



The Defender



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Soldiers test mettle at Best Squad Competition on Fort Campbell



Soldiers from the U.S. military's premier all hazards command proved their mettle during the Best Squad Competition, May 15 - 19. The squad from the 52nd Ordnance Group (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) won the Best Squad Competition. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – American Soldiers from the U.S. military's premier all hazards command proved their mettle during the Best Squad Competition, May 15 - 19.

The 52nd Ordnance Group (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) squad won the 20th CBRNE Command Best Squad Competition on Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Spc. Jacob Boatman and Sgt. 1st Class Drew Hawley from the 722nd EOD Company, 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group, respectively earned best Soldier and best non-commissioned officer.

Together with Hawley and Boatman, Sgt. Christopher Brown, Spc. Skyler Sheets and Spc. William Wheat represented the 52nd Ordnance Group (EOD).

The 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters and Headquarters Company squad was the runner-up squad.

Staff Sgt. Ricardo Jasso, Cpl. Keoni Wolford, Spc. Javier Garcia, Spc. Jorge Orta and Spc. Haven Barnes represented the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters and Headquarters Command.

The Fort Cavazos, Texas-based 48th Chemical Brigade was represented by Sgt. Michael Granados, Cpl. Bruce Lome, Cpl. Garrett Hahn, Pfc. Michael Camacho and Pfc. Nicholas Adam.

The 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) was represented by Staff Sgt. Aramis Escobar-Diaz, Sgt. Aidan Fullerton, Spc. Zion Clark, Spc. Keylin Pierce Dunnican and Pfc. Michael Paguirigan.

The winners will compete at the U.S. Army Forces Command competition.

Hawley, who is from Jonesville, Michigan, said finding time to train as a squad was challenging since his company has many missions to

accomplish, from providing support to the U.S. Secret Service to training for combat missions.

"We used whatever available time we had to train on whatever events we thought we could see," said Hawley. "We were able to train on patrolling with a prior infantry Soldier in our company which ended up being a big help to the team."

The 52nd EOD Group squad trained for land navigation, conducted battle drills and completed the Army Combat Fitness Test a week prior to the competition.

"In the EOD career field, we are hyper focused on mastering our craft, which is what the Army asks of us and what we will continue to do," said Hawley, adding that EOD units must be able to support infantry and Special Forces missions. "We need to make time to ensure our EOD techs aren't only excellent at their job but are also well-rounded in basic Soldier tasks. It was also super fun to show up, give it our all and walk away with a win."

Hawley initially enlisted in the Michigan Army National Guard as a Motor Transport Operator (88M). After spending four years in that job and deploying to Afghanistan, Hawley decided to become an EOD technician.

"EOD is a small community that has a great culture within the Army," said Hawley, who has deployed to Niger and Iraq as an EOD team leader. "Between conducting homeland response missions, supporting the U.S. Secret Service, airborne EOD supporting the Immediate Response Force, supporting special operations forces and being experts in all things CBRNE, among countless other things we do, there is a wide variety of mission sets you can do in EOD."

[See full story](#)

From the Command Sergeant Major

Leader tip: Don't confuse the respect you're entitled to with the respect you've earned.

Respect. It's a fundamental human value, essential for healthy relationships and social interactions. With respect comes more than authority, but also optimization of time. Less time is spent explaining, more time spent executing.

In the Army, as we gain experience, position, rank, and expertise, formalized gestures of respect increase. We call these customs and courtesies, and this respect is essential to the continued advancement of an organization, as well as good order and discipline. Could you imagine if every time a leader or critical expert in the team changed out, we started from zero? Making them prove themselves before any trust was given or any decisions supported? We trust the professional education and selection process that precedes promotions and assignments has qualified our leaders to assume their roles. The inherent respect that is specified by authorities, customs, and courtesies, is in fact entitled by grade and position, and it comes with compliance.



Soldiers follow orders, people follow leaders. It's not enough to get compliance, for an organization to become a cohesive, disciplined, and agile team there must be commitment. Commitment begins with the leaders earning the respect, trust, and confidence of the Soldiers, civilians, and family members under their care. Respect entitled, is day one, and begins to be validated or negated with every interaction that follows. As leaders demonstrate their compassion and competence, their earned respect grows. With that grows the commitment of the team, not just to the mission, but to each other.

Earned respect is a byproduct of engaged leadership that cares and invests in the success of individuals, not just the mission. A leader cannot supervise their team to success, those that try are known as micro-managers and seldom gain earned respect. A point will come when enough oversight isn't possible. It's at that point that commitment, or lack thereof, becomes evident.

An NCO gives instructions to a Soldier in the motorpool. The Soldier standing at parade rest answering "Roger Sergeant!" is the respect entitled. The level of execution taken by the Soldier as soon as dismissed is the respect earned. When the task is completed to minimum standard, does the Soldier say, "good enough" and stop, or do they push themselves to go the extra measure? If the leader ensured the Soldier understands the purpose, what's at stake, and how critical their role is, the Soldier will feel valued and committed to do beyond what is asked. This is the respect earned.

Our goal as leaders is to earn the respect of our formation, each and every day. Over the next few editions, I'm going to deep dive into the vision of the 20th CBRNE Command to be an organization of extraordinary professionals who lead our formations, care for our Soldiers, civilians, and families, train our force, and maintain our resources. Leaders dedicated to this vision will, without exception, earn respect, trust, confidence, and commitment.

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



The Defender

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Army chaplain administers oath to son during ROTC commissioning ceremony



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Daniel D. Kang welcomed his son 2nd Lt. Steven Shinyoung Kang into the Army officer ranks during the ceremony at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Chaplain Kang is the command chaplain for the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier all hazards formation. Courtesy photo.

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – A U.S. Army chaplain administered the oath of office to his son during the ROTC commissioning ceremony at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Daniel D. Kang welcomed his son 2nd Lt. Steven Shinyoung Kang into the U.S. Army officer ranks during the ceremony.

Chaplain Kang is the command chaplain for the 20th CBRNE Command.

Maj. Gen. Antonio Munera, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Cadet Command and former commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, spoke at the ceremony and congratulated the Kang family on their legacy of service to the nation.

Chaplain Kang said Munera accepted the offer to speak at the ROTC commissioning ceremony before he became the commanding general for U.S. Army Cadet Command.

"It was definitely very special for the Kang family," said Chaplain Kang. "It is an honor to have the Cadet Command commanding general visit and speak. His remarks were very encouraging to the young cadets. He made it very personal to the Kang family. We

really appreciated him coming over to our family when we took pictures."

Chaplain Kang said he was tremendously proud to administer the oath of office to his son.

"As a father, it was most memorable to be able to execute my son's oath of office directly, as I did not take that oath lightly when I took it a long time ago, and I now bestow the same duty and honor of the oath on my own son," said Chaplain Kang.

The chaplain will move to 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, this summer. His son will serve as a transportation officer at the 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, in Hawaii.

Having his father administer the oath of office was something that 2nd Lt. Kang said he will always remember.

"The greatest highlight was most definitely when my father administered my oath," said 2nd Lt. Kang.

[Read full story](#)

Chaplain's Corner

Greeting to all,

Are we safe to share our struggles and challenges to our leaders and others in our organization to get help? Are we safe to get help from behavioral health and other helping agencies?

Good leaders and good organizations provide emotionally safe environments. We need to be safe enough to know that when we mess up, we will not be put to shame.

Healthy and good leaders and organizations encourage and teach us. They do not shame us, humiliate us, belittle us, or retaliate against us.

Author Dr. Brene Brown efficiently distinguishes between shame and guilt. Shame is labeling who you are, and guilt is pointing out what you did.

For example, when you make a mess, your leaders or spouses could say, "You made a mess" instead of "You are a mess."

An emotionally safe environment is one with no fear, no shame, and no humiliation. It is the place where leaders allow mistakes and growing pains.

It is where leaders, parents, and spouses encourage, teach, and guide others with patience and compassion, even if they are all adults.

We must create this culture to build a healthy and trustworthy organization.

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Current operations officer promoted to colonel during ceremony



Ashleigh Kazor (left) and Brendan Kazor (right) help to promote their father Col. Anthony J. Kazor (center) to colonel at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, May 2. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.



ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The current operations officer for the U.S. military's premier all hazards command was promoted to colonel during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, May 2.

Col. Anthony J. Kazor, the former current operations officer for the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, was promoted to his current rank during a widely attended ceremony at the command headquarters.

The ceremony was hosted by Col. Michael Tremblay, the commander of the 1st Recruiting Brigade. Kazor served as the executive officer when Tremblay commanded the 2nd Battalion, 393rd Infantry Regiment on Fort Cavazos, Texas.

A career U.S. Army Chemical Corps officer, Kazor earned a biology degree from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, through the Army ROTC program in 2000.

He earned a Master of Science in Environmental Management degree from Webster University in Webster Groves, Missouri.

"As a young 2nd lieutenant, I couldn't imagine completing my career, if I made it that long, as a CBRN officer. However, at each point along the way, I could not think of doing anything else that I would like better. So fast forward 22 and a half years later, here I am still a proud Chemical Corps officer," said Kazor. "I would definitely recommend the Chemical Corps to anyone joining the Army. I have had the opportunity to do some truly amazing things."

Kazor has deployed as a battalion staff officer and CBRNE Response Team leader to Afghanistan where he led a Counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Laboratory. He has also commanded as a captain and major, run an Army-level program at the Department of the Army and commanded the Radford

Army Ammunition Plant in Radford, Virginia.

The colonel said he had welcomed the opportunity to serve as the current operations officer for the command.

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.

"I have a pulse on everything going on in the command," said Kazor. "With all the exercises, missions, and training events we do, I understand the awesome and unique capability this command provides our Army and nation. It is an honor to be a Defender."

Following his tour as the 20th CBRNE Command current operations officer, Kazor will report to the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania.

A veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Kazor said the Soldiers and leaders around him have helped him to become the leader he is today.

"I stand on the shoulders of giants. From my first staff job as a battalion chemical officer to today, I have been a part of so many great teams of leaders, peers and subordinates that have shaped me into the leader I am today," said Kazor. "I thank everyone that I have served with because everyone has helped make me a better person and leader."

Kazor credited his wife and children with his success and thanked them for the many sacrifices they have made that have enabled him to serve his nation.

"My wife and children have had the patience and strength to support me and this career. They have often borne the brunt of military life. From missing the birth of my first born, to temporary assignments, training exercises and deployments, my family has been my rock," said Kazor. "I couldn't ask for a better home team."

[Read full story](#)

Army civilian contributes to multicomponent CBRNE readiness

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – An Army civilian program analyst contributes to readiness at the U.S. military’s premier all hazards command.

Mary-Alice Allan, a program analyst in the Operations Training, Readiness and Exercises (G37) section at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, was selected as the command Civilian of the Quarter.

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.

Allan planned and led a synchronization conference that brought together nine battalions, three EOD groups and a chemical brigade as well as the CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, 1st Area Medical Laboratory and Army Reserve’s 76th Operational Response Command.

The conference was designed to plan for upcoming joint exercises, Combat Training Center rotations and Warfighter exercises for the next four fiscal years.

Allan prepared the products and worked with U.S. Army Forces Command and the Department of Army to plan for next two fiscal years with units from the company level and higher. She also developed a Training and Exercise Synchronization monthly teams meeting with the staff and major subordinate commands.

“I audit the monthly unit readiness reports of the command which provides the Army and Joint Staff with our command’s operational readiness and status of our resources,” said Allan. “I plan to continue helping the command and subordinate units with reporting and communicating our readiness status to the Army.”



Charles Hughes (left), the deputy to the commanding general and senior U.S. Army civilian at the 20th CBRNE Command, congratulates Mary-Alice Allan (right) on being selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter. A native of Bel Air, Maryland, Allan is a program analyst in the Operations Training, Readiness and Exercises (G37) section at the 20th CBRNE Command. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

A native of Bel Air, Maryland, Allan grew up around the military. Allan began working at the 20th CBRNE Command as a contractor in 2011 and transferred to civil service in 2021.

Allan has spent 12 years in the 20th CBRNE Command G37 section.

“Serving as a US Army civilian gives me a sense of purpose and community,” said Allan. “I enjoy working at the 20th CBRNE Command because of the people and the mission.”

