



## Hood promoted to major general during ceremony on APG

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The commanding general of the premier CBRNE Command was promoted to major general during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Dec. 14.

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command, pinned on his second star during the widely attended ceremony at the Myer Auditorium.

Gen. Andrew P. Poppas, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, hosted the ceremony.

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

Hood is the ninth commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command.

Before assuming command in September 2022, Hood served as the deputy director of operations for Team Four at the National Joint Operations Intelligence Center in the Pentagon where he routinely interacted with Poppas who served as the director of the Joint Staff at the time.

Poppas said that Hood had proven himself throughout his storied career from his early days as an enlisted Soldier to commanding the nation's premier CBRNE formation.

"You talk about a storied career. He's been from the tactical to the strategic level," said Poppas. "At every step, he has learned, he has mentored and he has excelled."

Poppas said that Hood has made every command he served at better while molding future leaders.

"That is the sign of a leader," said Poppas. "That's why we are putting a second star on him right now."



*Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command, pinned on his second star during a widely attended ceremony at the Myer Auditorium on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Dec. 14. Gen. Andrew P. Poppas, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, hosted the ceremony. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.*

Great Army families make great Army leaders, said Poppas, adding that Hood epitomized the leadership and character needed in a strategic Army leader.

"It starts well before you put the uniform on," said Poppas. "When you look at the depth of character that General Hood always displays, I will tell you that starts from home."

Hood is a U.S. Army Chemical Corps officer who is originally from Athens and Gainesville, Georgia. He previously served as the 31st chief of Chemical and commandant of the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear School on Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

A graduate of the University of Georgia, Hood has served in a wide variety of command and staff tours in the United States, Europe, South Korea, Middle East and Central Asia.

Hood commanded the 3rd Chemical Brigade; 110th Chemical Battalion; and 87th Chemical Company, 4th Squadron (Aviation), 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Since assuming command of the 20th CBRNE Command, Hood has focused on people, readiness and modernization.

During the ceremony, Hood thanked his family, friends and mentors for their support throughout his career.

The U.S. Army's newest two-star general closed his remarks with three questions designed to guide leaders to greater heights.

"What type of leader are you and what do you want to be? What is your destination and purpose in life?" said Hood. "What impact do you have on people?"

[Read full story](#)

# From the Command Sergeant Major

The 20th CBRNE Command is comprised of extraordinary professionals who lead, care, train, and maintain resources. FM 7-0 states, "Training is the cornerstone of unit readiness. Training prepares Soldiers, leaders, and units to fight and win in combat." Training in the Army is not just about physical endurance and skill improvement; when done right it is a transformative experience that shapes individuals into disciplined and resilient Soldiers and teams. Leaders owe Soldiers well-planned and resourced training that pushes them to new heights. Quality training reinforces discipline, reduces mental fatigue by programming individuals and teams to execute drills and builds esprit de corps through the shared experience. Survivability on the battlefield requires more than job proficiency. Effective communication, trust and respect all become critical components of a team during moments of crisis. The challenge to leaders is balancing the multitude of requirements while ensuring we are delivering combat-ready formations who are masters of warfighting. Four approaches to this problem are prioritization, preparation, concurrent execution and inspiration.



Priorities do not tell us what to do, they tell us what not to do. Knowing the Chief of Staff of the Army has directed focus on warfighting and delivering combat-ready formations empowers leaders to make that a priority over administrative tasks. We need leaders to communicate what is keeping them from making training a priority so that at the appropriate echelon, we can either remove those distractions or accept the risk of lowering those on the priority list. When it comes to training preparation the focus must be clearly understood across the organization. Processes like the eight-step training model and troop-leading procedures standardize the "how" we arrive at training success. Soldiers expect their time to be valued and wisely invested. Ensuring the right resources and expertise are dedicated and protected increases the success of planned events. Planning is easy, preparation is what becomes the difference between valuable training and a waste of time. With everything that is required, we do not have the luxury of only doing one thing at a time.

Taking advantage of making every event a multiple return on investment is the only way we can come close to meeting our demands. Concurrent execution means that when training a Military Occupational Specialty skill, we integrate warfighting tasks, while executing command maintenance we practice troop-leading procedures, a PT event can also include movement under fire, etc. Leaders need to creatively take advantage of every minute of a duty day and multiply the benefit of every event. Asking ourselves, what else can we get out of this?

Regardless of how prepared and protected a training event is, if the audience does not understand why we are doing it, we will not move from compliant to committed. The "why" this is important is what cultivates inspiration. Taking the time to explain the significance of what we do will collect buy-in and focus. A Soldier training to meet a requirement will never leave as developed as a Soldier training to fulfill a purpose! Leadership is defined as providing purpose (ADP 6-22). Next time there is training planning or execution, take the time to communicate just how important this is and what is at stake if they do not get it right. You will increase your return on investment and move from compliant to committed. People need to believe in what we're doing, when they do, they go all in.

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



## The Defender

### Commanding General

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood

### Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Steven M. Modugno

### Editorial Board

Charles Hughes

Lt. Col. Ben Clark

Lt. Col. Valerie Knight

Lt. Col. Cameron Wright

Amy Snyder

Kent Ward

Chuck Grady

Shila Smith

### Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva

### Editor in Chief

Walter T. Ham IV

### Deputy to the Commanding General

Charles Hughes

### Public Affairs Staff

Marshall Mason

Angel Martinez-Navedo

The Defender is an authorized publication for members of the command. Contents of The Defender are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Forces Command or 20th CBRNE Command. The newsletter is distributed quarterly by 20th CBRNE Command Public Affairs. Send articles and photos to 20th CBRNE Command Public Affairs at [cbnepao@gmail.com](mailto:cbnepao@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions is the last day of the month prior to the publication month.

## Chaplain's Corner

### What's For Dinner?

One of the unique and enjoyable things about serving in the military, especially in an overseas location is the opportunity to absorb different cultures. For my family, having been assigned to Germany, Korea and Italy, one aspect of all of these cultures that we loved was the food scene. Across Europe, table reservations are more the rule, but once you have a table reserved, it's yours for the entire evening. In the U.S., it's customary for people to wait until everyone's food arrives prior to eating. In Germany, your meal will arrive at your table fresh out of the kitchen when it's hot. Regardless of who else has food, you are expected to start eating. We've adopted this in our family – we call it 'German rules' and we're happy to explain it to guests we dine with. Eat it when it's hot. In Italy, if you show up at a restaurant at 1700, you will find that only the kitchen staff are working and will be told to return three hours later to eat. Most Italians eat between 2000 and 2020.

One unifying tie that binds just about all the cultures in the world outside the U.S. is the value of the family sitting down together to eat. Perhaps that is why so many cultures eat so late is so that mom and dad can both be home from work. The old Norman Rockwell image of a family having dinner together in the evening seems to be declining in the U.S. Reasons for this vary, from the rise of single parent homes, aggressive athletic schedules, people getting married later, many choosing not to marry and the need for both parents to work. Some current publications seem to celebrate the freedom from feeling forced by society to eat together. An article in the Huffington Post claims that the pressure to "conform" into the "trap" of eating together is harmful and unnecessary. Most experts would disagree, however. Anne Fishel of the Family Dinner Project, also a professor of psychology at the Harvard Medical School, half jokes that she could be out of business as a therapist if more families had dinner together. As much as teenagers want to distance themselves from their parents, 80 percent of those surveyed said they actually prefer a meal with parents rather than with peers or in front of a screen. Harvard research shows that pre-school age kids learn to communicate faster and more effectively being exposed to adults conversing at the dinner table, rather than just what they get from peers in class.

In the military, I would suggest that blocking off time to eat together is just as difficult if not harder than it is for the rest of the U.S. population. I would also suggest that military families sharing a meal together is more important and pays more dividends than the rest of the U.S. population. Extended absences, deployments and the constant upheaval of kids' schools and neighborhoods due to PCS increase the value of togetherness. In my family, we made it a priority years ago to share meals in the evening together. As a chaplain, I am on call 24 hours a day. It took discipline, planning and a commitment of time. Our sons are now both away at college and I can assure you from experience that the time we spent together at the dinner table was priceless. A few years ago, we sold that dinner table after having it for about 15 years. As it went to its new owner, I almost had to keep it, thinking about how so much precious time was spent with family at that table. So, the challenge I have for Army unit leaders is this: go home at a reasonable hour and eat dinner with your families. First, you need it and your family needs you. Second, as your subordinates and staff see you leave and understand you are joining your family, they will feel free to do likewise.

No leader in the Army today would claim that their work for the day is done by 1800. The reality is that for most of us our work is never complete, there's always something more. With modern technology like VPNs and MS Teams, most of us can join our families for dinner, then retire to a home office to work on email or your overdue DTS voucher. Another option is to push mealtime back like the Italians do leaving room for athletic practice, late work or an after-work gym session. The solutions are endless. Leaders then need to ensure subordinates and those down the chain of command enjoy the same freedom. If we believe that the family is the backbone of the Army, then it makes sense to protect the time that is essential to building family togetherness.

When commanders ask me what can be done to foster family resilience, I often respond by asking if they have made mealtimes with family a priority. That's it? No multimillion-dollar program? No data points? Nope. Let's start around the dinner table. So I ask you, what's for dinner tonight?

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ben Clark  
20th CBRNE Command Chaplain  
Office: 410-306-3098



# 20th CBRNE Command presents retention excellence awards

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – Leaders from the 20th CBRNE Command recognized units and individuals for excellence in retention during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the senior enlisted leader, presented awards to the top retention teams, career counselors and retention noncommissioned officers during a ceremony at the Commander's Forum, Feb. 8.

Staff Sgt. Filip Velghe from the Fort Campbell, Kentucky-based 184th Ordnance Company (EOD) was recognized as the 20th CBRNE Command Career Counselor of the Year.

