

Alabama Guardsman

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Alabama Guard trains for historic task during exercise

by Staff
131st MPAD

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. - Members of the Alabama National Guard prepared for an historic job as they participated in Vibrant Response 13 here in August.

The purpose of Vibrant Response 13 was to test the Department of Defense's tiered response of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Enterprise, and more specifically to any catastrophic CBRN event within the United States.

The Alabama National Guard is responsible for providing a Command and Control CBRN Response Element (C2CRE/Joint Task Force Guardian) that will be ready to respond to a CBRN event in the United States. The 31st CBRN Brigade, led by Brig. Gen. David Brown was tasked with assembling and preparing this team. According to Brown, Task Force Guardian performed well during VR 13.

"My assessment is we did amazingly well," he said. "With only 6 months to prepare for this national level exercise, we completed the largest convoy in state history to (and from) the exercise with zero injuries or lost vehicles. We accomplished 96 of 96



Eric Roberts/photo

MUSCATATUCK URBAN TRAINING COMPLEX, Ind. —Alabama National Guard soldiers perform a simulated decontamination during Vibrant Response 13.

mission assignments, also a record number in the history of the exercise. Our high level of success was possible due to several reasons. First, we have outstanding leaders and staff officers down to the platoon level who worked very hard to prepare for this exercise. Second, Maj. Gen. Smith and the MACOM Commanders provided great units and consistent support leading up to the exercise. Communication across MACOM lines can be tricky but their support made this work. Third, the support provided by the 167th TSC and the joint staff, particu-

larly Brig. Gen. Allen Harrell and Col. Scott Gedling, was extraordinary. Finally, the support of the Florida and Kentucky National Guard and the strength of their Soldiers was crucial. Our success was a total team effort. Our performance reaffirms that the National Guard is DOD's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) experts."

Brown said that he is excited to take on this mission.

"I am excited about the opportunity to (Please see *VIBRANT RESPONSE*, page 6)

Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

MUSCATATUCK URBAN TRAINING COMPLEX, Ind. —Soldiers from the 129th Medical Co. of Task Force Guardian pull a stretcher with a simulated victim from a smoke-filled building during Vibrant Response 13. (photo by Sgt. Bethany McMeans).

Adjutant General

Task Force Guardian takes on monumental role



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

Several months ago, we received word that the Alabama National Guard would be responsible for providing a Command and Control

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Response Element (C2CRE) that would be ready to respond to a catastrophic CBRN event in the United States

under the direction of U.S. Northern Command.

In only about six months, the Alabama National Guard assembled a team from throughout the state - spearheaded by Brig. Gen. David Brown and the Soldiers of the 31st CBRN Brigade - to create a trained and prepared force ready to respond to disasters. During its recent validation exercise, Joint-Task Force Guardian - as the C2CRE was named - also commanded aviation assets from the Kentucky National Guard and signal Soldiers from the Florida National

Guard.

In this issue of the Alabama Guardsman you can see what an in-depth mission Task Force Guardian has and what a great job they did during their recent exercise in Camp Atterbury, Ind. Let each of us consider what a professional force Joint Task Force Guardian is and ensure that we, as Alabama National Guardsmen, focus on our own professionalism so that we can continue to be a premier National Guard organization. Lead from the front!

State Command Sergeant Major

Alabama Guard takes key role in nation's defense



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

Earlier this month I had the honor and pleasure of visiting with Alabama Guardmembers serving at Camp Atterbury, Ind. They were participating in Vibrant Response 13, an exercise that helped

prepare the Alabama National Guard to respond to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) event in the United States.

Starting on October 1, the Alabama

National Guard will be responsible for providing a Command and Control CBRN Response Element (C2CRE) if such an event happens.

After watching the Alabama Guard in action at Camp Atterbury, I have no doubt that we are ready for this tremendous task. I watched Alabama Guardmembers training as they fight. I saw them going the extra mile to make sure they got the job done and that they did it the right way. I was impressed with the effort and willingness to learn from the younger enlisted troops; they give me great confidence in our future. I was also impressed with senior NCOs who were leading by example and taking the time to mentor their younger Soldiers.

When the training became difficult our Alabama Guardmembers didn't get discouraged. They adapted, overcame and made sure that they completed the mission.

I would like to commend the Soldiers of the 31st CBRN Brigade who were instrumental in assembling and preparing the C2CRE, which is now known as Joint Task Force Guardian.

Many Alabama Guardmembers will have a tremendous responsibility for the next two years. I hope and pray that there is not a catastrophic event that the members of Joint Task Force Guardian are called to respond to, but I know that they are trained and ready if that call should come.