[Read full story](#)

Awards

Darryl Briggs	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	Keith Weeks	Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Nathan Cantwell	Civilian Service Commendation Medal		
Michael Emelio	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	David Penhollow	Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
William Hart	Civilian Service Commendation Medal		
Virginia Isaac	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	Angie Bartos	Certificate of Appreciation
Johnson Pedro	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	Chuck Godby	Certificate of Appreciation
Albert Marte	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	Janine Hoskins	Certificate of Appreciation
Kimani Rice	Civilian Service Commendation Medal	Brooke Kunstbeck	Certificate of Appreciation
		Laura Lenker	Certificate of Appreciation
Walter T. Ham IV	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Jen Murrell	Certificate of Appreciation
Steven Sieranski	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Tia Reed	Certificate of Appreciation
Walter Oldenburg	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Shai Reynolds	Certificate of Appreciation
Nicole Patton	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Jessie Wilson	Certificate of Appreciation
Mary-Alice Allan	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Moon Kang	Certificate of Appreciation
Edward Rios	Civilian Service Achievement Medal		
Bradley Weber	Civilian Service Achievement Medal	Rick Lopez	Public Service Commendation Medal

Colonel concludes 30-year Army career at 20th CBRNE Command

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A U.S. Army Chemical Corps colonel concluded 30 years of service during a ceremony at the U.S. military's premier all hazards command, April 27.

Col. Brant D. Hoskins retired from the Army during a widely attended retirement ceremony at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Hoskins retired together with Lt. Col. Ronald C. Lenker, the Nuclear Disablement Team 2 leader, at a joint retirement ceremony.

A native of Albany, Oregon, Hoskins is the former deputy commanding officer and operations officer for the 20th CBRNE Command.

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

The one-of-a-kind command is home to 75 percent of U.S. Army's active-duty Explosive Ordnance Disposal 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.

Hoskins' portion of the joint retirement ceremony was hosted by Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command.

Hood thanked Hoskins for his service and highlighted the colonel's focus on leadership and education.

In addition to graduating from Southern Oregon State College, which is now called Southern Oregon University, Hoskins also earned master's degrees in Adult Education, Theater Operations and Strategic Studies.

The commanding general also emphasized the important role that



U.S. Army Col. Brant D. Hoskins retired during a retirement ceremony at the 20th CBRNE Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, April 27. Hoskins is the former deputy commanding officer and operations officer for the 20th CBRNE Command. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

Hoskins had played in supporting maneuver formations throughout his career.

"Today, we stop and think about why the 20th exists," said Hood. "We enable lethality. We enable commanders to have freedom of action so they can make timely decisions."

During his 30 years in uniform, Hoskins has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Bosnia and Germany. He said his Bosnia deployment in 1997 – 1998 is particularly memorable.

"I got a lot of satisfaction out of helping the people in Bosnia," said Hoskins. "We were there immediately after the ceasefire during the winter and those people were in really bad shape. It was a privilege to help them get back on their feet."

Hoskins commanded the 89th Chemical Company, 110th Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort) and Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

He was also a Counter Weapons of

Mass Destruction planner at 20th CBRNE Command.

Hoskins said serving in the U.S. Army was his lifelong goal.

"I wanted to join the Army since I was a little boy," said Hoskins. "I have a family history of service in the Army and it seemed like the best fit for me."

Hoskins said he will miss the Soldiers and Army civilians that he has served with during his 30 years in uniform.

"I have had many highlights but what sticks out the most is the incredible people that I have met all around the world," said Hoskins. "I would have never had that opportunity if I had not joined the Army."

His advice to the Soldiers following in his footsteps is straightforward.

"I think the three top things are to focus on the mission, respect and take care of people and they will take care of you and don't quit on anything," said Hoskins.

[Read full story](#)

First command chief warrant officer promoted on APG



Jesse J. Deberry (left) and Jacqueline L. Deberry (right) promote their son U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse S. Deberry (center), the first command chief warrant officer for 20th CBRNE Command, during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The first command chief warrant officer to serve at the U.S. military's premier all hazards formation was promoted to chief warrant officer 4.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse S. Deberry was promoted to his current rank during a ceremony at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, June 2.

In addition to being the first command chief warrant officer for the 20th CBRNE Command, Deberry was one of the first Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Technician warrant officers in the U.S. Army in 2011 after the program was established a year earlier.

Deberry is now one of 11 serving as a CBRN chief warrant officer 4 in the U.S. Army.

As executive level professionals, CBRN warrant officers provide the U.S. Army with the technical and tactical expertise to combat the world's most dangerous hazards.

Deberry has served as the command chief warrant officer at the 20th

CBRNE Command since July 2021.

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, hosted the promotion ceremony.

Hood said that CBRN chief warrants officers like Deberry provide technical expertise that help to keep the Army ready to enable maneuver forces to succeed on the battlefield.

Growing up in an Army family, Deberry graduated from the SHAPE American High School in Belgium.

Originally from Columbia, South Carolina, Deberry enlisted as a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) specialist in the Army in 1998.

"I initially joined the Army for the discipline, education and to travel the world," said Deberry. "After 9/11, my reasons for serving transitioned into playing my part in defending he constitution and protecting our nation."

From Germany to South Korea, Deberry has served around the world during his 24 years in uniform. He has also deployed to Bahrain, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

Deberry said the highlights of his career were molding future Soldiers as a drill instructor, meeting President Barrack Obama in Afghanistan in 2010 and becoming one of the first CBRN warrant officers in the Army.

Deberry said he has been successful because of his faith and family. He added that it is important to be adaptable, self-disciplined and resilient.

In addition to his military education, Deberry earned his bachelor's degree in Homeland Security from University of Maryland and his master's degree in Acquisition and Procurement Management with a certification in Government Contracting from Webster University.

"I attribute my success in the Army to having great leaders and mentors who invested time and effort into my well-being, training, military and civilian education and career management," said Deberry.

He was selected for master sergeant and warrant officer on the same day.

"I aspired to become the regimental command sergeant major of the Chemical Corps," said Deberry. "The CBRN Warrant Officer Program introduced a new set of challenges and new opportunities that influenced my decision to cross over."

As a warrant officer, Deberry has served as a CBRN technician at the 1st Battalion, 62nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, on Fort Cavazos, Texas; and the 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, on Fort Liberty, North Carolina. He also served as the regimental chief warrant officer for the U.S. Army CBRN School and the command chief warrant officer for the 48th Chemical Brigade.

"The best part of serving as the first command chief warrant officer for the 20th CBRNE Command is serving with the Soldiers and civilians at the command, coaching junior warrant officers and shaping the position for a future chief warrant officer 5 to fill," said Deberry.

[Read full story](#)

Army civilian chronicles premier deployable all hazards command

By Maj. Steven M. Modugno
Public Affairs Director

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — A U.S. Army civilian public affairs officer chronicles the U.S. military's premier all hazards command in publications and on websites around the world.

Walter T. Ham IV, the deputy public affairs director for the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, was selected as the U.S. Army Forces Command Civilian Writer of the Year and 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter.

A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Ham tells stories that feature the command and its Soldiers and Army civilians while strengthening its partnerships with joint, interagency and allied organizations around the world. In addition to serving as deputy public affairs director, Ham is also the editor-in-chief of *The Defender*.

Ham is a retired U.S. Navy Chief Journalist who deployed on the aircraft carrier USS America during Operation Desert Storm and the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard during tsunami relief operations in Indonesia and naval operations in the Persian Gulf. He served as the staff journalist and director of internal communications for the Chief of Naval Operations in the Pentagon during 9/11 and its aftermath.

Ham earned his bachelor's degree in mass communications/journalism from Excelsior College and his master's degree in nonfiction writing from Johns Hopkins University.

A former *Pacific Stars & Stripes* reporter, Ham has served as a civilian public affairs officer for the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army and Department of Defense.

To bolster the professions in the command, Ham also highlights legends in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Chemical Corps and Special Forces communities and writes about CBRNE enablers like the Military Working Dog teams that support EOD techs.



Col. John P. Kunstbeck, the chief of staff for the 20th CBRNE Command, presents the U.S. Army Forces Command Civilian Writer of the Year certificate to Walter T. Ham IV. As the Deputy Public Affairs Director, Ham chronicles the command in news and features stories. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

Col. John P. Kunstbeck, the chief of staff for the 20th CBRNE Command, said Ham and the public affairs team had dramatically increased news coverage of the command.

"It's just amazing at the highest levels of the Department of Defense, our articles are being seen on almost a weekly basis," said Kunstbeck, a U.S. Army Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer who is originally from Altoona, Pennsylvania. "That's really a testament to the entire public affairs section and especially to Mr. Ham."

Ham said the command is fortunate to have an extraordinary public affairs team with Maj. Steven M. Modugno, the public affairs director and Santa Clarita, California, native, as well as public affairs and audiovisual specialists Marshall R. Mason from Richmond, California, and Angel D. Martinez-Navedo from Vaga Baja, Puerto Rico.

The 20th CBRNE Command public affairs team puts in long hours in the office and on the road to produce stories, photos and video products to highlight the deployable and multifunctional unit.

"This is truly a one-of-a-kind command and public affairs team," said Ham. "The brave, smart and talented Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians at this command take on amazing missions around the world and the public affairs team works hard to ensure they are recognized for their service."

Ham has written more than a thousand stories on everything from naval operations in the Persian Gulf and congressional hearings on Capitol Hill to lighthouse maintenance on the Chesapeake Bay and training exercises on the Korean Peninsula.

During his 36 years of Navy and civil service, Ham has also crafted more than 500 speeches, scripts and messages for flag and general officers in the Navy, Army and Air Force.

Ham credited his wife MiOk R. Ham and their Catholic faith with his continued success throughout his career.

"I've truly been blessed," said Ham. "With the help of God and for His greater glory, I strive to make the world a better place by telling the story of the people who defend liberty in the greatest military in the history of the world."

[Read full story](#)

Nuclear Disablement Team 2 leader retires from Army



Lt. Col. Ronald C. Lenker, the team leader for Nuclear Disablement Team 2, concluded his more than 20 years in uniform at a ceremony at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters, April 27. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — The leader of a highly trained and uniquely capable nuclear team retired after 23 years of service in the U.S. Army, April 27.

Lt. Col. Ronald C. Lenker, the team leader for Nuclear Disablement Team 2, concluded his more than two decades in uniform at a widely attended ceremony at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Headquarters.

Lenker held his retirement ceremony together with Col. Brant D. Hoskins, the former deputy commanding officer and operations officer for the 20th CBRNE Command.

Maj. Gen. Antonio V. Munera, the commanding general for the U.S. Army Cadet Command, served as the host for Lenker's portion of the joint retirement ceremony.

Munera, who also served as the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command from June 2000 to September 2022, thanked Lenker for his 23 years of service to the nation in the U.S. Army and his leadership of Nuclear Disablement Team 2.

A native of Wiconisco, Pennsylvania, and a U.S. Army Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer (FA 52), Lenker completed his career as the team leader of one of the Army's three Nuclear Disablement Teams, also known as NDTs.

NDTs directly contribute to the nation's strategic deterrence by staying ready to exploit and disable nuclear and radiological Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) infrastructure and components to deny near-term capability to adversaries. The teams also facilitate follow-on WMD elimination operations.

Part of the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. Army's Nuclear Disablement Teams — the NDT 1 "Manhattan," NDT 2 "Iron Maiden" and NDT 3 "Vandals" — are stationed on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Lenker originally joined the Pennsylvania National Guard as an armor crewman and was later selected for an Army ROTC scholarship at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pennsylvania.

"Honestly my options for paying for college were either going into debt for a good portion of my adult life or joining the Army. Initially, it was only supposed to be a four-year commitment, but between the professionalism, educational opportunities and amazing people I worked with, I decided to make it a career," said Lenker.

Lenker started his active-duty U.S. Army career as an ordnance officer.

In 2012, he switched to the FA 52 program. Lenker earned a master's degree in nuclear engineering and logistics management at the Air Force Institute of Technology.

