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## **Special team prepares for worst**

### **Group passes final exams**

BY KATHY PLUM, The Dominion Post



West Virginia's Civil Support Team practiced decontamination methods using specialized equipment during its final exam. Kathy Plum/The Dominion Post photos

West Virginia's Civil Support Team -- a sort of HAZMAT team on steroids -- passed its final exams recently, making it available to help civilian and military responders to weapons of mass destruction. That includes hazardous chemicals, biological agents, radioactive materials and high-yield explosives.

"We bring some equipment, knowledge and training that typically you do not have in a first-responder agency," noted Lt. Col. Michael Kitts, commander of the Support Team.

The team was one of five created in February, joining 32 others across the country. But while older teams had up to 18 months to train and pass their certification tests, West Virginia's had nine months. The team consists of 22 members divided into six sections: Command, operations, communications, medical, survey and decontamination. All are HAZMAT and combat lifesaver qualified. Each member trained intensively individually, up to 1,000 hours apiece, before coming together about a month ago.

It will respond within a 250-mile radius of its base in St. Albans to assist the incident commander, advise the commander and medical facilities and facilitate other assets as needed.

*See Special team, p. 10*

## Commander's Corner

### To First Army soldiers and civilians

#### Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members of First United States Army -

On entering this holiday season, Linda and I extend our warmest greetings to each of you. As we pause to reflect on our blessings and draw close to our families and friends, let us offer thanks that we are Americans and fortunate to be part of the best military in the world.

We are blessed to be part of an Army team that has served our country since its very beginning. During the past unprecedented year in our nation's history, soldiers and civilians in First Army have performed superbly. Take pride in your many accomplishments; I appreciate your care and support of our men and women in uniform.

Be proud that America is the symbol of liberty to the entire world. Soldiers are securing that liberty day in and day out. The important job that they do has earned a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans. All find strength in their courage and inspiration in their sacrifices for peace and freedom. So remember our fellow soldiers who are courageously serving around the world and let us offer a prayer for their safe return home and peace for their families.

Let us make this holiday season safe and accident free. Best wishes to you and your families. May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America.

Lt. Gen. Joseph R. Inge



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### Operation Uplink helps troops phone home

by Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs

Troops stationed overseas will be provided free phone cards during the holiday season thanks to a partnership between Veterans of Foreign Wars and three multi-million dollar corporations.

Wal-Mart has promised to furnish all military personnel serving overseas with a 60-minute AT&T phone card between Thanksgiving and Christmas, said Mike Meyer, the administrator of corporate development for VFW Foundations. Each phone card will be enclosed inside a Hallmark greeting card and transported free of charge by Federal Express, Meyer added.

Through Operation Uplink, the phone-card project that began three years ago, 500,000 cards will be delivered this holiday season, Meyer said.

"Since the inception of Operation Uplink, one million cards have reached military personnel worldwide and hospitalized veterans," Meyer said.

"We want to show our men and women in uniform that we support them," Meyer said. "So Operation Uplink is to boost morale and relieve the burden that expensive phone calls can cause.

Those interested in contributing to the fund, or who would like to request phone cards, can go to <http://www.vfw.org/>.

**Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley** shares a laugh with Elmer Taylor, a 79-year-old World War II veteran. Taylor, who quit school to join the Navy during in 1942, received his high school diploma after



more than 60 years Nov. 7 under a new state law. The law allows veterans whose high school completion was interrupted by military service to receive their diplomas. Tilley

met with Taylor during a visit to his hometown of Vancouver last week. He also spoke to students at Fort Vancouver High School where he graduated in 1966.

## Command Sergeant Major's Message



**Command Sgt. Maj.  
Jeffrey J. Mellinger**

Just for a moment, take some time to see how truly fortunate you are. It is the time of year when we have the most reminders of how lucky we are, and how thankful we should be. Look around where you are. We live in a land of bounty, of cleaner air and water than most of the world, and we have the freedom to choose so many things. But do we fully appreciate what we have?

Most of the world doesn't enjoy a part of our freedoms and amenities, and we tend to take what we have for granted far too often. When you got up this morning, chances are you flipped a switch, and light flooded your room. Think of that just for a moment. How many regions of the world can you name right now that have no such basic service?

