



20th CBRNE Command hosts inaugural Joint CBRNE Forum

COCKEYSVILLE, Md. – The U.S. Department of Defense's premier all hazards command hosted the inaugural Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Forum to mark and celebrate the contributions made by joint service CBRNE personnel around the world.

The 20th CBRNE Command held the event at the Martin's Valley Mansion in Cockeysville, Maryland, July 28.

Hosted by U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, the event welcomed joint service Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel.

The one-of-a-kind command is headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in Northeast Maryland's science, technology and security corridor,

The 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army's CBRN specialists and EOD technicians, 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.

This year's forum highlighted the joint service personnel who confront and defeat CBRNE hazards in support of U.S. military operations around the world and civil authorities across the nation.

The U.S. Army Chemical Corps was established during World War I when chemical weapons were first used in Europe during trench warfare.

Since chemical weapons were banned by the international communi-



The U.S. military's premier all hazards command hosted the inaugural Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Forum to mark the contributions made by joint service CBRNE personnel around the world. The U.S. Army's 20th CBRNE Command held the event at the Martin's Valley Mansion in Cockeysville, Maryland, July 28. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

ty, CBRN specialists, who are also called Dragon Soldiers in the Army, have focused on safeguarding and enabling maneuver forces to operate in a CBRN-contested environment during large-scale combat operations.

U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians marked their 80th anniversary last year.

The U.S. Army began training the first enlisted Bomb Disposal Soldiers, the predecessors to today's EOD technicians, on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in April 1942.

The U.S. Army started training bomb disposal Soldiers following the establishment of the British Bomb Squad, which was created to defeat

time-delayed bombs dropped during World War II.

After defeating hundreds of thousands of Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq and Afghanistan, joint service CBRNE forces are shifting their focus to support large-scale combat operations against near-peer adversaries in support of the National Defense Strategy.

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Erik C. Peterson, the deputy chief of staff for G-8 programs, was the guest speaker at the Joint CBRNE Forum. Peterson said that having combat-credible forces that are trained, equipped and ready was the key to deterring and if necessary, defeating any adversary during multidomain operations.

[Read full story](#)

From the Command Sergeant Major

The 20th CBRNE Command is composed of extraordinary professionals who lead, care, train, and maintain resources. Over the next few editions, we are going to break that down by the numbers to understand what that means.

Beginning with being an extraordinary professional. Every one of you that are a member of our team is already extraordinary. Considering less than one percent of Americans volunteer to serve, each of our Soldiers and civilians that make up the 20th CBRNE Command are exceptional by default.

According to ADP 6-22, the Army profession is a trusted vocation of Soldiers and Army civilians whose collective expertise is the ethical design, generation, support, and application of land power; serving under civilian authority; and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people. Being a trusted professional is the shared identity we have certified in character, competence, and commitment to honorably fulfill our oaths of service. The five essential characteristics of our profession are trust, honorable service, military expertise, stewardship of the profession, and esprit de corps. It is not only important we can draw a direct line between each of those and everything we do, but it is also critical. From daily activities to decisions, our professionalism is either supported or deteriorated by our actions. There is no middle ground.

The difference between someone professional and unprofessional is usually obvious. However, the difference between a professional and an extraordinary professional is often more subtle. These individuals are not content with mediocrity; they constantly strive for excellence in everything they do.

One key characteristic of an extraordinary professional is their unwavering commitment to continuous learning and improvement. They understand that knowledge is power and actively seek out opportunities to expand their skills. What you might not see is their work when no one is watching. Extraordinary professionals read our professional journals, mentor, and seek mentorship. It is not enough to achieve the standard. We must strive to exceed the standard, set new standards for ourselves, and higher expectations for others along the way.

I call on you to push yourselves to raise your level of expertise and promote our profession of arms honorably. You will not only build trust and esprit de corps along the way, but you will likely discover more about who you are in the process. The Army's recruiting motto sums up being extraordinary perfectly, be all you can be! Next, we will talk about helping others be all they can be ... or as the Army calls it, leading.



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



The Defender

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CBRN officer picked for 75th Ranger Regiment



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Christopher Coughlin (left) from the 25th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Company (Technical Escort), participates in the CBRN Best Warrior Competition on Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. A native of Tacoma, Washington, who grew up around West Point, New York, Coughlin was recently selected for the 75th Ranger Regiment. Courtesy photo.

FORT STEWART, Ga. – A team leader from an Army Chemical Corps unit achieved his life-long goal of serving in the elite 75th Ranger Regiment.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Christopher A. Coughlin from the 25th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort) was selected for the U.S. Army's premier direct-action raid unit.

The 25th CBRNE Company "Sentinels" are part of the 83rd CBRN Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command.

A native of Tacoma, Washington, who grew up around West Point, New York, Coughlin wanted to gain more CBRN experience.

"That's when I received an invite to 25th CBRNE Company," he said. "This unit offered me the chance to get key development time and lots of technical chemical experience."

Coughlin was inspired to be an Army Ranger by his grandfather. "My grandfather fought in the first wave on Normandy as an infantryman and used to tell me stories of his experiences during World War II. One of the stories that stuck with me was when he was moving up off the beach. There was a minefield with a Soldier on the ground, missing his leg. He directed them to avoid one area and to follow the marked route that had been cleared before," said Coughlin.

"He said that I was here today in part because of those Rangers that led the way off the beach," said Coughlin. "Since then, being in the 75th Ranger Regiment was one of my main goals and I did everything I could to get there."

[Read full story](#)

Chaplain's Corner

Show up, Wash Rinse and Repeat. 2,031 times

As a baseball fan, it's hard not to notice that this is shaping up to be a great season for the local MLB team, the Baltimore Orioles. They're crushing it. As I write this, the Orioles are remembering one of the most celebrated days in their history. 28 years ago this week, a huge milestone was achieved at Camden Yards. A dramatic home run streak? No. A blazing strike out record? Nope. No hitters, perfect games, ESPN highlight worthy plays? Wrong again. Cal Ripken Jr, wearing number 8 for the Orioles, simply repeated something he had done 2,130 times before – he showed up in the correct uniform, at the right time, ready to play. That night Ripken broke the consecutive games record set by the great Lou Gehrig 56 years earlier. If you don't know anything about baseball, know this: a baseball season is a lot like Army life in several ways.

First, it's a daily grind with the typical season having 162 games, lots of travel and few days off. Second, as the season drags on, many players will play while hurt, taking the field patched up and medicated. Third, there's always the threat to get sent packing to the Minor League if you don't perform. Sound familiar?

Please take encouragement in the words of Solomon in the book of Proverbs, one of the wisest men who ever lived. He writes, *A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich, and Whoever works his land will have plenty to eat, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.* I would suggest that this is great wisdom not just for your Army life, but your entire life. We certainly live to celebrate heroes in life – those who dare and succeed at great things. But those of you who simply show up every day, in the right uniform, ready to play are what a successful organization and in fact a successful life is built upon. Show up at work but also, and perhaps more importantly, show up at home.

Here is part of the legacy of Cal Ripken's commitment to show up. The 1994-95 MLB season was cancelled to include the 1994 World Series due to a strike which angered fans and threatened to end professional baseball. In mid-1995 games resumed but fans were still angry, and attendance plummeted. Professional baseball was on life support in desperate need of a shot in the arm – a lifeline.

That lifeline came in the form of Cal Ripken Jr whose accomplishment on September 6th, 1995, provided the excitement, energy and connection with fans that was desperately needed. Many will say that Ripken, who is from Aberdeen, saved baseball that day by simply showing up and taking the field. You may never know the true impact of simply showing up.

CH (LTC) Ben Clark
20th CBRNE Command Chaplain
Office: 410-306-3098

Premier CBRNE command support Army recruiting across nation



D'Wayne Thorpe (center), a U.S. Army Kansas City Recruiting Battalion recruit, recites the U.S. Army Oath of Enlistment, Aug. 18, in St. Joseph, Missouri, during the Kansas City Chiefs training camp. In partnership with the 1st Infantry Division and the KC Chiefs, the KC Recruiting Bn. swore in 18 recruits during the Chiefs Military Appreciation Day. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alvin Conley, 19th Public Affairs Detachment.



ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The U.S. military's premier all hazards command is supporting Army recruiting efforts across the nation.

Soldiers from the 20th CBRNE Command are bolstering recruiting efforts by demonstrating their unique capabilities and describing opportunities to prospective recruits.

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

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

five Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.

Maj. Steven M. Modugno, the public affairs director for the 20th CBRNE Command, said the command is supporting the recruiting effort with everything from EOD techs in bomb suits at recruiting events to Soldiers referring potential recruits in the communities where they live.

"We have Soldiers on 19 bases in 16 states who are contributing to the recruiting effort in their local communities across the nation," said Modugno, a native of Santa Clarita, California, and former United States Military Academy, West Point instructor. "Our Soldiers are defending our nation from all hazards and helping to inform the American public about the opportunities available in the Army."

Modugno said the Army offers potential recruits the opportunity to serve their nation while learning valuable skills that will help them in the future.

"During its 248 years of defending liberty at home and overseas, the U.S. Army has forged warriors and leaders who have made our nation the greatest in the world," said Modugno.

Not only does the U.S. Army offer educational benefits, training, health and dental care, housing and allowances, but it also offers up to \$50,000 in bonuses.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader for the 20th CBRNE Command, said the recruiting effort falls in line with the Army's priorities of people and readiness.

"Today's recruits ensure tomorrow's readiness," said Silva, a Master Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician. "The engagements EOD and CBRN personnel participate support national, corps and division recruiting events and are tremendously successful because 20th CBRNE Command Soldiers are extraordinary professionals with unique skill sets and amazing stories from diverse missions and training."

Silva said the Army has taken him from his hometown of Long Beach, California, to all 50 states and five of the seven continents.