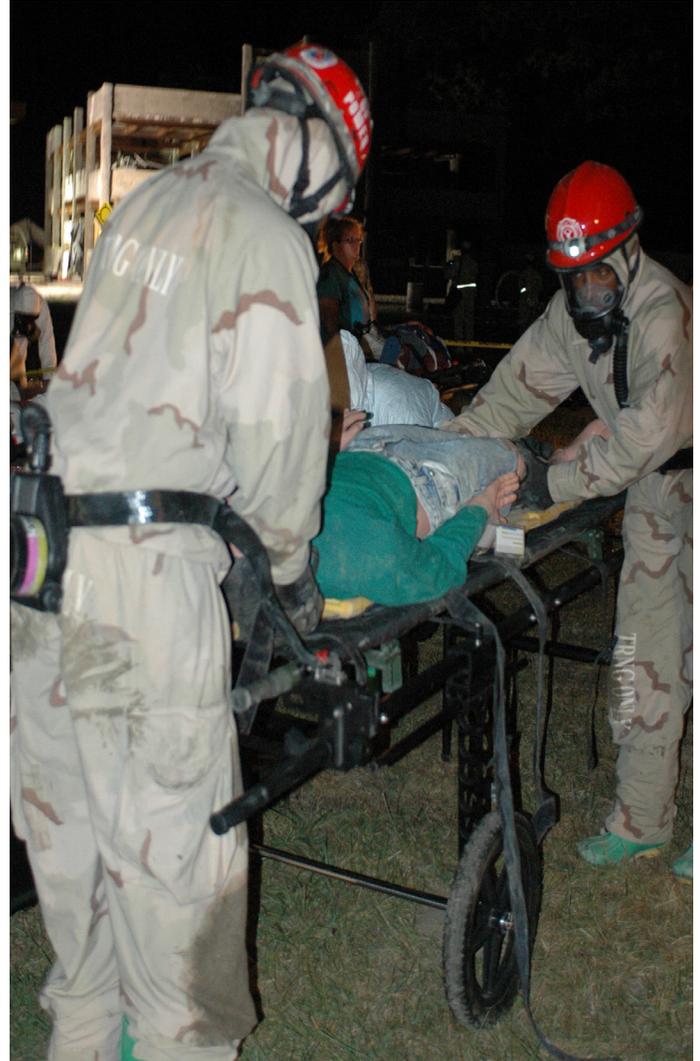
Snap Shots

A look at some of the recent highlights from the Alabama National Guard



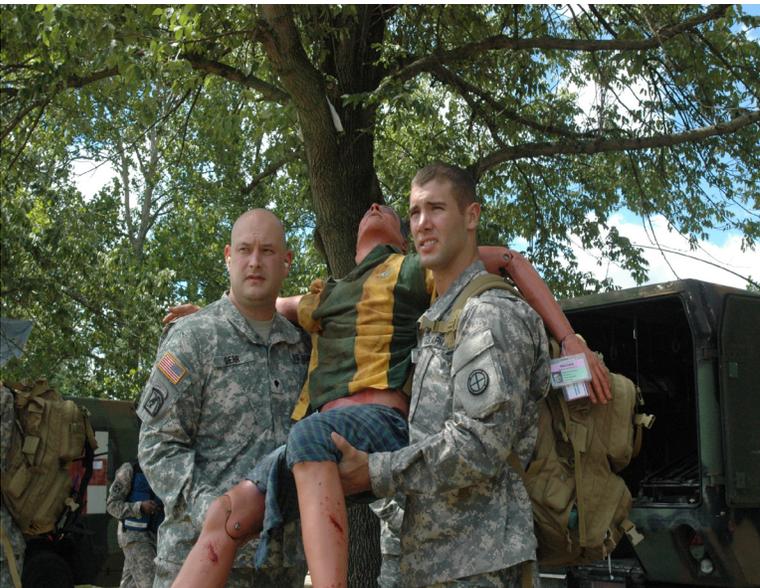
Jamie Brown/photo

Soldiers from the 129th Medical Company of Task Force Guardian prepare simulated victims for transport during Vibrant Response 13.



Bethany McMeans/photo

Soldiers of the 1152nd Engineer Detachment place a simulated victim found during a search and rescue mission on a gurney to prepare her for decontamination and to receive medical care during Vibrant Response 13.



Tiffany Harkins/photo

Soldiers from the 129th Med. Company prepare to carry a simulated victim to a helicopter during Vibrant Response 13.



Bethany McMeans/photo

A soldier from the 208th Chemical Company leads a team in conducting air quality checks for nuclear and radiological agents in a subway during the Vibrant Response 13 exercise.



Bethany McMeans/photo

Soldiers from the 208th Chemical Company remove gear after having conducted an air quality check mission during the Vibrant Response 13 exercise



Jamie Brown/photo

Soldiers from the 129th Medical Company of Task Force Guardian place a simulated victim on a stretcher during Vibrant Response 13.

128th Med. Co. brings a ray of light in the night

by Sgt. Bethany McMeans
131st MPAD

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. – When the majority of people are in the process of preparing for bed, the Soldiers of the 128th Medical Co., Alabama Army National Guard, are taking part in an exercise by administering medical care and conducting transport missions for victims of a simulated nuclear explosion.

The training is called Vibrant Response 13 which is training for a response to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) attack should it ever happen on American soil.

“The care and safety of citizens is our top priority,” said Pfc. Christopher Alston, a Combat Medic for the 128th. “Hopefully, when we respond, the people understand we’re here to help and there is nothing we won’t do within our ability to help them. We have crossed every T and dotted every I to make sure we are capable of caring for the people who could be affected by a CBRN attack.”