As you tie your running shoes (since you don't have to hunt for your breakfast, you *are* taking the time to keep yourself physically fit, yes?), you hit the remote control and turn on the news. Or for the electronically enhanced, you dial-up a connection and glean the headlines from an online news source. Ever wonder what the rest of the world knows about what is happening in their own country? Freedom of speech is a wonderful thing-- One of our guarantees, no less.

Back from PT, you shuffle into the bathroom, taking your choice of porcelain fixtures -- sink, toilet, or bath -- each with clear, clean, running water. You know that most of the world enjoys none of the simple fixtures found in most American homes. Grab your soap, your washcloth, get clean, then dry off on a clean towel. Feeling thankful yet? As you throw your dirty clothes into the washing machine and dryer, think about how often you take this simple act for granted.

As you slip into your clean clothes and get dressed for the day, did it occur to you that there are those who own only the clothes on their back, so having them clean is but a fleeting fantasy? Feeling hungry? Just give a tug on the door of the refrigerator, and choose something from amongst the selection you have stored in relative safety from contamination (unless you carelessly allowed a science project to begin). Or go to the cupboard and make a choice. Turn on the stove and make your breakfast hot (or for the younger crowd -- pop something into the microwave). And unless you aren't hungry any-

more, you can have more. How many people fight for scraps in the garbage heap? Think about that as you throw the uneaten portion of your breakfast in the trash.

If you have children in school, you send them off without giving them a mine awareness or sniper avoidance lesson before they go. You don't watch your neighbors as they watch you, each ready to kill the other over a long-past wrong or injustice. You do not have to choose which child will get the food from aid workers, and which will die.

Go to your car, turn the key, and drive off without giving it another thought. Where would you be without your car? In another part of the world, more than likely. Walking along a dusty road or trail, in all kinds of weather, perhaps lugging a water can up the mountain just so you can cook your meal for the day? So take some time to be thankful.

Be thankful that you are an American. As the CG says, we have all won the lottery just for being born in this country. Think about that for a moment. Where else could you be living that you enjoy so many basic "necessities," are guaranteed so many freedoms and rights under a constitution soldiers have sworn to uphold and defend, and be asked for so little in exchange?

So as you are thinking of your lot in life this holiday season, think of how fortunate you are. And if you're feeling particularly blessed, give of yourself, your time, your food or clothing or money, and give to those less fortunate than yourself. You don't have to look far to find someone worse off than you.



U.S. and Coalition service members fighting the war on terrorism were treated to a warm Thanksgiving meal at Bagram Air Base dining facilities. The holiday season officially got underway when food service specialists gathered to serve the most anticipated meal of the year in Afghanistan. *U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alfredo Jimenez Jr.*

# Special Forces Medic Reaches Out to Afghan People

By Kathleen T. Rhem  
American Forces Press Service

Sgt. 1st Class Victor Andersen had never seen a donkey bite before. That's why he couldn't identify the large crescent-shaped wound on a young boy in Afghanistan. In fact, the Special Forces medical sergeant saw a lot of things in Afghanistan that he never expected to see.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Victor Andersen tends to an Afghan boy who had been bitten by his donkey. Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Victor Andersen, USA.

Andersen, a member of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion from Fort Bragg, N.C., recently returned from a seven-month stint in Afghanistan. He shared some of his experiences in an interview during a Pentagon visit.

He came across the injured boy, believed to be around 9 or 10 years old, on a routine trip in the Orgun Valley region. "He had the strangest laceration, a perfect horseshoe shape," Andersen said. He said it resembled a bite, "but it was way too big to be from somebody's mouth." The wound was clear through the boy's hand to the bone.

The wound was several hours old and had to be scraped out and disinfected. Andersen wasn't carrying anesthetics, but the boy didn't need any. "These kids are tough as nails," he said. "He just stood there as stoic as could be and just appreciating the attention."

Only after someone arrived who could talk to the boy did Andersen learn about the boy, his donkey and the wound. "Then he rode off on the same donkey," he said.