Displays and equipment catch potential recruits' attention but conversations with Soldiers pique the interest of potential recruits, said Silva.

"We want folks to see themselves when they see our Army. When Americans talk with our Soldiers, it connects us, the Army, to the nation, to our communities and allows us to share that the Army is not only filled with amazing opportunities but also filled with amazing people. It's the Army family that people enlist to be a part of. The job is our role in the family," said Silva. "Lots of employers are offering training, we are offering purpose and belonging."

[Read full story](#)

Civilian budget analyst keeps 48th Chemical Brigade ready

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – An Army civilian budget analyst helps to keep the U.S. Army’s only Chemical Brigade ready for operations around the world.

Marlena Semezier, a budget analyst for the 48th Chemical Brigade, ensures the one-of-a-kind formation has the necessary resources to accomplish its high stakes mission.

The 48th Chemical Brigade “Spartans” are part of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE headquarters.

Semezier was recently selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter for April through June 2023.

Providing support for a geographically dispersed Chemical Brigade with a global mission is no small feat. The Fort Cavazos, Texas-headquartered 48th Chemical Brigade commands four battalions and 15 companies with units stationed on nine installations in eight states. From the brigade headquarters on Fort Cavazos, Texas, Semezier monitors and manages budget authority and acts as the primary funds control manager.

She also assists in negotiating budget and programmatic issues.

A native of Austin, Texas, who attended the University of Texas, Semezier has served at the brigade for two years. Semezier said having the trust and full support of her leadership is the highlight of serving in the brigade.

“My husband is a Chemical Warrant Officer and I wanted to continue doing what I love and have the ability to transfer jobs within the government,” said Semezier. “I want to



Marlena Semezier, a budget analyst for the 48th Chemical Brigade, helps to keep the U.S. Army’s only Chemical Brigade ready for operations around the world. Semezier was selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter for April through June 2023. Courtesy photo.

continue partnering with Soldiers and civilians offering financial guidance to ensure they are always in a state of readiness to accomplish any mission handed to them.” Command because of the people and the mission.”

[Read full story](#)

Awards

20th CBRNE Command

Walter D. Wyatt Jr.	Meritorious Service Commendation Medal
Rocio D. Bennett	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Charles P. Grady II	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Pedro D. Johnson	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Albert C. Marte	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Angel D. Martinez-Navedo	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Manuel D. Salvador	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Pamela S. Silcox	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Xiaoyan Jiang	Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Natalie L. Polk	Civilian Service Achievement Medal
Alec T. Tebbe	Civilian Service Achievement Medal

52nd EOD Group

Anthony Whetstone	Civilian Service Achievement Medal
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71st EOD Group

Madison Schoonover	Certificate of Appreciation
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CARA

Timothy M. Reed	Meritorious Service Commendation Medal
Christopher A. Henke	Civilian Service Commendation Medal
Mark A. Brock	Certificate of Promotion
Valerie A. Lesniak	Certificate of Promotion
Samuel B. Pannoni	Certificate of Promotion
Taylor T. Phillips	Certificate of Promotion
Paige N. Smith	Certificate of Promotion
Sean A. Swartz	Certificate of Promotion
Kevin P. Wioland	Certificate of Promotion

US Army infectious disease experts to analyze mosquitos

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A team of U.S. Army infectious disease experts are working together to gather and analyze the genomic sequence of mosquitos following the first confirmed non-travel related malaria case in Maryland in more than 40 years.

The U.S. Army's 1st Area Medical Laboratory and scientists from the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and Smithsonian Institution are leveraging their collective expertise to better understand the reemergence of malaria in the United States.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-based 1st Area Medical Laboratory "Mad Scientists" are assigned to the 44th Medical Brigade and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier CBRNE formation.

American Soldiers from 1st AML deploy as a unit or in task-organized teams to perform surveillance, laboratory testing and health hazard assessments of environmental, occupational, endemic disease and CBRNE threats to support force protection and Weapons of Mass Destruction missions.

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1st AML deployed diagnostic capabilities to five different areas around the world, including U.S. bases in Japan, Korea and Germany.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-based 1st AML routinely works with the Fort Detrick, Maryland-based USAMRIID to provide health hazard assessments of environmental, occupational and endemic diseases

Entomologists, the biological scientists who study insects, support both commands.



Lt. Col. Cynthia Tucker from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory characterizes the mosquito population in the Exercise Precise Response training area for a new entry into the Smithsonian Institution's specimen voucher collection used worldwide for mosquito research. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Cynthia Tucker, an entomologist who serves at both 1st AML and WRAIR's Birosytematics Unit at the Smithsonian Institution, recently characterized the mosquito population around Canadian Forces Base Suffield in Alberta, Canada, during Exercise Precise Response.

Tucker will use her research from the multinational exercise to contribute a new entry to the Smithsonian Institution's specimen voucher collection that supports mosquito research around the world.

Col. Matthew J. Grieser, the former commander of the 1st AML, said the mosquito study is another example of how his unique command contributes to force protection.

"While the new case of malaria is very rare and non-contagious, we are studying the mosquitos involved out of an abundance of caution," said Grieser, a native of Mulino, Oregon, who deployed to Afghanistan four times and Iraq five times and has also served in Haiti, Panama and New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. "When it comes to the health of our force, we seek to better understand all potential diseases to contribute to force protection measures."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that the risk to the public for locally acquired mosquito-transmitted malaria remains very low.

[Read full story](#)

Awards

20th CBRNE Command

Lt. Col. Hassan Reynolds	Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Samuel Clark	Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Graham Miller	Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Rex Stanton	Meritorious Service Medal
Chief Warrant Officer Ramon Vargas	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. Maj. Carida Godby	Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Jeremy Burris	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Charity Groff	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Martarius Mccalebb	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Ramirez-Mendoza	Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Ronnie Atwood-Bryant	Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. James Buensuceso	Army Commendation Medal
Maj. Mitchell Lokker	Army Commendation Medal
Maj. Steven Modugno	Army Commendation Medal
Capt. Evan Caval	Army Commendation Medal
Capt. John Hurt	Army Commendation Medal
Capt. Amanda Nash	Army Commendation Medal
Capt. Charles Novinger	Army Commendation Medal
1st Sgt. Zackery Jones	Army Commendation Medal
Master Sgt. John Binot	Army Commendation Medal
Master Sgt. Thomas Holk	Army Commendation Medal
Master Sgt. Jody Mease	Army Commendation Medal

Army EOD officer completes Ironman Triathlon in Idaho

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho – An Explosive Ordnance Disposal platoon leader completed the Ironman Triathlon in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. John G. Ziomek, a platoon leader from the 787th Ordnance Company (EOD), proved his mettle during the 140.6-mile endurance competition.

The Ironman Triathlon included a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile marathon run. Ziomek was one of 988 competitors in the grueling race. Ziomek was named the 20th CBRNE Command Defender of the Week.

The swim was in Lake Coeur d'Alene and the bike and run were through the hilly terrain around the lake. With more than 109 miles of shoreline, the 25-mile-long Lake Coeur d'Alene varies in width from one to three miles.

"I finished in 14 hours, 49 minutes and 33 seconds," said Ziomek. "The highlight of the race was running through the finish line at the end."

Ziomek said he swam, biked and ran every week, except during field training exercises.

[Read full story](#)



U.S. Army 1st Lt. John G. Ziomek, a platoon leader from the 787th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) proved his mettle during the 140.6-mile endurance competition in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The Ironman Triathlon included a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile marathon run. He swam, biked and ran every week to prepare for the endurance race. For his service, Ziomek was named the 20th Chemical Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command Defender of the Week. Courtesy photo.

Awards

Sgt. 1st Class Mason Ishiki	Army Commendation Medal	Lt. Col. Matthew Zimmerman	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Ronnie Atwood-Brant	Army Commendation Medal	Maj. Daniel Concepcion	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Miguel Becerra	Army Commendation Medal	Maj. Marie Hough	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Divon Johnson	Army Commendation Medal	Maj. Jonathan Schwarz	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Daniel Mcbrayer	Army Commendation Medal	Maj. Cameron Wright	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Jordan Moorer	Army Commendation Medal	Command Sgt. Maj. Dustin Rolfe	Army Achievement Medal
Staff Sgt. Rigoberto Olmeda-Flecha	Army Commendation Medal	Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse Deberry	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Samuel Andrew	Army Commendation Medal	Master Sgt. Jammie Camacho	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Tyler Bisson	Army Commendation Medal	Master Sgt. Paul Fields	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Davon Butler	Army Commendation Medal	Master Sgt. Matthew Gilbert	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Lincoln Jonas	Army Commendation Medal	Master Sgt. Wade Wagley	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Alpha Ly	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Franco-Gonzalez	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Shivam Patel	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Maj. Carida Godby	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Andrew Petrakis	Army Commendation Medal	Staff Sgt. Ricardo Jasso	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. Andrew Votral	Army Commendation Medal	Staff Sgt. Tarik Lewis	Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Charita Allen	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Javier Garcia	Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Brandon Braun	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Bradley James	Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Evan Browning	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Emily Vega-Maldonado	Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Bryan Farr	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Keoni Wolford	Army Achievement Medal
Spc. Zachary Varner	Army Commendation Medal	Sgt. Keoni Wolford	Army Achievement Medal
Pfc. Jonathan Hoffman	Army Commendation Medal	Cpl Stuart Landaverde	Army Achievement Medal
Pfc. Vinny Yang	Army Commendation Medal	Spc. Logan Collins	Army Achievement Medal
Lt. Col. Vance Brunner	Army Achievement Medal	Spc. Keon Forbes	Army Achievement Medal
Lt. Col. Matthew Hurley	Army Achievement Medal	Spc. Zachary Varner	Army Achievement Medal
Lt. Col. William Mason	Army Achievement Medal	1st Sgt. Zackery Jones	Foreign Badge
Lt. Col. Hassan Reynolds	Army Achievement Medal		