Army Commendation Medals were presented to Master Sgt. Russell Ellison; the senior career counselor for the 52nd EOD Group; Staff Sgt. Yanique Roberts; the career counselor for the 22nd CBRN Battalion; Staff Sgt. Hector Melendez, the full-time retention noncommissioned officer for the 192nd EOD Battalion; and Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod Vanwinkle, the career counselor for the 184th EOD Battalion.

For unit awards, the Early Bird Award went to the Fort Campbell, Kentucky-based 52nd EOD Group.

The Commanding General's Award for Retention Excellence went to the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 22nd CBRN Battalion and the Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 192nd EOD Battalion.

The Liberty We Defend Awards were presented to the 52nd EOD Group, 192nd EOD Battalion, 184th EOD Battalion and 22nd CBRN Battalion.

Master Sgt. Wade A. Wagley, the 20th CBRNE Command senior retention operations noncommissioned officer, said the retention awards demonstrate the impact that proactive leadership has on unit retention.

"These retention accomplishments convey that our leadership across the command is fully engaged and invest-



*Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood (second from the left), the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, presents U.S. Army Commendation Medals to Master Sgt. Russell Ellison, Staff Sgt. Yanique Roberts, Staff Sgt. Hector Melendez and Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod Vanwinkle. Leaders from the 20th CBRNE Command recognized units and individuals for excellence in retention during a ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Feb. 8. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gregory R. Hazeltine.*



ed in the Army Retention Program," said Wagley, a native of Duncan, Arizona. "Our command provides the necessary time, resources and effort to ensure all Soldiers are afforded effective retention counseling."

Wagley said the U.S. Army has to compete with the private sector to keep Soldiers in uniform.

"We have talented Soldiers with desirable skills and abilities," said Wagley, who has served in the U.S. Army for 22 years and deployed to Afghanistan. "Our command and its subordinate units retain its talent by caring for Soldiers and leveraging the unit career counselor."

Wagley said unit career counselors explain Army incentives and benefits, including the retention bonuses, educational benefits, training opportunities, assignment choices, medical benefits and retirement benefits.

Wagley said he became a career counselor because he liked to help Soldiers and their families.

"We play a vital role in the Soldiers decision-making process to further their career in the Army," said Wagley. "It is the most rewarding job in the Army."

Sgt. Maj. Eric C. Detheridge, the 20th CBRNE Command Career Counselor, said retention supports readiness.

"These awards demonstrate the commitment that our command teams and retention personnel bring to the task of retaining our most important resources – our Soldiers," said Detheridge, who is from the Bronx in New York City. "Every day, they greatly contribute to the readiness not only of this important command but also of the world's greatest Army."

[Read full story](#)

# Retired command sergeant major named Defender of Liberty



*Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood (left), the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva (right), the 20th CBRNE Command senior enlisted leader, present the 2023 Defender of Liberty award to retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Graham (second from right) and a Certificate of Appreciation to his wife Melony Graham (second from left), during a ceremony, Feb. 8. Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Graham was the fifth senior enlisted leader of the 20th CBRNE Command. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gregory Hazeltine.*

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A one-of-a-kind U.S. Army command recognized its fifth command sergeant major as the 2023 Defender of Liberty.

The 20th CBRNE Command selected retired U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Graham as the 2023 Defender of Liberty.

Graham is the first retired enlisted leader to earn the prestigious award.

Established in 2019 on the command's 15th anniversary, the Defender of Liberty Award is presented to leaders who have made a significant impact on the U.S. military's only multifunctional CBRNE command.

Retired Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Richard Cody was the first recipient of the award in 2019 for authoring the memo that led to the creation of the 20th CBRNE Command while serving as the deputy chief of staff of the Army for operations and plans.

The command selected Maj. Gen. John C. Doesburg as the 2020 Defender of Liberty.

The 2021 Defender of Liberty was retired Maj. Gen. Keith R. Wendel. The 2022 Defender of Liberty was retired Lt. Gen. Leslie C. Smith.

A Chemical Corps Soldier, Graham served in leadership positions from squad leader to command sergeant major during his 31 years in uniform.

A native of Warren, Ohio, Graham deployed for Operation Desert Storm and Operation Joint Endeavor. He also deployed to Iraq three times during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition to serving as the first sergeant for the 21st Chemical Company, Graham served as the senior enlisted leader of the 23rd CBRN Battalion and 48th Chemical Brigade before becoming the command sergeant major for 20th CBRNE Command.

Today, Graham serves as the vice president for Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier Affairs for the Major General Harry Green Chapter of the Association of the United States Army.

Graham earned a master's degree in business management from Excelsior College and graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John C. Doesburg, the 2020 Defender of Liberty; retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. William E. King IV, the sixth commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command; and retired U.S. Army Col. Robert Gutjahr, the president of the AUSA Major General Harry Green Chapter, all praised Graham for his leadership and commitment to Soldiers.

Mary Jane Jernigan, the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) for northern Maryland, presented a coin and letter to Graham for his service.

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the current commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command, hosted the event that wrapped up a commander's forum at the command headquarters. Hood thanked Graham for his leadership and continued support of the one-of-a-kind command.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the current senior enlisted leader of the 20th CBRNE Command, said Graham mentored him while in uniform and continues to mentor him today.

"Talk to anyone who served under him or beside him and then you will be inspired," said Silva, a Master Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician from Long Beach, California. "He gave me the opportunity to lead and that gave me the opportunity to stand here and sing his praises from the position he proudly held before me."

Silva said Graham was an example of the kind of leadership that has made the command the premier CBRNE command in the U.S. military. "It's my pleasure to welcome you into this prestigious and small group," said Silva. "It is neat that he is the first enlisted precipitant of this title and this award. I can't think of a better leader than retired Command Sgt. Maj. Ken Graham."

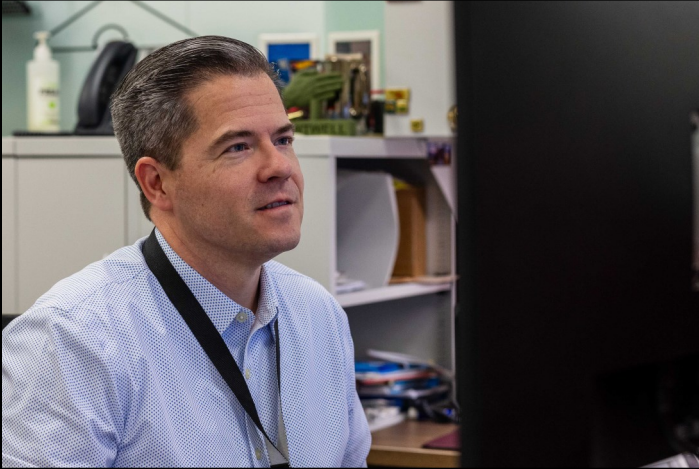
Graham said he was honored to be named a Defender of Liberty by the command.

"I'm proud to stand next to the former recipients of this Defender of Liberty award," said Graham. "I look forward to continuing to serve this organization."

[Read full story](#)



# Army civilian recognized for enabling global CBRNE deployments



*Nathan C. Cantwell, an operational planner for global CBRNE deployments, was selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter for October through December 2023. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.*

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A U.S. Army civilian operational planner was recognized for enabling global deployments at the U.S. Department of Defense's premier CBRNE command.

Nathan C. Cantwell was selected as the 20th CBRNE Command Civilian of the Quarter for October through December 2023.

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

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

Cantwell supports these high stakes missions by developing, preparing and publishing operational plans for 20th CBRNE Command units. He has routinely responded to emergent requirements for CBRNE support around the world.

In addition to being an operational planner for the 20th CBRNE Command, Cantwell is the Army Reserve operations officer at Army Material Command – Army Reserve Element (AMC-ARE) Detachment 7, which directly supports the Communications-Electronics Command.

Cantwell serves in the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) Current Operations (G3/5) staff office during annual and monthly training. In this Army Reserve capacity, he has supported exercises, equipment testing, equipment fielding 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 full spectrum combat operations around the world.

Cantwell is a Field Artillery officer who has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and served in Germany for 12 years.

He said his service as a U.S. Army civilian is an extension of his service for him and his family.

"My time as a uniformed active-duty officer serving the country overseas is what allowed my wife and I to find each other in the first place. Finding a way to continue service in a new role as an Army civilian fulfills that need. It also provides an additional sense of security, work/life balance and predictability than my Reservist time overseas provided in the last few years," said Cantwell, a graduate of the New Mexico Military Institute and New Mexico State University who is originally from Phoenix.

"The biggest bonus is the ability to maintain our inclusion to the comradery that exists with Soldiers," said Cantwell. "The community the Army and military service has provided my family through some truly tough times has been greatly appreciated and we feel a sense of duty to pay it back and to pay it forward."

Cantwell said his civilian operational planner position has brought together his Army civilian and Army Reserve service since the 20th CBRNE Command and CECOM are both headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

"There are so many instances where life on both sides of the coin come together to my benefit," said Cantwell. "Whether it be my continued learning through Intermediate Level Education Common Core in the Reserves or just staying informed on daily changes in the big 'A' Army as an Army civilian, it really allows me to bring more to the table and be more active to make positive change for our subordinate commands and units."

In his role as a civilian operational planner, Cantwell said he always works to provide as much predictability as possible for Soldiers serving and deploying at the unit level.

Cantwell said he plans to continue to focus on his family life while leveraging lessons learned to better serve the Army and nation in positions of greater responsibility.

"I am not sure how far that path will take me yet, but it is one that I know will be enjoyable as it has been for the past 24 plus years," said Cantwell. "My key to success has just been maintaining the course and diversifying. Have the events and paths that I have taken throughout the years been unclear or cloudy at times, sure. But through support, mentorship, resilience and perseverance, I believe I have left some positive mark on the force."

[Read full story](#)

# FORSCOM commanding general visits 20th CBRNE Command

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The general who commands all operational U.S. Army forces in the United States thanked Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from the nation's premier CBRNE Command.

Gen. Andrew P. Poppas, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, toured the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Dec. 14.