As a Special Forces medic on a civil affairs team, Andersen has been trained in all aspects of health care, including general surgery, dentistry, obstetrics, and

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even veterinary practices. While he was able to help the boy with the donkey bite, the career soldier said he saw many things in Afghanistan that were beyond his abilities. He worked closely with soldiers from the 947th Forward Surgical Team, an Army Reserve medical unit from Connecticut.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Victor Andersen (left), and an unidentified American soldier work on an Afghan soldier injured in an explosion. Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Victor Andersen, USA.

Together, the civil affairs team and Reserve unit built a hospital for the Orgun Valley, provided routine care to civilians in the region, responded to emergencies and trained local care providers in modern standards. Most local doctors had been trained in Pakistan decades before and had received no updated training since.

Andersen said the most common medical treatment before the Americans' arrival was egg yolk and tobacco spit. "They would rub this into any wound," he said. He spoke of a man the team saw who had a dislocated wrist. Here's how local hospital's doctors treated him: "Egg yolk and tobacco spit," Andersen said. "This was their cure for everything." Andersen said he saw "a hundred years' worth of change" during his stay in terms of medical care available to the local civilian population.

"They're so accustomed to no help being available that when someone reaches a condition (of a certain level of seriousness), they expect the person to die," he said. The sergeant noted the Afghans' average life span is 44, "and most don't make it that far." Andersen said most Afghans seem fairly healthy, but added with some bitterness that's because the ones who aren't healthy die. He said he believes the American soldiers' caring for the people and improving the skills of local care providers have begun to change the sense of fatalism held by most Afghan civilians he came to know.

## People can prevent, prepare for terrorism

by Sgt. William A. Graves, Assistant editor, Fort Benning, Ga. Bayonet Newspaper

Many national and senior Army leaders have said it's not a question if terrorists will strike again; it's a matter of when and where.

"We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self," said President George W. Bush during the State of the Union Address. "We have been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass."

"We are all combatants," Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton recently said.

Given that, residents of Army posts across the country, along with civilians, can benefit from learning what to do to help prevent and prepare for terrorist attacks, according to the Citizencorps Web site, located at [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov).

Alice Bass, directorate of Intelligence and Security, offered advice on preventing terrorist attacks:

- o Be alert to strangers on government property for no apparent reason.
- o Write down license numbers of suspicious vehicles, noting the description of the occupants.
- o Report anything unusual to your chain of command; report unusual or suspicious behavior.
- o Avoid using your name and rank on answering machines.
- o Don't open your door to strangers; use a peephole viewer.
- o Ask for identification for contractors assigned to work on your home and quarters.
- o Brief family members on residential security and safety procedures.
- o Instruct family not to provide strangers with information about you or your family.

According to the Weprevent Web site, located at [www.webprevent.org](http://www.webprevent.org), people should do the following to do their part in the prevention of terrorist attacks:

- o Know your routines. Be alert as you go about your daily business. This will help you learn the normal routines of your neighborhood, community and work place. Understanding these routines will help you to spot anything out of place.

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o Be aware. Get to know your neighbors at home and while traveling. Be on the lookout for activities such as unusual conduct in your neighborhood or in your workplace. Learn to spot suspicious packages, luggage or mail abandoned in a crowded place like an office building, an airport, a school or a shopping center.

o Take what you hear seriously. If you hear or know of someone who has bragged or talked about plans to harm citizens in violent attacks or who claims membership in a terrorist organization, take it seriously and report it to law enforcement immediately. People can do much more to help with the war on terrorism, Eaton said. People should lose weight if necessary, know how to fire a weapon accurately and be able to administer first aid, he advised.

According to the Citizencorps Web site, the Citizen Corps has many opportunities for people who want to volunteer their time or be proactive in the fight against terrorism. Volunteer opportunities include:

- o Citizen Corps Councils, which help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources.
- o The Community Emergency Response Team, which is a training program that prepares people in neighborhoods, the workplace, and schools to take a more active role in emergency management planning, and to prepare themselves and others for disasters.
- o An expanded Neighborhood Watch Program, which incorporates terrorism prevention and education into its existing crime prevention mission.
- o Volunteers in Police Service, who provide support for resource-constrained police departments by using civilian volunteers to free up more law enforcement professionals for frontline duty.
- o The Medical Reserve Corps, which coordinates volunteer health professionals during large-scale emergencies to assist emergency response teams, provide care to victims with less serious injuries, and remove other burdens that inhibit the effectiveness of physicians and nurses in a major crisis.
- o Operation TIPS, Terrorism Information and Prevention System, which is a nationwide program