Awards

48th Chemical Brigade

Maj. Norman Cole	Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Whitney Miller	Meritorious Service Medal
CW2 Brian Moore	Meritorious Service Medal
CW2 Lacena Williams	Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Albert Lamont	Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Huy Nguyen	Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. Danny Volkert	Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Natalie Campbell	Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Michael Rose	Meritorious Service Medal
Maj. Todd McDaniel	Army Achievement Medal
Capt. Adam Martin	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. 1st Class James Korkodilos	Army Achievement Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Detrick Stevenson	Army Achievement Medal
Maj. Azucena Towne	Certificate of Achievement
Capt. Kacey Adams	Certificate of Achievement
1st Sgt. Martinique Ingram	Certificate of Achievement
Master Sgt. Janice Pleasant	Certificate of Achievement
Cpl. Sialeia Faauli	Certificate of Achievement
Cpl. Amanda Owen	Certificate of Achievement
Pvt. Damien Williams	Certificate of Achievement
Pvt. Addrielyn Agustin	Certificate of Achievement

52nd EOD Group

Maj. Stephen Knudsen	Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Jeremiah Worker	Meritorious Service Medal
1st Sgt. James Swartz	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Elliott Shumer	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Mark Tantlinger	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Rashied Tolson	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Uber	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wesel	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Erik Wolgan	Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Thoms Hennig	Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Drew Hawley	Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. Christopher Brown	Army Commendation Medal
Spc. Jacob Boatman	Army Commendation Medal
Spc. Skyler Sheets	Army Commendation Medal
Spc. William Wheat	Army Commendation Medal
Spc. Donald Cribbett	Army Achievement Medal
Capt. Manfred Baltschkeit	German Badge
Capt Denis Glinski	German Badge
Capt. Marvin Grimmett	Foreign Badge

Capt. Stephen Siwinski	German Badge
1st Lt. John Jennes	German Badge
1st Lt. Jeffry Macrae	Foreign Badge
1st Lt. John Morrissey	German Badge
CW2 Thomas Allen	German Badge
WO1 Zarinah Inyang	Foreign Badge
Master Sgt. Christopher Morrow	Foreign Badge
Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Gautreau	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Isaac Klein	German Badge
Staff Sgt. Justis Gambaro	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Sean Hansen	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Patrick McCutcheon	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Bradley McDowell	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Cameron Niccum	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Jeremy Poe	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Joseph Reid	Foreign Badge
Staff Sgt. Shane Hope	German Badge
Sgt. Daniel Osborne	German Badge
Sgt. Robert Paul	German Badge
Cpl. Hunter Freedline	German Badge
Spc. Kevin Klaus	German Badge
Spc. Gabriel Gonell	Foreign Badge
Spc. Donavon Wilson	Foreign Badge
Spc. Tyler Crosby	German Badge
Pfc. Richard Simpson	Foreign Badge
Pfc. Dustin Williams	Foreign Badge

71st EOD Group

Maj. Thomas Artone	Meritorious Service Medal
Master Sgt. Nicholas McClure	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Caleb Balduff	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Wesley Foster	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Golson	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Tommy Oakley	Meritorious Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Oliver	Meritorious Service Medal
Staff Sgt. Daniel Perkins	Army Commendation Medal
Sgt. Tyler Orvik	Army Commendation Medal
Maj. Vincent Aebi	Army Achievement Medal
Maj. James Hawthorne	Army Achievement Medal
Capt. Travis Chewingkulick	Army Achievement Medal
1st Lt. Ryan Perry	Army Achievement Medal
Maj. Kyle Garis	Certificate of Achievement
Maj. Jonathan Schwebke	Certificate of Achievement
Capt. Jacob Mihfeld	Certificate of Achievement

Army civilian promoted to lieutenant colonel in USAR

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — An Army civilian operations planner from the U.S. military's premier all hazards formation was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, July 28.

Lt. Col. Nathan C. Cantwell was promoted to his current rank during the ceremony at the Mallette Auditorium.

Cantwell serves as the Army Reserve operations officer at Army Material Command – Army Reserve Element (AMC-ARE) Detachment 7, which directly supports the Communications-Electronics Command, and an Army civilian operations planner at the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, hosted the ceremony and recognized Cantwell for his service.

Hood said that Cantwell personified the power of the combined Army Team through his service as a National Guardsman, active-duty Soldier, Army Reservist and Army civilian. The Army's greatest strength is our people, Hood emphasized.

Cantwell was promoted because he demonstrated that he was an exceptional professional who could lead, care and train people and maintain equipment, said Hood.

A native of Phoenix who graduated from the New Mexico Military Institute and New Mexico State University, Cantwell is a Field Artillery officer who has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He also served in Germany for 12 years.

Cantwell serves as the Reserve operations officer and has continually supported the Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland during his annual training and monthly training weekends in the command's Current Operations (G3/5) staff office. In this Reserve capacity, he has supported exercises, equipment testing, equipment fielding



William Cantwell promotes his father Lt. Col. Nathan C. Cantwell during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, July 28. Lt. Col. Nathan Cantwell serves as the Army Reserve operations officer at Army Material Command – Army Reserve Element (AMC-ARE) Detachment 7, which directly supports the Communications-Electronics Command, and as an Army civilian operations planner at the 20th CBRNE Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

and other events identified by the CECOM commander and staff.

CECOM delivers Command, Control, Communications Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) capabilities, weapons systems, business systems and medical sustainment to enable combat operations.

Maj. Gen. Robert L. Edmondson II is the commanding general for CECOM, and he serves as the senior mission commander for APG.

Cantwell said 20th CBRNE Command has a strong relationship with the Army Reserve through its multi-component Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Team 3 and the Army Reserve Consequence Management Unit.

"There is a lot of overlap between my Army Reserve and Army civilian life," said Cantwell. "Working with Soldiers as a leader on the weekends keeps me better focused on what I need to do as an Army civilian to ensure those Soldiers at the brigades and groups are receiving what they need to prepare for their next mission."

As an Army civilian, Cantwell serves as a plans analyst in the Future Operations (G35) section.

Cantwell said the 20th CBRNE Command overcomes the tyranny of distance when working with subordinate units across the nation to support U.S. Army Forces Command and combat commands around the world.

"Despite the complexity, the command very successfully manages those subordinate headquarters and provides combat capability to combatant commands ready for mission success," said Cantwell. "The level of comradery among many of the civilians and the military personnel that come to the headquarters make the command unique in its ability to capitalize on requirements."

Cantwell said his wife Romy Cantwell has been the driving force throughout his career.

"This is a rank for you as much as it is for me," said Cantwell to his wife, while also thanking his son William and late daughter Lilian-Destiny for their support.

[Read full story](#)

1st Area Medical Laboratory welcomes new commander



Col. Dubray Kinney, Sr., the incoming commander of the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, speaks at his change of command ceremony, Sept. 8. Kinney assumed command of 1st AML from Col. Matthew J. Grieser at a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The U.S. Army's only mobile medical laboratory welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Sept. 7.

Col. Dubray Kinney, Sr., assumed command of the 1st Area Medical Laboratory from Col. Matthew J. Grieser during the widely attended ceremony.

The 1st AML "Mad Scientists" are part of the 44th Medical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command.

Activated in 1942, the 1st AML has served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Soldiers from 1st AML deployed to help contain the Ebola outbreak in Liberia in 2014 – 2015.

The 1st AML was also the first Army unit to deploy to U.S. military bases overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Col. Michael F. Belenky, the commander of the 44th Medical Brigade, hosted the ceremony. Belenky thanked Grieser for his successful command tour.

"As the commander of the Army's only expeditionary and tactical medi-

cal laboratory, your outstanding leadership, pursuit of excellence and intense dedication to mission readiness have directly contributed to the success of the 1st AML," said Belenky, from Arnold, Maryland.

Belenky praised Grieser for his efforts to build partnerships around the world during visits to South

Korea, Poland, Germany, Romania, Canada and Australia.

A native of Mulino, Oregon, Grieser will retire from the U.S. Army early next year. During his 32 years in uniform, Grieser has deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq and other contingencies around the world.

Grieser said the highlight of his command tour had been serving alongside the Mad Scientists as they tackled challenges. Grieser said that 1st AML is a team of teams with Soldiers who constantly seek to deepen their expertise and master their profession.

Kinney started his U.S. Army career as a combat medic before becoming a commissioned Medical Service Corps officer. A graduate of the University of Maryland at Eastern Shore, Kinney has deployed to Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I can't help but feel humbled and privileged that a poor kid from the inner city in Washington, D.C., who was raised by a single mom is blessed to make it this far," said Kinney. "Only in America and only in God's country could this happen."

[Read full story](#)



Brig. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Explosives (CBRNE) Command, thanks Col. Matthew J. Grieser, the outgoing commander of the 1st AML. Grieser is retiring from the U.S. Army after 32 years. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

WMD expert highlights current threat posed by chemical weapons

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A Weapons of Mass Destruction expert discussed the lessons learned from eliminating Syria's chemical weapons program and how those lessons may apply to future large-scale combat operations.

Dr. Philipp C. Bleek spoke to Army leaders from the 20th CBRNE Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, during an Operations Directorate Leader Professional Development session, July 13.