Poppas visited the command to promote Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of 20th CBRNE Command, to two-star general. A native of Janesville, Wisconsin, and U.S. Military Academy graduate, Poppas received a briefing on the multifunctional and deployable command.

Headquartered on Fort Liberty, North Carolina, U.S. Army Forces Command trains and prepares combat ready, globally responsive forces to build and sustain readiness to meet combatant command requirements.

The FORSCOM commanding general commands 216,000 active-component Soldiers and 190,000 members of the U.S. Army Reserve, while providing training and readiness oversight to the Army National Guard. FORSCOM is the U.S. Army's largest command and includes many of the nation's most storied combat units. The command celebrated its 50th anniversary in June 2023.



Gen. Andrew P. Poppas, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, meets with Soldiers and Army civilians from the 20th CBRNE Command on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Dec. 14. Poppas visited the command to promote Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

Since assuming command of FORSCOM in July 2022, Poppas has prioritized empowering leaders and winning current and future wars as a balanced total Army. During his visit, Poppas said, "All of us contribute to the success of the force."

[Read full story](#)

## Awards

### 20th CBRNE Command

Col. Vance M. Brunner - Meritorious Service Medal  
Lt. Col. Ann S. Anderson - Meritorious Service Medal  
Lt. Col. Matthew S. Giffen - Meritorious Service Medal  
Maj. Robert S. Bourgeau - Meritorious Service Medal  
Maj. Danielle D. Murrell - Meritorious Service Medal  
Maj. Carlie A. Wilson - Meritorious Service Medal  
Capt. Matthew R. Hale - Meritorious Service Medal  
Master Sgt. Matthew G. Gilbert - Meritorious Service Medal  
Master Sgt. Tonya Y. Prince - Meritorious Service Medal  
Staff Sgt. Ricardo Jasso Jr. - Meritorious Service Medal  
Capt. Hannah N. Davis - Army Commendation Medal  
Capt. Veronica Simmons - Army Achievement Medal  
Warrant Officer 2 Catherine HidalgoAlmonte - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. 1st Class Eddie R. Partee - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Counterman - Army Achievement Medal  
Staff Sgt. Sean M. Anderson - Army Commendation Medal  
Staff Sgt. Joseph L. Byrd - Army Commendation Medal  
Staff Sgt. Eddie A. Edwards - Army Commendation Medal  
Staff Sgt. Shykara T. Jones - Army Commendation Medal

Staff Sgt. Nakenyah Singletary - Army Commendation Medal (2)  
Staff Sgt. Frederick L. Stevens - Army Commendation Medal  
Staff Sgt. Eduardo Carreno - Army Achievement Medal  
Sgt. Emily C. Garcia - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Javier Garcia - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Charles E. Jeffreys - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Patrick H. Kuchta - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Matthew A. Redic - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Eashan J. Stefanski - Army Commendation Medal  
Sgt. Jacob R. Finch - Army Achievement Medal  
Sgt. Josiah Henriquez - Army Achievement Medal  
Sgt. Orlando L. Morales - Army Achievement Medal  
Sgt. Keoni K. Wolford - Army Achievement Medal  
Sgt. Tyler J. Bisson - Certificate of Achievement  
Sgt. Alexander J. Conti - Certificate of Achievement  
Sgt. Bradley K. James - Certificate of Achievement  
Spc. Kevin D. Munoz - Army Commendation Medal  
Spc. Brandon A. Braun - Army Achievement Medal  
Spc. Saleria Z. Jordan - Army Achievement Medal  
Spc. Savannah R. Wiggins - Army Achievement Medal  
Pvt. 1st Class Vinny T. Yang - Army Achievement Medal

# Retiring major uses DoD program to transition to civilian position



Maj. Grant J. Brayley spent six months in the 20th CBRNE Command Risk Management Office as a part of the DoD SkillBridge program. The DoD SkillBridge program is designed to give service members the opportunity to participate in apprenticeships, internships and training during the last six months of their military service. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — A retired information operations officer has used the DoD SkillBridge program to transition to an Army civilian risk management position.

Maj. Grant J. Brayley spent six months in the 20th CBRNE Command Risk Management Office before being selected for a risk management position at the Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center.

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

“I wanted to cultivate options for employment after the Army and I found that safety and occupational health was a good option for me,” said Brayley.

“The Risk Management Team at 20th CBRNE Command are seasoned, experienced professionals who taught me a great deal about the profession of safety and occupational health,” said Brayley. “The 20th CBRNE Command was gracious enough to approve my request for the SkillBridge program, which I really appreciated.”

Brayley added that SkillBridge gave him the time to take valuable courses on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, hazardous materials, ammunition and explosives as well as a variety of Army tactical safety courses.

As he hangs up his uniform after 21 years in the Army, Brayley looks forward to continuing to serve his nation.

“I see it as a career change, the same as when I left teaching for the military,” he said. “I will leverage every bit of experience and skill I have gained to keep doing jobs that challenge me.”

[Read full story](#)

## Awards

### 20th CBRNE Command

- James B. Area – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
- Charles P. Grady II – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
- Karen Diep-Arwood – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
- Virginia D. Isaac – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
- Manuel D. Salvador – Civilian Service Commendation Medal
- Nathan C. Cantwell – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
- Ryan P. Cole – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
- Keith A. Weeks III – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
- Laila Ancheta – Certificate of Appreciation
- Angela Anderson – Certificate of Appreciation
- Melony Graham – Certificate of Appreciation
- Terrell Murrell – Certificate of Appreciation

### 48th Chemical Brigade

- Keioka Norfleet– Civilian Service Commendation Medal

### 52nd EOD Group

- Anthony Whetstone – Civilian Service Achievement Medal
- Keila AndinoColon – Civilian Service Achievement Medal

### CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity

- Dalys J. Talley – Superior Civilian Service Medal
- Earl Austin – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
- Timothy M. Cook – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
- Gregory Young – Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
- Earl Austin – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Keith M. Beigel – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Matthew K. Kalfoglou – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Michelle E. LaFrance – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Katie Laughery – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Valerie A. Lesniak – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Dhammika Navarathna – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Sarah Pisarcik – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Timothy M. Reed – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Xuerong Shi – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Irvine D. Swahn – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Bao Tran – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Richard A. Trombly – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Kevin P. Wioland – GWOT Expeditionary Medal
- Earl Austin – Retirement Certificate
- Timothy Cook – Retirement Certificate
- Dalys Talley – Retirement Certificate
- Gregory Young – Retirement Certificate



# Army team increases readiness for radiological detection missions



*Soldiers from the U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams helped to conceptualize, coordinate and create a backpack that helps them to provide theater-level confirmation and identification of radiological materials more quickly in a tactical environment. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Steven M. Modugno.*

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A team of American Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians recently came together to design a better backpack.

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams helped to conceptualize, coordinate and create a backpack that helps them to provide theater-level confirmation and identification of radiological materials more quickly in a tactical environment.

The Nuclear Disablement Teams worked with partner organizations, including the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) Center from the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command.

Maj. Aaron J. Heffelfinger, the deputy team chief from Nuclear Disablement Team 1, said the new mobile backpack was the result of a six-month project.

“The challenge the NDT always had with its Ortec High Purity Germanium (HPGe) detectors was always the deliberate cool down period required for the equipment to be ready, typically in excess of seven hours from a complete shutdown,” said Heffelfinger, a native of Moore Township, Pennsylvania, who previously served as an Air Defense Artillery officer.

Since the detector needs to draw outside air for its internal cooling system and needs to expel this hot air to maintain cryogenic operating temperatures, Heffelfinger said the cases that came with the detector required the equipment to be shut down during transportation. The team members would have to either wait for around eight hours to use their best gamma detector or transport it unprotected with nothing more than a shoulder strap.

The backpack enables the NDTs to move faster and provides commanders with greater operational flexibility.

“Time is always of the essence. The longer it takes the team to provide the gamma spectroscopy and isotopic assay results to the supported unit, the more constrained the commander becomes,” said Heffelfinger. “If we can provide that information without an 8-hour cooldown first, it can drive the decision-making process that much faster.”

Capt. John M. Prevost, an Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer from NDT 2, said the power and cooling systems are self-contained and interchangeable with a range of batteries and store power on the backpack.

The detector can remain operational almost indefinitely with the new backpack, said Prevost, adding that it can be used anywhere a Soldier can carry it. By allowing the NDTs to carry spectral analysis software on a target downrange, the backpack eliminates the need for reach-back support if communications become degraded.

“This new backpack provides a protective, continuously-cooling, man-packable solution for bringing our most critical detection equipment to a target,” said Prevost. “The backpack makes our most critical detection and analysis capability smaller, lighter, faster and more ruggedized for expeditionary deployments.”

Prevost said the improved backpack was the result of an on-going NDT discussion on existing capability limitations and doctrinal requirements.

“The backpack is proof that the best way to solve complex problems is to assemble teams of experts from varied backgrounds and establish a common vision of success, especially during initial design,” said Prevost, a native of Shelby, North Carolina, and graduate of Wofford College.

“By doing this, you gain varied perspectives on potential problems, existing or innovative design solutions and end-user considerations early in the process,” said Prevost. “Put simply, a small group of motivated experts can accomplish a great deal in an environment where ideas and input are openly traded regardless of rank, education or background expertise where mission success is the sole collective focus.”

Jaywoon Joo was one of the experts who worked on the backpack project. As a U.S. Army civilian project engineer at the C5ISR Center, Joo regularly supports organizations by rapidly prototyping services for them.

Originally from San Diego, Joo studied mechanical engineering at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas before moving to Maryland.

“My father, Bill Joo, is my main inspiration for becoming an Army civilian,” said Joo. “He has always explained that our work is important - not only because it helps us to win wars - but because it ensures our Soldiers come home safe to their families. I've always found that idea to be really inspiring and it's why I'm working here today.”

