sit silent, gathering dust during the years of war throughout Europe ringing loudly once again as the war was finally won. My own discovery of the old Christmas hymn came during a time of war.

I was deployed in Iraq at Christmastime in 2006. It was the saddest of times to be away from family for all of us. One evening I grabbed my iPod and went for a walk outside around our FOB north of Baghdad and ended up sitting on top of one of the concrete bunkers we used for shelter during rocket and mortar fire. It was cold, clear and some stars were visible way overhead which was rare. *I Heard the Bells* came up on a random playlist and I almost skipped on ahead to *Silent Night*. As I looked south towards Baghdad, knowing the violence that raged there even this Christmas Eve, the words struck home to me. “And in despair I bowed my head, there is no peace on earth I said for hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good-will to men.” As I sat on my FOB, literally surrounded by violence and hate, I felt the writer and I shared a similar experience. Later I would discover the history of the carol, surprised to find it was penned by the noteworthy poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Longfellow wrote it on Christmas Day 1863 after his wife had died and son was severely wounded in the Civil War. This man clearly understood the pain of war.

Back on my bunker in Iraq, the tone of the song changed from despair to hope. “Then pealed the bells more loud and deep God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good-will to men.” My spirit was immediately uplifted by the words and a feeling of hope began to descend on me. A sharp crack of thunder jarred me back to reality. Fortunately, it was outgoing and not incoming artillery. It would not be the sound of bells that would challenge my sleep tonight; it would be the sounds of war. I would visit this Christmas Carol again the next Christmas, as our unit was extended, forcing me to spend a second holiday season in Iraq. Every year I listen to this hymn and rejoice that I get to spend the holiday at home, not in a war zone.

This holiday season, as the news of conflict worldwide never ceases, take comfort in the fact that many of us are blessed to be with our families this year. Keep in mind that the 20th CBRNE has Soldiers in harm's way in hot spots around the globe. We can all take comfort in Longfellow's words that we believe that because of our vigilance one day evil will fail, the right will prevail, and all will enjoy peace on earth and goodwill toward men.

CH (LTC) Ben Clark
20th CBRNE Command Chaplain
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20th CBRNE Command hosts ROK CBRN Defense Command

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – American and South Korean military leaders forged even stronger bonds during the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance, Nov. 1.

The U.S. Army's 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command hosted a tabletop exercise with the Republic of Korea Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Command.

Called Liberty Shield, the exercise was held at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

The exercise has been held annually for years including virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The one-of-a-kind U.S. Army CBRNE command is headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in northeast Maryland's science, technology and security corridor.

The 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army's CBRN specialists and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians, as well as the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, five Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.

Supporting military operations and domestic authorities, American Soldiers and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command deploy from 19 bases in 16 states to confront and defeat the world's most dangerous hazards.

Established in 2002, the ROK CBRN Defense Command incorporates personnel from all branches of the South Korean Armed Forces.

Units and personnel from the 20th CBRNE Command and the ROK CBRN Defense Command routinely train together in both the U.S. and South Korea.

Among recent events, the ROK CBRN Defense Command hosted the 1st Area Medical Laboratory and



American and South Korean military leaders forged even stronger bonds during the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance, Nov. 1. The U.S. Army's 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command hosted Exercise Liberty Shield with the Republic of Korea CBRN Defense Command. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.



members of the 20th CBRNE Command's Nuclear Disablement Teams trained with their ROK Nuclear Characterization Team counterparts to improve interoperability.

From annual peninsula-wide exercises in South Korea to field training exercises at the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, California, the 20th CBRNE Command and ROK CBRN Defense Command have forged an enduring partnership, much like the alliance they support.

U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general for 20th CBRNE Command, met with his counterpart, ROK Army Brig. Gen. Jaehoon Yoo, the commanding general of the ROK CBRN Defense Command, on Nov. 1.

Yoo said the relationship between the two highly specialized com-

mands exemplified the fighting spirit of the alliance.

The commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command emphasized the importance of the annual meeting to the ironclad alliance that celebrated its 70th anniversary in October.

Hood said the 20th CBRNE Command was looking forward to building even stronger bonds in the coming year. The ROK-U.S. Alliance was officially established by the Mutual Defense Treaty that was signed on October 1, 1953.

The ROK-U.S. Alliance has provided the security on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia that enabled the meteoric rise of South Korea from the ashes of war to become one of the world's leading economic and cultural powers.

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20th CBRNE Command welcomes new HHC commander

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The Headquarters and Headquarters Company for the U.S. Army's premier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) command welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony, Nov. 3.

Capt. Ali S. Salman assumed command of the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Capt. Charles "Taylor" Novinger during the ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Salman reported to the command following the Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course.

An Army logistics officer from Cedartown, Georgia, Novinger will become the Secretary of the General Staff for 20th CBRNE Command following his command tour.

Col. Gregory P. Hirschey, the deputy commander of the 20th CBRNE Command, hosted the ceremony, and Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, attended the ceremony.

Following time-honored change of command tradition, 1st Sgt. Zachery P. Jones, the HHC senior enlisted leader, passed the command flag between the outgoing and incoming commanders.

Hirschey congratulated Novinger for a successful command tour.

The deputy commander added the Novinger deployed to South Korea for Exercise Freedom Shield 2023 and helped numerous 20th CBRNE Command units to prepare for deployments.

"Over the past 24 months, Taylor has expertly commanded the HHC to accomplish great feats," said Hirschey, a senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer from East Helena, Montana. "I want to thank you for your leadership, compassion and commitment to the Soldiers and the officers at the HHC."

Hirschey welcomed Salman to the important company that supports the U.S. Department of Defense's premier deployable and multifunctional CBRNE formation.

"Ali brings the right skills to the company at the right time," said Hirschey. "As HHC has risen to new heights under Taylor's leadership, it is now time for Ali to take HHC to a new level."

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the multifunctional 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) specialists, as well as the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, five Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.



(Above) Col. Gregory P. Hirschey, the deputy commander of the 20th CBRNE Command, passes the colors to Capt. Ali S. Salman speaks at his change of command ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Nov. 3. Salman assumed command of the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Capt. Charles "Taylor" Novinger during the ceremony. (Below) Novinger speaks at the HHC change of command ceremony. U.S. Army photos by Marshall R. Mason.

Soldiers and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command deploy to take on the world's most dangerous hazards in support of military operations and domestic authorities.

Novinger said it was an honor to serve as the 20th CBRNE Command HHC commander.

"This headquarters company has continued to lead the way in readiness," said Novinger. "This is because of the Soldiers, the staff and the civilians at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters and Headquarters Company."

Salman said he welcomed the opportunity to command the unique U.S. Army HHC company at the one-of-a-kind command.

"I cannot tell you what an honor it is to be standing here today," said Salman. "It is truly a special privilege."

[Read full story](#)

Army civilian recognized for contributing to medical readiness

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – An Army civilian was recognized for contributing to the medical readiness of the U.S. military’s premier all hazards command.

Karen Diep-Arwood, the medical readiness coordinator for the 20th CBRNE Command Surgeon Cell, was selected as the command Civilian of the Quarter for July through September 2023.

Col. Michael R. Boivin, the command surgeon, said Diep-Arwood accomplishes a critical mission for the multifunctional mission for the multifunctional command.

“As the medical readiness coordinator for the command, Karen provides invaluable expertise in managing medical readiness of our Soldiers, from compiling reports from multiple data systems to coordinating quarterly Soldier Readiness Programs with Kirk Army Clinic and ensuring we’re in compliance with Army policies and regulations,” said Boivin, a native of Laurel, Maryland.

Diep-Arwood maintains technical links with Army, joint and interagency organizations to ensure medical readiness.

“I have to ensure our troops are healthy and medically ready in order to accomplish their mission,” said Diep-Arwood, who is from the Boston area.

A retired Massachusetts National Guard sergeant 1st



Karen Diep-Arwood, the medical readiness coordinator for the 20th CBRNE Command, was selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

class, Diep-Arwood deployed to Uzbekistan following 9/11. She also supported the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit.

Along with the esprit de corps and sense of membership that being an Army civilian brings, Diep-Arwood said the highlight of serving at command is the people.