"As much as I loved being a logistics officer and still do, I always wanted to get more use out of my undergraduate degree in physics," said Lenker. "When the Army began to downsize a few years ago, it seemed like the right time to make the switch. It was the right move and has been extremely rewarding, allowing me to be on the Nuclear Disablement Teams and really develop an understanding of the United States' nuclear enterprise."

During his more than two decades in uniform, Lenker deployed to Iraq twice and Kuwait once. His most memorable mission happened during his first convoy in Iraq from Balad Air Base to the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad.

"We had some excitement along the way because we had to fire our weapons and had to drive around an Improvised Explosive Device found by the engineers ahead of us — but the memorable part was at the end," said Lenker. "We were stuck in traffic on Route Tampa. All of a sudden, I looked out the window and see a guy in a donkey cart passing everyone along the shoulder of the road."

At NDT 2, Lenker has helped to increase interoperability with the Republic of Korea Nuclear Characterization Teams during several partnership events since 2018.

Following retirement, Lenker plans to live in northeastern Maryland and will continue to work in the CBRNE and counter Weapons of Mass Destruction field.

Lenker said one of the keys to success in the Army is leveraging the collective talent, experience and wisdom of everyone.

"Listen to the folks around you — officers, noncommissioned officers, Soldiers, civilians, everybody," said Lenker. "Everyone has a unique perspective and being able to put all those perspectives together allows you to efficiently solve any problem."

[Read full story](#)

Command surgeon promoted to colonel at ceremony

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — The command surgeon for the U.S. military's premier all hazards formation was promoted to colonel during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, June 9.

Col. Michael R. Boivin was promoted to his current rank at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters.

The ceremony was hosted by Col. Benjamin N. Palmer, the director of the Public Health Directorate in the Office of the Surgeon General.

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, and other senior command leaders attended the event.

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 in the command.

"I think the best part of serving as the 20th CBRNE Command Surgeon is working with Soldiers and with other areas of expertise," said Boivin. "All of my past assignments have been in U.S. Army Medical Command or Defense Health Agency, so almost entirely medical-focused and heavily civilian. It has been great working with Soldiers and seeing how medical fits into the operations of a U.S. Army Forces Command unit."

A native of Laurel, Maryland, Boivin decided to apply for medical school while studying for his bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

"I chose the Army because I grew up in the Washington, D.C., area and heard a lot about Walter Reed growing up. I also chose the Army because it's the largest and I thought it had the most options and opportunities," said Boivin.

"I was planning to apply to medical school early in college and looked into the Health Professions Scholar-



Col. Michael R. Boivin speaks at his promotion ceremony at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, June 9. Boivin is the command surgeon for the 20th CBRNE Command. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

ship program as I started the application process. In addition to not having to take out significant loans, I was also interested in the unique opportunities in the Army and caring for those in harm's way," said Boivin. "I would definitely recommend the Army to anyone looking to serve their country and see the world."

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.

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

He then completed residency 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 said the highlight of his Army career has been his assignment at Global Emerging Infections Surveil-

lance (GEIS) Branch at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division for the Defense Health Agency.

"I started that job without an official passport and had only been to Afghanistan," said Boivin. "While there, I was able to visit several of the (DoD overseas) labs in 12 countries and filled up my passport. Through providing infectious disease surveillance findings to the combatant commands, it was also rewarding to contribute to the force health protection of service members deployed across the globe."

Boivin said his parents instilled a hard work ethic in him and that his family has supported everything he has done.

"I think the key to my success has been working hard and making the most out of every opportunity. I've received great training and have been given increasing levels of responsibility that have allowed me to excel," said Boivin. "While not all my assignments were my first choice, I've found that those ended up being some of the most rewarding experiences that I have had. I've found that keeping a positive attitude goes a long way."

[Read full story](#)

EOD staff sergeant selected as Army Career Counselor of Year

FORT CARSON, Colo. – The career counselor from an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion that commands six EOD companies in four states was selected as the U.S. Army Career Counselor of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Zachary T. Olson from the 242nd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) on Fort Carson, Colorado, earned top honors for his service at the battalion.

The 242nd EOD Battalion “War Falcons” are part of the 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier all hazards command.

The 242nd EOD Battalion “War Falcons” confront and defeat explosive threats from bases in Colorado, New Mexico, Louisiana and Missouri.

Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth presented the award to Olson during a ceremony at the Pentagon, March 31. At the same ceremony, Sgt. 1st Class Antoni Bukowski was selected as the Career Counselor for the Year for the Army Reserve.

Olson said the key to success as an Army career counselor and leader is ensuring that Soldiers understand the impact of their service.



Staff Sgt. Zachary T. Olson from the 242nd Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) was selected as the U.S. Army Career Counselor of the Year. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Apolonia L. Gaspar.

“It’s not just important to have a clear understanding of their mission, it’s imperative for success and for the betterment of the organization you serve, regardless of what type of unit you’re in,” said Olson.

[Read full story](#)

Awards

48th Chemical Brigade

Lt. Col. Justin Hurt - Meritorious Service Medal
Lt. Col. Danielle Taylor - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Trey Ferguson - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Jordan Horn - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Jenny Metzler - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Matthew Bertram - Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Parker Tootill - Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rodrigo Contreras - Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric Moore - Meritorious Service Medal
Command Sgt. Maj. William Fritzinger - Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Adam Johnson - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Eric Petty - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Eric Truss - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Lane - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Theon Sok - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class David Weeks - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. Erin Toth - Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Sacha Soto-Castro - Army Achievement Medal

52nd EOD Group

Maj. Daniel Voss - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Thomas Shanahan - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Jennifer Turnipseed - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Alexander Fowler - Meritorious Service Medal

Capt. Matthew Booker - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Jared Fallaw - Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Dereck Gunn - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Brandon MacBride - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Stewart Stambaugh - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Chad Staples - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Joshua Tygret - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Justin Jacobs - Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Rockford Vickery - Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Jared Hart - Army Achievement Medal

71st EOD Group

Maj. Shawn Gutierrez - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Jonerik Livingston - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Matthew Earl - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Daniel Alberts - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Lt. Nicholas Canton - Army Achievement Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tamesha Holman - Army Achievement Medal
1st Sgt. Rommel Antonio - Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Tyler Anderson - Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. John Horton - Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Alan Rhoads - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Christina McLeod - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod Feldt - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Johnathon Williams - Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Walter Russell IV - Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Lesley Sparks - Meritorious Service Medal

EOD tech wins Army championship on Food Network show

CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. – A senior noncommissioned officer and Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician was the U.S. Army champion during the Military Salute tournament on the Food Network television show Chopped.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Colvin, the enlisted aide for the commandant of the U.S. Army War College, won first place for the Army in the competition that pits chefs and teams against each other during timed cooking matches with ingredients that are revealed right before the clock starts.

After first serving as a combat medic, Colvin became an Army EOD tech and took on explosive hazards at the 630th Ordnance Company (EOD) and 774th Ordnance Company (EOD) on Fort Riley, Kansas.

Colvin said he was drawn to the EOD community because it leverages the expertise of the team when confronting and defeating explosive hazards.



Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Colvin won first place for the Army during the Military Salute tournament on the Food Network television show Chopped. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Colvin.

“Our mission set is unique as our physical safety and lives are very much intertwined with those who are working with us,” said Colvin. “We must all be able to trust each other completely and without reservation, as a private may have the answer to circumventing a hazard that is geni-

us and outside of the box that I may not have otherwise thought of.”

A native of Englewood, Florida, Colvin used the same attributes that made him successful as an Army leader and EOD technician to succeed at the competition.

Since joining the National Guard in 2004 and the active-duty U.S. Army in 2006, Colvin has served as a field medic, EOD technician, Army recruiter and enlisted aide. Colvin said he initially joined the Army for the GI Bill.

“I have continued to serve for many other reasons,” said Colvin. “I have had several different military occupational specialties in the Army, received my bachelor’s degree, I’m pursuing my master’s degree, and I’m the U.S. Army’s Chopped Champion. What other job in this world will allow you to do all this and pay you for it?”

Colvin earned his bachelor’s degree from Southern New Hampshire University with a concentration in business administration and he is currently working on his master’s degree at Liberty University with a focus on education and history.

In his assignment as the first EOD tech to serve as the enlisted aide and estate manager for the 8,156-foot Quarters 1 on Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, Colvin routinely cooks for general and flag officers, elected officials and foreign dignitaries.

Maj. Gen. David C. Hill, the commandant of the U.S. Army War College, said Colvin contributes to the success of the U.S. Army War College through his leadership and service at Quarters 1, which is one of the largest historical homes in the U.S. Army.

“Sgt. 1st Class Colvin provides a margin of excellence to every representational function at Quarters 1. Whether providing world-class food service or diligently caring for a one-of-a-kind historic property, he demonstrates character, competence and commitment,” said Hill. “He’s just a great NCO, family man and trusted teammate.”

[Read full story](#)

Awards

20th CBRNE Command

Col. Christopher P. Bartos - Legion of Merit
Col. John P. Kunstbeck - Legion of Merit
Lt. Col. Daniel D. Kang - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Ariel A. Alcaide - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Charles E. Foster - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Jerry J. Hynes - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. James C. Bowen - Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Derek D. Whipkey - Army Commendation Medal
Maj. Stacey M. Yarborough - Meritorious Service Medal and Army Achievement Medal
Capt. Matthew R. Hale - Army Commendation Medal
Capt. William P. McKean - Army Commendation Medal
Capt. Joshua A. Warner - Army Commendation Medal
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric I. Burns - Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Dawn C. Wilson - Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Stephen N. Reed - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Liberio Miguel-Pablo - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Marco A. Alvares - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Rezvani - Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie R. Beachley - Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Tracey N. Jackson - Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Frederick I. Stevens - Army Commendation Medal
Staff Sgt. Joseph R. Maxwell - Army Commendation Medal
Staff Sgt. Kemafia D. Coleman - Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Matthew A. Redic - Army Commendation Medal
Cpl. Keoni K. Wolford - Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Bryan D. Farr - Army Commendation Medal

NDT 3 team leader concludes career at APG ceremony



Lt. Col. Michael C. Fish speaks at his retirement ceremony at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, April 14. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — The outgoing leader of a highly specialized U.S. Army nuclear team was honored for nearly 23 years of service to his nation, April 14.

Lt. Col. Michael C. Fish, the team leader for Nuclear Disablement Team 3, retired from the U.S. Army at a widely attended ceremony at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Col. Christopher P. Bartos, the deputy commanding officer for 20th CBRNE Command, spoke at the ceremony.

Fish served as a Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer (FA 52), which are the U.S. military's nuclear subject matter experts. As the NDT 3 leader, Fish also marshalled military support for post-blast nuclear forensics missions for the FBI-led domestic National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force.

NDTs directly contribute to the nation's strategic deterrence by staying ready to exploit and disable nuclear and radiological Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) infrastructure and components to deny near-term capability to adversaries. They also facilitate follow-on WMD elimination operations.

Part of the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. Army's Nuclear Disablement Teams — the NDT 1 "Manhattan," NDT 2 "Iron Maiden" and NDT 3 "Vandals" — are stationed on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Fish enlisted in the Army in 1996 as a UH-60 helicopter mechanic and served as a Blackhawk crew chief with the 228th Aviation Regiment at Joint Task Force-Bravo in Honduras.

"I had wanted to join the Army throughout high school, but I was committed to going to college first. As it turned out,

I had neither the discipline nor maturity to succeed on my own after high school," said Fish.

"I joined the Army as a Plan B, but it ultimately became such a fulfilling and rewarding experience that I stayed for over 20 years," said Fish. "The Army instilled the discipline and maturity I lacked as a post high school teenager and provided the education I sought before enlisting."

After attending a preparatory school, Fish earned a four-year degree in nuclear engineering from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, and he was commissioned as an Air Defense Artillery officer. Later in his Army career, he graduated from the Air Force Institute of Technology with a master's degree in nuclear engineering and became a Nuclear and Countering WMD officer.

Fish said the highlight of his Army career has been serving as team chief of both Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Team 1 and Nuclear Disablement Team 3 at the 20th CBRNE Command.

"Both of those positions are coded for lieutenant colonels but allow the unique opportunity to bond more closely with my teammates and influence a tactical mission that has strategic implications," said Fish.

An Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, Fish said Nuclear and Countering WMD officers accomplish critical missions during large-scale combat operations since nuclear weapons, and the pursuit thereof, pose a tremendous danger.