**See Prepare for terrorism, p 11**

## Engineers dive into training exercise

Story and photos by Spc. Anthony K. Reinoso  
204th MPAD

The 841st Engineer Battalion of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., are Army Reserve engineers who train to mobilize and deploy by sea, air and land to conduct survivability and limited mobility operations. On orders they also handle counter mobility operations during combat operations.

“A lot of our training areas are around water,” said Capt. Rudolph P. Santacroce, commander of the 841st. Here on the beaches of Florida Santacroce considers this opportunity training. The exercise of the day is water-proofing.

Practicing this exercise once a year, the 841st must secure gear and equipment in wet weather ponchos and traverse them in a small rubber raft in the ocean, returning back to the beach with the cargo dry.

Santacroce said, “To build morale and teamwork among the soldiers, they compete between platoons. Racing along the beach, three soldiers carry the raft with cargo to the water, row to a designated buoy and row back. This training helps them maintain their water survivability skills.”

According to Santacroce, engineers have to be able to adapt to any condition. Much of their equipment must survive harsh conditions. For example, by waterproofing equipment like blasting caps and ignitions helps to keep vital hardware used for demolition operations dry.

Santacroce said teamwork plays an important factor in achieving any mission. “It’s a good mix of people in our unit. All the soldiers gel well together,” Santacroce said. Working along side each other in the civilian world many of the soldiers are college students, police officers, firemen and paramedics to name a few.

“Waterproofing is just one small piece of the puzzle,” Santacroce said. “This just leads up to the next event. The exercise simply reminds the soldiers how to maintain equipment in damp condition. They train for all conditions natural or otherwise.”

In order for engineers like the 841st to secure hostile areas, making it safe for other soldiers and equipment, engineers must insure the equipment for such operations survive the trip. Santacroce stated, “I feel I have an excellent company, my soldiers are very highly motivated. They are very well prepared, very intelligent. They can take a situation and adapt to it. They can overcome any situation.”

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Sergeant Daniel Gagnier races soldiers to the beach during the unit’s water training exercise.



841st Engineer Battalion soldiers from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., swim vigorously to get their team back to shore first.

## PERSCOM replaces all e-mail address with AKO

By Capt. John L. Barrett

In terms of personnel business, Army Knowledge Online became the official e-mail for all soldiers this month. U. S. Army Personnel Command replaced all soldier e-mail addresses currently in its database with AKO addresses. Officer record briefs, for example, now contain the us.army.mil address in the top left-hand corner, not what was previously listed. Enlisted soldiers' AKO addresses are also required on efficiency reports to shorten contact time when an NCO-ER requires a correction. Previously, various unit and personal e-mail addresses were saved in the Army's personnel database. Some remained current while others were not updated after soldiers moved away from an installation.

"We want every officer and soldier to be accessible," said Lt. Col. Georgia Bouie, whose office headed the e-mail transfer. The only way to ensure that is to use a common e-mail address that the soldier will have for his entire life."

AKO e-mail is currently used for a variety of official purposes, such as correspondence from career managers and the electronic mailing of travel voucher settlements from DFAS. The change was implemented at PERSCOM, with no action required on the part of soldiers. Soldiers without AKO addresses will not have a contact e-mail in their database. Soldiers who do not currently have an AKO address should sign up for an account from the Army Knowledge Online web site at [www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil), officials said.

AKO e-mail is just one of the various features of the larger AKO initiative. It includes functions such as AKO chat -- which allows soldiers to communicate electronically in real time -- and the AKO White Pages, where soldiers can search for other soldiers. AKO provides troops access to functions normally included in the electronic communities of the private sector, officials said.