[Read full story](#)

Awards

20th CBRNE Command

Master Sgt. Roree A. Anderson - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Robert J. Shaw – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Ronald H. Ancheta – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Andres Mancipe – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Jessica C. Miller – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Zachary N. Roberts – Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Victor Robinson - Army Commendation Medal
Capt. Monique M. Mciver – Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Williams – Army Commendation Medal
Staff Sgt. Shykara T. Jones - Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. Lincoln J. Jonas – Army Commendation Medal
Spc. Christina P. Harris – Army Commendation Medal
Spc. Christopher K. Seiple – Army Commendation Medal
Col. Michael R. Boivin – Army Achievement Medal
Capt. Michael A. Carrara Jr. – Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie R. Beachley – Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Daniel M. Mcbrayer – Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Lincoln J. Jonas – Army Achievement Medal

Spc. Savannah R. Wiggins – Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Lincoln J. Jonas – Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Hunter R. Sadler – Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Antonio M. Mcnew – Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Miriandaerica Nwonganeyamo – Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Keyonta Z. Curgil – Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Matthew A. Redic – Certificate of Achievement
Sgt. Toby J. Smith – Certificate of Achievement
Spc. Haven R. Barnes – Driver Mechanic Badge
Sgt. Javier Garcia JR – Driver Mechanic Badge
Spc. Jorge Orta JR – Driver Mechanic Badge
Pfc. Steven G. Sandlin – Driver Mechanic Badge
Sgt. Bo L. Truong – Driver Mechanic Badge
Staff Sgt. Rigoberto J. Olmeda – German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge
Capt. Samuel J. Bunn – German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge
Capt. Matthew R. Hale – Master EOD Badge
Capt. Graham A. Miller - Master EOD Badge

NCOs prevail in annual 20th CBRNE Command Turkey Bowl



Noncommissioned officers competed against officers during the 20th CBRNE Command Turkey Bowl on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Nov. 22. The NCO team held off the officer team, 21 – 20, during the game on Fanshaw Field. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The noncommissioned officer team held off the officer team, 21 – 20, during the 20th CBRNE Command Turkey Bowl, Nov. 22.

The NCO team secured victory by thwarting a two-point conversion during the annual Turkey Bowl on Fanshaw Field on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Nov. 22.

Wet turf and cold temperatures were no match for the command that confronts and defeats the world's most dangerous hazards

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Whitworth, the officer team coach, said it was a close game that pitted youth and stamina against grit and strategy. “The officers will dominate next year,” predicted Whitworth, who also coaches his son’s youth football team, the Aberdeen Bulldogs.

Whitworth said the game brought the command’s leadership teams closer together.

“Ultimately, this game makes our entire team stronger,” said Whitworth, who serves as the aide for Brig. Gen. Dar-yl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ricardo Jasso Jr. coached the NCO team to victory. “It was the teamwork and dedication that everybody put into our practice to ensure that we came away with a win,” said Jasso, the command group noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

An El Paso, Texas, native, who has served in the U.S. Army for 15 years, Jasso said the NCO team would be in winning form again next year.

Jasso said the 20th CBRNE Command leaders came together to prove their mettle and achieve gridiron greatness during the annual Thanksgiving tradition.

“The best part was the comradery on the field,” said Jasso. “Everybody had a great time.”

[Read full story](#)

Awards

20th CBRNE Command

Joe L. Bestor Jr. – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
Ryan P. O’Connell – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
Mary Alice B. Allan – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Virginia D. Isaac – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Gerald D. Oliver – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Alec T. Tebbe – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Karen Diep-Arwood – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Shirley A. Goodman – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Luis A. Lefert – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Christopher J. Skowron – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Vera Oliver – Certificate of Appreciation
Nadia C. Hopkins – Certificate of Promotion
Xiaoyan Jiang – Promotion

CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity

Timothy M. Crews – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Christopher P. Barnett – Civilian Service Achievement Medal

Mark A. Brock – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Eric A. Dietz – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Kevin M. Hanuszcak – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Donald Jennings – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Walter H. Oldenburg – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Anthony E. Pino – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Michael R. Randolph – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Clinton R. Vandiver – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Jarrod M. Williams – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Diane Young – Certificate of Appreciation
Sheri Austin – Certificate of Appreciation
Rebecca O’Connell – Certificate of Appreciation
Tracey Talley – Certificate of Appreciation
Angela S. Bahr – Certificate of Promotion
Grace M. Bultron-Rodriguez – Certificate of Promotion
Christopher J. Seliga – Certificate of Promotion
Paige N. Smith – Certificate of Promotion

Maryland Veterans Caucus holds meeting at 20th CBRNE Command



Members of the largest veterans caucus in the nation meet with veterans and military retirees at the headquarters for the U.S. Army's premier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, Nov. 2. The senators, delegates and staff members from the Maryland House and Senate held the meeting at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters. U.S. Army photo by Sean Kief.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – Members of the largest veterans caucus in the nation met with veterans and military retirees at the headquarters for the U.S. Army's premier CBRNE Command, Nov. 2.

The senators, delegates and staff members from the Maryland House and Senate held the meeting at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters a week before Veterans Day.

Members of the caucus visited the headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the nation's oldest continuously operating proving ground.

The Veterans Caucus group from the Maryland State Legislature was led by Maryland Sen. Johnny Salling and Maryland Del. Mike Rogers.

Maj. Gen. Robert L. Edmonson II, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) and the senior mission commander for Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Conaty, the CECOM senior enlisted leader, accompanied the Veterans Caucus. Edmondson thanked 20th CBRNE Command for hosting the event.

Col. Gregory P. Hirschey, the deputy commander for the 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader, represented the command at the headquarters.

Created in 2004, the Maryland Veterans Caucus studies, develops and promotes legislation to improve quality of life for veterans. The caucus works with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Veterans Caucus discussed a wide variety of state legislative initiatives designed to help veterans and military retirees in Maryland.

The issues addressed during the meeting ranged from state taxes on military retirement pay to school equivalency standards for students transferring from other states.

"I've learned more today than I ever have before about the veterans' initiatives in Maryland," said Chuck Grady, a Havre de Grace, Maryland, native and retired Army officer who serves as the 20th CBRNE Command Secretary for the General Staff.

[Read full story](#)

Command surgeon earns highest proficiency designator

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The command surgeon for the U.S. military’s premier multifunctional CBRNE command was recently selected for the U.S. Army’s highest proficiency award.

Col. Michael R. Boivin, the command surgeon for the 20th CBRNE Command, was selected for the “A” Proficiency Designator award.

Boivin provides medical expertise to the command by supervising medical readiness programs, medical operational planning and occupational and environmental health while maintaining oversight of health services support and operational public health for more than 3,600 Soldiers and 250 Army civilians across the nation and around the world.

The U.S. Army Office of the Surgeon General of the Army presented the annual proficiency designator award to 75 Medical Corps Officers this year.

Candidates for the proficiency designator must be board-certified, have a minimum of 12 years of professional experience in the specialty and demonstrate mastery in the profession across the scope of academic, clinical and operational medicine.

Selection criteria also includes an academic appointment at a medical school; evidence of sustained, significant teaching activities, authored publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals; completed field-grade professional military education; service as a primary investigator with significant involvement on institutional review board approved research protocols; and successful service in U.S. Army Medical Department senior strategic roles.

Boivin applied for medical school while studying for his bachelor’s degree in psychology and sociology at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

After a year at the National Institutes of Health, Boivin entered medical school and earned his medical degree from the University of Maryland-Baltimore in 2005.

A native of Laurel, Maryland, Boivin then completed a transitional internship at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington, and he earned a Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2007.

He completed residencies in preventive medicine at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in 2008 and his residency in occupational and environmental medicine at the Uniformed Services University in 2009, becoming board certified in both specialties. Boivin deployed to Afghanistan as the preventive medicine officer for the 1st Cavalry Division.

Boivin served at the Global Emerging Infections Surveillance (GEIS) Branch at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division for the Defense Health Agency. He said this assignment was the highlight of his career.

The 20th CBRNE Command surgeon said the “A” proficiency designator award was recognition for his service throughout his Army career.

“This is mostly based on my entire career and more of a personal recognition of excellence in my field,” said Boivin. “It is definitely nice to be recognized for my accomplishments.”

Lt. Gen. Raymond S. Dingle, the 45th surgeon general and commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Command, sent a letter to Boivin recognizing him for his selection.

“You can be justifiably proud of your selection as this award is the highest the Army Medical Department can bestow,” said Dingle. “Recipients of the ‘A’ Proficiency Designator have demonstrated professional expertise, exceptional ability and outstanding achievements in both clinical and academic medicine.”

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Awards

48th Chemical Brigade

Command Sgt. Maj. Chesley L. Baird Jr. – Legion of Merit
Command Sgt. Maj. Chylander S. Cummings – Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Fabian D. Oros – Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Julio I. Teixeira-Hernandez – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Kenneth L. Greene - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Aaron M. Robertson – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Montemayor – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy W. Mcelhaney – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Mercedes A. Fees – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Ada Hoffman – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Connor A. Pearce – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Henderena Pittman – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Veronica Mejiabernal – Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Harlintony A. Austingerman – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Kiley A. Malewicki – Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jarrod Gasiorowski – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Jose R. Gonzalez – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Vance A. Collins – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Melanie A. Hayes – Meritorious Service Medal

48th CBRN Brigade holds change of responsibility ceremony

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – The U.S. Army’s only operational active-duty Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) brigade welcomed a new command sergeant major during a ceremony on Fort Cavazos, Texas, Nov. 29.