"The FA 52 community within the Army serves to assess vulnerabilities of nuclear weapon effects against our allies on their populations, infrastructure, terrain and military," he said. "We work with the intelligence community to help predict conditions under which a weapon may be used against American or other allied forces as well as the effects of such employment."

Fish said Nuclear and Countering WMD officers are specially educated or trained to understand the science that governs nuclear weapons and nuclear WMD infrastructure, allowing them to inform commanders at all levels in their decision-making process during counter WMD and large-scale combat operations.

Fish said the key to success as an Army leader is empowering Soldiers and helping them to develop professionally and personally.

"When people feel genuinely cared for by their leadership, they will invest themselves back into the organization that has invested in them," said Fish.

Fish and his family will settle in Hope Mills, North Carolina. In June, Fish plans to hike the 2,198-mile Appalachian Trail, starting from Maine. He hopes to finish by Christmas 2023.

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US Army's only chemical brigade welcomes new commander



Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood (left), the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, passes the colors for the 48th Chemical Brigade to Col. Johannie San Miguel on Fort Cavazos, Texas, May 25. San Miguel assumed command of the 48th Chemical Brigade "Spartans" from Col. Alexander C. Lovasz during the widely attended ceremony. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, San Miguel deployed to Guatemala following Hurricane Mitch and to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is fluent in Spanish.

San Miguel is also a distinguished graduate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Western Hemisphere for Security Cooperation, and she graduated from the National War College.

She has served in numerous command and staff positions around the world.

From its headquarters base on Fort Cavazos, Texas, the 48th Chemical Brigade commands four battalions and 15 companies stationed across nine Army installations in eight states.

The brigade deployed to Liberia to support the U.S. Department of Defense mission to combat the Ebola outbreak in June 2015 as a part of Operation United Assistance.

The brigade is part of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier deployable and multifunctional all hazards command.

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the command senior enlisted leader, attended the ceremony.

Hood thanked Lovasz for his leadership and accomplishments at the brigade and he welcomed San Miguel to the command.

Hood also thanked the Spartans for their continued service around the world.

"This ceremony is meant to focus on the commander, but I just want to say well done to you, the Soldiers. Any time in command, whether it be at the company level or the brigade level or even higher, is only successful because of the Soldiers who are part of that unit," said Hood. "Keep striving to make a difference in what you do. No one else can do that but you."

[Read full story](#)



FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – The U.S. Army's only active-duty chemical brigade welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony on Fort Cavazos, Texas, May 25.

Col. Johannie San Miguel assumed command of the 48th Chemical Brigade "Spartans" from Col. Alexander C. Lovasz during the widely attended ceremony.

A native of Columbus, Georgia, Lovasz commanded the 48th Chemical Brigade for two years and he will now serve at the Department of the Army Headquarters as the chief of the G8 Force Development Branch.

An Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, Lovasz earned his bachelor's degree in international affairs at Florida State University. He also earned his mas-

ter's degree in international management from Troy University.

Lovasz, who speaks French fluently, studied at the Institute of Higher National Military Education in Paris, France, and he served as the director of staff for the NATO Rapid Reaction Corps-France in Lille, France.

During his time in command, Lovasz planned and participated in multiple exercises, including numerous exercises in South Korea.

The 48th Chemical Brigade also supported a Defense Civil Response Force mission in Mexico and Immediate Response Force mission in Europe.

San Miguel assumes command of the one-of-a-kind brigade following a tour as the Command Inspector General for U.S. Southern Command.

Fort Bliss, Texas-based EOD team wins all-Army competition

FORT CARSON, Colo. – The U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) “Luchadores” won first place in the all-Army EOD Team of the Year Competition, April 19.

Staff Sgt. Lesley S. Sparks and Staff Sgt. Walter J. Russell from the 734th EOD Company took top honors during the four-day competition on Fort Carson, Colorado, April 16 - 19.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Perkins and Sgt. Tyler Orvik from the 303rd EOD Battalion from U.S. Army Pacific earned second place in the competition and Staff Sgt. Rockford Vickery and Sgt. Jared Hart from the 52nd EOD Group came in third place.

Representing their EOD units at the competition was Sgt. 1st Class Robert Contini and Sgt. Michael Wing from the 1108th EOD Company from the New York National Guard and Sgt. Timothy King and Sgt. Nathaniel Evans from 702nd EOD Company in U.S. Army Europe-Africa.

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader from the 20th CBRNE Command, attended the award ceremony with Col. Michael G. Schoonover and Command Sgt. Maj. Randall C. Markgraf from the 71st EOD Group.

Called the “Crayon Crew,” the winning EOD team earned Meritorious Service Medals and championship belts, among many other awards.

The five Army EOD teams took on a wide variety of challenging scenarios during the competition, from responding to chemical ordnance and an Unmanned Aerial System to rendering safe a lodged projectile and multiple explosives at an ammunition supply point.

As explosives experts who support overseas military operations and domestic authorities at home, the “Luchadores” deployed to the U.S. Army Europe Africa area of responsibility in 2020 and served in Iraq in 2018.



Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians from five U.S. Army EOD teams complete during the all-Army EOD of the Year Competition on Fort Carson, Colorado. The teams took a wide variety of challenging scenarios during the five-day competition. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.

The 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) is assigned to the 3rd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

The competition was hosted by the 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

Russell said one of the biggest challenges was overcoming the fatigue during the competition.

“The nature of the scenarios was physically and mentally demanding,” said Russell, a native of Newnan, Georgia, and former U.S. Marine Corps field radio operator. “Taking the time to justify our thought processes was vital to our success as a team.”

Sparks, who also served in the U.S. Marine Corps before joining the U.S. Army, said the EOD team had to overcome old “training scars” to counter new scenarios.

“Maintaining scene command while rectifying the hazard under a time constraint was challenging,” said Sparks, a native of Westminster, Colorado.

Sparks and Russell said the senior noncommissioned officers from the

734th EOD Company helped them to prepare for the EOD Team of the Year competition by setting training lanes to evaluate critical EOD tasks and proficiencies.

Russell said learning new things and honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills is critical to success as an EOD technician.

“I became an EOD technician because there is no limit to the knowledge that you can gain,” said Russell. “As soon as you think you know everything, that is what will get you killed.”

The team will take the lessons learned and share them with the rest of the EOD technicians in the company, said Sparks.

“We are very blessed that 734th EOD Company is a very tight-knit community,” said Sparks. “These problems we ran at this year’s Team of the Year Competition offer new insights on challenges on today’s battlefield.”

The “Luchadores” deployed to the U.S. Army Europe Africa area of responsibility in 2020 and served in Iraq in 2018.

[Read full story](#)

Leaders pay tribute to fallen EOD heroes during ceremony



Military leaders honored fallen Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians at the EOD Memorial Ceremony on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, May 6. A joint service color guard presented the colors during the ceremony. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – Military leaders honored fallen Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians at the EOD Memorial Ceremony on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, May 6.

The ceremony recognized Lt. j.g. Aaron P. Fowler, a U.S. Navy EOD officer and Naval Academy graduate from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who died during a training mission in Hawaii on April 17, 2022.

Fowler became the 344th fallen hero listed on the EOD Memorial that honors all EOD technicians who have made the ultimate sacrifice at home and abroad since World War II.

Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Forrest C. Poole III, the assistant deputy commandant for installations and logistics, was the guest speaker at the event.

Hosted by U.S. Navy Capt. Steven Beall, the commanding officer of the Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, the ceremony featured a wreath laying and name reading.

Based on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, the Naval EOD School is a jointly staffed school that provides specialized, basic and advanced EOD training for U.S. and allied

troops and selected U.S. government personnel.

Army Capt. Michael Villahermosa, an instructor at the EOD school, said the highlight of the ceremony was taking the time to honor the EOD technicians who came before them.

“Every year, we gather as a community and reaffirm our commitment to the families, friends and colleagues of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our Gold Star Families and let them know, no matter what happens, we are here for them,” said Villahermosa, a native of Rosedale, New York, who has deployed to Afghanistan twice and Kosovo once.

“There are very few communities that do this annually,” said Villahermosa. “We are a family.”

Villahermosa, who serves as the Air Ordnance Division officer at the school, said he welcomed the opportunity to serve as an instructor at the Naval EOD School.

“By far the best part of this assignment is developing the next generation of Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians,” said Villahermosa, who

was previously a platoon leader and operations officer in Baumholder, Germany. “They are incredibly intelligent and ready for the challenge.”

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the command senior enlisted leader, attended the ceremony.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader for the 20th CBRNE Command, has served as a Army EOD technician for 26 years. He said National EOD Day is a time for EOD technicians to come together and remember their fallen heroes.

“Once a year, EOD techs from all services, across all living generations, families and supporters gather for one weekend. We gather to honor and remember our fallen, pay tribute to their sacrifice and celebrate their lives. This small community is bonded by far more than a common school we’ve attended,” said Silva.

Silva said the joint nature of the EOD community was on full display at the ceremony, which was held at a Navy school on an Air Force base and attended by Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

“We place a lot of pride on our EOD badge, all four services share it,” said Silva. “It is the emblem of our trials and victories, as well as the representation of those that took the long walk for what they believed in. However, what makes EOD truly unique is not the badge... it’s the heart behind the badge.”

Silva said that the reading of every name on the EOD Memorial and the other events of National EOD Day are how the tight-knit volunteer community keeps its promise to never forget their fallen and their purpose.

“As long as there are explosives, there will be those that place themselves between the danger and what they love. This is the essence of our EOD family,” said Silva.

[Read full story](#)

Army CBRNE Response Team leader combats all hazards

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. – An Army Chemical Corps officer helps to protect the United States and its warfighters from all hazards across the nation and around the world.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Toy Nguyen serves as the team leader for CBRNE Response Team 1, which is currently part of the interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force (NTNF).

Supported by U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams and CBRNE Response Teams as well as the U.S. Air Force Technical Applications Center, the FBI-led NTNF Ground Collection Task Force gathers and packages samples of radioactive fallout that enable partner agencies to determine the source of the radiation.

The Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington-based CBRNE Response Team 1 is assigned to the 11th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Company (Technical Escort), 110th Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier deployable all hazards formation.

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

CBRNE Response Teams tackle a variety of challenging missions, including initial sampling, limited decontamination, packaging, escorting, detection, munitions assessment, explosive threat mitigation and contaminated sensitive site exploitation.

Nguyen began her military service as an enlisted combat medic at the Weed Army Community Hospital (WACH) on Fort Irwin, California.

"I truly enjoyed working at WACH during those first four developmental years as a junior Soldier and noncommissioned officer before commissioning," said Nguyen.

The CBRNE Response Team leader decided to join the Army after earning her bachelor's degree in crime, law and society from the University of California-Irvine and her law degree from Whittier College, adding that she wanted to learn everything about the legal system to advocate for laws that best represent the people.

"The best part of serving as a Chemical Corps officer is the variety of missions and the schools offered," said Nguyen. "My favorite assignment so far is the NTNF mission because it allowed me to be part of an elite CBRNE response task force that works together to navigate threats to the American people."

Nguyen said that leadership in the Army is built on trust and respect. In the future, she plans to build on that leadership philosophy by taking care of her Soldiers and their families while also taking care of her family.



CBRNE Response Team 1 Leader 1st Lt. Toy Nguyen (right) tapes the hood of Capt. David D. Manzanares (left) from Nuclear Disablement Team 1 during Exercise Prominent Hunt. Highly specialized American military units trained for nuclear forensics missions with interagency partners during Exercise Prominent Hunt in Houston, May 1 - 5. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

"The greatest lesson I have learned so far in the Army is that it is in the business of people — respecting people's needs and capabilities is critical to building trust," said Nguyen. "This trust in turn builds better working relationships within the unit and among entities that the Army works with."

Nguyen said joining the Army is a great way to gain valuable leadership experience and to make a difference around the world.

"My best advice for someone thinking about joining the Army is to make your own path. You are the biggest advocate for your career," said Nguyen. "There will be great leaders to guide you along the way and memories you will not soon forget."

Nguyen was inspired to serve in the U.S. Army by her father and mother who immigrated with her from Saigon, Vietnam, to the United States in 1987. After spending less than a year in Florida, her family moved to Los Angeles.