[Read full story](#)

# NDTs train to disable any potential enemies' capabilities



U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Team 2 conducts training on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Jan. 17. The U.S. Army's three Nuclear Disablement Teams are part of the 20th CBRNE Command. Courtesy photo.

**ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.** – Highly trained American Soldiers honed their skills to disable any potential enemies' nuclear capabilities during training on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Team 2 trained Jan. 17 on Aberdeen Proving Ground.

A one-of-a-kind capability in the U.S. Department of Defense, NDTs directly contribute to the nation's strategic deterrence by staying ready to exploit and disable nuclear and radiological Weapons of Mass Destruction infrastructure and components to deny near-term capability to adversaries.

The Nuclear Disablement Teams also facilitate follow-on Weapons of Mass Destruction elimination operations.

The Nuclear Disablement Teams are part of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier CBRNE formation.

The 20th CBRNE Command is also home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units, as well as the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity and five Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Teams.

From 19 bases in 16 states, 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 multinational operations.

The U.S. Department of Defense's only Nuclear Disablement Teams — NDT 1, NDT 2 and NDT 3 — are all stationed on Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The U.S. Army Nuclear Disablement Teams include Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (FA 52) officers, an Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer, a Nuclear Medical Science officer and a Health Physics noncommissioned officer.

"This training event is critical to the success of the NDTs, as conducting disablement operations is one of our core tasks," said U.S. Army Capt. John M. Prevost, an Army

Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer from Nuclear Disablement Team 2.

"Effective application of the correct tool to the correct task starts with understanding how to set up and employ the equipment. This course allows NDT personnel to see the effects of each tool on a given target material, thus revealing planning considerations and limitations for use in expeditionary operations," said Prevost.

He said disablement operations contribute to counter Weapons of Mass Destruction missions and give commanders greater options on the battlefield.

"It can also increase the safety of nuclear infrastructure, enabling freedom of maneuver to the ground component commander and reducing the risk of a potential contamination event," said Prevost.

[Read full story](#)

## Awards

### 48th Chemical Brigade

- Maj. Tristan W. Obluck - Meritorious Service Medal
- Capt. Deborah J. Cruz - Meritorious Service Medal
- Capt. Olivia P. Fairfield - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Lt. Luke K. Jennings - Meritorious Service Medal
- Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ryan P. Horner - Meritorious Service Medal
- Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dante J. Wins - Meritorious Service Medal
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert S. Claiborne - Meritorious Service Medal
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 James H. Cook - Meritorious Service Medal
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jessica M. Jackson - Meritorious Service Medal
- Warrant Officer 1 Jerrod D. Einsel - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Sgt. Markkenneth P. Penecios - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Sgt. Nicholas M. Seeber - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Sgt. Adrian A. Valle - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Gerald M. Bayless - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Yesenia Juarez - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Janice M. Pleasant - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rodewald - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Willie L. Williams Jr. - Meritorious Service Medal
- Staff Sgt. Yanique Roberts - Army Commendation Medal

# Retired Army civilian shares experience with retirement process

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – A retired U.S. Army civilian shared his personal experience with the retirement process with Army civilians who serve at the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE command, March 5.

Michael R. Williams, who previously served in the 20th CBRNE Command’s G6 Communications Directorate, spoke at the monthly Army civilian professional development session at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

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

Based on his year of retirement, Williams shared his timeline for receiving his interim and full retired pay and discussed many other important details that Army civilians should consider before deciding to retire.

He encouraged all Army civilians to learn as much as possible about their retirement benefits.

“This is my experience,” said Williams. “Everyone is going to have their unique experience. You all have unique careers.”

Since he retired, Williams has become a certified pickleball coach.



Michael R. Williams, who previously served in the 20th CBRNE Command’s G6 Communications Directorate, spoke at the monthly Army civilian professional development session. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.

Charles Hughes, the deputy to the commanding general, has developed a monthly Army civilian professional development program since becoming the senior Army civilian at 20th CBRNE Command in November 2022.

Hughes thanked Williams for sharing his experience and encouraged all Army civilians to learn all that they can about retirement and other Army civilian benefits.

[Read full story](#)

## Awards

### 52nd EOD Group

- Lt. Col. Corbin E. Copeland - Meritorious Service Medal
- Maj. Kimberly D. Staudt - Meritorious Service Medal
- Capt. Jose G. MatosArbona - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. Maj. Colin S. Bradshaw - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. Maj. Joseph J. Bryant - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Kimily T. Deverteuil-Streeter - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Leonard E. Guillen - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Jesse J. Todd - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Latrice D. Blount - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Richard J. Rogers - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod R. Vanwinkle - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Drew R. Hawley - German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge
- Staff Sgt. Filip R. Velche – Army Commendation Medal
- Spc. Christian D. Renfroe – Army Achievement Medal

### 71st EOD Group

- Capt. Matthew C. Johnson - Norwegian Foot March Badge

- 1st Sgt. James R. Bohanon - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Sgt. Andrew M. Olson - Meritorious Service Medal
- 1st Sgt. Robert K. Ridenour - Meritorious Service Medal
- Master Sgt. Sasha D. Kennedy - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Baeza - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class James Cribbitt - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Thomas E. Fentiman - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Albert L. Jaramillo - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Brannon T. Littleton - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Andrew S. McGowin - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Steven M. McNeil - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Matthew W. Rackley - Meritorious Service Medal
- Sgt. 1st Class Marc J. Renno - Meritorious Service Medal
- Staff Sgt. Kyle T. Smith - Meritorious Service Medal
- Spc. Noah P. Fuess – Norwegian Foot March Badge
- Spc. Levi A. Newhouse - Norwegian Foot March Badge

### 1st Area Medical Laboratory

- Maj. Andrew Clack - Meritorious Service Medal



# Soldier leads lifesaving Army bone marrow registry campaign

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — A U.S. Army specialist who turned a grassroots bone marrow registration drive into a lifesaving Army-wide campaign spoke at the U.S. military's premier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command.

Spc. Christian Sutton addressed Soldiers and leaders during the Commander's Forum at the 20th CBRNE Command Headquarters on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Feb. 5 - 6.

"The 20th CBRNE Command is establishing one of the first unit driven programs that is going to empower their junior leaders and noncommissioned officers to take on these drives, to give these briefs and to register people themselves," said Sutton. "They will be directly responsible for saving lives."

Sutton leads a team of Soldiers in the "Operation Ring the Bell" campaign that supports the Department of Defense "Salute to Life" Bone Marrow program.

A native of Sumter, South Carolina, Sutton has a personal reason for his commitment to the bone marrow drive. His mother passed away from Hodgkin's lymphoma when he was four.

Spearheaded through Social Media platforms, the campaign has gained support of numerous senior leaders and formations around the U.S. Army. The campaign is named "Ring the Bell" in honor of a custom that marks when a patient is cancer free.

"Getting people on the registry is the way of not only saving the lives of those that need your specific donation right now but also safeguarding your own future and the future genetic matches out there somewhere that might need your donation," said Sutton. "It increases the chances of hope for cancer patients either now or over the next several decades."

Since 2022 when he started the campaign, Sutton has personally registered more than 4,042 people and his campaign team has registered 5,926. He hopes to establish the U.S. Army as one of the largest sources of bone marrow donations in the United States.

"Having a diverse and robust donor data base is the best way to protect American cancer patients as well as protect our service members. In the Army, we have a young, diverse and healthy population that can register more than are currently being registered. The Army alone could double the number of donors each year," said Sutton. "It's about service."

Attached to the 1st Armored Division on Fort Bliss, Texas, Sutton is currently working full-time for the Department of Defense Bone Marrow Registry and engaging with leaders at major Army formations across the nation.

He has worked with commanders and senior enlisted leaders across the Army and helped to shape policy.



*Spc. Christian Sutton (right) speaks with Staff Sgt. Sean M. Anderson (left) at the 20th CBRNE Headquarters, Feb. 5. Sutton leads a team of more than 20 Soldiers in the "Operation Ring the Bell" campaign that supports the U.S. Department of Defense "Salute to Life" Bone Marrow program. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.*

"I really enjoy the idea of serving in a way that really makes a lot of impact on my heart and my idea of service," said Sutton.

Chad C. Ballance, the senior recruiter for the U.S. Department of Defense Bone Marrow Program, said Sutton is critical to the mission of increasing people on the donor data base.

Ballance said the "Ring the Bell" campaign has been successful because it has been championed by leaders like Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Silva, the 20th CBRNE Command senior enlisted leader.

Silva said the campaign will be implemented to reach Soldiers, Army civilians and Army families stationed on the 19 bases in 16 states where 20th CBRNE Command units are stationed.

"The biggest takeaway for me about Spc. Christian Sutton and Operation Ring the Bell is you don't need rank or a position to make a big impact in the Army. All you need is passion and initiative," said Silva, a Master Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician from Long Beach, California, who has deployed seven times and served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As leaders, our job is to recognize Soldiers like Spc. Sutton within our ranks, arm them with our support, empower them to do great things and then step back and be amazed at what's possible. He's changing culture, saving lives and ensuring all his efforts are integrated into Army processes so they are sustainable and repeatable," said Silva. "I'm so impressed with this young man and all he's accomplished. We have so much talent in the Army. The solutions to most of our challenges lie right within our formation."

[Read full story](#)

# NDTs visit commercial atomic power station in Pennsylvania



*Members of the Nuclear Disablement Teams recently visited a commercial atomic power plant in Delta, Pennsylvania. Soldiers from the Nuclear Disablement Teams visited the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station less than an hour away from their home base of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Courtesy photo.*

DELTA, Pa. – Members of the Nuclear Disablement Teams visited a commercial atomic power plant in Delta, Pennsylvania, to learn more about nuclear power plant operations.

Soldiers from the Nuclear Disablement Teams visited the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station less than an hour away from their home base of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Maj. Matthew Stokley, the NDT 3 medical science officer, said the visit provided greater insight into the operations and nuclear infrastructure of commercial power plants.