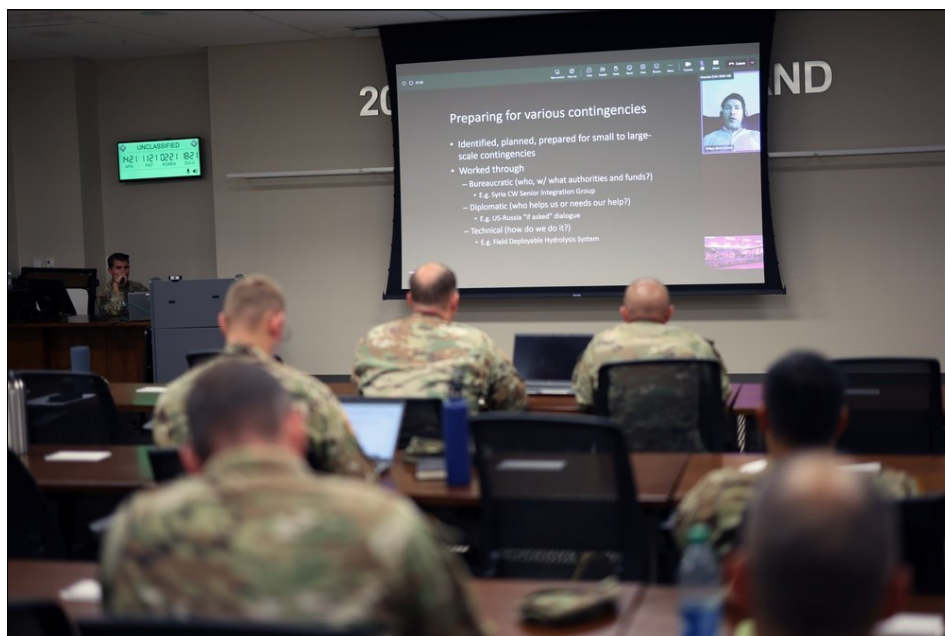
Bleek is a professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) at Monterey, California, in the Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies Program (NPTS).

He also currently serves as an expert on the Congressionally-mandated, Department of Defense-sponsored, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine-convened study called "Assessing and Improving Strategies for Preventing, Countering, and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism: Chemical Threats."

Bleek previously served as a senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs where he helped to author the 2014 National Defense Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction and played a role in planning for various Syria chemical weapons-related contingencies.

Much of the declared Syrian chemical weapons stockpile was destroyed in international waters aboard the container ship MV Cape Ray with two Field Deployable Hydrolysis Systems that were developed by the Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center, now the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Chemical Biological Center on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Part of the Ready Reserve Force, the Portsmouth, Virginia-homeported Cape Ray is owned by the U.S. Maritime Administration.

"This eliminated most of one of the few chemical arsenals that existed," said Bleek.



Dr. Philipp C. Bleek spoke to Army leaders from the 20th CBRNE Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, July 13. Bleek previously served as a senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs where he helped to author the 2014 National Defense Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction and played a role in planning for various Syria chemical weapons-related contingencies. U.S. Army photo by Angel D. Martinez-Navedo.

This LPD event was held two weeks after the 105th anniversary of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps and a week after the United States completed the destruction of its declared chemical weapons stockpiles in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997.

"The dramatic marginalization of chemical weapons is something worth celebrating," said Bleek, while adding that the potential threat of chemical weapons use persists, particularly to hinder operations and target logistical hubs during large-scale combat operations.

Col. Vance M. Brunner, the operations director for the 20th CBRNE Command, invited Bleek to speak at the development session.

"Dr. Bleek brings a host of knowledge regarding chemical weapon programs both by state and non-state actors," said Brunner.

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies has teamed up with the 20th CBRNE Command for their Leadership Development Program.

"The world-class professors at Middlebury bring a higher level of edu-

cation than what you will find at our military schools. They bring a global security perspective for combating Weapons of Mass Destruction," said Brunner. "They cover topics at the strategic and political level, such as treaties, international organizations and regional political factors for the pursuit of WMDs."

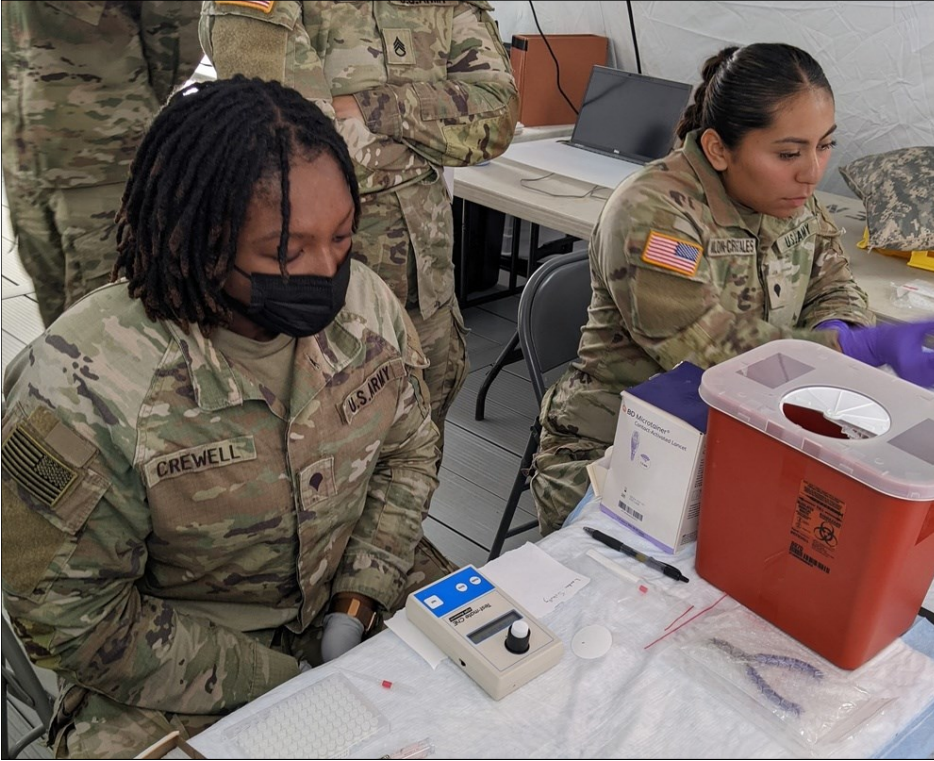
Brunner was selected to be an Army War College fellow at Middlebury Institute of International Studies from 2021-2022 before coming to the 20th CBRNE Command.

Brunner said the development program helps the command prepare to support maneuver forces during large-scale combat operations.

"Preparing for countering Weapons of Mass Destruction with a near-peer adversary is critical. Any U.S. adversary will struggle in a conventional fight with the might of the U.S. Joint Force and its multiple partners and allies. Therefore, they may rely on WMDs to level the playing field or try to gain an advantage against the U.S. and its allies," said Brunner. "Being prepared for worst case scenarios is an essential part of a near-peer fight."

[Read full story](#)

NATO troops complete live-agent CBRN training in Canada



U.S. Army Sgt. Jasmine A. Crewell and Spc. Lesli Bailon Cristales perform testing for all 1st Area Medical Laboratory troop personnel and train four Suffield Defence Research and Development Canada staff. American Soldiers from the 20th CBRNE Command's 68th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort) and the 1st Area Medical Laboratory represented the U.S. Army at Exercise Precise Response on Canadian Armed Forces Base Suffield in Alberta, Canada, July 10 - 28. Courtesy photo.



CANADIAN FORCES BASE SUFFIELD, Alberta, Canada – Highly specialized NATO forces honed their life-saving and mission-enabling skills during live-agent chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) training at Exercise Precise Response on Canadian Forces Base Suffield in Alberta, Canada, July 10 – 28.

CBRN troops from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States trained together at the Suffield Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) site during the exercise.

American Soldiers from the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological,

Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command's 68th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort) and the 1st Area Medical Laboratory represented the U.S. Army at the multinational exercise.

The 68th CBRNE Company "Responders" are part of the 2nd CBRN Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier all hazards command.

The Fort Cavazos, Texas-based 68th CBRNE Company provides advice, assessment, sampling, detection, verification, render safe capabilities, packaging and escort of chemical and biological devices or hazards, biological surveillance and

limited consequence management support for military forces and domestic authorities. During the exercise, the 68th CBRNE Company assumed the role of Task Force lead, responsible for issuing orders and battle tracking five NATO countries.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Dylan Tossavainen, the executive officer for the 68th CBRNE Company, said the Responders operated and managed capabilities across the multinational task force during the NATO exercise.

"This exercise has allowed Soldiers to see a broader scale of how the military operates, expanding their scope from company and battalion training events to partnered NATO incorporated events," said Tossavainen. "Our Soldiers will leave this exercise knowing where they fit not only in the U.S. Army but also across NATO as a whole."

Members of the 1st Area Medical Laboratory supported numerous missions during the exercise, including Lt. Col. Cynthia Tucker who characterized the mosquito population in the training area for a new entry into the Smithsonian Institute's specimen voucher collection used worldwide for mosquito research, Maj. Carl C. Ducummon who tested troops before and after missions and Capt. Jared M. Egbert who served as a preventive medicine physician.

Canadian Armed Forces Lt. Col. Trevor Waaga, the exercise director, also recognized U.S. Army Capt. Kaisha Nesmith from 1st Area Medical Laboratory for her support and expertise on radiological and nuclear issues during the exercise.

Maj. Suzanne E. Mate led a troop from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory that worked on 95 samples from 11 NATO teams during the exercise.

"The troop's success is reflected in zero safety incidents and the gained trust of our Suffield hosts who welcomed us back in 2024," said Mate. "We all learned together, which only happens at a combined training event."

[Read full story](#)

Airborne EOD techs hone skills during international competition



A U.S. Army Paratrooper runs toward the goal after jumping from a CH-47 at Glen Rock Drop Zone during Leapfest 2023 at Exeter, Rhode Island, Aug. 5. Leapfest is the largest, longest standing, international static line parachute training event and competition hosted by the 56th Troop Command, Rhode Island Army National Guard to promote high level technical training and esprit de corps within the International Airborne community. U.S. Army Reserve photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar.