AKO was designed as a central place for soldiers to receive information. Personalized information can be sent directly to them via their AKO e-mail account. The Army can use this similar to how businesses use e-mail to provide information to their customers, PERSCOM officials said. They said information about assignments, professional development opportunities, and re-enlistment can be sent to the field quickly -- saving both time and money. AKO e-mail can be read through the AKO Web site or can be forwarded to other e-mail accounts owned by the soldier for convenience. Mail forwarding can be implemented by choosing the "personalize" tab once inside the AKO portal.

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## Soldiers bound for remote tours get POV storage

Army News Service

Hundreds of service members have begun taking advantage of the Military Traffic Management Command's new long-term privately owned vehicle storage program.

Available since May 1, the program offers a no-cost standardized storage option for service members who qualify.

"The program is designed for a service member who is assigned to a remote tour or an area where taking a vehicle is not an option," said Dennis Barborak, MTMC program manager. "One vehicle may be stored at no cost for the duration of the tour."

"We see a number of vehicles bound for storage," said Terri Mroz, center manager.

Assignments that preclude taking a privately owned vehicle, but allow POV storage, include: hardship tours to Korea without family members for a year or less; assignments to Japan for troops whose vehicles were made from 1976 to the present; assignments to Egypt for troops whose vehicles are older than four years.

"There is a service maintenance track to these vehicles," said Steve Douthit, operations manager. "The vehicles are covered and stored inside. Engines are started once a month. For each vehicle, we follow the manufacturer's recommendations for long-term storage."

There are several practical pointers for storing a vehicle, Douthit said.

"The vehicle should have had a fresh oil change, be clean and mechanically safe," said Douthit. Under the new program, vehicles may be turned in for storage at any of 39 processing centers operated by American Auto Logistics. Vehicles may be left at other sites outside of the Global Privately Owned Vehicle Contract including Yokohama, Japan; Keflavik, Iceland; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and American embassies and consulates.

The locations and phone numbers for the centers are on the MTMC Web site at [www.mtmc.army.mil](http://www.mtmc.army.mil). When a tour is completed, a service member may arrange for a vehicle return through any of these sites, officials said.

## Special Forces soldiers return home from Operation Enduring Freedom

By SrA Stephen D. Hudson

More than 100 Florida National Guard soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group returned home Friday morning, [November 15] following a seven-month deployment in Afghanistan.

The soldiers – whose missions include unconventional warfare and reconnaissance – deployed from Camp Blanding last January to train at Fort Bragg, N.C., before shipping out to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Every one of you served honorably and did your jobs like the true professionals you are,” Adjutant General of Florida Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett said to the Special Forces soldiers during a brief ceremony at the unit’s Camp Blanding headquarters Friday. “All of you came home safely, and that is what it’s all about...I think our nation is better because you went down-range and protected those freedoms that we as Americans hold dear.”

During the event Burnett presented awards – including a Bronze Star and five Joint Service Achievement Medals – to soldiers who distinguished themselves while deployed.

Staff Sgt. “Barry,” a member of the 3/20th Support Company, called the deployment “kind of like payback for us because we weren’t able to go anywhere in ’91,” referring to Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

Barry, who asked his last name not be used for security reasons, was mobilized with the same Special Forces unit for Operation Desert Storm but, because the ground war ended shortly after their call-up, the unit never deployed.

Support company’s primary mission during this recent deployment was to re-supply the Special Forces teams in Afghanistan, but Barry said they also assisted in providing humanitarian aid to local civilians.

“I didn’t really know what to expect,” Barry said, remembering when they arrived in Afghanistan. “It was a total shock to a lot of guys – myself as well. Just the smells, the sights, and the sounds were like nothing I’ve ever experienced before.”

Like many of the soldiers, Barry said he was glad to be returning to his family and civilian life now, but he did not regret the lengthy deployment.

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“It was a good experience,” he said. “We all came away knowing that we have worked together as a team. No one looked forward to going, but now that we’re back we’re glad we got to serve and do our part.”

Special Forces units are designed to spend months at a time operating deep within enemy territory. Members are self-sustaining, able to speak the language of their target area, and know how to survive on their own without extensive re-supply.

Since September 2001, nearly 500 members of the Florida National Guard have been deployed outside the state supporting the global war on terror.



Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett, TAG Florida, speaks to Florida Army National Guard soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group. The soldiers returned home after a 11-month deployment in Afghanistan (Photo courtesy of the Florida National Guard Public Affairs Office).

## SMA forecasts promotion tests, male E-5 drill sergeants

By Jim Caldwell, TRADOC News Service

Some of the things that may change for noncommissioned officers in a few years is a promotion test, the end of Basic NCO Courses and an opportunity for male E-5s to be drill sergeants, Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley recently told a group of NCOs. Tilley was at Fort Monroe Nov. 25 for a series of briefings on the Army Accession Command, part of the Training and Doctrine Command. He told TRADOC NCOs about some soldier programs the Army is pursuing. "You're going to be tested to make sure you're certified to move from one level to another level," Tilley said. "I think in the past we have promoted people who should not have been promoted." That remark was followed by a chorus of "hooah."

## Byrnes becomes 11th TRADOC commander

by Jim Caldwell



**Gen. John N. Abrams, retiring Training and Doctrine Command commander, prepares to pass the TRADOC flag to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki as incoming commander Gen. Kevin P. Byrnes looks on. Abrams handed the reins of TRADOC leadership to Byrnes Nov. 7 at Fort Monroe, Va. Photo by Joe Burlas**

The new commander of Training and Doctrine Command continues the "vital tradition of ... commanders who have known battle first-hand," the Army's top general said during TRA-

DOC's change-of-command ceremony Nov. 7. Both incoming commander Gen. Kevin P. Byrnes and retiring commander Gen. John N. Abrams served combat tours in Vietnam. Byrnes most recently served as director of the Army staff for Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric

K. Shinseki before becoming the 11th TRADOC commander.

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## First U.S. Army hosts responders for DoD role

Story and photo by Karen Bradshaw



Over one hundred-fifty soldiers converged in Atlanta this fall for the Department of Defense Emergency Preparedness

Course hosted by First U.S. Army. Soldiers from the 78th, 85th, 87th Divisions (Training Support) and their brigades attended as well as Senior Army Advisors to the National Guard, members of the Field Training Groups assigned to the National Guard's enhanced separate brigades and newly assigned emergency preparedness liaison officers. In an intensive 5-day course, attendees were introduced to the Federal Response Plan, with special emphasis on the Department of Defense role in assisting the civilian community in disasters both natural and manmade.

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## Soldiers can now view days-deployed data on AKO

by Patrick Swan  
Army's Chief Information Office/G-6

Beginning in December, soldiers can track their total deployment days on their Army Knowledge Online accounts. This greater visibility for soldiers is a result of collaboration between AKO and the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, which is establishing a link to AKO with its PERSTEMPO web application.

"Posting deployment data to AKO offers numerous advantages, makes best use of available technology at a reasonable cost and allows the Army greater flexibility to disclose PERSTEMPO data to soldiers in the field," said Capt. Rob McCaslin, an action officer for PERSCOM's Field Systems Division.

The deputy secretary of Defense suspended the PERSEMPO per diem payment provision in October 2001, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Tracking of deployed days continues, but not for payment consideration, PERSCOM officials said. Until November 2001, individual PERSTEMPO counts were posted to a soldier's leave and earning statement. Based on a unanimous recommendation by the military services at an October 2001 PERSTEMPO meeting the Office of the Secretary of Defense instructed that the posting of PERSTEMPO data on the LES be suspended.

Following recommendations from a number of senior Army leaders earlier this year, PERSCOM and AKO staffs proposed posting the relevant PERSTEMPO information on AKO in a format similar to that recently implemented for individual soldier dental readiness information, McCaslin said. This information will be available to soldiers in the Personnel community of the AKO web site, under the "My Personnel" channel.

"Using AKO in this way leverages technology to the Army's advantage," McCaslin said. "Unlike the once-per-month LES remark, deployment data posted to AKO is updated throughout the month. This allows soldiers easy access to their individual PERSTEMPO counters anytime/anywhere. In addition, soldiers can keep up to date with the PERSTEMPO program through a Frequently Asked Questions link in AKO. AKO officials are constantly exploring new ways to serve soldiers, Wallington said. These include using AKO User ID and password from the Army Portal ([www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil)) to let soldiers view their leave-and-earnings statements online and to conduct TRICARE business as well.