“The NDTs were able to expand their understanding of commercial nuclear power emergency planning, site safety operations and key reactor safety systems within a boiling water reactor, the second most prevalent nuclear reactor style in the world,” said Stokley, who earned his bachelor’s degree in physics from Valdosta State University and earned his master’s degree in nuclear engineering from University of Texas.

“This enhances the NDTs capability to access potential hazards and sup-

port solutions if confronted with nuclear infrastructure emergencies upon the battlefield or when in supporting civil emergency response activities,” said Stokley, a native of Waynesboro, Mississippi. “This coordination allows for the strengthening of our national security by leveraging the world-class nuclear power infrastructure expertise within our local community at Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station.”

The Nuclear Disablement Teams are part of the 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE formation.

Samantha L. Leschke, the Emergency Preparedness Manager at the Peach Bottom Clean Energy Center, said the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Plant hosts six to 10 tour groups a year.

“They range from high school or local college groups to law enforcement personnel who support the power plant to groups like the NDT,” said Leschke, who has worked at the plant for 18 years in engineering, training and emergency preparedness.

Bryan E. Holcomb, the Training Technology and Instructional Specialist at the plant, said they enjoyed hosting the one-of-a-kind U.S. Army teams at the plant, which he called one of the largest clean energy power plants in the nation.

Holcomb has worked at Peach Bottom for 25 years in both engineering and training.

“It was great fun to host and work with people that had such a good base understanding of nuclear power and to be able to see the plant from a different perspective. Everyone was enthusiastic and fun to work with,” said Holcomb. “Looking forward to our next meeting at Peach Bottom where they will get to spend time in the simulator.”

Maj. Alex C. Redznak, a nuclear operations officer from Nuclear Disablement Team 3, said the NDTs often visit commercial power plants once or twice a year, adding that the proximity of the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Plant made it a much more convenient location for the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-based teams.

“NDT 3 plans to expand their relationship with Peach Bottom. In early 2024, NDTs plan to visit Peach Bottom again to utilize their control room simulator,” said Redznak.

“Their training center provides a wealth of knowledge to empower the NDTs on reactor systems,” said Redznak. “If we continue this relationship, the NDTs will integrate frequent visits to Peach Bottom into their future training plan.”

Originally from St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Redznak graduated from Norwich University before serving as an Artillery and Adjutant General officer and deploying to Afghanistan.

“With participation in training exercises, I can inform and influence nuclear and counter Weapons of Mass Destruction readiness,” said Redznak. “I feel that I am making a difference being a part of this effort.”

[Read full story](#)



# US Army EOD officer leads team during tornado relief efforts



*Soldiers from the 184th EOD Battalion, including the 717th EOD Company, 723rd EOD Company and 744th EOD Company, as well as 63rd Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Company, volunteered to support residents in the "Volunteer State" in nearby Tennessee. Capt. Taylor A. Gordon, the operations officer for the 184th Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), led a team of Soldiers and civilians during tornado recovery efforts in Clarksville, Tennessee. Courtesy photo.*



FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – An Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer led a team of Soldiers and civilians during tornado recovery efforts in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Capt. Taylor A. Gordon, the operations officer for the 184th Ordnance Battalion (EOD), coordinated with two civilian organizations and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency during the community recovery efforts following the devastating tornado in December 2023.

As part of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) effort, Gordon led approximately 50 Soldiers and 100 civilians who cleared debris away from 10 damaged homes.

Soldiers from the 184th EOD Battalion, including the 717th EOD Company, 723rd EOD Company and 744th EOD Company, as well as 63rd CBRN Company, volunteered to support residents in the "Volunteer State" in nearby Tennessee.

"Many Soldiers also donated supplies with their own money, helped move people out of their destroyed homes and helped Soldiers adapt to a lack of essential services throughout the week," said Gordon. "During the recovery efforts, the 184th partnered with local civilians to clear debris and deliver supplies, showing that the 184th and 101st cared for the town that we call home."

With winds up to 165 miles per hour, the EF-3 tornado caused massive amounts of damage to personal property and city infrastructure.

"Though we wanted to help earlier, the city would not allow us to go into parts of town due to a lack of power," said Gordon. "Through coordination with the Mosaic Church, they in turn coordinated with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and city officials, we were able to identify specific areas we could work alongside city contractors and clear debris."

Gordon said the people in the community were impressed by the leadership and work ethic demonstrated by the Army volunteers.

"I think we take our initiative and organization for granted," said Gordon. "Through the people we worked with, they explained how much they appreciated our ability to manage so many people and our efficiency."

Gordon said the volunteer effort demonstrated how Soldiers can serve not only their nation but also their community by coming together to help others in need.

"The highlight for me was seeing how many people from the Army and the city came to the aid of our community," said Gordon. "We had volunteers from all over the country dedicating their personal tools, time and skills to get this city back on its feet. The 184th EOD Battalion Soldiers showed that service goes far beyond their profession, and it made me feel proud to be a part of this organization."

The 184th EOD Battalion is part of the 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier CBRNE command.

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

For his efforts, Gordon was named the 20th CBRNE Command Defender of the Week.

Lt. Col. Matthew J. Derfler, the commander of the 184th EOD Battalion, said Gordon and the other EOD volunteers demonstrated his Soldiers' commitment to their local community.

"Captain Gordon's efforts and those of the volunteers from across the 184th Ordnance Battalion (EOD) to assist in recovery efforts across Clarksville, Tennessee, exemplifies the Soldiers' commitment to the Army Values and their support to the Fort Campbell community," said Derfler.

[Read full story](#)



# Army Airborne EOD techs train with Military Working Dogs



*Airborne Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians supported Military Working Dog teams training on Fort Liberty, North Carolina. EOD techs from the 722nd Ordnance Company (EOD) trained with Military Working Dog teams from the 550th MWD Detachment. U.S. Army photo by Capt. Eugene E. Osborne.*

FORT LIBERTY, N.C. – U.S. Army Airborne Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians supported Military Working Dog training on Fort Liberty, North Carolina.

EOD technicians from the 722nd Ordnance Company (EOD) trained with Military Working Dog teams from the 550th MWD Detachment.

Capt. Eugene E. Osborne, the commander of the 722nd EOD Company, said the training improved the readiness of the EOD paratroopers and Military Working Dog teams.

“The highlight of the training with the 550th MWD was being able to integrate interoperability of EOD paratroopers and K-9s and their handlers,” said Osborne. “The senior K-9 handler reached out to us to help facilitate training for two K-9 teams poised to move forward and support enduring missions overseas.”

Sgt. Martin E. Daniels, a Military Working Dog handler, served as the 550th MWD Detachment coordinator for the training.

“The goal behind this training was to give the experience to our EOD paratroopers of working alongside a dual-purpose ‘fur missile’ and to instill confidence in both parties of their capabilities,” said Osborne. “The type of training conducted was a simple area search that required the K-9 to rapidly clear an area and if the situation called for it, an EOD would move in to further investigate the scene.”

Osborne said the training helped not only the Military Working Dog unit redevelop its standard operating procedures for working together with EOD technicians but also helped his EOD paratroopers to further their knowledge

on the capability of the Military Working Dog teams and how to implement them rapidly.

The training also helped the Military Working Dog handlers to understand some of the hazards that they could encounter and gave suggestions on how the handler could avoid them with the dog in lead, said Osborne. This kind of training leads to stronger capabilities for both units, he added.

“We worked alongside three separate teams that were comprised of their handlers and a Belgian Malinois or a German Shepherd,” said Osborne. “K-9s have the opportunity to make our EOD paratroopers safer by providing standoff between our personnel and potential hazards by using their enhanced natural capabilities.”

As the U.S. Army’s explosive experts, EOD technicians confront and defeat the explosives designed to imperil troops and impede missions.

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

These highly trained dogs not only provide paws on the ground but also support operations at sea and in the air. The U.S. Air Force’s 341st Training Squadron has been training the dogs since the 1950s.

EOD forces work alongside Military Working Dog units for a variety of missions from Defense Support to Civil Authorities and U.S. Secret Service support to enduring missions overseas.

The 722nd EOD Company is part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military’s premier CBRNE formation.

Army EOD companies on Fort Liberty, North Carolina, support the XVIII Airborne Corps and 82nd Airborne Division on the U.S. Army’s Immediate Response Force.

When assigned to the rotational Immediate Response Force mission, Army EOD techs have to stay ready to deploy within 18 hours.

Osborne said EOD techs from the 722nd EOD Company have trained with counterparts from the United Kingdom, U.S. Army 18th Airborne Corps Field Artillery, 82nd Airborne Division and U.S. Army Special Forces units during the past two years.

“The 722nd EOD Company prides itself in our ability to find, formulate and execute training with units inside and outside Fort Liberty,” said Osborne. “We have a great relationship with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, and continuously execute various training events that either involve airborne operations, fly-away missions or the standard ground movement to an objective.”

[Read full story](#)

# US Army officer takes first place in Savannah Bridge Run

FORT STEWART, Ga. – A high-speed U.S. Army Chemical Corps officer took first place in the ruck division of the 10-kilometer Enmarket Savannah Bridge Run in Savannah, Georgia.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brian M. O'Leary, the team leader of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Response Team 2 from the 25th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort), competed against 67 other athletes in the ruck division of the race.

O'Leary came in 30 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher during the race that went through historic downtown Savannah and across a steep bridge.

"The bridge run is something of an institution here in Savannah, so I had wanted to participate since I moved here," said O'Leary.

The race took place on a cool morning with misty rain and heavy fog blanketing the historic city in coastal Georgia. The Savannah race had more than 4,200 competitors in all divisions.

The ruck division was much smaller, said O'Leary, a native of Zionsville, Indiana, who graduated from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, where he studied Engineering Technology and Philosophy.

"My division was a 10-kilometer ruck route crossing the Talmadge Bridge twice, a 1.4-mile span at a 5.5 percent grade over the Savannah River," said O'Leary. "That doesn't sound like much, but it's the steepest hill around. Standing on top of the bridge with a ruck on my back, looking over the river and the city below was a surreal experience that I'll remember for a long time."