EXETER, R.I. – For a group of American Soldiers who jump out of airplanes and defuse bombs for their nation, X marks the spot.

Eight Airborne Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers from the 192nd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) competed against U.S. and international airborne troops during Leapfest 2023.

Held in Exeter, Rhode Island, and hosted by the Rhode Island National Guard, the international parachute competition has been conducted every year for almost 40 years.

The Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based EOD team placed 10th out of 50 teams in the competition. A team from the United Kingdom won the competition. The teams jumped out of CH-47 Chinook helicopters from 1,500 feet and steered MC-6 parachutes toward an “X” on the ground.

Once the teams landed, the clock started until they reached the “X” and the team with the lowest time won.

Capt. Eugene E. Osbourne, the commander of the Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 722nd EOD Company, said the Leapfest gives Airborne Sol-

diers the chance to focus on hitting a target.

“Typical airborne operations have you exit an aircraft and fate decides where you land. Leapfest releases you in relative proximity to the mark and you must maneuver yourself in the air safely and effectively to the target,” said Osbourne.

“MC-6 jumps allow parachutists the freedom to move closer to an intended area to land but with little precision,” said Osbourne. “In Leapfest, you have to be precise or it will cost you time and seconds decide a top 10 finish or nothing at all.”

Osbourne said participating in Leapfest helps to contribute to mission readiness for his airborne EOD company.

“The highlight of Leapfest was interactions with members from different Armed Forces from all over the world,” said Osbourne. “The ability to mingle and create relationships that further improve future training was incredibly invaluable.”

Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based EOD units from the 192nd EOD Bat-

talion train to support the 82nd Airborne Division. When assigned to the rotational Immediate Response Force mission, Airborne EOD techs have to stay ready to deploy within 18 hours.

The 192nd EOD Battalion is part of the 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

During Leapfest, teams from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force competed against Armenian, British, Czech Republic, Dutch, Egyptian, Greek, German, Italian and Portuguese teams. Active duty and National Guard units participated in the competition.

Sgt. 1st Class Drew Hawley, a platoon leader from the 722nd EOD Company, said the weather was good throughout the competition.

“In my opinion, the highlight of Leapfest was the weather holding out and giving us the green light to complete all four planned jumps,” said Hawley. “It gives us an opportunity to use and test all of the functionalities of the MC-6 parachute. On normal jumps, you may not need to do a whole lot of steering but during the competition trying to land on a small X, your parachute handling skills are tested.”

Staff Sgt. Christopher A. Smith from the 722nd EOD Company said teams had to take many factors into consideration during the competition.

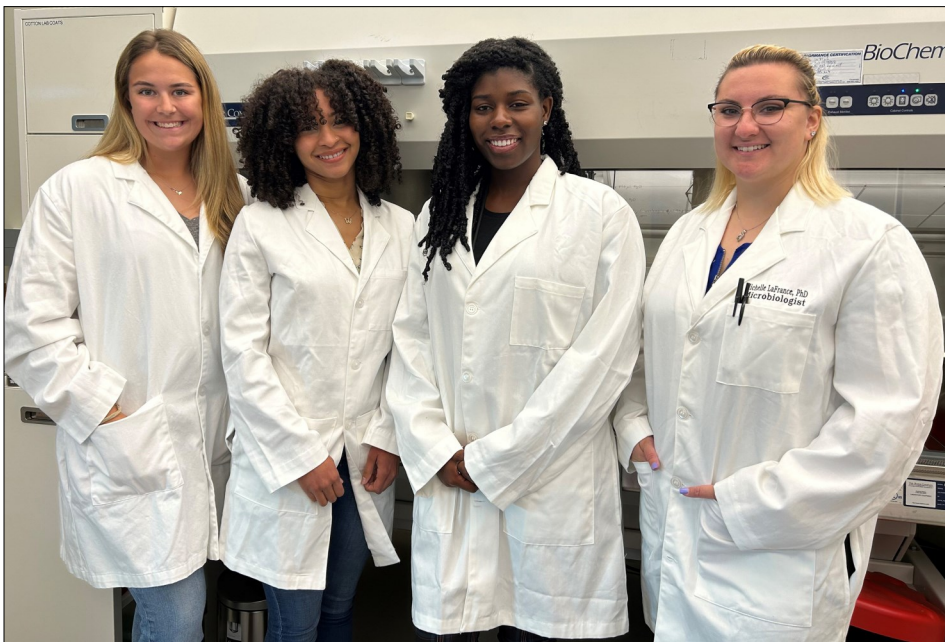
“You have your fellow teammates in the air with you potentially all aiming for the same target and about 1 minute of hangtime before the ground,” said Smith. “In that minute, you have to calculate windspeed, direction of drift, rate of decent and determine which way your team is going so you don’t collide and get to that X.”

Smith said the competition helped the team to develop its skills.

“We were able to build more confidence and expertise so we can provide better training for our airborne EOD techs,” said Smith. “We need more canopy time and the 722nd EOD is taking the gold next year.”

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Four rising Army scientists serve at 20th CBRNE Command



These young scientists work for the 20th CBRNE Command in the CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity to identify soil, water and air samples to help protect soldiers. From left: Paige Smith, Grace Bultron, Jessica Caldwell and Courtney Aceto. U.S. Department of Defense photo by Katie Lange.

By Katie Lange

Armed with Science editor

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — More and more women are working for the federal government in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, known as STEM, and there's no better way to highlight their growing influence than by meeting some of the women who put in the work every day.

At the Army's 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives Command's CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity — known as CARA — there are four young women who are making their mark in the military science community. Jessica Caldwell, 29, and Grace Bultron, 30, are chemists in the unit.

Paige Smith, 23, is an air monitoring chemist, and Courtney Aceto, 27, is a microbiologist. Their careers were all built on hard work, good mentoring and a healthy dose of curiosity.

Here we're sharing the details of their paths to success to help others who want to follow in their footsteps.

Of the four women, Jessica Caldwell has been at CARA the longest. The 29-year-old said she's always been a

curious, analytical person who loved to solve puzzles.

"My mom said I would always ask, 'Why? Why?'" she said. "And that's the question we're always asking as we do our jobs."

She said the TV shows "Forensic Files" and "CSI" got her interested in forensic science, but someone talked her into focusing on a field that had broader career opportunities.

"[They said] 'If you go into chemistry, which is a little more general, you're not locked into forensic science. You can do anything. You may want to go to med school, or do pharmaceuticals,'" Caldwell remembered. She attended the University of Virginia and eventually got a degree in chemistry — a task that wasn't particularly easy. "There were multiple times where I wanted to quit, honestly. But I was like, 'You know what? I love this. I have a passion for it, and it makes sense to me.' So, I was like, 'I can do this.'"

Courtney Aceto earned her Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry at Stevenson University in Maryland, but her love of science started long before that.

The 27-year-old said that was something that worked out well when the COVID-19 pandemic hit: "I was totally ready!"

Aceto is working toward finishing her master's degree at Johns Hopkins University, where she got her first job in microbiology doing DNA sequencing. She then switched out of academia to quality control work at a biotech company. But she wanted something with more job security, so she decided the government sector would be her next move.

She said she lucked out when the CARA position opened. "If it weren't for my family being military and government, I wouldn't have searched so hard on USA Jobs," Aceto said, referring to the federal government's official employment website.

Grace Bultron brings a different perspective to the team. The 30-year-old native Spanish speaker lived her entire life in Puerto Rico prior to making the jump to the mainland last October when she accepted the position at CARA.

She had worked as a chemist for environmental and pharmaceutical companies since graduating from the University of Puerto Rico in 2016, but she thought a government position would be a chance to grow personally and professionally.

Bultron said chemistry wasn't really on her radar as an option until she got to high school, where a teacher motivated her and got her into it.

"I chose this career because here, there's the opportunity to be curious but also analytical at the same time, and creative," Bultron said. "The lab is always open for us to experiment."

As for her advice to other women: "I would tell them that at first, STEM can seem a little bit intimidating. I will not deny it's a challenging career. But I would tell them to acquire knowledge and ... recognize which area your skills are in. Be confident that you can succeed. Look for someone who inspires you, and just go for it."

[Read full story](#)

Brothers defend nation together in Army chemical battalion



(Above and center) Spc. Noor M. Atal and Pfc. Muzamil Atal serve together in the 22nd Chemical Battalion on Fort Bliss, Texas. The Atal brothers joined the Army from Tampa, Florida, as a part of the Battle Buddy program and attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) together. Courtesy photo.

FORT BLISS, Texas – Two Afghan American brothers are defending their new nation together in a U.S. Army chemical battalion that combats chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) hazards around the world.

Spc. Noor M. Atal and Pfc. Muzamil Atal serve in the 22nd Chemical Battalion, which is part of the 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier deployable and multifunctional CBRNE formation.

The brothers chose to become Chemical Corps Soldiers because of their interest in science, technology and emergency response.

Born in Ghazni, Afghanistan, and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, the Atal brothers joined the U.S. Army from Tampa, Florida, as a part of the Battle Buddy program and attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) together.

The Atal brothers are part of a large family with four brothers and four sisters.

An elder brother served as an interpreter for U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2009 and still works as a U.S. Army contractor and cybersecurity analyst.

During their time at the battalion, the



Atal brothers have trained with NATO allies in Romania, deployed to the Central Command Area of Operations and trained with Mexican CBRN troops.

"We joined the Army for various reasons, including a desire to serve this great nation, access to education and training, career opportunities and discipline," said Muzamil Atal. "The most appreciated aspects of serving in the Army for us is a sense of purpose, fulfillment, personal growth and leadership development."

The Atal brothers have served in the Army for almost two years.

The brothers applied for citizenship

in AIT and became U.S. citizens in July 2022. Muzamil Atal is working on a degree in cybersecurity while Noor Atal is studying for his real estate license.