"Before I was born, my family twice attempted to escape Vietnam during the Vietnam War but was caught by the Viet Cong," said Nguyen. "After I was born, we received sponsorship and moved from Vietnam to the U.S."

Her father served in the Vietnamese Air Force and spent almost five years as a prisoner of war.

"My mother and father inspired me to serve. My mother, when she was living, inspired me by always having a big heart and giving to others," said Nguyen. "My father inspired me, not only as an aviation officer in the Vietnamese Air Force during the war but also by being captured and resilient as a POW. He showed me that freedom is worth fighting for."

[Read full story](#)

Enforcers named top active-duty US Army Chemical Company



The 10th Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) "Enforcers" earned first place in the active-duty category of the prestigious 2023 Maj. Gen. William L. Sibert Award. The 10th Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) is part of the 22nd Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier multifunctional all hazards command. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Christian A. Castro.

FORT CARSON, Colo. – The 10th Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) "Enforcers" set the standard by earning first place in the active-duty category of the prestigious 2023 Maj. Gen. William L. Sibert Award.

The Chemical Corps Regimental Association presents the annual award to recognize the best active-duty, reserve, National Guard and team or detachment CBRN units in the Army.

The 272nd Chemical Company from the Massachusetts Army National Guard earned first place in the National Guard category; 320th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Company took first place in the Reserve category; and 82nd Chemical Reconnaissance Detachment secured first place in the team category.

The Fort Carson, Colorado-based 10th Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) is part of the 22nd Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the

U.S. military's premier deployable and multifunctional all hazards command.

American 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.

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians and 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.

In 2022, the Enforcers served on the U.S. Northern Command Joint Task Force-Civil Support's Defense CBRN Response Force (DCRF) and supported the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during training for large-scale combat operations at the

Joint Readiness Training Center on Fort Polk, Louisiana.

To support simulated combat operations at JRTC, the company provided the 2nd Brigade Enhancement Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), with thorough and operational decontamination as well as sensitive site assessment and exploitation support. The Enforcers enabled freedom of movement during the combat training center rotation and established an early defense warning system for CBRN threats.

The company also participated in Exercise Roving Sands on Fort Bliss, Texas, and trained with the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade during Exercise Global Defender, which was part of the U.S. Army's Global Defender series designed to ensure the U.S. Army is ready for multi-domain operations against a near peer adversary.

During Exercise Roving Sands, the Enforcers enabled operations for the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, the largest and most deployed air defense unit in the world.

The company concluded the year with a short-notice, two-month deployment to the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

Cpl. Erin W. McFearson from the 10th Chemical Company was drawn to the Chemical Corps by the important mission. The corporal switched from Cavalry Scout to Chemical Corps Soldier because CBRN Soldiers help to protect the force and enable operations around the world.

A native of Chicago who has served in the U.S. Army for six years, McFearson said the company stays ready by putting forth maximum effort during every training and certification exercise.

"I believe our company won the award because of our commitment to excellence and every Soldier's determination to be the absolute best," said McFearson.

[Read full story](#)

Units hone skills for large-scale combat operations at NTC rotation

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Soldiers from the U.S. military's premier all hazards command enabled the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team to defeat enemy forces in a contested environment where chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive hazards could be used to harm friendly forces and hinder combat operations.

American Soldiers from the 92nd Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) "Rock Steady" and the 756th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) "Blasters" supported the 2nd ABCT, 3rd Infantry Division, during Decisive Action Rotation 23-05 at the National Training Center (NTC) on Fort Irwin, California.

U.S. Army combat units hone their warfighting skills against fierce opposition forces from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment during combat training rotations in the "the box" – shorthand for the Mojave Desert training center that is almost as big as the state of Rhode Island.

The 92nd Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) is part of the 83rd Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Battalion, 48th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier all hazards command.

The 756th Ordnance Company (EOD) is part of the 184th EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command. Like the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team and 3rd Infantry Division, both 20th CBRNE Command companies are based on Fort Stewart, Georgia.

U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Albert E. Lamont, the senior enlisted leader for the 92nd CBRN Company (Hazardous Response), said the integration into the 2nd ABCT started in August.

The training prior to the rotation included aircraft decontamination, CBRN detection for a wet gap crossing operation and an integrated command post exercise.

"These events were executed within six months of our deployment to NTC and ensured a seamless integration was accomplished," said Lamont,



American Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division hold position to engage simulated enemy targets during Decisive Action Rotation 23-05 at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., Feb. 27. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ryan Gosselin, Operations Group, National Training Center.

who is originally from Detroit and has deployed to Cuba, Haiti, Iraq, Africa and South Korea.

Capt. Donovan G. Coleman, the commander of the 92nd CBRN Company, said the training rotation was focused on integrating enabling forces into the 2nd ABCT.

"Although not organic to the brigade, each of us brought a unique but invaluable asset to the fight," said Coleman, an Afghanistan veteran from Huntsville, Alabama. "The 92nd Chemical Company (Hazardous Response) brought mounted and dismounted reconnaissance, detailed troop and equipment decontamination and sensitive site analysis."

Coleman said his company also met with a Kazakhstan CBRN cell at NTC. The 92nd Chemical Company demonstrated equipment and decontamination techniques while also exchanging handshakes and unit patches with the Kazakh military leaders.

EOD 1st Sgt. Henry J. Charles, the first sergeant for the 756th EOD Company, said his EOD techs not only train for combat operations but also take on domestic missions.

Capt. Jose G. Matos, the commander of the 756th Ordnance Company, said the NTC rotation enabled "the Blasters" to integrate and provide continuous support to the 2nd ABCT.

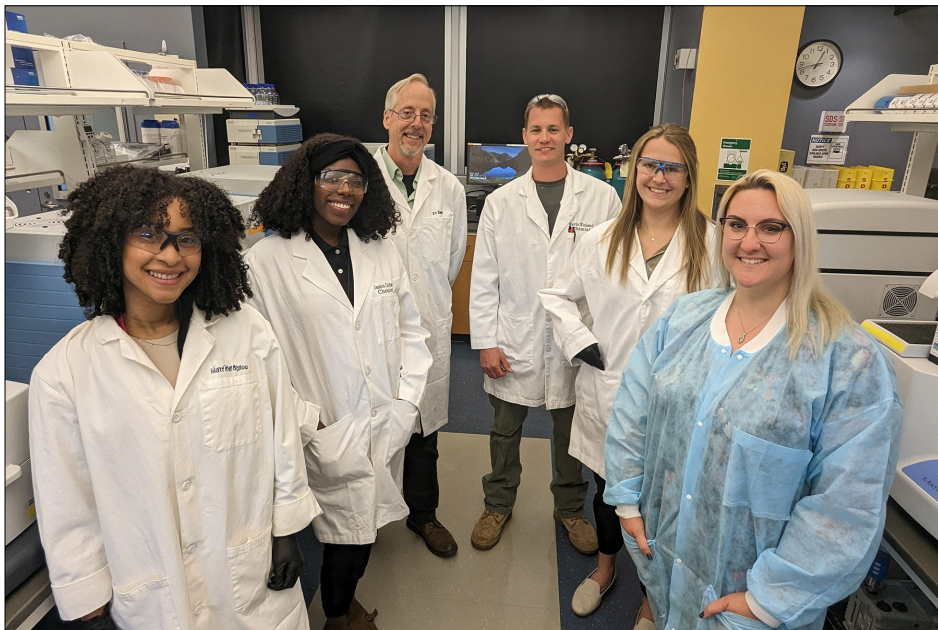
"Our training scenarios were tailored to prepare our Soldiers to support maneuver units during large-scale combat operations against a near-peer threat with a heavy emphasis on military munitions to include both foreign and domestic," said Matos, who is from Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

Matos said his EOD technicians trained for a wide variety of missions during the NTC rotation, from defeating explosive devices and rendering safe lodged projectiles to destroying enemy weapons caches and clearing booby traps.

"We will utilize the lessons learned during this NTC rotation to continue to optimize the way we integrate at echelon, empower our unit leadership, conduct mission-focused training and emphasize the importance of maintenance to build sustainable unit readiness, increase combat power and prepare for our next assigned mission," said Matos.

[Read full story](#)

Seasoned chemist works to make bad ‘unknowns’ known



Six Army chemists who are part of the 20th CBRNE Command's CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity – CARA – pose for a photo. From left to right: Grace Bultron, Jessica Caldwell, Irvine Swahn, Kevin Wioland, Paige Smith and Courtney Aceto. U.S. Department of Defense photo by Katie Lange.

By Katie Lange

Armed with Science editor

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – Having grown up not far from the Army Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, Irvine Swahn knew at a young age that he would probably end up working there someday.

He started as a base forklift driver before transferring in 1984 into an entry-level chemist position for the Edgewood Research, Development and Engineering Center as he began his last year of college.

Fast forward nearly 40 years, and you'll still find Swahn working at APG. But he had a few stops on his career path in between Army gigs, and those helped make him a leader in the field of chemical warfare agent science.

He's worked in some intense situations — in Iraq, Libya and Pakistan, to name a few — and seen a lot of changes in technology.

Nowadays, he's passing his extensive knowledge on to others and reminding all up-and-coming scientists that there are a lot of civilian careers available within the DOD — all you need to do is get your foot in the door.

Swahn is a chemist within the 20th CBRNE Command's CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity — simply known as CARA. It's an all-civilian organization that has four main mission sets:

- Conducting mobile lab operations at the level III Theater Validation level in support of DOD operations.
- Supporting emergency response missions for suspected recovered chemical warfare material.
- Supporting remediation operations at formally used defense sites and other areas within the U.S.
- Providing technical escort to move chemical agents within the U.S.

It may sound complicated to some, but Swahn said his role really isn't.

As a chemist at the CARA mobile labs, he receives air, soil and water samples from military and civilian units, then prepares and analyzes them on various instruments to identify whether they contain dangerous chemicals that might cause harm.

"That's a whole lot of words to say we make the bad unknowns known,"

Swahn said. And the preparation is key. "You have to prepare those correctly for each specific instrument because you can get a little bit of information from one instrument, then more information from another. We have multiple chemical databases, which are libraries used by the instruments to identify those unknown compounds in samples collected."

Swahn trains new chemists on how chemical warfare agents are made, on how they break down in the environment and about their physical and toxicological properties. This information better equips CARA chemists to handle and analyze the dangerous compounds.

Swahn develops methods for analyzing samples to better look for unknown chemical compounds — or, as he said, "that needle in a haystack."

Swahn works with soldiers, too. He's currently gearing up to prepare realistic drills for units at various Army training centers so soldiers can learn to recognize certain chemicals and equipment that's used to store, fill or make weapons — from synthesis labs up to full-scale industrial production plants. He also teaches them how to identify the most significant evidence and how to collect it properly.

Since the 1980s when he first started his career, technological advancements have sped up chemists' ability to separate samples and do analysis on a greater number of chemicals.

"Now, you have instruments with hundreds of thousands of compounds in a library, and you can put any chemical in and get on-the-spot identification," Swahn said. "And now we're using a lot of handheld instruments, which top the big dinosaur instruments I started on. ... It's quite impressive how far we've come in the past 25 to 30 years."

Swahn was working for CARA in 2016 when he deployed with its mobile lab to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to set up and take samples from the area for U.S. Central Command.

[Read full story](#)

Army civilians build mock WMD sites for elimination training



A Chemical Corps Soldier from the 46th CBRN Company (Technical Escort) checks a simulated Weapons of Mass Destruction laboratory on Fort Bliss, Texas. U.S. Army civilians from the CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity build mock Weapons of Mass Destruction labs for elimination training. Courtesy photo.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – U.S. Army civilians build mock chemical and biological laboratories to help Chemical Corps Soldiers to prepare for Weapons of Mass Destruction exploitation and elimination missions around the world.

Army civilians from the CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity (CARA) leverage their scientific expertise and real-world experience to create realistic training sites for troops at bases across the nation.

CARA is part of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier all hazards command. From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and Army civilians take on the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

The CARA Mobile Expeditionary Laboratory (CARA-MEL) organization has built targets and trained Soldiers at locations across the nation, including Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Liberty, North Carolina; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Joint Base

Lewis-McChord, Washington; Fort Cavazos, Texas; National Training Center at Fort Bliss; Fort Irwin, California; and Umatilla Chemical Depot, Oregon.