Commissioned in the U.S. Army in May 2021, O'Leary leads a CBRNE Response Team that saves lives and enables operations.

The Fort Stewart, Georgia-based CBRNE Response Team 2 is part of the 25th CBRNE Company, 83rd CBRN Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier CBRNE formation.

To forge stronger relationships with other units, O'Leary also recently organized the Norwegian Foot March on Fort Stewart, Georgia.

The Norwegian Foot March is an 18.6-mile, 25-pound rucksack march where participants who complete the march in the prescribed timeframe before dawn and work a full day after the march earn a Norwegian Armed Forces Skill Badge.

"We had 97 Soldiers attend from 20 units across Fort Stewart," said O'Leary. "I was very pleased with the turnout. The goal of the event was to build relationships with units on post to help our Chemical Soldiers better integrate with and enable them when we train in the field. With so many units being represented, we built a lot of



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brian M. O'Leary, the team leader of the CBRNE Response Team 2 from the 25th CBRNE Company (Technical Escort), took first place in the ruck division of the 10-kilometer Enmarket Savannah Bridge Run in Savannah, Georgia. Courtesy photo.

great relationships that should leave a lasting impact on the installation."

Capt. Jose G. Matos, the commander of the 756th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), was the first-place finisher in the Norwegian Foot March with a time of 3 hours and 43 minutes.

O'Leary said his focus on fitness has helped him to set the example for his Soldiers and gives him experience to lean on when he is pushing them to improve. O'Leary learned the importance of grit, tenacity and determination from firsthand experience.

A few years before commissioning, O'Leary broke his neck in an accident during an interstate cycling trip. He said the long road to recovery was a tremendous setback.

"Once I got clear of the restrictions the injuries brought, I attacked fitness with a new resolve; understanding how fragile life is has given me a new dedication to be as strong and as capable as I can," said O'Leary. "Not long after the end of my recovery, I rucked my first 30 miler."

O'Leary challenged other Soldiers to push themselves further than they think possible.

"For Soldiers who are trying to work on fitness, I'd say this: exercise is supposed to be uncomfortable," said O'Leary, who hopes to attend Ranger School later this year. "I remember how hard it was to get into the gym for the first time or to push myself to get out and start my first long run. Remember that if you want to be something you've never been before, you need to get out and do something you've never done before."

[Read full story](#)



# EOD techs support Army recruiting at robotics competition



*Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians supported U.S. Army recruiters during a middle and high school robotics competition in Wheeling, West Virginia. Soldiers from the 754th Ordnance Company (EOD) demonstrated the tools of their profession to students at the Wheeling Robotics Competition. U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Vincent D. Mallardi.*

WHEELING, W.Va. – Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians supported U.S. Army recruiters during a middle and high school robotics competition in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Soldiers from the 754th Ordnance Company (EOD) recently demonstrated the tools of their profession to students at the Wheeling Robotics Competition.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Gettle from Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Pfc. Calvin Battaglia from West Chester, Pennsylvania; and Pfc. Hayden Rolf from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, represented the 754th EOD Company at the event in support of the Richmond Army Recruiting Battalion.

"There were around 140 teams that competed and around 5-6 members in each team," said Gettle. "The competitors were middle school and high school aged kids from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) schools from all over the region."

Gettle said the students came from 36 high schools and 60 middle schools.

"The competition had each team that built their own robot and then competed in presentation, skills and a battle that consisted of them scoring balls into their goal and getting extra points for skills demonstrated during the match," said Gettle, who has deployed to Afghanistan twice during his 10 years in the U.S. Army.

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's Reserve's 463rd Engineer Battalion helped to judge the robotics competition, which determined competitors for the robotics national competition finals in Dallas.

The 754th EOD Company is part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier CBRNE command.

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

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army EOD and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) units, 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.

Across the nation, the 20th CBRNE Command is supporting the Army recruiting effort with everything from EOD techs in bomb suits at recruiting events to Soldiers referring potential recruits in their local communities.

The 754th EOD Company previously served downrange in support of the Special Operations Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve in Syria from December 2018 to September 2019 and deployed to Tunisia for Exercise African Lion in 2022.

The Fort Drum, New York-based EOD company also responds to military munitions in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

As the U.S. Army's explosive experts, EOD techs take on everything from hand grenades to nuclear weapons. EOD techs use robots to confront and defeat explosives designed to harm people and hinder operations.

Along with other EOD tools, the 756th EOD Company team members brought the Man Transportable Robot System 2 (MTRS II) and the Common Robotics System-Individual (CRS-I) robots to the robotics competition.

Gettle said many of the students wanted to know more about their robots and their high stakes profession in the U.S. Army.

"They liked the use of training aids and being able to operate the robots we brought to the event," said Gettle. "It was great to see their passion for STEM and to be able to share some of the opportunities we've had to work with unique capabilities like robots through the military."

[Read full story](#)



# Army EOD techs train to enable Arctic dominance in Alaska

FORT WAINWRIGHT, Alaska – Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal techs who routinely defeat dangerous devices had to overcome a different kind of hazard during training in Alaska.

To enable the U.S. Army's focus on regaining Arctic dominance, EOD techs from the Fort Drum, New York-based 760th Ordnance Company (EOD) recently traveled to an even colder climate to train together with 65th Ordnance Company (EOD) on Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

EOD technicians from the 760th EOD Company attended the Cold Weather Indoctrination Course in December where they learned to construct improvised shelters and fighting positions, to ruck in snowshoes and to cook in subzero temperatures.

Capt. John D. Velasquez from Bethesda, Maryland; 1st Lt. Jude A. McDowell from Downingtown, Pennsylvania; Sgt. 1st Class Justin E. Liller from Philadelphia; and Sgt. Andrew G. McCoy from Tallahassee, Florida, from the 760th EOD Company attended the training.

Velasquez, the commander of the 760th EOD Company, said the EOD techs also trained with explosives in colder temperatures.

"We spent two days on the demolition range comparing the impact of the cold on the explosive effects of demolition material," said Velasquez, a graduate of American Military University with a sociology degree who has deployed to Afghanistan twice during his 14 years in the Army. "Tests were run with explosives that were both at ambient room temperature and exposed to the cold and comparisons were made between the two."

Velasquez said the EOD techs tested different methods for dislodging stuck rounds from an M777 Howitzer barrel during freezing temperatures.

The 760th EOD Company enables military operations around the world and supports civil authorities at home. The company most recently deployed to Kuwait in 2021 and covers domestic response missions across the northeastern United States.



*Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians from the Fort Drum, New York-based 760th Ordnance Company (EOD) recently traveled to an even colder climate to train together with 65th Ordnance Company (EOD) on Fort Wainwright, Alaska. During the training, the EOD technicians tested different methods for dislodging stuck rounds from an M777 Howitzer barrel during freezing temperatures. Courtesy photo.*

The 760th EOD Company is part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

On Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely, Alaska, the 65th EOD Company supports the 11th Airborne Division and organizations requiring EOD support while using the 870,000 acres of training land in Alaska.

Capt. Stephen S. Goetz, the commander of the Fort Wainwright, Alaska-based 65th EOD Company, said this area includes Donnelly Training Area, Yukon Training Areas and Tanana Flats Training Areas. He added the 65th EOD Company also supports civilian and federal law enforcement across the northern half of Alaska.

"The 65th Ordnance Company (EOD) represents a very small portion of the Army garrisoned in Alaska but together we all face the same challenges presented by this harsh and austere environment," said Goetz. "We are still working to source innovative solutions to the challenges presented and identifying ways to regain Arctic dominance."

A native of El Paso, Texas, Goetz graduated from Texas A&M Corpus

Christi with a biochemistry degree. He has deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq during his 13 years in the Army.

To add teeth to the U.S. Army effort to regain Arctic dominance, the 11th Airborne Division was reactivated in June 2022.

The Alaska-based airborne division conducts expeditionary and multi-domain operations in the Indo-Pacific theater and stays ready to decisively defeat any adversary in extreme cold weather on mountainous, high-latitude and high-altitude terrain during large-scale combat operations.

Goetz said the 11th Airborne Division has been spearheading many new ideas and the 65th EOD Company is focused on explosive effects, render safe techniques and survival in small teams.

Training with other EOD units helps to strengthen everyone involved, said Goetz.

"Working with another organization is always better," said Goetz. "You can share ideas, build camaraderie and realize other organizations share the same problem sets."

[Read full story](#)

# EOD techs pioneer method for clearing stuck artillery round



*Explosive Ordnance Disposal techs from the 761st Ordnance Company (EOD) safely cleared a stuck round that jammed in a M109A6 Paladin howitzer during training on Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Staff Sgt. Cody A. Dodd, an EOD team leader from the 761st EOD Company, coordinated with the Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division to implement a new strategy to clear the lodged round. Courtesy photo.*

FORT SILL, Okla. – Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians demonstrated flexibility, ingenuity and resourcefulness during a recent response to a lodged round in a M109A6 Paladin howitzer on Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Army EOD Soldiers, from the 761st Ordnance Company (EOD) safely cleared the projectile that jammed during howitzer training.

Staff Sgt. Cody A. Dodd, an EOD team leader from the 761st EOD Company, coordinated with the Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division (NAVEODTECHDIV) to implement a new strategy to clear the lodged round.

The U.S. Navy is designated as the joint service Executive Agent for EOD Technology and Training. Part of the Naval Sea Systems Command, the Naval Explosive Disposal Technology Division is used by all EOD technicians for joint EOD requirements.

"This response was unique because it is rare to receive such an incident," said Dodd. "Being at Fort Sill, home

of the artillery, you would think this is a common occurrence. However, that is not the case. I've been stationed here for two years and this is the first incident like this."

After the usual stuck round procedures were unsuccessful, Dodd and the field artillery battalion commander determined that the safest course of action was for the disposition of the gun barrel and ordnance inside.