"We are the first-generation uniformed service members," said Muzamil Atal. "We hope to leave a positive impact on our unit, colleagues and community that we serve with professionalism and dedication to the service."

Command Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Langes, the senior enlisted leader for the 22nd Chemical Battalion, said the Atal brothers have served with distinction.

"Both brothers are extremely professional, embody the Army values and strive to improve every day," said Langes, a native of San Antonio.

"Both have competed side-by-side in Best Warrior Competitions, at boards and learned the NCO Creed at the rank of private," said Langes. "Pfc. Muzamil Atal was selected as the battalion commander's driver due to his initiative, potential and performance in everything he does."

Langes said this is the first time during her 19 years in the U.S. Army that she served with brothers in the same unit.

"What an outstanding opportunity to have both. Noor, as the older brother, mentors and leads Muzamil," said Langes. "It is amazing to watch his mentorship and guidance as his 'elder.' They are both incredible."

Langes, who joined the U.S. Army Chemical Corps because of the diversity, uniqueness and civilian career possibilities in the CBRN profession, has deployed to the Central Command Area of Operations and Afghanistan.

"I drove through the city that the Atal brothers grew up in several times while deployed but from a different outlook," said Langes. "I am so proud to see their commitment to serve and their dedication."

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Army EOD techs clear way to victory during NTC rotation



U.S. Army EOD technicians from the 704th Ordnance Company (EOD) "Lonestar" technicians cleared the way to victory against near-peer enemy forces during simulated large-scale combat operations on the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, California. The Army EOD techs supported the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team "Ironhorse" from the rear to the frontlines by defeating mock Improvised Explosive Devices, unexploded ordnance and explosive Unmanned Aerial Systems. Courtesy photo.

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians cleared the way to victory against near-peer enemy forces during simulated large-scale combat operations on the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, California.

Army EOD techs from the 704th Ordnance Company (EOD) "Lonestar" recently returned to their home base of Fort Cavazos, Texas, following the intense combat training rotation on Fort Irwin, California.

The EOD techs supported the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team "Ironhorse" from the rear to the frontlines by defeating mock Improvised Explosive Devices, unexploded ordnance and explosive Unmanned Aerial Systems.

The EOD company trained with many units, including the "Lancers" from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment; the "Thunderhorse" from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment; the "Muleskinners" from the 115th Brigade Support Battalion and the "Sabers" from the 91st Engineer Battalion.

U.S. Army combat units prepare to overcome any threat and defeat any enemy in large-scale combat operations training against fierce opposition forces from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment during National Training Center rotations.

Called "the box" by the Soldiers who train there, the Mojave Desert training center is almost as big as the state of Rhode Island.

After decades of counterinsurgency operations, combat training center rotations are focused on preparing for large-scale combat operations against a near-peer adversary who could use chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

Army EOD units that defeated hundreds of thousands of improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan are honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills to support large-scale combat operations at the National Training Center.

Capt. Jacob C. Randazzo, the commander of the 704th EOD Company, said the highlight of the rotation

was going to brigade and battalion meetings and hearing how the EOD teams increased the supported unit's lethality and ability to seize their objectives.

"They ran these missions everywhere from the forward line of troops to the brigade rear area and in-between," he said. "This prepared the EOD techs to integrate at all levels, as well as deal with near-peer threats, such as jamming and direct and indirect fire."

Randazzo said his EOD technicians tackled a wide variety of explosive threats during the rotation, from responding to downed UAS systems to exploiting a chemical munitions laboratory.

"Every time we interacted with the supported unit, they only spoke highly of the EOD teams and platoon leadership," said Randazzo, a Durham, Connecticut, native who earned his bachelor's degree from University of Scranton. "The feedback was always positive, and they stated how they were glad to have EOD techs supporting them. Every unit wanted to have EOD with them."

Soldiers from the 704th EOD Company earned Hero of the Battle and Sidewinder Hero of the Battle Awards during the rotation.

The 704th EOD Company is part of the 79th EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

Randazzo said he was proud to serve as an EOD officer and to command the Lonestar company.

"They all are some of the best individuals I've worked with in my career," said Randazzo, who previously deployed to Kuwait.

"I became an EOD officer to work with the best and brightest sons and daughters of America, the EOD community, and for the positive impact on the protection of personnel, property and livelihood," he said "It is incredible to see what EOD techs can do, and I am fortunate enough to work for and lead such amazing Soldiers."

[Read full story](#)

Bomb squad personnel attended course at Gettysburg Museum

GETTYSBURG, Pa. – U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians joined Federal, state and local bomb squad personnel at a Civil War era unexploded ordnance course at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

Around 35 bomb squad personnel from nine U.S. military, state and local bomb disposal units attended the UXO awareness course.

Members of the U.S. Army's 55th Ordnance Company (EOD); U.S. Air Force's 316th EOD Wing; Pentagon Force Protection Agency; Pennsylvania State Police Bomb Squad; Maryland State Police Bomb Squad; Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department Bomb Squad; Montgomery County Police Bomb Squad; Arlington County Fire Department Bomb Squad; and Loudoun County Bomb Squad attended the training.

R. Gregory Goodell, the museum curator at the Gettysburg National Military Park, conducted the training course to provide an overview of the variety of Civil War era artillery ammunition that bomb squad professionals are likely to encounter.

"This is particularly important for two reasons: the physical imprint clearly made by this ammunition on our physical landscape and the presence of historic artillery ammunition in accumulated museum collections across the country," said Goodell. "Our military and law enforcement EOD teams are the first line of response in addressing this piece of our accumulated history."

Goodell said an enormous amount of artillery was fired during the Battle of Gettysburg, which was one of the costliest and most decisive battles of the Civil War.

"Both armies collectively expended around 55,000 rounds of artillery ammunition during the battle," said Goodell. "This included all of the typical field artillery ammunition of the time – solid shot and bolt, cannister, shell and case shot."

A native of Westminster, Maryland, and graduate of Johns Hopkins Uni-



U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians joined Federal, state and local bomb squad personnel at a Civil War era unexploded ordnance course at the Gettysburg National Military Park. The 1st New York Light Artillery Monument (pictured here) is located at the Gettysburg National Military Park. Courtesy photo.



versity and University of Maryland, Goodell has been at the Gettysburg Museum for 22 years.

Goodell said the Battle of Gettysburg and Civil War continue to inspire a deeper study and examination more than 160 years (eight score) after the guns fell silent.

Staff Sgt. Dustin D. Turner from the U.S. Army's 55th Ordnance Company (EOD) coordinated the UXO training course with the other bomb squads.

The Fort Belvoir, Virginia-based 55th EOD Company responded when a 3 -inch Burton Case Shot was discovered in February 2023. The Army EOD team determined that the item was safe to transport to a local disposal area to be destroyed by detonation.

The 55th EOD Company "VIPpers" are part of the 192nd EOD Battalion,

52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, who attended Willow Springs High School in Willow Springs, Missouri, Turner has served in the Army for seven years and deployed to Afghanistan. He became an EOD technician because he wanted to combat the Improvised Explosive Devices that were being used to target U.S. troops.

Turner has been the team leader on 11 EOD emergency responses.

"My most memorable call was also on Gettysburg," he said. "There was an explosive shell from the battle lodged in the wall of the Josiah Benner Farm Building, which had been a temporary Union hospital during the battle. We responded and removed the shell from the wall and took it to a nearby area for disposal by detonation."

[Read full story](#)

American Soldiers train with Romanian troops in Bucharest



American Soldiers from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory trained with Romanian Army troops at a biological research facility in Bucharest, Romania. The 1st Area Medical Laboratory team conducted the training using the Romanian's equipment at the Cantacuzino Institute. Courtesy photo.



BUCHAREST, Romania – American Soldiers from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory trained with Romanian Army troops at a biological research facility in Bucharest, Romania.

Maj. Joshua M. Carmen, the chief of the 1st AML Biological Threat Assessment Section, said the training included an introduction to the one-of-a-kind U.S. Army mobile laboratory as well as the history of biological threats and threat agents as defined by the CDC.

“The Defense Threat Reduction Agency requested 1st AML’s assistance to conduct field identification of biological agents training,” said Carmen. “Our goal was to demonstrate procedures adapted for field environments that produce accurate identification of potential threats or terrorism agents.”

Five members from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory’s Biological Threat Assessment Section, including Maj. Mathanraj Packiam, PhD, who also runs the Genetic Sequencing Laboratory at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease, participated in the training.

Maj. Christine E. Hulseberg, PhD, a former 1st Area Medical Laboratory member and the senior science officer from U.S. Army Medical Research Directorate-Georgia in Tbilisi, Georgia, also took part of the allied training event.

“These members of the team were key to our success and added the diverse perspectives of their respective organizations to this event,” said Carmen, a Phoenix native and Arizona State University graduate.

The first week was dedicated to training Romanian soldiers from two of their CBRN Battalions on basic laboratory techniques.

“We built on that foundation by teaching them to perform polymerase chain reaction (PCR),” said Carmen. “PCR is considered an advanced molecular biology technique and is an extremely valuable tool for identification of biological agents.”

Carmen said the Romanian CBRN troops used the advanced PCR technique to identify the samples.

“The week culminated with a practical exercise in which teams of three received an unknown sample and performed the steps to identify it. We had a 100 percent success rate, and I could not be more impressed with how expertly they were able to perform the testing,” said Carmen.

The second week shifted focus to an engagement with scientists and medical doctors from the Cantacuzino Institute and the Matei Bals Institute that was focused on specific biological threat agents and distinguishing natural and manmade events as well as the equipment and technique differences in mobile laboratory operations versus fixed facilities.

The 1st Area Medical Laboratory is part of the 44th Medical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command.