The CARA teams have also supported joint and international activities with Kuwaiti, British and German government organizations.

"CARA-MEL tailors targets and training to meet unit needs and requirements from kits consisting of glassware to simulate small-scale, clandestine operations to multi-level, full-scale, mock, production facilities for both chemical and biological agents," said Matthew Kalfoglou, an analytical chemist at CARA.

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Kalfoglou previously served in the U.S. Air Force as a Communications, Navigations and Mission Systems Avionics Technician on the B-52H Stratofortress

Kalfoglou said the CARA-MEL teams helped prepare Soldiers for the challenges they would face during a mission to eliminate CBRNE threats on the battlefield.

"CARA-MEL assists in exposing Soldiers to realistic scenarios by including a diverse set of laboratory processes and scientific equipment for each target build to address training objectives and emerging threats. By tailoring the target builds, CARA-MEL is able to reinforce foundational skills and enhance the knowledge of the CBRNE Response Teams (CRT), which will create more efficient interactions between the CRT and CARA scientists within a theater deployed environment," said Kalfoglou.

"Proper sampling and collection techniques lead to a more precise analysis that CARA-MEL can then report to combatant commanders allowing for more informed, real-time, battlefield decisions," said Kalfoglou, a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Sam Pannoni, a microbiologist from CARA, said exercises on mock WMD sites are conducted to ensure CBRN Soldiers are prepared to exploit chemical and biological sites.

In addition to constructing targets that simulate chemical and biological agent research and development, production and dissemination, CARA-MEL also provides observer, coach and trainer support during exercises to ensure the teams are correctly identifying, characterizing and sampling targets.

Impressed by the impact that the Army organization has during missions around the world, Pannoni decided to join CARA in 2022.

"What attracted me most to CARA-MEL was the expeditionary element of our mission, which equates to a gritty, boots-on-the-ground approach to problem solving," said Pannoni.

"This puts our scientists and mobile labs out there in the deployed environment where our advanced capabilities can have the greatest impact, which is exactly where I want to be," he said. "I am proud and honored to be a part of a team where my call to serve is as important as the technical expertise I bring to the fight."

[Read full story](#)

Army, Air Force EOD techs train to support island hopping missions

PATRICK SPACE FORCE BASE, Fla. — U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians trained for explosive clearance operations designed to support remote airfield operations during island hopping missions against a near-peer adversary.

Army EOD technicians from the 38th Ordnance Company (EOD) trained with EOD Airmen during Joint Operation Island Hopper on Patrick Space Force Base in Florida.

The joint service EOD airfield clearance operations training supports the U.S. Air Force strategy of agile combat employment by enabling air operations from smaller, dispersed and remote island airfields in a fight against a near-peer adversary.

During the training, the EOD teams supported a joint task force with the mission of reclaiming the fictional Malabar Atoll Airfield from enemy forces to gain further operational access.

The training was conducted with live explosives on Patrick Space Force Base at the Malabar Training Annex. The area was closed and solely reserved for the EOD training.

The Army and Air Force EOD technicians cleared all explosive hazards from the airfield's critical infrastructure and gathered technical intelligence during the 48-hour training operation.

Due to the expeditionary conditions of the mission, the teams had limited logistical support.

Sgt. 1st Class Edwin G. Vazquez from the 38th EOD Company said the training will make both the Army and Air Force EOD techs more capable of enabling joint service combat operations.

"The exercise allowed both Soldiers and Airmen to share knowledge and experience in a modernized training scenario. Both components gained a critical insight into the operational capabilities of the other branch while gaining constructive criticism on their own tactics, techniques and procedures," said Vazquez.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Samuel T. Johnson, the 2nd Platoon leader from the 38th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), conducts a course of action brief with Air Force EOD technicians from MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, and Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians trained for explosive clearance operations designed to support remote airfield operations during Joint Operation Island Hopper. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Edwin G. Vazquez.

Originally from Phenix City, Alabama, Vazquez has served in the Army for 12 years and he earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.

The Fort Stewart, Georgia-based 38th EOD Company "Bangers" are part of the 184th EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier all hazards command.

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

The Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians came from the EOD flight in the 23rd Civil Engineering Squadron on Moody Air Force Base, Georgia; the EOD Flight from the 6th Civil Engineering Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida;

the EOD flight on Homestead Air Force Base, Florida; and EOD Flight from 45th Civilian Engineering Squadron on Patrick Space Force Base, Florida.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Samuel T. Johnson, the 2nd Platoon leader from the 38th Ordnance Company (EOD), said joint training helped the EOD technicians to hone their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills.

"Being afforded the opportunity to train and work alongside other branches is a key factor in identifying shortfalls in current capabilities of each branch of service," said Johnson, a native of Glendale, California, native, who earned his bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology from the University of California-Santa Barbara.

"As we move into a new generation of warfare, being inclusive with the other branches will broaden the capabilities of all services," said Johnson.

[Read full story](#)

Army EOD techs support Marine Corps training in Vermont



U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians from the Fort Drum, New York-based 754th Ordnance Company (EOD) supported the Vermont National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps during a range clearance mission on Camp Ethan Allen, Vermont. The mission gave the EOD Soldiers the opportunity to work with other services. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James R. Gamble.

CAMP ETHAN ALLEN, Vt. – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians conducted an unexploded ordnance clearance (UXO) operation on a Vermont National Guard base to support U.S. Marine Corps infantry training there.

Army EOD Soldiers from the Fort Drum, New York-based 754th Ordnance Company (EOD) supported the Vermont National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps during the range clearance mission on Camp Ethan Allen, Vermont.

The 754th EOD Company “Yetis” are part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier multifunctional and deployable all hazards command.

The one-of-a-kind command is home to 75 percent of U.S. Army’s active-duty Explosive Ordnance Disposal 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.

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

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Patrick M. Pearce, the range clearance operation officer-in-charge from the 754th EOD Company, said the Vermont National Guard asked the 10th Mountain Division for EOD support for a target insertion mission on the base to aid in U.S. Marine Corps training.

Pearce said the EOD team was tasked with navigating three grid coordinates and clearing them of unexploded ordnance to enable U.S. Marine Corps pilots to safely drop targets.

“The operation was unique because it was our Army EOD team supporting the Vermont National Guard who had Marine Corps pilots flying on the targets,” said Pearce, a native of Orlando, Florida, who served in the U.S. Navy before becoming an Army officer. “It also was unique because the team and I not only were conducting EOD operations but also sling load operations into an impact area.”

From the 754th Ordnance Company (EOD), Staff Sgt. Gerard J. Gagne III, an Army EOD team leader from Buckfield, Maine, and Staff Sgt. James R. Gamble, an Army EOD team member from Albuquerque, New Mexico, participated in the range clearance operation.

The Army Mountain Warfare School recognized Pearce, Gagne and Gamble with Army Achievement Medals for the operation.

From destroying hand grenades to rendering safe Improvised Explosive Devices, EOD tech are the Army’s experts on explosive hazards

In support of civil authorities, the 754th EOD Company responds to military munitions discovered on and off post in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The Army EOD company also previously served downrange in support of the Special Operations Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve in Syria from December 2018 to September 2019 and deployed to Tunisia for Exercise African Lion in 2022.

Following the operation, the Marines and National Guardsmen thanked the Army EOD techs for their work on the range and the Vermont National Guard invited the EOD team to conduct demolitions on their range and hold small arms training on the base in the future.

Pearce said the clearance mission gave the EOD technicians the opportunity to work with other services while testing their ability to communicate with Marine Corps aircrews.

“It truly showed us how to remain adaptable and flexible. The highlight was the final drop of the last target into the impact area. It was instant job satisfaction to see the whole team working together to accomplish a complex mission. Our hard work led to the emplacement of mortar targets for U.S. Marine Corps infantry battalions to use for years to come,” said Pearce.

[Read full story](#)

Soldiers, Airmen support nuclear forensics exercise in Houston

HOUSTON – Highly specialized U.S. military units trained for nuclear forensics missions with interagency partners during Exercise Prominent Hunt in Houston, May 1 - 5.

Soldiers from the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command's Nuclear Disablement Team 1 and 1st CBRNE Response Team, 11th Chemical Company (Technical Escort), qualified to serve on the interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force during Prominent Hunt.

Airmen from the Patrick Space Force Base, Florida-headquartered Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) also qualified for the task force during the exercise.

As a part of an FBI-led interagency task force, the NTFN Ground Collection Task Force gathers and packages samples of radioactive fallout that enable partner agencies to determine the source of the radiation.

The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Agency also provides technical expertise during Exercise Prominent Hunt.

Air Force Capt. Bryan Egner, a nuclear engineer from the Air Force Technical Applications Center, said AFTAC detects and responds when an event involves radiological material.

Airmen from AFTAC conduct assessments on the ground and in the air and then forward the samples to a network of laboratories for analysis.

"Being a part of this exercise allowed me the opportunity to apply the skills I have learned during my Air Force career. It also gave me the chance to put my doctorate research in nuclear engineering to work, not just in theory, but in a real-world environment," said Egner, a native of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and a Penn State graduate who earned his master's degree and PhD from the Air Force Institute of Technology.

An Air Force surveillance command, the Air Force Technical Applications Center monitors nuclear treaties of all



Sgt. James Thomas from the 11th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort) gathers nuclear fallout debris during Exercise Prominent Hunt. American military units trained for nuclear forensics missions with interagency partners during Exercise Prominent Hunt in Houston, May 1 - 5. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.



applicable signatory countries. The highly educated center has more than 1,100 personnel with 226 associate degrees, 262 bachelor's degrees, 274 master's degrees and 68 doctorate degrees.

AFTAC routinely participates in national-level exercises to test its global nuclear monitoring capabilities and technical applications expertise when nuclear events occur.

From the U.S. Army, Nuclear Disablement Team 1 and CBRNE Response Team 1 are part of the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier all hazards formation.

CRT 1 is part of the 11th Chemical Company (Technical Escort), 110th Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command. The deployable team is based on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

CRT 1 Team Leader 1st Lt. Toy Nguyen said her team brings CBRNE crisis and consequence management expertise to the interagency exercise.

Maj. Aaron J. Heffelfinger, the deputy team leader from Nuclear Disablement Team 1, said NDTs bring unique expertise to the task force.

Heffelfinger said U.S. military units operate in support of the Department of Justice during the FBI-led exercise.

"The NDT and CRT ensured we were always ready to push out collections on time and provided sound advice, along with the DoE, to the FBI lead so the agency had the required information and courses of action to make critical decisions," said Heffelfinger. "It proved to be a great system and the experience provided by the Army personnel on the interagency team was crucial to mission success."

[Read full story](#)

EOD company trains for counter WMD operations around world



During climbing, rigging and rappelling training at the Hoover Dam in Nevada, 1st Lt. Taylor Gordon and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Tretta rappel down the dam face at the Hoover Dam in Nevada. U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. JD Tippit.

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. – American Soldiers from a one-of-a-kind U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal company that combats Weapons of Mass Destruction train for high stakes missions around the world.

U.S. Army EOD technicians from the 21st Ordnance Company (EOD WMD) “Blackjacks” provide support to defeat or mitigate the effects of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Army EOD techs from the company train to reach Weapons of Mass Destruction wherever they are located.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher N. Tretta, the operations sergeant for the Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico-headquartered 21st EOD Company, said this unique mission can lead to some unique training opportunities. The EOD teams even trained to climb and rappel on the Hoover Dam in Nevada.

“Tactical climbing, hoisting and rigging is a mission essential task that unit members must be proficient in conducting, as it’s a crucial component of our unit’s capabilities,”

said Tretta. “The Hoover Dam complex, with all its massive concrete structures, like spillways and the dam itself, was an absolutely world-class training venue that continually challenged my team.”

The summer training exercise focused on hoisting and rigging in the unforgiving environment of extreme heat and sheer vertical drops.

With the temperature peaking at 122 degrees during the day, the EOD techs practiced hoisting heavy equipment from apertures in the spillway walls across hand-tensioned high lines over the gorge and then retrieving their payloads from confined spaces in very hard to reach areas.