Command Sgt. Maj. Chylander S. Cummings assumed the senior enlisted leader responsibilities for the 48th CBRN Brigade from Command Sgt. Maj. Chesley L. Baird Jr. during the change of responsibility ceremony.

Col. Johannie San Miguel, the commander of the 48th CBRN Brigade, hosted the ceremony.

The 48th CBRN Brigade “Spartans” are part of the 20th CBRNE Command.

A seasoned U.S. Army Chemical Corps Solder, Baird has served across the nation and around the world, including leadership assignments in Germany and South Korea and deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Baird said he had lived and seen the Army Values every day during his nearly three decades in uniform, especially during the crucible of combat.

“It has been an honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to serve this great nation,” said Baird. “I am very optimistic and excited for the future and what it holds.”

Born in the Choctaw Nation Hospital in Idabel, Oklahoma, Baird plans to focus on developing the next generation and giving back to the Choctaw Nation Tribe.



Command Sgt. Maj. Chesley L. Baird Jr. relinquishes responsibility for the 48th Chemical Brigade during his change of responsibility ceremony on Fort Cavazos, Texas. Command Sgt. Maj. Chylander S. Cummings assumed senior enlisted leader responsibility of the brigade. U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Julian Winston.

The incoming senior enlisted leader has served in many leadership positions throughout her 24-year career.

Cummings said she welcomed the opportunity to serve as the senior enlisted leader for the brigade.

“Today, I’m truly humbled and honored to assume the role as Spartan 7,” said Cummings. “As always, this journey is not one that I could have ever done alone because I stand on the shoulders of giants.”

[Read full story](#)

Awards

Master Sgt. Janice M. Pleasant - Meritorious Service Medal
Cpl. Krisdeon N. Harris – Certificate of Achievement

52nd EOD Group

Lt. Col. Corbin E. Copeland – Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Marvin D. Grimmatt – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Anthony R. Hillery – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Michael C. Ryan – Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Robert L. Hayslett – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Ivan Calderon JR – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Robert D. Miller – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Tyler A. Brannon – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph M. Haskins – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Menchaca – Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Marcel A. Blood – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. Maj. Colin S. Bradshaw – Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Russell D. Ellison – Army Commendation Medal

Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod Vanwinkle – Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Derek C. Weisbecker – German Proficiency Badge
Staff Sgt. Hector A. Melendez – Army Commendation Medal

71st EOD Group

Col Michael G. Schoonover – Legion of Merit
Sgt. 1st Class William R. Phillips – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Caleb L. Balduff – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Chadrick S. Giles – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Andrew C. Schweers – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Andrew S. MCGowin - Meritorious Service Medal

1st Area Medical Laboratory

Maj. Nicholas A. Magno – Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Mathanraj Packiam – Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Kenneth R. Gonzales – Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. Maj. Jackie S. Mims - Meritorious Service Medal

1st Area Medical Laboratory Soldiers support recruiting event

NEW YORK – American Soldiers from the U.S. Army's one-of-a-kind 1st Area Medical Laboratory recently supported Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) recruiting events at two high schools in New York City.

Sgt. Bashiru C. Alhassan, Sgt. Dennis Chantia and Spc. Stacy M. Radtke from the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-based 1st Area Medical Laboratory talked to students at the STEM events at Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology and Hempstead High School.

In addition to the 1st Area Medical Laboratory Soldiers, the "I Will Graduate" program also featured the New York Police Department and New York Fire Department.

As the U.S. Army's sole mobile laboratory, the 1st Area Medical Laboratory performs surveillance, laboratory testing and health hazard assessments of environmental, occupational, endemic disease and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) threats to support force protection and Weapons of Mass Destruction missions.

Activated in 1942, the 1st Area Medical Laboratory has served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan.

Soldiers from 1st AML deployed to help contain the Ebola outbreak in Liberia in 2014 – 2015.

The 1st Area Medical Laboratory was also the first Army unit to deploy to U.S. military installations overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 1st Area Medical Laboratory has strengthened partnerships with allies during recent visits to South Korea, Poland, Australia, Canada and Germany.

The 1st AML is part of the 44th Medical Brigade and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier CBRNE formation.

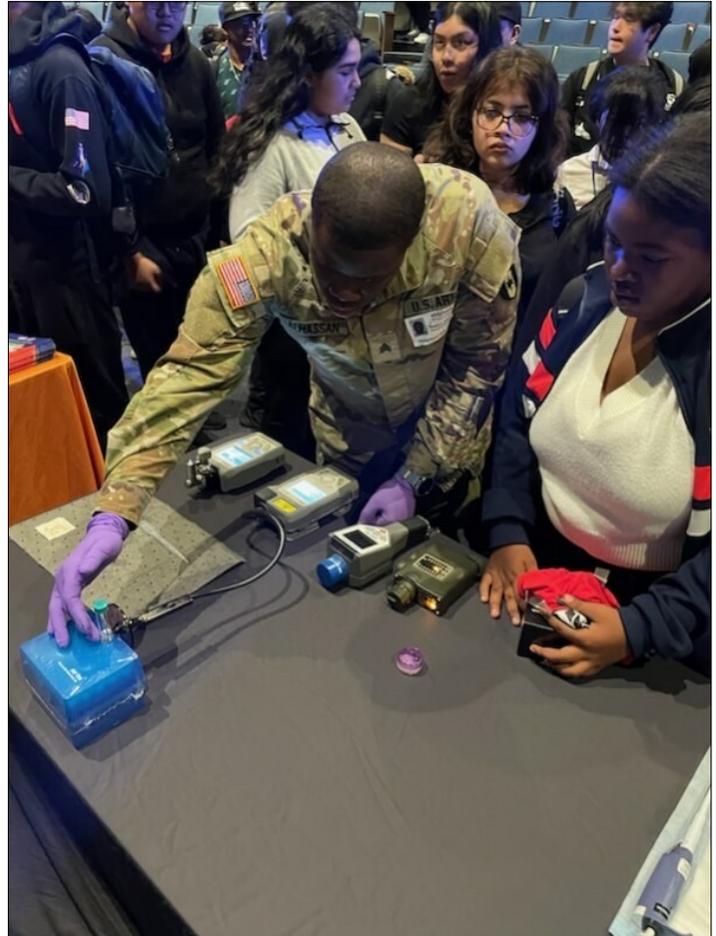
Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command deploy from 19 bases in 16 states to take on the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

Soldiers from the 20th CBRNE Command routinely participate Army recruiting events and describe their unique capabilities to potential recruits.

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the 20th CBRNE Command supports Army recruiting efforts with everything from EOD technicians in bomb suits at recruiting events to Soldiers referring potential recruits in the communities where they live.

Alhassan said more than 700 students attended the STEM events at the schools in New York City.

"We took a few of our handheld analyzers to showcase



Sgt. Bashiru C. Alhassan speaks with students during a recruiting event. Alhassan, Sgt. Dennis Chantia and Spc. Stacy M. Radtke from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory talked to students during STEM recruiting events at Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology and Hempstead High School in New York City. Courtesy photo.

our capabilities. We also set up a liquid sample dilution to demonstrate our extraction process," said Alhassan. "The students were given the chance to interact with our setup."

"The students were mainly interested in what we did on a daily basis," said Alhassan. "We encouraged students to learn about STEM opportunities in the U.S. Army."

Alhassan, a U.S. Army medical laboratory specialist, added that "we piqued the interest of many students, with a few declaring their intention to enlist."

A naturalized citizen from Ghana who has served in the U.S. Army for five years, Alhassan said he joined the Army to make a difference and to serve his nation.

"Prior to joining the Army, I didn't feel like anything I did made a big enough impact on people's lives," said Alhassan. "I joined the Army for the sole purpose of impacting other lives, while also serving this great nation that has given so much to my family and me."

[Read full story](#)

Army EOD technicians hone warrior skills with Mixed Martial Arts

CLARKSVILLE, Ky. – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians honed their warrior skills during Mixed Martial Arts training near Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal techs from the 717th Ordnance Company (EOD) recently conducted training that will help them to improve their hand-to-hand combat skills and ability to operate under pressure.

From the company, 28 Soldiers trained in hand-to-hand combat at the Modern Martial Arts and Family Fitness Center in Clarksville, Kentucky.