Col. Matthew J. Grieser, the commander of the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, said the training bolstered the partnership between the U.S. Army and the Romanian Armed Forces.

“Training events like this make us stronger together,” said Grieser, a seasoned leader from Mulino, Oregon, who has multiple deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq and other contingency operations. “Our 1st Area Medical Laboratory Soldier scientists serve as a force multiplier by conducting medical diplomacy missions that build theater security through the exchange of best practices among our allies and partners.”

[Read full story](#)

Retired EOD tech receives Purple Heart for Afghanistan mission

IDALOU, Texas – A retired U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician received the Purple Heart during a ceremony in Idalou, Texas, Aug. 12, almost a decade after he was injured in Afghanistan.

Retired Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Fatigati, a former EOD team leader from the 748th Ordnance Company (EOD), received the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during an insurgent attack that knocked his vehicle over during a mission in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan.

At the time, Fatigati was serving under the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan in the Panjwai District in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Maj. Ivan N. Cho, one of the platoon leaders from the 748th EOD Company at the time of Fatigati's injuries, presented the Purple Heart to Fatigati during a ceremony in his West Texas hometown of Idalou.

"His initial submission for the Purple Heart was denied due to lack of evidence that the injuries sustained during his vehicle's rollover was due to enemy action," said Cho. "However, later intelligence reports came out indicating the rollover was caused by a distraction vehicle that was a part of a larger complex attack involving ensuing small arms fire and IED detonations."

It took years of diligence and determination, especially from the support from his family, for the award to finally be approved, said Cho.

"Chris has been a close friend throughout the years since I in-processed into the 748th. I started getting involved when his Purple Heart was initially denied and one of his team members asked for help in getting his rebuttal submitted to the Human Resources Command Awards Division," said Cho, who is currently a student in the Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction officer (FA 52) school.

"This award took almost a decade with his friends and family all putting in their efforts to ensure veterans do not get overlooked when it comes to



Retired Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Fatigati (center), a former EOD team leader from the 748th Ordnance Company (EOD), received the Purple Heart during a ceremony in Idalou, Texas, Aug. 12, almost a decade after he was injured in Afghanistan. (From the left) Capt. Matt DeAtley, student in the Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (FA 52) course; MAJ Ivan Cho, student at FA52 course; retired Staff Sgt. Christopher Fatigati; Sgt. 1st Class David Guyette from the 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) and Master Sgt. BJ Hopper from the 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) stand together at the ceremony. Courtesy photo.

recognition and awards that were due. Chris could not be more deserving of this award," said Cho.

During the 2013 mission, Fatigati suffered multiple injuries and had to be medically evacuated out of theater for emergency surgery on his spine.

"My surgeon explained how lucky I was to be alive and attributed my resiliency to a high level of fitness. From that point forward, and to this day, I've spent my life in a great deal of pain," said Fatigati, who currently serves in the Lubbock, Texas, Police Department SWAT team and the Texas Anti-Gang Center Task Force. "My life from that point was forever changed in ways I cannot begin to explain."

Fatigati said he was never interested in receiving awards for his service, but the Purple Heart was different.

The Purple Heart is awarded to American service members who were wounded or killed in combat

against an enemy of the United States.

"The medal is more than just a medal," said Fatigati. "The Purple Heart to me was a representation of the nation I fought so gallantly for – so gallantly without question. It was a way for the country to recognize the sacrifice I made. Without it, I would have no closure."

Almost 10 years after the mission that continues to cause Fatigati so much suffering and pain that closure came at a small ceremony attended by some of his closest friends.

"I finally received the only medal I had ever found myself caring for," said Fatigati. "I have closure now and I am reminded by the people that surrounded me on that day – that I live in, and had the pleasure of serving, the greatest nation the Earth has ever known. Aside from God, I am thankful for the handful of people that never gave up fighting for me. You know who you are. Thank you."

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Nuclear Disablement Team validates mission at simulated site



Nuclear Disablement Team 1 trained with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during an air assault exercise that took them from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Hollywood, Alabama, where they successfully simulated powering down the Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant. (From the left) Maj. Aaron J. Heffelfinger, Staff Sgt. Rigoberto Olmeda, Capt. David D. Manzanares and Capt. Samuel J. Bunn from Nuclear Disablement Team 1 participate in the training exercise. Courtesy photo.

HOLLYWOOD, Ala. – A one-of-a-kind U.S. Army team validated its ability to shut down a simulated nuclear power plant during an air assault training exercise in Hollywood, Alabama.

Nuclear Disablement Team 1 trained with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during an exercise that took them from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Hollywood, Alabama, where they successfully simulated powering down the Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant.

The plant is not operational, unfinished, and does not store nuclear fuel, making the site a safe and realistic training ground for this exercise.

Nuclear Disablement Team 1 (NDT 1) is part of the 20th CBRNE Command.

Capt. David D. Manzanares, the Nuclear Medical Science officer from NDT 1, said the exercise increased interoperability and readiness.

“The possibility of dealing with a damaged nuclear power station or emergencies involving nuclear reactors in

a hostile environment is an emerging threat,” said Manzanares. “This training event was complex, dynamic and challenged our technical expertise.”

Originally from Managua, Nicaragua, Manzanares immigrated to the U.S. when he was five and was raised in Miami. He joined the Army in 2003 and served as a Health Physics NCO before becoming a Nuclear Medical Science officer.

As the Nuclear Medical Science officer on NDT 1, Manzanares fills the force health protection role by identifying radiological health risks for current and future operations and maintaining team occupational radiation doses as low as reasonably achievable.

Manzanares also advises on-scene commanders, command staff and the NDT chief on operational exposure guidance and radiation health risk.

During the exercise, Manzanares leveraged his experience from serv-

ing as a Health Physics NCO at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) in Bethesda, Maryland.

Maj. Aaron J. Heffelfinger, the deputy chief of the NDT 1, said the Idaho National Laboratory provided a simulator that helped to create a more realistic nuclear power plant.

Heffelfinger said the exercise was unique because shutting down the reactor was incorporated in a tactical training exercise.

A native of Moore Township, Pennsylvania, who previously served as an Air Defense Artillery officer, Heffelfinger said the exercise validated the NDTs critical mission of disrupting the nuclear fuel cycle at a nuclear power plant (NPP).

The mission disrupts the nuclear fuel cycle and keeps adversaries from obtaining nuclear weapons.

“NPPs are a key part of the nuclear fuel cycle. It is the place all plutonium is produced. Therefore, reactors are a key area in nuclear weapon pathway defeat,” said Heffelfinger. “The NDT’s ability to assess the state of a reactor, and if needed, control and shut it down, is crucial for our mission success and those we are directly supporting.”

As the U.S. military trains to deter or defeat near-peer adversaries, Heffelfinger said having NDTs that are trained, equipped and ready is critical for supporting joint conventional and Special Forces during large-scale combat operations.

“The NDTs are the only asset in the DoD with this skillset,” said Heffelfinger. “The training event helped the teamwork through logistical issues, integration with a Special Forces unit and ensuring the right people with the right skillsets were brought to bear on the objective. The lessons learned will absolutely increase the teams’ lethality supporting future contingency operations or large-scale combat operations.”

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US Army EOD techs help to bring fallen American heroes home

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians not only safeguard U.S. troops from explosive hazards around the world but they also help to return America's fallen heroes home to their families.

Joint service EOD technicians serve as an integral part of the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and support investigation and recovery missions around the world.

The DPAA EOD section includes Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps EOD techs who deploy as a part of highly specialized teams to austere locations.

Due to the frequency of the missions, the DPAA EOD section is occasionally supported by other EOD organizations, including the U.S. Army's 303rd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) "Phoenix."

U.S. Army Maj. Zachary D. Abood, the executive officer of the Schofield Barracks, Hawaii-based 303rd EOD Battalion, said that the battalion has recently supported DPAA missions in Laos.

Abood said the EOD techs always welcome the opportunity to participate in DPAA missions.

"The DPAA mission is special because it allows EOD team leaders to support an important and cherished mission for the DoD," said Abood, a native of Lansing, Michigan, and graduate of Central Michigan University who has served in the U.S. Army for 13 years and deployed to Kosovo, Afghanistan and Djibouti.

During DPAA missions, EOD technicians locate and identify hazards and advise mission leaders on the best course of action to address the hazards.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan J. Smith, the operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 303rd EOD Battalion, recently participated in a DPAA mission to Laos.

Smith said discovering unexploded ordnance at a site can temporarily shut down operations, adding that



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Joshua C. Kinchen from the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency's Explosive Ordnance Disposal section recently participated in a mission in Papua New Guinea. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps EOD techs support the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency investigation and recovery missions around the world. Courtesy photo.

acidic soil can often deteriorate ordnance and evidence at a site.

"As the EOD technician, you must make an accurate assessment and provide it to the site commander," said Ryan, a native of San Diego and graduate of Grand Canyon University who has deployed to Afghanistan.

EOD techs from the DPAA EOD section are part of the Expeditionary Support Section based on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Most EOD techs in the section spend half of the year away on missions around the world.

DPAA conducts investigation and recovery missions for fallen heroes from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War in the Indo-Pacific and European theaters.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Joshua C. Kinchen from the DPAA EOD section recently returned to Hawaii from a mission in Papua New Guinea, his first mission at the agency.

A native of Albany, Louisiana, Kinchen has deployed to Iraq twice and Afghanistan three times during his 24 years in the U.S. Army. Kinchen said he is proud to work for an agency with such a noble mission.

"Finding an aircraft that an American hasn't seen in over 80 years is a very humbling experience. Knowing that I am part of a team that will help someone back home get some closure is an extremely rewarding feeling," said Kinchen.

"Everyone on the team works for one common goal while we are out there. Everyone works hard and gives it their all. I am honored to be in the position that I am in," said Kinchen. "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't have a great sense of pride in what I am doing."