“The training culminated on the last day with the 700-foot rappel off the face of the dam,” said Tretta. “This was obviously no ordinary rappel and special attention had to be given to rope length and weight and even the speed of descent, as too much speed would generate excessive heat in the rappel device and possibly melt the rope.”

Tretta said the 21st EOD Company team members are now among approximately 150 people to have rappelled down the dam face in its 92-year history.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime event and the highlight of the training. The scale of the dam is hard to comprehend and impossible to convey through words. Without qualification, I submit that the uniqueness of the venue and the extremely challenging nature of the training environment at the dam complex better prepared my team for our mission than any other single location in the U.S.,” said Tretta. “My team and I are privileged and honored to have taken part in such an amazing and unique training opportunity.”

Tretta said rappelling is the least complicated aspect of training for climbing missions that the unit trains to conduct around the world.

The 21st EOD Company team members must be able to physically hoist and rig heavy loads out of precarious spots.

“During each of our four team’s train-up to assume international emergency response duties, they will conduct rigorous climbing, hoisting and rigging training,” said Tretta. “Many times, this training can culminate on Kirtland Air Force Base on a large shipping container stack meant to simulate containers stacked on cargo vessels crossing the ocean.”

Each member of the 21st EOD Company is also required to graduate from the Air Assault School on Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and the team members use the Basic Mountaineering Course to prepare them to operate in any environment. The company is part of the 242nd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier all hazards command.

[Read full story](#)

US Army EOD techs train with Charlotte Police Bomb Squad

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians honed their lifesaving skills together with the police bomb squad in Charlotte, North Carolina.

U.S. Army EOD technicians from the Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 18th Ordnance Company (EOD) trained with their counterparts in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Bomb Squad.

The training involved six Army EOD Soldiers and 15 law enforcement personnel, including an FBI Special Agent Bomb Technician.

Army EOD techs work with local law enforcement bomb squads because civilian bomb squads are not authorized to work on military ordnance due to the Military Munitions Rule in the Code of Federal Regulations.

Officer Andrew Hyde, a hazardous devices technician on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Bomb Squad, said the training gave his squad the opportunity to forge stronger bonds with their military counterparts.

“Being able to meet in this type of setting was a great way to bring the two squads together both socially and professionally,” said Hyde. “EOD has responded to Charlotte numerous times (for) the collection and disposal of military ordnance, but now when they respond, both squads will know who is coming or will be on scene and what can be expected from both.”

Originally from Chicago, Hyde has been with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for 14 years and he has served on the bomb squad for three years.

Hyde said the CMPD bomb squad often discovers unexploded military munitions and the training will help the police bomb squad to identify military ordnance in the future.

“EOD gave a phenomenal class on military ordnance, which helps us in identifying ordnance we might come across and then be able to pass on necessary information to them,” said Hyde.



U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians from the Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 18th Ordnance Company (EOD) honed their skills together with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Bomb Squad in Charlotte, North Carolina. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brett C. Bryant, an EOD team leader from the 18th Ordnance Company (EOD), previously worked with the Charlotte bomb squad.

“I had the opportunity to collaborate with the Charlotte Police Department during an emergency response,” said Bryant. “This collaboration fostered a strong working relationship between our teams, which led to a training event aimed at enhancing our collective knowledge and abilities in dealing with explosive hazards and procedures.”

Bryant said the training scenarios included defeating different types of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and other areas of shared interest.

“We also delved into advanced circuit speed calculations and precision grid aim disruptions on IEDs in diverse material containers,” said Bryant. “This training aimed to enhance our proficiency in dealing with complex explosive threats.”

The Army and police explosive experts also focused on identifying military munitions.

“We dedicated time to improving the police department’s ordnance awareness, enabling them to better identify and safely handle explosive hazards encountered in real-world situations,” said Bryant. “This aspect of the training was essential for ensuring the safety of both the responders and the public at the scene.”

A native of Amherst, Virginia, Bryant has served as a U.S. Army EOD technician for 10 years.

Bryant said he became an EOD tech to protect lives during high-risk situations, to adapt to evolving threats and to engage in intellectually stimulating work that combines technology, problem-solving and critical thinking.

“As an EOD tech, my most memorable experience was during my tour in South Korea,” said Bryant. “I had the opportunity to participate in landmine disposal operations at the DMZ (Korean Demilitarized Zone).”

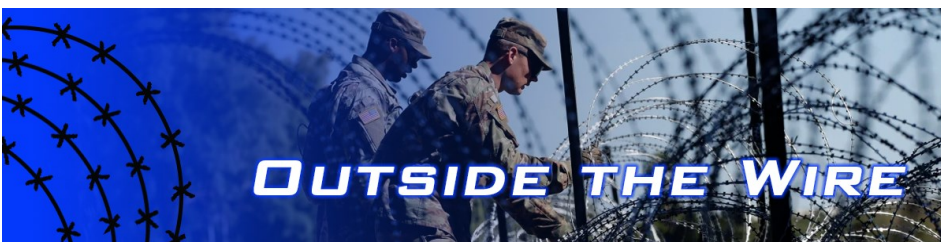
Bryant has also confronted and defeated IEDs during a deployment to Afghanistan with the 723rd EOD Company.

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Joint Technical Analysis and Integration Cell supports missions



The Joint Technical Analysis and Integration Cell from the 20th CBRNE Command empowers combined joint task force operations to locate, identify and eliminate Weapons of Mass Destruction. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.



CAMP HUMPREYS, South Korea – The Joint Technical Analysis and Integration Cell (JTAIC) from the U.S. military's premier all hazards command empowers combined joint task force operations to locate, identify and eliminate Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The integration cell from the U.S. Army's 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command provides the information necessary to accomplish Combined Joint Task Force-Elimination (CJTFE) missions.

Part of the 20th CBRNE Command Intelligence Directorate (G2), the JTAIC recently honed its skills during Exercise Freedom Shield in South Korea, March 13 – 23.

Conducted to strengthen Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance, Exercise Freedom Shield was a routine and defensive-oriented exercise designed to

strengthen security on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia. The exercise integrated live training and constructive simulations that brought together South Korean, U.S. and multinational sending states.

Forged in the fire of the Korean War, the Republic of Korea-United States Alliance will mark the 70th anniversary of the signing of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty this year.

The 20th CBRNE Command routinely trains with units from the ROK CBRN Defense Command and other South Korean units on the Korean Peninsula and at combat training centers in the United States.

Soldiers and Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command deploy from 19 bases in 16 states to confront and defeat the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, inter-agency and allied operations.

The 20th CBRNE Command deploys Combined Joint Task Force-Elimination to support combatant commanders around the world.

The task force was established from the lessons learned during the hunt for Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review identified the 20th CBRNE Command as the command responsible for the task force.

James B. Area, an Army civilian in JTAIC, said the integration cell supports the Combined Joint Task Force-Elimination whenever it deploys in support of WMD elimination operations.

"Our purpose is to provide technical CBRN review of all the exploitation reporting and support the Intelligence Section (G2) with Technical Intelligence and CBRN related analysis of all other significant actions and reporting," said Area, a native of Corona, California.

Area is a retired U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps lieutenant commander who started his Navy career as a Hospital Corpsman. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Health from Old Dominion University, as well as a Master of Science degree in Public Health from Tulane University and Master of Divinity from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. At the command since 2014, Area started as a contracted Program Manager for JTAIC and became an Army civilian in 2021.

"The role of the JTAIC is to provide full-spectrum CBRNE technical reach back to the CJTFE and our supported units," said Area.

Col. John P. Kunstbeck, the chief of staff for the 20th CBRNE Command, said JTAIC enables Combined Joint Task Force-Elimination to succeed at its high stakes mission.

"Information is power and JTAIC keeps us ready to fight and win our nation's wars," said Kunstbeck, a Nuclear and Countering WMD officer from Altoona, Pennsylvania.

[Read full story](#)

1st AML leaders met with Polish counterparts in Warsaw



Leaders from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory meet with their Polish counterparts at the Polish Epidemiological Response Center in Warsaw, Poland. The command team from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory visited Poland in support of the U.S. Army Europe-Africa Surgeon Cell. Courtesy photo.

WARSAW, Poland – Leaders from the U.S. Army's only deployable medical field laboratory recently met with medical officials and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear experts from the Polish Armed Forces.

The command team from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory visited Poland in support of the U.S. Army Europe-Africa Surgeon Cell's regional engagement efforts.

During the week-long visit, 1st AML leaders toured the Polish Epidemiological Response Center and Military Institute for Chemistry and Radiology. Both Polish organizations have similar missions to the 1st Area Medical Laboratory.

The 1st AML leaders also toured the laboratory facilities at the Polish Military Institute of Medicine - National Research Institute in Warsaw, Poland, and the biological and chemical labs at the Military Preventive Medicine Center in Modlin, Poland.

Lt. Col. Nick Nussdorfer, the force health protection officer in the Office of the Command Surgeon for U.S. Army Europe-Africa, said 1st AML brings one-of-a-kind capabilities that increase interoperability with allies and partners.

"U.S. Army Europe-Africa appreciates the force health protection expertise that 1st AML provides the theater," said Nussdorfer.

Maj. Suzanne E. Mate, the chief of Chemical Threat Assessment for 1st Area Medical Laboratory, said meeting with allies helps to keep NATO ready for any contingency.

"It's better to know your partners before you have to work together in a high consequence situation. We learned the strengths in different mobility platforms for laboratories and the capabilities within fixed scientific institutions to maintain standards and currency in chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) investigations," said Mate.

"This knowledge is invaluable when determining how to move a sample quickly and efficiently to characterize a suspected CBR threat when airlift resources are constrained or country treaties prevent movement activities," said Mate.

Mate has served in the U.S. Army for 15 years as both an enlisted and commissioned Soldier and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the National Institute of Health. Mate, a Medical Service Corps officer, said

the visit helped to forge stronger ties with 1st AML's Polish counterparts.

Mate said the 1st Area Medical Laboratory invited their Polish counterparts to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and Fort Detrick, Maryland, to see their facilities.

Col. Matthew J. Grieser, the commander of 1st Area Medical Laboratory, said the visit was an example of how his command supports alliance partners around the world.

"It was a great opportunity to meet our Polish counterparts and to learn from one another," said Grieser, a native of Mulino, Oregon.

"We intend to continue to strengthen this relationship with our Polish counterparts," said Grieser. "Poland is a great ally and it was an honor to visit our counterpart organizations."

Lt. Col. Łukasz Krzowski, the Polish Armed Forces coordinator for the visit, said collaboration is the key to success in high stakes CBRN missions.

Krzowski said the visit introduced unit tasks, capacities and capabilities in biodefense and preventive medicine, adding that it also helped to define areas for field detection and identification of naturally occurring or intentionally released infectious diseases as well as chemical or radiological hazards.

A former soldier of the Epidemiological Response Centre (ERC) of the Polish Armed Forces, Krzowski is assigned to the Biodefense Laboratory, Biomedical Engineering Centre, in The Military University of Technology and still collaborates with the ERC in the areas of biodefense and preventive medicine.

"This visit will start collaboration in biodefense and other hazards in the chem or rad area. That means our future collaboration activities will increase our knowledge and procedures and lead to improved areas of interoperability between our nations," said Krzowski.

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Military Working Dog stands cybersecurity duty on DoD page

FORT MEADE, Md. – A Military Working Dog wearing goggles stands cybersecurity duty on the U.S. Department of Defense Global Directory login page every day.

That Military Working Dog is Nick, a six-year-old German Shepherd with the 2nd Military Police Detachment on Fort Meade, Maryland.

Sgt. 1st Class Jon R. Silvey, the Kennel Master for the 2nd Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog) Kennel on Fort Meade, said that Nick is one of six patrol explosive detection Military Working Dogs in his kennel.

The kennel also has three patrol drug detector dogs.

"The 2nd MP Detachment (MWD) stands ready to deploy in support of contingency operations throughout the world but operate daily in the Military District of Washington footprint," said Silvey. "The MWD teams are a force-multiplier that handle a variety of mission taskings from numerous agencies that include the Fort Meade Department of Emergency Services, local unit commanders, United States Secret Service and the U.S. State Department, upon request."