Dodd led the team that disposed of the round while it was still lodged by moving the barrel to the demolition range and assisting in the download of the 4,500-pound tube. The EOD team was able to destroy the round and the Paladin will be operational again after repair parts are installed.

"This is important to the supporting artillery units because a stuck round causes the gun to be completely inoperable," said Dodd, a native of Wellsburg, West Virginia, who has deployed to Afghanistan and Syria during his almost nine years in the Army. "It is our job to make all efforts to attempt to enable the gun to be at a firing status again."

Dodd said the response will serve as a lesson learned for future joint service Explosive Ordnance Disposal operations involving stuck rounds.

"The highlight of this response would be the demolition procedure conducted on the gun tube and ordnance," said Dodd. "With guidance from NAVEODTECHDIV, we were able to contribute to the overall EOD force for future incidents involving this ordnance."

The Fort Sill, Oklahoma-based 761st EOD Company is part of the 79th EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

After defeating more than 50,000 Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army EOD techs are training to support ground forces during large-scale combat operations.

Army EOD techs from the 761st EOD Company conduct target insertion, range clearance and fire break clearance missions for U.S. Army field artillery and air defense artillery units.

EOD technicians from the 761st EOD Company also enable military operations around the world and respond when military munitions are found on and off base in Oklahoma, Arkansas and across 60 counties in Texas.

Based on Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the 1-78th Field Artillery Battalion trains and educates Soldiers in fire support core competencies to support operational Army forces.

Lt. Col. Brian J. Dermody, the commander of the 1-78th Field Artillery Battalion, presented coins to the Soldiers involved in the response.

"Our fires mission is an absolutely critical part of the U.S. Army's shift to preparing for large-scale combat operations against a near-peer adversary," said Dermody, a native of West Chester, Pennsylvania, who has commanded the artillery battalion since July of 2023. "EOD technicians like Staff Sgt. Dodd take on the dangerous and demanding role of helping to keep us mission ready."

[Read full story](#)



# Army EOD instructor demonstrates commitment to fitness

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – A bodybuilding U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer brings guns to the bomb fight.

Capt. David B. Winne, an Army EOD officer and instructor at the Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, routinely demonstrates his commitment to physical fitness by participating in bodybuilding and Crossfit competitions.

While many people set new fitness goals at the beginning of a new year, Winne said the key to success is maintaining a sustainable training schedule and working out together with partners.

“Complacency kills but consistency compounds,” said Winne. “Establish a training regime that is sustainable for your schedule. Too often Soldiers will be overly ambitious with their training plan and crush it for a few weeks before tiring out simply because it isn’t sustainable.”

“It’s much easier to go for that early morning run or evening lift session when it’s with someone else that is going to hold you accountable and push you,” said Winne. “It’s also a great time to build relationships and friendships when you both are suffering through your workouts.”

Winne started his fitness journey with bodybuilding and later shifted gears to functional fitness.

“I’ve been seriously lifting for about 15 years and always had a passion for training and bodybuilding,” said Winne, a native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and graduate of Liberty University. “For a while my only goal was to lift as heavy as I can and be as big as I could but when I joined the Army, I realized I had to change my approach to training or else I could quickly become a liability to my team.”

Winne added that bodybuilding and functional fitness are almost on exact ends of the fitness training spectrum.

“They each demand a very different training methodology, nutrition and even mentality. While bodybuilding prioritizes form and physique above all else. Functional fitness and CrossFit aims to push the body to maximal human capacity and performance,” said Winne.

After spending half of the last year competing in local Crossfit competitions before qualifying for the Crossfit quarterfinals, Winne spent the rest of the year focused on bodybuilding and qualified for national competitions while almost earning a bodybuilding Pro card.

“Balancing the two within a year was extremely difficult but also rewarding,” Winne added. “Right now, I am training in a Hybrid method that combines multiple fitness modalities, including bodybuilding, Crossfit, running and Olympic lifting. I have found this to be the most sustainable, healthy and beneficial method of training.”

Fitness contributes to success during combat missions downrange when EOD technicians confront and defeat



*Capt. David B. Winne (carrying American flag), a U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer and instructor at the Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, demonstrates his commitment to fitness by participating in bodybuilding and Crossfit competitions. Courtesy photo.*

explosive devices that are designed to imperil troops and impede missions.

Winne commanded the 18th Ordnance Company (EOD) when it served as the sole EOD company in Iraq in 2021. The Fort Liberty, North Carolina-based 18th EOD Company is part of the 192nd EOD Battalion, 52nd EOD Group and 20th CBRNE Command.

Winne said physical fitness is a critical component of the profession of arms.

“Fitness is a universal language,” he said. “It’s a language civilians, other units, military occupations and even other countries understand. When you have a passion for that, it opens doors that otherwise may have been closed. I can’t tell you how many relationships I have built through fitness with people, units and allies that I may never have had.”

Winne said his focus on fitness improves every aspect of his life and helps him to deal with the inevitable stress that comes from serving in a dangerous and demanding profession.

Capt. Michael Villahermosa from Echo Company, 73rd Ordnance Battalion, said Winne serves as a great role model for the Army and the entire EOD community.

“He is one of the few EOD technicians who has graduated Ranger school at the top of his class,” said Villahermosa. “He also takes the time to build up those around him.”

[Read full story](#)



# US Army lab techs train with medical professionals in Germany

MUNICH, Germany – American Soldiers from a one-of-a-kind mobile laboratory command trained with German and Tunisian military medical professionals at the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology in Munich, Germany.

During a week-long training session, Soldiers from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory honed their skills to conduct safe and efficient biological warfare agent sampling procedures for collection, rapid testing and transportation to laboratories.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-headquartered 1st Area Medical Laboratory is part of the 44th Medical Brigade and 20th CBRNE Command, the U.S. military's premier CBRNE formation.

The classroom training covered biological warfare agents, including toxins, bacterial strains and viral sources.

During the hands-on training phase, Soldiers tackled a variety of challenging scenarios designed to test their ability to plan and execute missions to collect suspected biological warfare agent samples for laboratory analysis.

German Armed Forces Lt. Col. Kilian Stoecker and Lt. Col. Katharina Müller led the training course at the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology.

Sgt. Adam T. Phayamouk from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory said the teams took on different challenges and focused on collecting forensic evidence for international court.

"There are diverse approaches to effectively gather sufficient forensic laboratory evidence to support a criminal case or to improve force health protection initiatives," said Phayamouk. "Our primary goal in traveling to Germany was to acquire expertise in developing secure and efficient procedures for sampling biological warfare agents."

Phayamouk said he was motivated to join the U.S. Army and serve as a Medical Laboratory Technician for the world-class training.



*American Soldiers from a one-of-a-kind mobile laboratory command trained with German and Tunisian military medical professionals at the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology in Munich, Germany. During a week-long training session, Soldiers from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory honed their skills to conduct safe and efficient biological warfare agent sampling procedures for collection, rapid testing and transportation to laboratories. U.S. Army by Sgt. Adam T. Phayamouk.*



"I embraced the challenge of this distinctive opportunity. The Army's Medical Laboratory Technician Military Occupational Specialty is known for its demanding curriculum," said Phayamouk, a native of New Hampshire.

Spc. Cormac B. Burns from the 1st Area Medical Laboratory said his team worked together with the Tunisian military to "put the pieces together" during a training scenario.

"We trained on how to investigate any suspected biological agent situation - from sourcing the material through after the dispersal," said Burns. "The Tunisian team has a forensic investigation background,

whereas we have experience in the laboratory side of things. Working together definitely led us both to being able to find the best possible samples for each of the different scenarios."

Originally from Austin, Texas, Cormac has been in the U.S. Army for two years. He studied microbiology in college and has built on that knowledge at 1st AML.

"The 1st Area Medical Laboratory has let me see all of that knowledge applied in way that's unique in the Army," said Burns. "There's no better spot in the Army for a lab tech."

[Read full story](#)

# Soldier wins Gold Medal in Taekwondo competition in Korea



*Sgt. Robert J. Errington from the 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) Errington took first place during an international Taekwondo competition at the Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters in Seoul. Errington also earned his Taekwondo black belt in six months during his deployment to South Korea, the birthplace of the famous martial art, which is also an Olympic sport. Courtesy photo.*

CAMP CASEY, South Korea – A U.S. Army sergeant won the Gold Medal during an international Taekwondo competition in South Korea.

Sgt. Robert J. Errington from the 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) took first place during the international competition at the Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters in Seoul.

Errington also earned his Taekwondo black belt in six months during his deployment to South Korea, the birthplace of the famous martial art, which is also an Olympic sport.

In the 1950s - 1960s, many of the American martial arts pioneers earned black belts while stationed in the U.S. military in Northeast Asia.

Chuck Norris, a six-time world Professional Middleweight Karate Champion and action star, earned his first black belt in the Korean martial art Tang Soo Do while serving as a U.S. Air Force Air Policeman on Osan Air Base in South Korea in the late 1950s.

Errington, a Chemical Corps sergeant, first became interested in the

martial arts during a family trip to Vietnam when he was 8 years old.

"During my stay there, I was able to watch monks from the Buddhist temple perform martial arts which piqued my interest in starting," said Errington. "Coming to Korea, I wanted to embrace the culture as much as I could."

Two company leaders, 1st Lt. Aidan J. Naylor and Sgt. 1st Class Sun-kyong Jung, who both used to practice Taekwondo, encouraged Errington to sign up for courses on Camp Casey, South Korea.

The U.S. Army provides Kukkiwon-certified Taekwondo grandmasters for the courses. Yi Yong-son, a 7th degree black belt, is Errington's grandmaster.

"Once I found out how easily Taekwondo was available, I signed up as soon as I could," said Errington, a native of Buffalo, New York. "There are seven belt levels here starting from white ending all the way to black. From what I was told by my grandmaster, I was quick to promote and got my black belt in six months."

Errington took all of the three classes offered on post every week. Since he had no prior martial arts experience, he practiced as much as possible.