Army 1st Sgt. Garrett J. McGuire, the senior enlisted leader from the 717th EOD Company, said his Soldiers practiced Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Army Combatives techniques.

“They learned the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu positional hierarchy, including mount, side control, guard, and back control,” said McGuire. “We drilled for escaping back control and executing the rear naked choke, as well as how to escape the mount.”

McGuire has been studying Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for six months.

Capt. Joseph J. Carothers, the commander of the 717th EOD Company, is a Master Army Combatives Trainer.

As the U.S. Army’s explosive experts, EOD techs take on everything from hand grenades to nuclear weapons.

The Fort Campbell, Kentucky-based 717th EOD Company “Jokers” are part of the 184th EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier multifunctional CBRNE formation.

From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command take on the world’s most dangerous hazards.

EOD technicians routinely conduct overseas and domestic explosive response missions.

The Jokers returned from a deployment to support Operation Inherent



Sgt. 1st Class Alexander M. Storruste and Staff Sgt. Jarrod V. Pearl from the 717th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), 184th EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group, 20th CBRNE Command, recently conducted training that will help them improve their hand-to-hand combat skills. The EOD technicians trained in Mixed Martial Arts at the Modern Martial Arts and Family Fitness Center in Clarksville, Kentucky. U.S. Army photo by Capt. Joseph J. Carothers and 1st Sgt. Garrett J. McGuire.



Resolve in the Central Command areas of operations in April.

The company also supports domestic response missions from the Canadian border in Wisconsin to the southern border of Tennessee.

A native of Hartland, Michigan, McGuire has deployed to Afghanistan and served in Jordan, Tajikistan and the Republic of Chad during his 13 years in the Army.

McGuire said his most memorable EOD mission was clearing the set of “Law and Order: SUV” during a VIP visit by then Vice President Joe Biden in 2016.

The first sergeant said the endurance and resilience gained from Mixed Martial Arts training readies his Soldiers for their rigors of high stakes missions around the world.

“In my humble opinion, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Combatives are great to

prepare Soldiers for combat through building physical and mental resilience,” said McGuire. “I can’t think of anything other than long hours in the bomb suit that has tested my grit like having a full-grown person pin you to the mat and try to submit you. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Combatives are a fantastic test to determine if a service member is comfortable being uncomfortable.”

McGuire said EOD techs must be able to succeed under pressure every time they are called to confront and defeat explosives, adding that all warfighters should be able to fight and win in hand-to-hand combat.

“Learning to control yourself under immense pressure is key to mission success at every level,” said McGuire. “Understanding the fundamentals of how to grapple with a combatant will most assuredly save lives on any battlefield.”

[Read full story](#)

CBRN Soldiers earn Top Gun award during gunnery exercise



Soldiers from the 63rd CBRN Company “Dragon Masters” took Top Gun honors during a gunnery exercise with units from the 21st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Spc. Christian Rosario from St. Cloud, Florida, was the driver and Staff Sgt. Alexandria Rodriguez from Hancock, New York, was the vehicle commander and gunner on the Top Gun crew. Courtesy photo.

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – U.S. Army Chemical Corps Soldiers recently earned “Top Gun” honors during a gunnery training exercise on Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Soldiers from the 63rd CBRN Company “Dragon Masters” took top honors during a gunnery exercise with units from the 21st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Spc. Christian Rosario from St. Cloud, Florida, was the driver and Staff Sgt. Alexandria Rodriguez from Hancock, New York, was the vehicle commander and gunner on the Top Gun crew.

The Dragon Masters crew out shot 12 combat maneuver crews by scoring over 100 points better than the other participating crews.

The Fort Campbell, Kentucky-based 63rd CBRN Company is assigned to the 2nd CBRN Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE headquarters.

From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers

and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command take on the world’s most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

The Dragon Masters tame CBRN hazards during military operations and domestic missions.

The 63rd CBRN Company recently served on the Defense CBRN Response Force (DCRF) in support of U.S. Northern Command’s Joint Task Force-Civil Support.

The DCRF saves lives, mitigates suffering and facilitates recovery operations in a CBRN environment to support civil authorities. The task force conducts Defense Support to Civil Authority response operations planning and preparedness to ensure mission readiness.

The Dragon Masters primarily operate the Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicle (NBCRV) Stryker during gunnery exercises.

The NBCRVs provide surveillance and direction capabilities to support

combat operations. The 1135 NBCRV Stryker is armed with M2 mounted 50-caliber machine guns and a Remote Weapons System.

During the exercise, the vehicle commanders are required to demonstrate proficiency with both the M2 50-caliber machine gun and the Remote Weapons System.

Army 1st Lt. Johnathon Strawbrich, the 1st Mountain Reconnaissance Platoon leader with the 63rd CBRN Company, said the Dragon Masters conduct gunnery exercises twice a year with maneuver units from Fort Campbell or with other companies from the 2nd CBRN Battalion.

Strawbrich, a native of Hamburg, New York, and graduate of Norwich University, said teamwork and leadership are the keys to success.

“They must excel in adaptability, communication and teamwork,” said Strawbrich. “Each member of the crew plays a vital role, and their collective success is critical. Effective communication under pressure while operating the weapon system is indispensable.”

Often called “enablers” because they safeguard maneuver forces, Army Chemical Corps Soldiers ensure ground troops can operate on a CBRNE contaminated battlefield.

Capt. Kacey M. Adams, the commander of the 63rd CBRN Company, said gunnery exercises validate that the Mounted Reconnaissance Platoon can support maneuver forces on the battlefield.

A native of Middleton, Tennessee, and graduate of the Virginia Polytechnic University, Adams has deployed to Mosul, Iraq.

“Our company strives to be more than just an enabler for maneuver units to utilize. We want to be a combat multiplier as well,” said Adams. “Executing gunnery well proves that we can support our maneuver counterparts in more ways than our CBRN capabilities.”

[Read full story](#)

US Army hosts joint IED training on Yakima Training Center

YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER, Wash. – U.S. military Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians and civilian law enforcement bomb squad personnel trained to combat advanced Improvised Explosive Devices at the premier U.S. Army Pacific Northwest training venue.

The U.S. Army 53rd Ordnance Company (EOD) hosted the joint, multicomponent and interagency training with the Washington National Guard 319th EOD Company, Oregon National Guard 142nd Flight Wing Civil Engineer Squadron, U.S. Air Force 92nd Civilian Engineer Squadron and U.S. Navy EOD Mobile Unit 11 Detachment Northwest on Yakima Training Center, Washington.

FBI Special Agent Bomb Technicians and agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives also participated in the training.

The counter IED training event provided valuable experience using alternative shaped charge and water-based tools in addition to disruption tools.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Quinton R. Reese, a platoon leader with the 53rd Ordnance Company (EOD), said the joint EOD techs discussed tactics, techniques and procedures with service-specific gear that usually only gets employed during joint advanced IED training.

“This was a great event with a much wider audience showcasing each tool that we as a total EOD force use to defeat an IED,” said Reese. “This training allowed some of our most junior team members the opportunity to see what their tools can actually do when used properly – so the first time they see one in action it’s not on a live device.”

While Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps EOD techs leverage their capabilities for different missions, they also have overlapping capabilities that complement each other. Reese said experiences are also different among EOD team leaders in the same service.

“The role of Army EOD teams varies from mounted patrols through an urban environment to dismounted Special Operations Forces support,” said Reese. “The experiences of one team leader to the next could be vastly different based on the mission sets.”

“By getting the various experiences and viewpoints of both junior and senior EOD technicians from all services and components as well as civilian counterparts, we can help bridge the gap and provide a forum for increasing the tool set both literally and in the problem-solving process for all EOD technicians, regardless of service,” said Reese.

Reese started his uniformed service as an enlisted Army Geospatial Imagery Intelligence Analyst before graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and becoming an EOD officer.

A native of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, Reese said he was inspired to serve as an EOD officer by a mentor from the 53rd EOD Company.



Spc. Maitlan G. Cherry and Spc. Micheal L. Holland demonstrate explosive tools techniques on metal to simulate ordnance during counter advanced Improvised Explosive Device training on Yakima Training Center, Washington. U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Quinton R. Reese.

The 53rd EOD Company “Fighting 53rd” is part of the 3rd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE formation.

Capt. Logan T. Morris, the commander of the 53rd EOD Company, said the training event gave the joint EOD and civilian bomb squad techs the opportunity to share their knowledge about functions, capabilities and branch-specific explosive tools and techniques.

Originally from Redmond, Oregon, Morris became an EOD officer after being mentored by his ROTC commander at Oregon State University, then Lt. Col. Eric Larsen, who was an EOD officer.