Silvey said his Military Working Dog teams train to deploy anywhere around the world.

"Our 2nd MP Detachment (MWD) teams stay ready mentally and physically by conducting daily training scenarios, joint training events with other agencies, homemade explosive training events and physical conditioning for both the Soldier and the MWD," said Silvey. "MWD teams would previously deploy to Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt."

Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, Silvey has served in the U.S. Army for 19 years and deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Serving as a MWD handler inspired Silvey to stay in the Army.

"I decided to serve as an MP because as a child I always respected and ad-



U.S. Army military working dog, Nick, of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, poses for a photo at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, May 29, 2020. The Military Working Dog in the photo is Nick, a six-year-old German Shepherd with the 2nd Military Police Detachment on Fort Meade, Maryland. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Derek Mustard.

mired law enforcement and thought it would make for an interesting job in the Army," said Silvey. "When offered the chance to become a MWD handler, I immediately knew the Army had me for the long haul."

Silvey said he hopes to continue to work with K9s in the civilian sector after he retires from the Army.

"I live by the philosophy that if you do something you love to do then you will never work a day in your life," said Silvey. "Being a MWD handler, you get the opportunity to do something you love daily with four-legged Soldiers who love to do the same."

The U.S. military has approximately 1,600 Military Working Dogs that serve in every branch of the United States Armed Services.

Around the world and around the clock, Military Working Dogs provide paws on the ground and support forces at sea and in the air.

Patrol explosive dogs like Nick support Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians as they confront and defeat explosives around the world.

In the Global Directory photo, taken by Spc. Derek J. Mustard, Military Working Dog Nick is deployed to Al Assad, Iraq.

Spc. Joseph J. Lane, his handler at the time, said they were training together with the 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

Lane said the famous photo with Nick wearing goggles, sometimes called "Doggles," was taken during a range mission.

As Lane's first Military Working Dog, Nick was no exception. While obedient, Nick also had his quirks.

"He never liked water and would avoid puddles at all costs," said Lane. "When teaching him new commands, he would pick them up very fast. Nick was very loyal and obedient to me but would crave attention from any one he thought was a friend."

Lane said seeing Nick on the Global Directory brings back good memories of the work they did together to defend the nation and its warfighters.

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American, South Korean nuclear teams improve interoperability

SEOUL – Highly specialized nuclear teams from the United States and South Korea strengthened their interoperability during NDT-NCT Partnership VIII on the Korean Peninsula, March 20 – 24.

U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams (NDT) trained with their Republic of Korea (ROK) counterparts from the ROK Nuclear Characterization Teams (NCT) during the defensive-oriented exercise.

Maj. Ariel A. Alcaide, the deputy team leader for Nuclear Disablement Team 3, said the teams have forged an important partnership that contributes to security on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia.

“The NDT-NCT partnership is unique to the NDTs,” said Alcaide, a former military intelligence officer who also served as a nuclear logistics planner aboard the U.S. Strategic Command’s Airborne Command Post. “Due to our similar mission set, the NDT-NCT partnership is the only relationship the NDT has with an allied nation military force.”

Alcaide said the NCTs and NDTs serve as the premier nuclear infrastructure characterization assets for their respective nations.

While there are many similarities, the U.S. and South Korean nuclear teams have different unit compositions and missions. The South Korean teams include Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) personnel from the ROK Army, ROK Navy and ROK Air Force who are part of the joint ROK CBRN Defense Command while the U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Team has the unique on order mission of disablement.

An Afghanistan veteran from Granada Hills, California, Alcaide earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Cal State Northridge and a master’s degree in information operations from the Naval Postgraduate School. He said his passion for math and science led him to become a U.S. Army Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer (FA 52).

Following his tour at the Aberdeen



Highly specialized nuclear teams from the United States and South Korea strengthened their interoperability during NDT-NCT Partnership VIII on the Korean Peninsula, March 20– 24. U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams (NDT) trained with their Republic of Korea counterparts from the ROK Nuclear Characterization Teams (NCT) during the defensive-oriented exercise. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.

Proving Ground, Maryland-based Nuclear Disablement Team 3, Alcaide will report to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, where he will earn his PhD in nuclear engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology.

As frontline warriors who directly contribute to the nation’s strategic deterrence, U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams exploit and disable nuclear and radiological Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) infrastructure and components to deny near-term capability to adversaries and they facilitate follow-on WMD elimination operations.

Nuclear Disablement Team members also serve with U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE) Response Teams in the interagency National Technical Nuclear Forensics Ground Collection Task Force on a rotational basis.

Part of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Army’s Nuclear Disablement Teams — the NDT 1 “Manhattan,” NDT 2 “Iron Maiden” and NDT 3 “Vandals” — are all stationed on

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland at the 20th CBRNE Command.

Alcaide said NDT-NCT Partnership VIII gave them the opportunity to train together on the Korean Peninsula.

“The NDTs and NCTs were able to plan and execute missions together and work hand-in-hand in areas that allow us to communicate effectively between each other and our Soldiers downrange,” said Alcaide. “This is a giant leap from the previous partnership events. In addition, both teams formed special bonds and friendship that each team member will cherish for the rest of their lives.”

Alcaide said the exercise made both teams stronger and contributed to the readiness of the ROK-U.S. Alliance, which will mark its 70th anniversary this year.

“As an ally and partner over several decades now, it is important we continue to strengthen our relationship with the ROK NCTs and improve our ability to operate together in the same mission space,” said Alcaide. “This goes with our motto of Katchi Kapshida or We Go Together!”

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1st AML forges enduring partnership with ROK counterparts



U.S. Army Maj. Nicholas A. Magno (second from right in back) from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory poses with members from Republic of Korea Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Command at their headquarters outside of the South Korean capital of Seoul. A native of West Chester, Pennsylvania, Magno said he felt drawn to serve in the U.S. Army because of his family legacy of defending freedom on the Korean Peninsula. Courtesy photo.

SEOUL – American Soldiers from the U.S. Army's only mobile medical laboratory trained with their South Korean Armed Forces counterparts to strengthen interoperability for counter Weapons of Mass Destruction missions on the Korean Peninsula.

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 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.

Col. Matthew J. Grieser, the commander of the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, said his command has forged an enduring relationship with its counterparts in the ROK CBRN Defense Command and ROK Armed Forces Medical Command.

"The ROK-U.S. Alliance is one of our strongest military alliances in the world and it is important to continue to strengthen interoperability with our Korean counterparts," said Grieser, a native of Mulino, Oregon.

Lt. Col. Brandon S. Pybus, Staff Sgt. Stephen J. Riddick and Spc. Tatyana M. Sluss from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory Chemical Threat Assessment Section trained with their coun-

terparts in the ROK CBRN Defense Command field analytical laboratory.

The ROK CBRN Defense Command Chemical Section is a mobile organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-certified analytical capability for theater validation of chemical warfare agents, their precursors and degradation products.

"This engagement served to cross-level laboratory capabilities for Command Joint Task Force-Elimination and enabled critical pre-coordination for sample sharing, equipment interoperability, communications and technical analysis," said Pybus.

A biochemist from Dothan, Alabama, Pybus joined the U.S. Army out of a desire to apply his skills and expertise to protecting U.S. troops.

Maj. Andrew A. Clack and Spc. Jasmine A. Crewell from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory Occupational and Environmental Health Section trained with troops from the ROK CBRN Defense Command Radiation Mobile Laboratory.

The 1st AML team members were given an in-depth tour of the mobile radiation laboratory and discussed

equipment and software use, precision analysis and safety guidelines.

"The team members discussed and trained with personal dosimeters, background radiation survey meters, gamma surface-contamination detectors, hand-held neutron detectors and hand-held high-purity germanium nuclide analyzers," said Clack, who is from Pittsburgh.

An Environmental Science and Engineering officer, Clack previously deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom and Cambodia for a goodwill mission.

Clack said the American and South Korean teams have similar equipment and management methods.

"This bodes well for future joint engagements in not only lab operations but site assessment, sample collection and management," said Clack.

Maj. Nicholas A. Magno and Maj. Joshua M. Carmen from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory met with their counterparts in the ROK CBRN Defense Command's biological threat assessment field analytical laboratory to coordinate for counter Weapons of Mass Destruction missions.

A native of West Chester, Pennsylvania, Magno said he felt drawn to serve in the U.S. Army because of his family legacy of defending freedom on the Korean Peninsula.

"I joined the Army because my father had served in the Korean War, and I wanted to explore the exciting opportunities the Army has to offer for physicians. As compared to my civilian counterparts, Army physicians have an unlimited potential for leadership, travel and to become an expert in fields which many civilians do not get access to," said Magno.

As the ROK-U.S. Alliance marks its 70th anniversary this year, the 1st Area Medical Laboratory and 20th CBRNE Command continue to support the alliance and to contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia.

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Military Working Dog makes mark on Army login access website

CHIÈVRES AIR BASE, Belgium – A picture of an attentive Military Working Dog looking at his camouflage-clad handler through a tunnel greets people when they open a wide variety of Army programs from the Enterprise Access Management Service-Army login page.

That dog is Torro, a U.S. Army working dog and his current handler is Cpl. Henry M. Blanco.

The seven-year-old German Shepherd is stationed on Chièvres Air Base, Belgium. Also known as the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Airfield, the NATO base is supported by Army Garrison Benelux in Belgium.

Blanco said Torro is trained for patrol and explosive detection service.

Providing paws on the ground outside the wire and inside the cordon, Military Working Dogs with explosive detection skills like Torro support Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians around the world.

Army EOD techs often rely on Military Working Dogs to support operations.

Approximately 1,600 Military Working Dogs serve in every branch of the U.S. military.

Military Working Dogs support operations on land, at sea and in the air.

Since the 1950s, the U.S. Air Force's 341st Training Squadron has been training the dogs.

Torro is part of the Combined Military Working Dog Detachment-Europe (CMWDD-E). Assigned to the U.S. Army's 18th Military Police Brigade, the detachment has 59 Military Working Dogs and more than 70 personnel.

With large, medium and small kennels, Combined Military Working Detachment-Europe has primarily German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois that are stationed in the countries of their origin, serving on installations in Germany, Belgium and Italy.

Sgt. 1st Class Brandon T. Meyer, the kennel master for the 100th Military Police (MP) Detachment (MWD), said the Military Working Dogs and their handlers cover the entire U.S. Army Europe-Africa footprint and support contingency operations around the world.

"We currently have missions in Africa, Kosovo, Egypt and Kuwait," said Meyer. "We work closely with our joint service counterparts for unity of effort to accomplish all missions in our area of operations."

Meyer said the MWD teams train daily to stay certified for operations.

"Each kennel location conducts realistic training scenarios daily to ensure the Military Working Dog can be employed



An American Soldier assigned to the 100th Military Police Detachment, 18th Military Police Brigade conducts exercise and obedience training with a Military Working Dog in the Boeblingen Local Training Area, Germany, April 24 2018. U.S. Army photo by Visual Information Specialist Jason Johnston.

in unique and complex environments," said Meyer. "Our dogs are capable of serving on ships and aircraft but our main objective is land warfare."

A native of Scottsdale, Arizona, Meyer has served in the U.S. Army for 11 years and deployed to Afghanistan for nine months in support of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force. Meyer decided to join the Army after meeting a classmate in high school who lost his mother during the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers.

"Something hit me right then that I needed to ensure something like that never occurs again," said Meyer. "I initially enlisted as an MP since it would translate to the civilian sector."

Meyer was one of the first privates selected from basic training to attend the Military Working Dog Handler's Course in a test pilot program. Military Police previously had to be a specialist before attending MWD training.

"The highlight of my job is seeing the development of a MWD team from beginning to end," said Meyer.

Taken by Jason Johnston in April 24, 2018, the photo was from the Boeblingen Local Training Area in Germany. Torro was stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, and his handler was Cpl. David Stefanik.

Meyer said that seeing the EAMS-A photo reminds him of the important missions that his kennel conducts daily in support of U.S. forces and NATO allies in Europe.

"Every time I see Torro on the EAMS-A login page it reminds me of the hard work, dedication and sacrifice that our MWD teams conduct everyday around the world," said Meyer. "It gives me a sense of purpose and motivation to continue my career in the best job in the Army."

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