For the 1st degree black belt test, Errington had to demonstrate the basics, perform four Taekwondo forms, complete 50 pushups and spar with a black belt at a higher level. He then had to break 3/4-inch-thick boards with a roundhouse tornado kick, spinning wheel kick and jumping reverse wheel kick.

During the competition in Seoul in September 2023, he had to overcome two opponents in his weight class to earn his Gold Medal.

"My final match was intimidating at first because I was matched up against a 3rd degree black belt who practiced Taekwondo at a university club in South Korea. Even though he was a great practitioner, I was able to come off with a 12 to 6 win," he said.

The Fort Drum, New York-based 59th CBRN Company "Mountain Dragons" was deployed to South Korea in support of the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division Sustainment Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army.

Capt. Evan P. Shortsleeve, the commander of the 59th CBRN Company, said that Spc. Jacob Oliver from the Mountain Dragons will also test for his Taekwondo Black Belt soon. Shortsleeve said Errington sets a great example of the U.S. Army's commitment to physical fitness and maintaining strong ties with our allies.

"Sgt. Errington represents our Army well," said Shortsleeve, a native of Litchfield, Connecticut, and graduate of Norwich University. "He approaches each day with gratitude and leads those around him to live a fuller life. Soldiers and KATUSAs (Korean Augmentees to the U.S. Army) following his example have found a deeper meaning behind holistic health and fitness and forged friendships that will outlast their service with the Mountain Dragon family."

[Read full story](#)



# Mountain Dragons improve mission readiness in South Korea

CAMP CASEY, South Korea – American Soldiers from a forward deployed U.S. Army CBRN company improved their technical and tactical readiness during a nine-month rotational deployment to South Korea.

Soldiers from the Fort Drum, New York-based 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) leveraged unit and individual training opportunities to increase mission readiness.

The 59th CBRN Company “Mountain Dragons” were deployed to Camp Casey, South Korea, in support of the 23rd CBRN Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division Sustainment Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army.

CBRN Soldiers graduated from the Advanced Chemical Biological Course in December 2023. Sponsored by the 23rd CBRN Battalion, the Advanced Chemical and Biological Course was held on Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

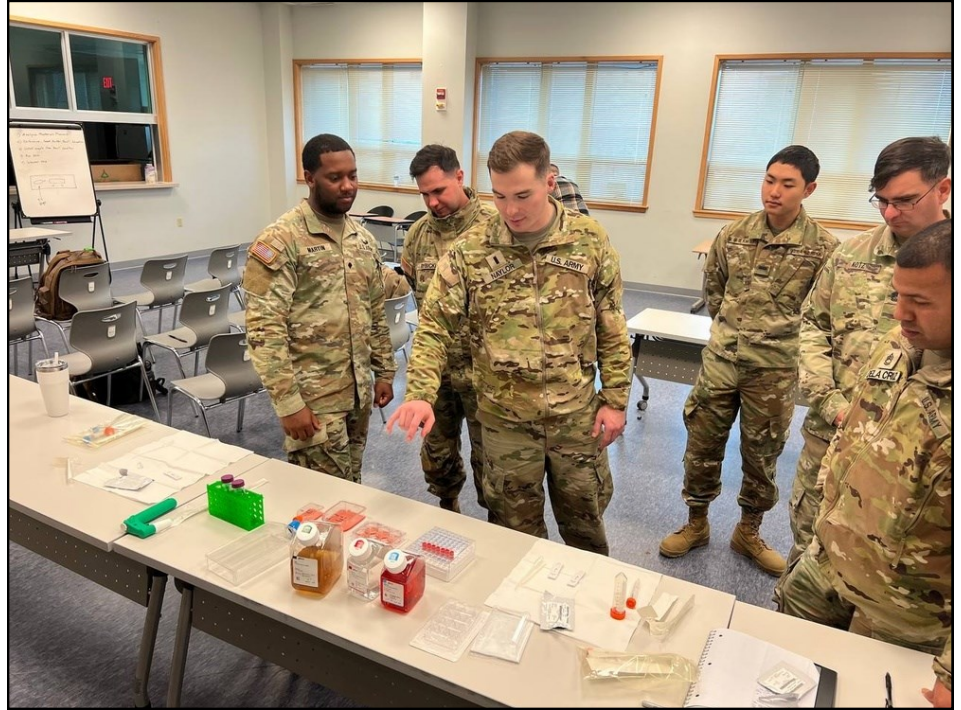
A training team from the Special Programs Division on Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, conducted the course.

“The course was an in-depth education on all the chemical and biological agents and targets that Dragon Soldiers might encounter while on mission,” said 1st Lt. Aidan J. Naylor, the executive officer of the 59th CBRN Company.

Naylor, Warrant Officer 1 Hwanglyong Hwangbo, Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Dela Cruz, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Kotz, Staff Sgt. Santos Carlos-Gonzalez, Staff Sgt. John Rybicki, Sgt. Branson Cody, Sgt. Nayara Gomez, Sgt. Sanisha Lewis, Spc. Dennis Chang, Spc. Timothy Crespín, Spc. Jayden Delair, Spc. Hannah Jobes, Spc. Martin Virgil, Spc. Jacob Oliver, Pfc. Sang Kim and Pfc. Won Seo completed the course.

Spc. Dennis Chang, a Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicle (NBCRV) surveyor, said the course covered the potential impact of chemical and biological hazards.

The Mountain Dragons also tested their mettle during the German Armed



*Soldiers from the Fort Drum, New York-based 59th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) participate in the Advanced Chemical Biological Course on Camp Humphreys, South Korea. A mobile training team from the Special Programs Division on Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, conducted the course. Courtesy photo.*

Forces Proficiency Badge qualification event, hosted by the 501st Military Intelligence Brigade on Camp Humphreys, South Korea, in January. The course is overseen by the German Armed Forces defense attaché in South Korea.

During the qualification event, Soldiers had to complete a basic fitness test, 100-meter swim in uniform, pistol qualification and 12-kilometer foot march to earn the badge.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Craddock said swimming in uniform was the most challenging part of the qualification event.

Craddock, Sgt. Robert Errington, Cpl. Alexander Cargal, Spc. Dennis Chang, Pfc. Nikolay Zelikov and Pfc. Conner Ossont earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge during the qualification event.

Sgt. Robert Errington and Spc. Jacob Oliver earned black belts in Taekwondo during their deployment to the birthplace of the famous martial art. Errington also won a gold medal in a Taekwondo sparring

competition at the Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters.

Spc. Jayden Delair also studied Brazilian Ju Jitsu for the first time and competed in two tournaments during the deployment.

Capt. Evan P. Shortsleeve, the commander of the 59th CBRN Company, said he has challenged his Soldiers to continue to focus on personal and professional development.

“I remind the 59th CBRN Soldiers of my standing charge every week at closeout formations to be 1 percent better every day,” said Shortsleeve, a native of Litchfield, Connecticut, and graduate of Norwich University.

“Ultimately, some of the best and worst days of our lives will take place when we only have 10 percent in the tank,” said Shortsleeve. “My charge to our Soldiers is to maximize what that 10 percent is capable of so that they can compete and win in their lives and defeat our adversaries in any condition.”

[Read full story](#)



# Retired Chemical Corps officer inducted into Order of the Dragon

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — A retired Army Chemical Corps officer was inducted into the Chemical Corps Regimental Association's Order of the Dragon on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

Antonio J. Amos, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and senior Army civilian, was welcomed into the order that recognizes current and former Soldiers, Army civilians and other individuals who have contributed to the promotion of the Chemical Corps.

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, inducted Amos into the Order of the Dragon, Feb. 28.

Amos served together with Hood during two previous U.S. Army assignments.

"I have known Maj. Gen. Hood for over 25 years," said Amos. "We served together at the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in various positions in the 84th Chemical Battalion. He is a great leader and someone for whom I have great admiration and respect."

Amos currently serves as the chief of Plans and Future Operations (G3/5) at the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM).

Originally from New Orleans, Amos served in the U.S. Army for 25 years and deployed for Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

He worked at the White House, Pentagon and U.S. Central Command.

Amos earned his bachelor's degree in biology from University of Notre Dame. He also earned master's degrees in systems engineering from Johns Hopkins University and administration from Central Michigan University.

Amos said that serving as the commander of the 21st Chemical Company in the 82nd Airborne Division was one of the highlights of his U.S. Army career.



Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood (center), the commanding general of the 20th CBRNE Command, stands beside Antonio J. Amos (right) on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Feb. 28. Hood welcomed Amos, a retired U.S. Army Chemical Corps lieutenant colonel and senior Army civilian, into the Chemical Corps Regimental Association's Order of the Dragon. U.S. Army photo by Marshall R. Mason.



"I had the pleasure of serving with some of the most professional and combat-ready Soldiers imaginable," said Amos. "I truly believe we were the best company in the division and represented the Chemical Corps well. Also serving as the CBRN Defense Program Manager in the White House Military Office was a highlight. But the real highlight of my career was meeting and serving with incredible Soldiers, civilians and family members."

Often called Dragon Soldiers, CBRN officers and specialists assess, protect and mitigate Weapons of Mass Destruction and other CBRN hazards.

Amos encouraged today's CBRN Soldiers to take advantage of the many opportunities for growth and development available.

"Diversify your Army experience by

serving in various types of organizations, take advantage of the opportunities presented to you, learn everything you can, stay proficient in both CBRN and Army operations and help others along the way," said Amos.

As the latest inductee into the Order of the Dragon, Amos was recognized for his steadfast commitment to the CBRN community and dedication to the Chemical Corps.

"I was humbled and honored to be inducted into the Order of the Dragon," said Amos. "The highlight was receiving the award from Maj. Gen. Hood in the presence of other distinguished leaders and friends, including the CECOM deputy to the commanding general, Ms. Liz Miranda, retired Sgt. Maj. Bruce Griffin and my current team from the CECOM G3/5 Plans and Future Operations Branch."

[Read full story](#)