Morris said the Yakima Training Center is the ideal location for large-scale training events. The 327,000-acre training center can accommodate brigade-sized units for maneuver exercises.

The Eastern Washington State training center is more than two and a half hours away from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

“Yakima Training Center boasts nearly limitless opportunities for training to scale with the demands of units requirements,” said Morris. “Yakima Training Center frequently hosts Canadian, Singaporean, Japanese, Korean and other Pacific Theater aligned joint and national training events and it is a bastion for brigade-level and below training with nearly no limitations.”

[Read full story](#)

US Army EOD techs train with allies during Ardent Defender



Participants conduct EOD training during a multinational exercise, Oct. 22, at Canadian Armed Forces Base in Gagetown, Canada. Ardent Defender is Canadian-led training exercise where more than 300 multinational participants, soldiers from nine allied nations: Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States take part in training that is designed to hone their skills to counter explosive threats. Canadian Armed Forces photo by Cpl. Brian Watters.

5TH CANADIAN DIVISION SUPPORT BASE GAGETOWN, New Brunswick, Canada – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians are training with military personnel from eight partner nations during Exercise Ardent Defender at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown in New Brunswick, Canada, Oct. 20 – Nov. 2.

EOD techs from the Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 192nd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) are participating in the counter explosive threat exercise with EOD troops from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The 192nd EOD Battalion is part of the 52nd EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier multifunctional CBRNE command.

Canadian Armed Forces Lt. Col. Ben Aho, the Exercise Ardent Defender director, said the scenarios are focused on explosive threats, primarily based on what has been observed in Eastern Europe conflict zones. "The types of scenarios are built to exercise Explosive Ordnance Dispos-

al teams, high risk search teams that investigate large areas or buildings, as well as route clearance teams," said Aho, who serves as the director at the Canadian Armed Forces Joint Counter Explosive Threat organization in Ottawa, Ontario.

Aho said the scenarios are developed from real-world events and change every year to take into consideration the ever-evolving threat situation.

"Once these scenarios are designed, the explosive threat is incorporated with the appropriate level of technical complexity required to challenge the exercise participants for their tasks," said Aho. "This entire process allows us to expose our operators to new and emerging devices that are being found globally."

The exercise director said that all recovered evidence and material, regardless of which scenario it was collected from, are then entered into an exploitation and analysis center that then injects their findings back into the development of the intelligence picture for the exercise.

Aho said analysis and exploitation are key capabilities that the Canadian Armed Forces has developed to not only counter explosive ordnance when discovered but also to disrupt their use and neutralize threats in future areas of operations through intelligence gathering.

This year marks the 10th iteration of Exercise Ardent Defender and the second year that the exercise has taken place at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown.

The New Brunswick base is home to the 4th Engineer Support Regiment and Canadian Army Combat Training Centre, as well as the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering, which supports the majority of Explosive Ordnance Disposal training for the Canadian Armed Forces and supports the exercise with their staff, instructors and facilities.

"These reasons are just some examples of the advantages of hosting Exercise Ardent Defender at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown now and into the future," said Aho.

A native of Montague on Prince Edward Island, Canada, Aho has served as a military engineer in the Canadian Army for 26 years.

Aho said the interoperability forged during the multinational exercise is essential to prepare allied Explosive Ordnance Disposal units for high stakes missions overseas, adding that defeating new devices require new ideas.

"The ability to train together, discuss lessons learned, demonstrate new tools and equipment and to share operational experiences, all within a training environment, allows the EOD community to develop best practices for new and emerging explosive threats and hazards," said Aho. "These lessons, and the teamwork that is built during Exercise Ardent Defender 2023, helps to create a collaborative network among the Explosive Ordnance Disposal operator community that is global and robust."

[Read full story](#)

US troops train for interagency nuclear forensics mission



Soldiers from the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command validated their mission readiness to serve on the interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force during Exercise Prominent Hunt, 16 - 20. American Soldiers and Airmen trained together with interagency partners to conduct post-blast nuclear forensics missions during the exercise in Frankfort, Kentucky. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.



FRANKFORT, Ky. – American Soldiers and Airmen trained together with interagency partners and validated their ability to conduct post-blast nuclear forensics missions during Exercise Prominent Hunt in Frankfort, Kentucky, Oct. 16 - 20.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-based Nuclear Disablement Team 3 and Fort Cavazos, Texas-based CBRNE Response Team 3 from the 68th CBRNE Company qualified to serve as a part of the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force.

The U.S. Air Force Technical Applications Center also qualified to support the task force during the exercise. Nuclear Disablement Team 1 served as observers and controllers during

the exercise. NDT 3 and CRT 3 are both part of the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier multifunctional CBRNE formation. American Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command deploy from 19 bases in 16 states to take on the world's most dangerous hazards during joint, interagency and allied operations.

The NTNF Ground Collection Task Force gathers and packages samples of radioactive fallout that enable partner agencies to determine the source of the radiation.

The FBI's Louisville Office served as the lead federal agency during Exercise Prominent Hunt. The Department of Energy also supported the joint and interagency exercise.

“Participating in Prominent Hunt, an exercise facilitated by the interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force, provides an opportunity for the Department of Defense and multiple federal agencies to execute a highly technical mission in a training environment,” said Michael Stansbury, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Louisville Field Office. “The FBI values this opportunity to exercise our capabilities alongside our partners in order to ensure effective operational readiness against potential future nuclear threats.”

Held every year, Exercise Prominent Hunt moves to different cities to enable the task force to train for the mission in a variety of different locations.

Maj. C. James Hunter, the deputy team leader for NDT 3, said Frankfort, about an hour outside of Louisville, Kentucky, was a great venue for the exercise.

Hunter said the Frankfort area had geographic diversity that provided challenges in terrain and population densities useful in stressing systems during the exercise, while adding that it took teamwork to succeed at the high stakes task force mission.

“The level of effort each component committed to the mission was remarkable and a direct contribution to its success,” said Hunter, a native of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and University of Florida graduate who has served in the U.S. Army for 14 years and served in South Korea.

Maj. Matthew B. Stokley, a U.S. Army Nuclear Medical Services Officer and the health physicist from Nuclear Disablement Team 3, said the highlight of the exercise was the ability to gather all the interagency partners together to discuss shared capabilities.

“A key factor is the ability to function effectively within a multifaceted team,” said Stokley. “You have to know your teams’ strengths and operational gaps while also understanding how to leverage other agency assets to best accomplish the mission.”

[Read full story](#)

Soldiers uses SkillBridge program to become Army civilian

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. – A Chemical Corps Soldier is leveraging the DoD SkillBridge program to transition to a U.S. Army civilian position at a one-of-a-kind military unit that combats the world's most dangerous hazards.

Spc. Joseph D. Howieson from the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 22nd Chemical Battalion is using the program to learn the skills needed to be an Army civilian Engineering Technician (Chemical) at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Analytical and Remediation Activity (CARA).

The DoD SkillBridge program is designed to give service members the opportunity to participate in apprenticeships, internships, and training during the last six months of their military service.

Howieson is serving with CARA's Remediation Response West team on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. The team clears old chemical weapons and unexploded ordnance on formerly used defense sites and training ranges.

Mark C. Hammond, the Army civilian supervisory program manager for CARA Remediation Response West, said Howieson had served with CARA personnel during a previous remediation project on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

Hammond said bringing Howieson onboard for the SkillBridge program was an easy choice.

"We had a chance to observe him during that timeframe," said Hammond. "Spc. Howieson showed a lot of interest in our mission and was a hard worker. He demonstrated a 'can do' attitude and worked well with the Army civilians assigned to Response Region West."

Originally from St. Louis, Hammond has served at CARA for 12 years.

Hammond said Chemical Corps and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers bring valuable experience to the organization, adding that remediation efforts on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, help to clear the land for future development by the Department of Defense, FBI and NASA.

"I decided to participate in this program with CARA after I did an assignment with the organization earlier this year," said Howieson. "I enjoyed my time working with the organization and the people that I worked alongside. I knew that I could further develop my CBRN career with this organization."

As a Chemical Corps Soldier from the 22nd Chemical Battalion, Howieson has supported Operation Allies Welcome on Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, and he participated in the Sampling Operations and Reconnaissance Exercise on Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

Howieson also served on the Defense CBRNE Response Force. Known as the DCRF, the Defense Response Force is trained to save lives, mitigate suffering and facilitate recovery operations during domestic response missions.



Spc. Joseph D. Howieson (left) seals the seams on the Level B protective suit that Clinton R. Vandiver is wearing during training. Howieson is using the DoD SkillBridge program to learn the skills needed to be an Army civilian Engineering Technician (Chemical) at the CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity (CARA). U.S. Army photo by Breygan C. Bedwell.