Kelly McKeague, the director of the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency, said EOD technicians are critical members of its investigative and recovery teams, which deploy to remote, austere locations around the world.

"Our EOD pros keep our teams safe," said McKeague, who has led the agency since September 2017. "Whether looking for unexploded World War II ordnance underwater off the coast of Europe or land mines in the jungles of Southeast Asia, they are essential to the team and contribute to helping us fulfill our sacred duty of bringing home America's missing, their fellow comrades-in-arms."

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Double Dragons strengthen ROK-US Alliance during deployment



Soldiers from the 181st Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Company (Hazardous Response) "Double Dragons" served alongside the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army during a nine-month rotational deployment to South Korea. The Double Dragons served with many American and South Korean units and trained for many missions, including sensitive site exploitation. Courtesy photo.

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – Soldiers from a U.S. Army CBRN company returned home to Fort Cavazos, Texas, following a nine-month rotational deployment to South Korea.

During the deployment, Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 181st CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) "Double Dragons" served alongside the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army and contributed to security on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia.

The Double Dragons transferred mission responsibility to American Soldiers from the Fort Drum, New York-based 59th CBRN Company "Mountain Dragons," who have taken on the same mission near the world's most heavily guarded border.

The 181st CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) is part of the 2nd CBRN Battalion and the 59th CBRN Company serves in the 83rd CBRN Battalion.

Both highly trained units are assigned to the 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Whitworth, the 3rd Platoon Leader from the 181st CBRN Company, said the Double Dragons trained with American and South Korean troops during the deployment, including the Republic of Korea's Army 17th Infantry Division.

Sgt. Robert A. Cross, an Initial Entry Team leader, said Exercise Goldmine gave them the opportunity to train with scouts, engineers and EOD techs.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Paul A. Serino, the 1st Platoon Leader, said the company helped to provide a smoke screen during a river or wet gap crossing exercise with the ROK Army.

Called Operation Warrior Strike, the wet gap exercise was designed to enable units to overcome obstacles and outmaneuver enemy forces.

"Their efforts enabled the Double Dragons to conduct mounted CBRN reconnaissance while integrated with 11th Engineer Battalion," said Serino. "This combined training im-

proved our mission proficiency, thereby improving the CBRN defensive posture of the peninsula."

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Steven E. Ringgold, the 2nd Platoon Leader, said the exercise enabled the company to focus on preparing to support forces during large-scale combat operations.

"The highlight of the deployment was the division validation exercise where the entire company was attached to different maneuver units, allowing us to execute real-world training and to refine tactics, techniques and procedures. This specific exercise improved the company's ability to integrate and improve the Army's large-scale combat operations," said Ringgold, a graduate of California State University-Fresno and native of Porterville, California.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dan Perez, the company warrant officer, served as a liaison with the Republic of Korea Army's 17th Infantry Division.

Perez said the deployment made the Double Dragons better able to conduct their lifesaving and mission-enabling mission.

"This deployment pushed leaders and Soldiers to become better in not only their assigned Military Occupational Specialty duties but as well as individuals and team members," said Perez, who is from Lawrence, Massachusetts. "The training events and challenges faced throughout the deployment will be used as lessons learned for everyone and will make them more calloused for future challenges wherever they may go."

Spc. Justin C. Torres said he facilitated communications with Republic of Korea Army communication personnel during the deployment. Torres is from Oxford, North Carolina.

Torres said the deployment to the Korean Peninsula made the Double Dragons even more fierce and capable of enabling combat operations.

"Whatever comes next, we'll be prepared and ready," said Torres.

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Command refines CBRNE skills at Dugway Proving Ground

DUGWAY PROVING GROUND, Utah – Units from the U.S. military's premier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) command refined their sampling and reconnaissance techniques during an exercise on Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, in August.

American Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command trained with joint and interagency partners during the command's Sampling Operations and Reconnaissance Exercise.

Designed to validate standard operating procedures in a tactical environment, the exercise brought together many units from the 20th CBRNE Command, including the 48th Chemical Brigade, 1st Area Medical Laboratory and CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity.

Command Sgt. Maj. Crystal D. Irby, the senior enlisted leader for the 110th CBRN Battalion (Technical Escort), said SOREX enabled the 20th CBRNE Command as well as other units and agencies to train together in a complex environment.

Irby said the exercise will help U.S. forces to succeed during multidomain operations against near-peer adversaries where CBRNE may be used to harm troops and hinder operations.

"The information collected from this exercise will undoubtedly impact how we operate in support of large-scale combat operations," said Irby. "This exercise will be very beneficial for the battalion's future mission set."

Irby said the multi-faceted exercise helped the 110th CBRN Battalion's new commander, Lt. Col. Stephen M. Siegner, to observe his Soldiers in a tactical environment. Siegner assumed command of the 110th CBRN Battalion in June.

"This training exercise is the 'crawl phase' in the battalion's glide path to conducting operations at the National Training Center in the spring of next year," said Irby.

The Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington-based 110th CBRN Bat-



Staff. Sgt. David Beals, a CBRN specialist with the 83rd Chemical Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade, tests for contamination during the Sampling Operations and Reconnaissance Exercise on Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, Aug. 17. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.



talion recently completed a 12-month mission on the U.S. Northern Command Joint Task Force-Civil Support's Defense CBRN Response Force that provides support to civil authorities.

Located 85 miles southwest of Salt Lake City, Dugway Proving Ground enables troops to test CBRN defense measures in a secure and isolated training environment. Irby said DPG was the ideal location to host the exercise.

"I want to highlight the professionalism and expertise of the scientists that have worked to ensure we are being provided the most realistic training scenarios that fully test our capabilities. Not only has the training been realistic but these professionals have also provided our teams with value added feedback at the end of every mission allowing our Soldiers to see the 'why' of the scenarios," said Irby.

"Dugway Proving Ground provides advanced training concepts and realistic scenarios that test our Soldiers technical proficiency allowing the unit to also focus on tactical concepts," said Irby. "We look forward to returning and allowing our leaders to attend additional advanced CBRN courses that are offered on the installation."

A native of Shelby, North Carolina, and graduate of Webster University who has deployed to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan during her 23 years in the U.S. Army, Irby said she is proud to serve as a Dragon Soldier.

"From the time my recruiter showed me the video of Chemical Soldiers training, I knew that was what I had to do," said Irby. "I'm proud to be a Dragon Soldier and I have the utmost confidence in the capabilities we bring to the fight and our tremendous impact on sustainment operations."

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Army EOD Company supports new bomb suit helmet program



Staff Sgt. Bradley M. Gilot approaches a downed Unmanned Aerial System to conduct an X-ray search for explosive hazards during the 55th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) validation exercise on Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. Program Executive Office Soldier and Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory observed the training to help in the development of the Vertical Load Offset System (VLOS) for the newest combat helmet called the Integrated Head Protection System (IHPS). Courtesy photo.

FORT BELVOIR, Va. – U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians are helping the Army improve state-of-the-art combat helmets to better protect them on high-stakes missions.

EOD technicians from the 55th Ordnance Company (EOD) are working with Program Executive Office Soldier and Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory to develop the Vertical Load Offset System (VLOS) for the newest combat helmet called the Integrated Head Protection System (IHPS).

The 55th EOD Company "VIPpers" are part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. military's premier all hazards formation.

Army EOD Soldiers from the 20th CBRNE Command defeated hundreds of thousands of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Fort Belvoir, Virginia-based 55th EOD Company covers explosive response missions in most of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, half of Pennsylvania, part of Washington D.C., and

part of West Virginia. The company also supports the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of State during Very Important Person Protection Support Activity missions to provide protection to the president, first lady, vice president and foreign heads of states.

Capt. Zachery S. Rowe, the commander of the 55th EOD Company, said the VLOS team observed his EOD Soldiers during a recent validation exercise.

A native of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and graduate of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Rowe previously served as the 1st platoon leader in the 718th EOD Company "Dokkaebi" on Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

Rowe said the IHPS with VLOS would help EOD techs by relieving neck strain and improving their ability to safely operate around any explosive hazard.

Jakob A. Hopping, the chief systems engineer for PEO Soldier's Product Manager Soldier Protective Equipment, said that through the addition of VLOS the IHPS is being adapted to better support numerous critical mission-enabling systems.

The VLOS is being designed to be worn with IHPS and other mission enablers such as the Integrated Visual Augmentation System (IVAS), Binocular Enhanced Night Vision Goggle (ENVG B), Next Generation Advanced Bomb Suit (NGABS) Heads Up Display (HUD) and Modular Sensor Suite (MSS) and Third Generation Enhanced Night Vision Goggle (ENVG III).

Hopping said Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory is a U.S. Department of Defense's University Affiliated Research Center with a long-standing strategic partnership on Personnel Protective Equipment and human performance.

This combat helmet enhancement effort is also supported by the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Army Research Laboratory (ARL), DEVCOM Soldier Center, the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center (ATC) and Creative Engineering through innovation and design, human factors engineering and validation testing.

By removing the effect of mass from the head and neck to the shoulders or lower, the VLOS greatly reduces the risk of musculoskeletal injury and fatigue, increases sustained alertness and capability, and optimizes Soldier potential, said Hopping.

"The IHPS is already lighter than any combat helmet issued to conventional Soldiers since at least 1979 and it provides better protection than any other helmet issued to any other combat force," said Hopping. "The VLOS effort will provide Soldiers with the ability to retain that effective lightness, even improve it, when they attach their mission enablers to their helmet."

The IHPS is not like your typical legacy combat helmet. It is designed to be used and connected with the full suite of other Soldier equipment. No other use highlights this better than the integration of the IHPS as the base helmet to be used with Next Generation Advanced Bomb Suit (NGABS), said Hopping.

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