## Special Team (Con't.)

Lt. Col. Peter Rzeszotarski of the 1st U.S. Army was one of the observers/controllers/trainers who graded the team during the exercise. It was the first time the team had been at Volkstone, a former chemical plant across the Cheat River from Camp Dawson, where military personnel train.

"We try not to use the same location more than once because once a unit becomes familiar with a site, it becomes old hat to them," Rzeszotarski said. An unfamiliar place and a new scenario faces them. Three hours into the exercise, Kitts said, they had indications of a biological agent and chemical production on site, but hadn't identified them yet.

"Sometimes we can solve it in an hour or two, and sometimes it takes all day," he said.

By the end of the day, they would unravel the whole puzzle. Going in, they were told that high school students had entered the abandoned plant a week earlier and fled after seeing what they thought was a drug lab. When the students felt ill with flulike symptoms a week later, one confessed to police.

Preston Sheriff Ron Crites raided the plant, the story went, and found three sick men of Arabic descent. Recognizing more than drugs were involved, the sheriff backed out and called the CST.

That's what they knew. What they didn't know is there were two labs: One producing tularemia, or rabbit fever, the other to make botulin, both naturally occurring biological agents that can be replicated. They would also find a box of stolen "Iodine 125," a radioactive isotope with a short lifespan that would prove to be no danger.

Not all weapons of mass destruction kill; some just have the potential to sicken great numbers of people.

"When people think of WMD, most people think of the 'D' as destruction, but it could also be disruption," Rzeszotarski noted.

The team works under the direction of the incident commander, usually a law officer or fire chief. "They never take over," Rzeszotarski said. "They always operate in support of the incident commander."

The team is equipped with state of the art equipment. An important part of it is the Unified Command Suite, a truck that includes a repeater so all responders with radios on site can talk to one another. It includes secure and unsecured Internet capabilities, telephone lines and satellite capabilities, with links to the Center for Disease Control, university and government sources.

Knowledge to share with the local responders is one of the team's most valuable assets.

"The medical section in the unit would normally contact all the local medical assets, and they would be able to give them advice," Rzeszotarski said. The team passed all its tests with flying colors, evaluators reported at the end of the day. They were the only team evaluated to date that passed every subtask.

They're ready now to go wherever they're needed. "And it's a state asset, it's not something you have to go through the federal government to get," Media Specialist Lt. Col. Greg Player noted.



The team was required to set up and maintain effective communication between different units



As a part of the testing exercises, one team member was declared a casualty, decontaminated and provided with medical attention.

## DoD looking at changing reserve, active mix

by Courtney Brooks

The Department of Defense is looking at changing the reserve- and active-component mix, according to its top civilian leader.

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld made that observation Nov. 4 to the Pentagon press corps amid questions of reports that Reserve and National Guard soldiers were being overtaxed with mobilization requirements since last year's terrorist attacks on this nation.

"There's no question but that there are a number of things that the United States is asking its forces to do," Rumsfeld said. "And when one looks at what those things are, we find that some of the things that are necessary, in the course of executing those orders, are things that are found only in the Reserves."

Within the Army, the Selected Reserve elements of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve comprise 54 percent of the force, as of September, according to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. These units provide essential combat, combat support, and combat service support to the Army. For example, by percentage of the Army, the Reserve provides the following capabilities: chemical brigades (100 percent), water supply battalions (100 percent), public affairs (82 percent), civil affairs (97 percent), medical brigades (85 percent), psychological operations units (81 percent), engineering battalions (70 percent), and military police battalions (66 percent).

Rumsfeld said that DoD is considering how it might migrate some active activities that are not always going to be needed into the Guard or the Reserve and vice-versa. When asked about the opinion that the Total Force Concept is at risk due to repeatedly calling back reservists, Rumsfeld responded that you would still have a TFC with a certain amount of active soldiers and a certain amount in the National Guard and Reserve.

"But you'd have it better allocated between the two so there would be less stress on Guard and Reserve on a continuing basis, since we now ought to be smart enough to be better able to see what those things are," Rumsfeld continued.