"I would like to continue working with CARA and continue to work in the CBRN field because I can only describe my experiences with both as extremely positive," said Howieson. He said the highlight of his time in the Army Chemical Corps has been the knowledge and experience he has been able to gain while serving his nation.

"These are experiences that I couldn't have gotten anywhere else, and they were with some of the best people that I've ever known," said Howieson. A native of Chicago, Howieson has attended American Military University during his three years in the Army.

Franz J. Amann, the CARA director, said the DoD SkillBridge program is ideal for Chemical Corps and EOD Soldiers who are transitioning out of the Army.

"The SkillBridge program is a valuable tool for all Soldiers who are preparing to transition out of the Army. This program is available in both the government and private sectors. For CARA, the SkillBridge program enables transitioning Soldiers to build on the skills they have learned in uniform and to continue to serve their nation as a U.S. Army civilian. During the six-month internship, Soldiers are able to expand their current skills to enhance their resume," said Amann, a retired U.S. Army Chemical Corps colonel from Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Amann said Chemical and EOD Soldiers already have much of the training required to serve at CARA, adding that SkillBridge provides an opportunity for interested Soldiers to get additional training so they can meet the position description requirements prior to departing the service (ETSing) or retiring.

"We hope more Soldiers will use this program to consider potentially joining the CARA team when they retire or leave from the service," said Amann. "We continuously have open positions that the Soldiers can easily fill."

[Read full story](#)

US Army North, National Guard highlight domestic missions



A U.S. Army Reserve Soldier from the 409th Engineer Vertical Construction Company of Windsor, Colorado, participates in a mock urban search and rescue operation in an area with chemical, biological and nuclear contamination during Guardian Response 2022 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Indiana, April 29, 2022. U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Juan F. Jimenez.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – Experts from U.S. Army North and the National Guard Bureau discussed the importance of having trained and ready multicomponent military units to conduct domestic Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) response missions.

Leaders from U.S. Army North and the National Guard Bureau participated in a virtual Leader Professional Development Program session with officers, noncommissioned officers and Army civilians from the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, Nov. 14.

The CBRN experts discussed the multicomponent military units that deploy for integrated state and federal CBRN response missions in support of the lead agency.

Lt. Col. Roberto R. Sanchez, the CBRN chief for U.S. Army North, described the CBRN Response Enterprise and Federal Response (Title 10) roles the military covers during domestic response missions to save lives and mitigate suffering.

Frank C. Hudoba Jr., the civilian Strategic Concepts and Doctrine Branch

chief at the National Guard Bureau, talked about State Response (Title 32) missions that National Guard CBRN teams accomplish in support of missions around the nation as part of the Incident Command System.

The National Guard teams include Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams, CBRN Enhanced Response Force Packages and Homeland Response Forces.

Hudoba said the National Guard teams have responded to numerous incidents from 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina to the Boston Marathon Bombing and Elk River Chemical Spill.

In addition to enabling joint, inter-agency and allied operations overseas, the 20th CBRNE Command routinely supports domestic missions.

From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command accomplish mission-enabling and lifesaving missions by taking on the world's most dangerous hazards.

Chemical companies from 20th

CBRNE Command serve on the U.S. Northern Command Joint Task Force-Civil Support Defense CBRNE Response Force. Soldiers from 20th CBRNE Command provide CBRN assessment and decontamination capabilities.

Nuclear Disablement Teams and CBRNE Response Teams from 20th CBRNE Command also serve on the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force.

The FBI-led National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force gathers and packages samples of radioactive fallout that enable partner agencies to determine the source of the radiation.

Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal techs from the 20th CBRNE Command also confront and defeat unexploded military munitions when they are discovered on and off base across the nation.

Col. Vance M. Brunner, the operations director (G3) for 20th CBRNE Command, said the professional development program session helped Soldiers and Army civilians at the command to better understand the interrelated nature of domestic missions.

“It takes teamwork to effectively respond to domestic CBRN incidents, from FEMA and Fire and Police Departments to highly trained U.S. military units,” said Brunner.

A native of Kailua, Hawaii, and graduate of the University of Hawaii, Brunner has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The U.S. military’s multicomponent CBRN teams safeguard our nation and its citizens and warfighters,” said Brunner. “We use these Leader Professional Development sessions to remind our teammates that we are the best at what we do. The 20th CBRNE Command is a disciplined force that accomplishes many important response missions but we do this through a team effort. All of us contribute to that success.”

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US Army EOD technicians train with Senegalese Armed Forces

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians returned home to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, following a three-month training session with Senegalese Armed Forces EOD troops in Dakar, Senegal.

Soldiers from the 763rd Ordnance Company (EOD) recently conducted new equipment and counter Improvised Explosive Device training with Senegalese forces in the West African nation.

Staff Sgt. Quincy L. Baumeister, the training noncommissioned officer-in-charge from Sturgis, South Dakota; Sgt. Robert B. Singleton from Blue Springs, Missouri; Sgt. Tyler J. Hassell from Camden, North Carolina; and Sgt. Chane E. Thomas from Baltimore conducted the training in Senegal.

Capt. Patrick A. Nieto, the commander of the 763rd EOD Company, said his EOD techs trained 12 noncommissioned officers from Senegalese Armed Forces in support of the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETF-A).

Nieto said his EOD Soldiers demonstrated and trained the Senegalese EOD troops with new EOD robots, bomb suits, X-ray systems and other technical equipment required for IED disruption and disposal.

The Senegalese forces received the new equipment from the SETF-A and the 763rd EOD Company Soldiers trained the Senegalese forces.

Nieto said the highlight of the Senegal mission was graduation week.

“Upon my arrival, my teams introduced me to the participants. Every participant greeted my teams with their local dialect and my teams responded back in kind,” said Nieto.

“Both the Senegalese and U.S. Soldiers shared each other’s culture and appreciation. The commander of the training site thanked us for sending our best instructors,” said Nieto. “The atmosphere was cheerful and professional as the Soldiers exchanged jokes and stories.”



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Quincy Baumeister, training team lead from the 763rd EOD Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Co., assists Senegalese Army Sgt. Baye Seny Ndiaye with his bomb suit during a training lane at the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Training Center in Bargny, Senegal, Aug. 24. SETAF-AF provides U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Army Europe-Africa a dedicated headquarters to synchronize Army activities in Africa and scalable crisis response options in Africa and Europe. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Brian Andries.



The 763rd EOD Company “Ozark Bandits” are part of the 242nd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier multifunctional CBRNE formation.

The 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army’s CBRN specialists and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians, as well as the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, five Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.

From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command take on the world’s most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

In addition to deploying for overseas missions, EOD technicians from the 763rd EOD Company also support explosive mitigation missions for

any military munitions found in Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota.

The EOD techs also protect the nation’s most senior leaders and foreign heads of state on Very Important Personnel Protection Support Activity missions.

A native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Nieto enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2011. He was commissioned through the ROTC program at Indiana University.

Nieto said he became an EOD officer because he wanted to be part of an elite profession that protects people and enables operations.

“I simply wanted to be with some of the best people the Army has to offer,” said Nieto. “There is rarely a day that is the same as the last and the constant flux of missions and training make this one of the best careers in the Army.”

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Mountain Dragons bolster combined defense posture in Korea



The 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) is training together with U.S. and Republic of Korea military units during a nine-month rotational deployment to South Korea. The Fort Drum, New York-based CBRN company is serving near the world's most heavily guarded border. Courtesy photo.

CAMP CASEY, South Korea – A deployed U.S. Army Chemical Corps company is training with U.S. and South Korean military forces near the world's most heavily guarded border.

American Soldiers from the 59th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Company (Hazardous Response) "Mountain Dragons" are bolstering the Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance combined defense posture during a rotational deployment near the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

Since arriving in South Korea in July 2023, the Fort Drum, New York-based CBRN company has trained with combat forces for a wide variety of combat missions in support of the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Division Sustainment Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Philip M. Ellis, the 23rd CBRN Battalion warrant officer, said the company has integrated with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division; 210th Fires Brigade; and 2nd Infantry Division Sustainment Brigade.

"The 59th CBRN Company has focused on warfighting first during its nine-month rotation to South Korea," said Ellis, a native of Honolulu who has served in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps for 16 years. "The Mountain Dragons regularly practice their ability to quickly assemble and perform their mission of providing CBRN reconnaissance and decontamination support."

The 59th CBRNE Company has also focused on supporting counter Weapons of Mass Destruction training missions, including combating chemical, biological and nuclear hazards.

"The Mountain Dragons put their skills and experiences to the test with an intense seven-day validation exercise where the company's performance was exemplary, prosecuting chemical, biological and nuclear targets across a non-continuous area of operations consisting of underground facilities," said Ellis.

The company also conducted a week-long validation exercise, which tested their tactical and technical

proficiency to conduct their wartime missions, including complex night and day chemical, biological and nuclear training missions.

"I observed 'greatness' from the 59th CBRN Company," said Ellis. "The company performed at a high level and overcame all obstacles, even with a rigorous timeline, and achieved validation status. I've observed six rotational chemical companies in the Republic of Korea and the 59th stands out by far as the best rotational chemical company to fight tonight."

The company also trained together with numerous Republic of Korea military units during Exercise Ulchi Freedom Shield in August.

ROK Army Brig. Gen. Jaehoon Yoo, the commanding general of the ROK CBRN Defense Command, recognized the company for its service during the deployment.

The 59th CBRN Company is part of the 83rd CBRN Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier multifunctional CBRNE formation.

The ROK-U.S. Alliance marked its 70th anniversary in October 2023. The alliance was established on October 1, 1953.

Capt. Evan P. Shortsleeve, the commander of the 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response), said it was an honor to uphold the storied legacy of generations of American Soldiers who have served in the alliance that has defended liberty on Freedom's Frontier for more than 70 years.

"I am proud of the Mountain Dragons service on the Korean Peninsula as the most forward hazard response company in the Army during the 70th year of the ROK-U.S. Alliance," said Shortsleeve, a native of Litchfield, Connecticut, and graduate of Norwich University. "The Mountain Dragons are fighting well above their weight class as we focus on warfighting to increase the proficiency of the interoperability between U.S. forces and ROK partners."

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American, South Korean nuclear teams train together at INL



Republic of Korea Nuclear Characterization Team members conduct external reconnaissance of a mock nuclear facility. U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Team 2 members trained with Republic of Korea NCT members at the Idaho National Laboratory. Photo by Meghan Fujimoto, Idaho National Laboratory.

IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY, Idaho – American and South Korean troops leveraged the expertise at America’s premier nuclear research facility during a training course.

The U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams and Republic of Korea Armed Forces Nuclear Characterization Teams completed the Nuclear Infrastructure, Assessment and Disablement Course at Idaho National Laboratory, Oct. 2 - 14.

From South Korea, NCT 1 and NCT 2 participated in the course while the U.S. Army’s NDT 2 and NDT 3 observed the training with support from the Operations Directorate’s Training, Readiness and Exercise Section (G37) from the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command.

U.S. Army NDT members join with their NCT counterparts, cooperating and sharing their knowledge in planning, detector employment techniques, battle tracking, decontamination procedures and other aspects of nuclear infrastructure exploitation operations.

The American and South Korean nuclear teams differ in their unit composition and mission.

The South Korean teams include CBRN personnel from the ROK Army, ROK Navy and ROK Air Force who are part of the joint ROK CBRN Defense Command.

Maj. Zachary R. Scott, who served as the lead planner for the event, said the NIAC course serves as the primary technical training that the ROK NCTs conduct every year.

“The Nuclear Disablement Teams also conduct similar training each year at the same location,” said Scott. “Scenarios developed for NIAC focus the NCTs on real-world scenarios that could occur in a potential future conflict on the peninsula. Their training and our training mirror each other, and as such, both teams are able to share Tactics, Techniques and Procedures to accomplish the mission in a more efficient and effective manner.”

Scott said the NIAC training course forges a shared understanding of

technical capabilities while creating greater logistical and tactical interoperability.

“By observing and providing feedback to the NCTs during their realistic scenario-based training, the NCTs and NDTs developed a deeper understanding of each other’s methods, objectives and intent when approaching different technical problem sets,” said Scott.

The NIAC course made both teams more capable of accomplishing their high stakes missions, said Scott, adding that the NCTs learned some new methods of protecting their equipment from potential contamination.

“We, the NDTs, were quite impressed with the thoroughness and attention to detail the NCTs displayed during this training,” said Scott. “Ultimately, this training benefits both teams and both nations collectively as being familiar with each other and our respective techniques shortens the amount of time required to synchronize actions on an objective.”

A native of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and Afghanistan veteran, Scott previously served as a Chemical Corps officer before becoming a Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer (FA 52) to become a subject matter expert in the field.

U.S. Army NDTs exploit and disable nuclear and radiological WMD infrastructure and components to deny near-term capability to adversaries and they facilitate follow-on WMD elimination operations.

NDT members also serve with U.S. Army CBRNE Response Teams in the FBI-led interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensic Task Force on a rotational basis.

As the ROK-U.S. Alliance marks the 70th anniversary of its mutual defense treaty this month, the teams from the 20th CBRNE Command and ROK CBRN Defense Command continue to strengthen their long-standing partnership that has been forged in exercises and events.

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Fort Leonard Wood Soldiers march to honor EOD sergeant major

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – More than a hundred Soldiers and Airmen participated in an inaugural march to honor a fallen Explosive Ordnance Disposal sergeant major who died while responding to an Improvised Explosive Device during a domestic response mission.

The ruck march was held to honor Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Ray Foster, Sr., who was killed by an IED at the Quincy Compressor Division Plant in Illinois in 1976.

Foster responded to the IED at the compressor plant with Staff Sgt. James P. Smith, Staff Sgt. George Sledge and Spc. 5 Mike R. Vining from the Army EOD team that was supporting Senator Robert Dole during President Gerald Ford's reelection campaign at the time.

A seasoned EOD technician from Charlotte, North Carolina, Foster joined the U.S. Army in 1951 and served in Korea.

At the time of the compressor plant response on September 28, 1976, Foster was the senior enlisted leader for the 63rd Ordnance Company (EOD) on Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Foster was inducted into the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Hall of Fame.

The 763rd Ordnance Company (EOD) coordinated the 6.3-mile march to honor Foster and the Fort Leonard Wood-based 63rd Ordnance Company (EOD) where he served as the senior enlisted leader.

Soldiers and Airmen from the 763rd EOD Company, 554th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Chemical Brigade, 35th Engineer Brigade and the U.S. Air Force's 368th Training Squadron participated in the march.

The 763rd EOD Company "Ozark Bandits" are part of the 242nd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Parker S.H. Petersen, the executive officer for the 763rd EOD Company, said that 86 participants finished the ruck march.



More than a hundred Soldiers and Airmen from Fort Leonard Wood, participated in the inaugural Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Ray Foster, Sr., Ruck March, Sept. 28. Coordinated by the 763rd Ordnance Company (EOD), the 6.3-mile ruck march honored Foster and the 63rd Ordnance Company (EOD) where he served as the senior enlisted leader. U.S. Army photo by Melissa Buckley.



"It was an excellent turnout for the event – such a high and spirited level of participation in the memorial ruck underscores the culture of respect for the fallen and commitment to duty at Fort Leonard Wood," said Petersen. "It was very meaningful for our EOD unit to be able to honor one of our own alongside Soldiers and Airmen from other units on the installation."

Petersen said the company recognized several top finishers from the march.

Capt. Quinn B. Gutierrez from Bravo Company, 554th Engineer Battalion, was the fastest individual finisher and Bravo Company was the fastest unit. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Benjamin E. Carlson and Senior Master Sgt. Joshua L. Hite from the 368th Training Squadron were the fastest command team.

Spc. Alex M. Sias from the 763rd Ordnance Company (EOD) earned the fastest guidon award.

Three of Foster's family members attended the ruck march, including Alicia K. Stockdale, Kenneth R. Foster, Jr., and Rodney A. Foster.