Currently, 57, 721 men and women have been called up in the National Guard and Reserve, according to Department of Defense statistics.

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## Prepare for terrorism (con't.)

providing millions of workers who, by the nature of their jobs, are well-positioned to recognize unusual events with a formalized way to report suspicious activity to the nearest FBI field office.

What can people do to prepare for a possible attack? According to the Red Cross Web site, located at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), you should:

- o Create an emergency communications plan. Choose an out-of-town contact your family or household will call or e-mail to check on each other should a disaster occur.
- o Establish a meeting place.
- o Having a predetermined meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or the area evacuated. Be sure to include any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters, and some hotels will not accept them.
- o Assemble a disaster supplies kit. If you need to evacuate your home or are asked to shelter "in place," having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable.
- o Check on the school emergency plan of any school-age children you have. Administrators may keep children at school until a parent or designated adult can pick them up or send them home on their own. The schools should have updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caregivers to arrange for pickup. If people are unable to pick up their child, schools require proper identification to release a child to someone you designate.

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## Web system tracks OERs

Personnel staff officers, rating officials and individual officers have a new capability to check to see if efficiency reports have arrived at the U.S.



Army Personnel Command. The Interactive Web Response System is a web-based solution that provides a list of all evaluation reports completed since Oct.

1, 1997 for a rated officer and identifies the date each was received at PERSCOM. IWRS complements the currently used interactive voice response system at (703) 325-2637, or DSN, 221-2637. IWRS is available through an American flag icon on the front page of the PERSCOM homepage in the bottom left hand corner. Users can access it with an AKO password.

## Essay, art contests open to military children

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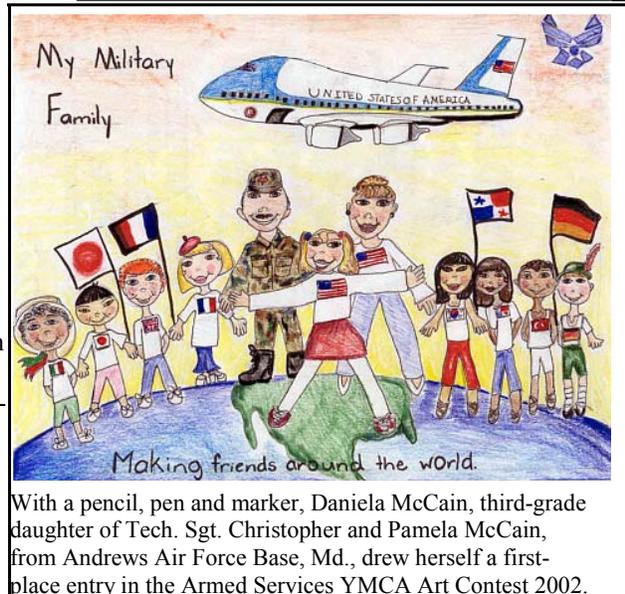
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ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AFPN) --

The Armed Services YMCA seeks both artists and readers for two annual contests.

Art Contest 2003, in its eighth year, seeks original artwork from children of military members in kindergarten through sixth grade depicting their active-duty, Reserve or Guard families. Top prizes are \$500 U.S. Savings Bonds, and each winner's artwork is used on posters for next year's Military Family Month. Children of Defense Department and Coast Guard civilians may enter in an honorary category. The deadline for the contest is Jan. 27.

With the goal of promoting reading among children, the seventh annual Armed Services YMCA Essay Contest is open to children in first through 12th grades, with prizes up to \$1,000 bonds. Children of the armed services (active-duty, Reserve, Guard and retired), and civilian employees of the DOD and Coast Guard, can enter the contest. Essays can be on any subject related to reading. Deadline for entry is March 17. Full guidelines for the contests can be found on the Armed Services YMCA Web site or by e-mailing [essaycontest@asymca.org](mailto:essaycontest@asymca.org), or by calling (703) 303-9600.



With a pencil, pen and marker, Daniela McCain, third-grade daughter of Tech. Sgt. Christopher and Pamela McCain, from Andrews Air Force Base, Md., drew herself a first-place entry in the Armed Services YMCA Art Contest 2002.



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[Send us your stories or story ideas.](#)

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