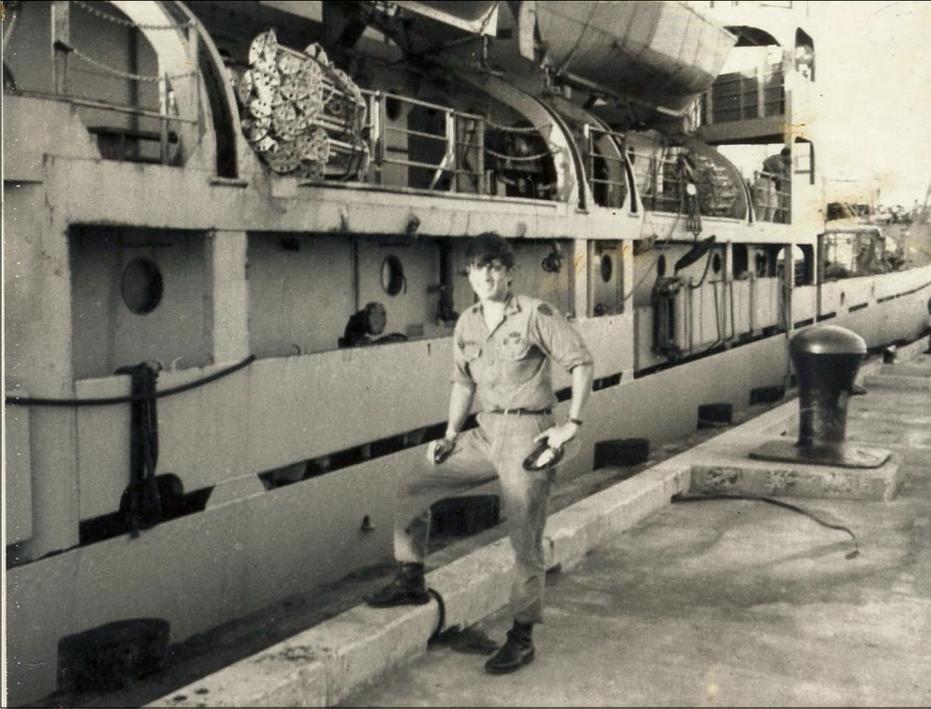
Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Mike Vining, who served with Foster during the IED response mission at the compressor plant, said he was grateful for the 763rd EOD Company for taking the time to recognize Foster for his enduring legacy in the EOD community.

Vining was one of the founding members of the U.S. Army's most elite Special Mission Unit and he participated in many of the U.S. military operations that defined the latter part of the 20th century, as an EOD technician and an elite Special Forces operator.

"I thank the members of the 763rd Ordnance Company (EOD) for remembering one of your own and my friend Ken Foster," said Vining.

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Retired Army colonel recalls response mission on Navy ship



Then U.S. Army 1st Lt. Daniel "Dan" Uyesugi stands beside the United States Naval Ship Francis X. McGraw (T-AK-241) prior to its departure from White Beach Tengen Pier, Sept. 19, 1970. Uyesugi served in the U.S. Army for 32 years and retired as a colonel. Courtesy photo.

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. – A retired U.S. Army Chemical Corps colonel vividly remembers the day when an alarm went off on a Navy cargo ship and his team ran toward the ship while everyone else ran in the opposite direction.

Col. Daniel "Dan" Uyesugi, a retired U.S. Army Chemical Corps and Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer, served in the 1970s with the Technical Escort Center during Operation Red Hat in Okinawa and Johnston Island.

Operation Red Hat brought together U.S. troops and civilians from around the world to safely transport more than 13,000 tons of chemical munitions from Okinawa to Johnston Island.

Headed by U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John J. Hayes, the commander of the 2nd Logistics Command, the joint service operation was completed in two phases well before the reversion of Okinawa to Japan on May 15, 1972.

The only reported mishap occurred in September 1970 on the White Beach Tengen Pier when U.S. civilian stevedores dropped two pallets of chemical

rockets onto the temporary decks in the hold of the United States Naval Ship Sea Lift (T-LSV-9).

The nerve gas filled M55 rockets fell into the ship when the pallet footer disintegrated. When the loading straps slipped, the rockets were dumped from the well above the top deck to the bottom temporary deck.

As other civilian and military personnel ran away from the ship when the alarm went off, members of the Technical Escort Center (TEC) dock team ran toward the ship.

Three members of the TEC shipboard team – then 1st Lt. Dan Uyesugi, Capt. Ken Chepy and 2nd Lt. Mark Loza donned Butyl Rubber Level A protection with M9 masks and climbed down seven stories on narrow ladders into the hold.

Per policy, the ventilation and power were turned off and the team members were locked into the ship by themselves.

"The temperature in the hold was initially over 100 degrees and in-

creased to well over 120 degrees over the four plus hours that we were in the hold," said Uyesugi. "There was no overhead lighting, and the team worked with only flashlights. We rested at intervals and doused ourselves with water to cool as best we could."

The M55 rockets were scattered many feet apart over most of the floor on the bottom temporary deck.

Since several of the rockets were damaged, the team had to improvise to overpack and decontaminate them.

The team worked to seal the damaged rockets in two metal cylinders with lead gaskets.

"We could not do that with several of the rockets with their shipping and firing tube shattered and bent at the threaded connection of the warhead and rocket motor. At least one was bent at a right angle and others were distorted significantly. We decided once we saw them that we had to improvise to seal the rockets," said Uyesugi.

"We needed to limit possible agent release as quickly as possible," said Uyesugi. "We used the rail ties and jumped on the ends of the rocket tubes to straighten them until each of them almost fit into the cylinders and we could insert the bolts and attach nuts in the cylinder flanges with lead gaskets. We then tightened to close and seal the cylinders and decontaminated each of the overpacked rockets with High Test Hypochlorite."

The damaged rounds were later taken to Johnston Island where they were destroyed at sea.

The TEC teams then escorted the chemical rounds on the more than 6,500-mile sea voyage from Okinawa to Johnston Island. No one was injured during the mishap and response.

The M55 incident on USNS Sea Lift was the only reported mishap during Operation Red Hat and the TEC Soldiers involved were never officially recognized for it.

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Army EOD officer takes on new challenges in US Space Force

WASHINGTON – A senior U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer who spent decades tackling one of the most prevalent threats on the modern battlefield has set his sights on a new warfighting domain.

U.S. Space Force Col. Dorian C. Hatcher made the leap from combatting explosives to transforming space acquisition to outpace global competitors in the Space Force in April 2023.

As the nation's first new armed service in more than seven decades, the United States Space Force trains, organizes and equips Guardians to conduct global space operations that enhance the way joint and coalition forces fight while also offering military options to achieve national objectives.

Established in December 2019, the U.S. Space Force ensures access and freedom of movement in space while safeguarding national security and economic prosperity.

A native of San Antonio, Hatcher was inspired to serve by his grandfather while growing up on a ranch in Texas.

"My grandfather, a United States Marine, enthralled me with tales from the past – stories not of terror but of camaraderie amidst the chaos of Vietnam and Korea. These narratives illuminated the unexpected humor that Soldiers conjure in the throes of battle and the remarkable cohesion within platoons and teams," said Hatcher.

"His own journey from enlistment to warfighter to Foreign Area Officer in Tehran, Iran, during the reign of the Shah left a trail of mementos, tangible echoes of far-off duty stations — each infused with its own vivid story," said Hatcher. "The ethos he showcased, nurtured by Marine Corps values, and cultivated on a Texas cattle ranch, took root within me at an early age."

Since the Marine Corps did not offer guaranteed Military Occupational Specialties, Hatcher decided to join the U.S. Army instead.

In 1992, he enlisted as a private and began his Army career serving at Camp Casey, South Korea, as a



U.S. Space Force Col. Dorian C. Hatcher made the leap from combatting explosives to transforming space acquisition to outpace global competitors in the U.S. Space Force in April 2023. A native of San Antonio, Hatcher currently serves in the Pentagon as the Deputy Director of Space Architecture and division chief of the Joint Capabilities Division in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration. Courtesy photo.

Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic, focusing on keeping equipment ready.

At his next duty station on Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Hatcher decided to become an EOD tech after a fateful meeting with then Staff Sgt. David Puig who drove up in an EOD vehicle.

"His vehicle sported an imposingly large EOD sticker, sparking my curiosity," said Hatcher. "I couldn't resist asking him about it, wondering why anyone would choose a path that involved handling hazardous explosives after what I thought was only three weeks of training."

Puig patiently explained to Hatcher that three weeks of handling explosives was preceded by more than a year of intensive training and invited Hatcher to the EOD shop on Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Puig then played an EOD recruiting video on a laser disc that would change Hatcher's life.

Puig would later serve as the third command sergeant major for the U.S. Army's 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier CBRNE command.

After more than two decades in the U.S. Army and 57 months deployed to combat zones, Hatcher was reminded of that fateful encounter with Staff Sgt. Puig, and realized, once again, he made the decision to apply for interservice transfer to the United States Space Force.

Upon selection and with the support and encouragement of his proud wife Karen and their children L. Ashley and E. Austin, Hatcher joined the Guardian family surrounded by classmates in a joint transfer ceremony..

"From the initial anonymity of an enlisted mechanic to the intricate art of neutralizing explosives, my journey embodies a fusion of dedication and heritage, all in service of safeguarding our nation," said Hatcher. "My military journey has been remarkable, allowing me to serve with our nation's finest. I am grateful to have been a Soldier and extremely humbled and proud to be a USSF Guardian."

Hatcher encourages anyone who is thinking about joining the military to talk with veterans and listen to their stories like he did.

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