The 128th was part of a mass casualty decontamination line. In the event of a CBRN attack, local civilians would have to go through a decontamination process and then go through medical stations to receive

(VIGILANT RESPONSE from page 2)

answer our nation’s call if asked to do so,” he said. “I am equally excited about the core team we have in JTF-Guardian. Now that the exercise has been completed, we have a clearer understanding of what is expected of us. The lines of communication with



Bethany McMeans/photo

A Soldier from the 128th Medical Company, Alabama Army National Guard, carries a simulated wounded civilian on a stretcher to await medical transport during the Vibrant Response 13 exercise.

medical treatment. Then, depending on the severity of their injuries, the victims would be either medically transported in military vehicles or by bus to locations outside of the decontamination zones.

“I’m sure the people understand that we’re here to help and will receive some of the best trained profes-

sionals the country has to offer,” said Alston.

“This is a great training place,” said Spc. Jerry Agee of the 128th. “It’s good if you know what you’re doing but it’s an opportunity to find the kinks and figure out how to fix them.”

U.S. Army North are open and Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, the ARNORTH Commander, has been receptive to our ideas and experience. As I said earlier, there is much to be done but we have a plan to be ready. I’d like to thank National Guard Bureau for choos-

ing the 31st CBRN Brigade for this vital mission. I have no doubt we will deploy when called and we will do great things in support of our nation’s first responders and great citizens. We are the Guard!”

For the 129th Med. Co. team players and experience equals exemplary care

by Sgt. Bethany McMeans
131st MPAD

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. – When it is needed the most the 129th Area Support Medical Company of the Alabama National Guard quickly answers the call of duty and is ready to accomplish the mission.

“We are here to limit human suffering and treat the wounded and sick,” said Sgt. Matt Styron, a healthcare noncommissioned officer in the 129th.

During the Vibrant Response 13 (VR13) exercise, the Soldiers of the 129th trained by conducting assorted missions in the event of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear (CBRN) attack. The missions included rescuing civilians from smoke-filled buildings, conducting medical transports and evacuations of the wounded and conducting wellness checks at relief centers where victims of an event would be taken.



Bethany McMeans/photo

Soldiers from the 129th Medical Company administer medical care to simulated victims that have been pulled from a smoke-filled building. The 129th was participating in the Vibrant Response 13 exercise at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

“This unit has some of the best team players with great group thinking and experience,” said Styron. “It would be tragic should we have to use this training in a real-life event, but there’s nothing better

than to be able to treat your own.”

During VR13, the Soldiers encountered several different actors who were trained to portray victims of a CBRN attack. These actors greeted the Soldiers with both hostile and happy demeanors. The morale

and motivation of the Soldiers of the 129th increased with the knowledge that the citizens in the training exercise were happy to see a military presence that offered its skills and experience.

“We are here to help our fellow Americans in support of our homeland,” said Maj. Jason Wells, commander of the 129th. “Not only are they proud to be helping local authorities by providing medical care, it is a humanitarian effort as well.”

Styron concluded by stating, “We are here to help – that’s what the National Guard does, and when needed, we will do everything we can to help America recover should something happen.”



Bethany McMeans/photo

Soldiers from the 129th Medical Company prepare a simulated victim for airlift during Vibrant Response 13.

*Clearing the way***Engineers do some heavy lifting during Vibrant Response 13**

by Jonathan Wood
131st MPAD

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. - Soldiers from the 168th Engineering Detachment from Jasper, Ala. took part in the Vibrant Response 13 exercise recently as a part of Joint Task Force Guardian. The unit from the 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Brigade served in an emergency route clearance and debris removal exercise. In a real world event the 168th could be called on to clear roads to enable medical aid and humanitarian supplies to reach the needy.

The 168th came prepared with more than 100 personnel and a fleet of heavy equipment, most of which was put to use during the historic tornado outbreak of April 2011 in Alabama. The exercise was based on a simulated terror attack on a major Midwestern city, complete with real road blockages, displaced civilians (actors) and mock medical emergencies. The commander of the 168th, Capt. Matthew Lee, said they had met their daily objective by midday but were having to overcome some minor problems while clearing the streets.

"We've faced some unique challenges because we don't have exactly the right equipment, but we use all safety precautions and take it as slow as we need to."

Heavy Equipment Operator with the 168th, Spc. Jud Clark explained that the unit must



Jonathan Wood/photo

Spc. Kenneth Terry, Heavy Equipment Operator with the 168th Engineering Detachment uses heavy equipment to clear debris during the Vibrant Response 13 exercise in Camp Atterbury, Ind., August 9.

come with the right mindset to help do what they can for the people of an affected city.

"We have to adapt and overcome to get the job done, no matter what equipment we're on," says Clark.

The 168th has been an integral part of relief efforts during Hurricane Katrina, Alabama tornado outbreaks and during the exercise practiced for other types of emergency response. They are a part of the approximately 2500 personnel serving under Task Force Guardian during the exercise.

The 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear

(CBRN) Brigade, working as a headquarters for Task Force Guardian, participated in Vibrant Response 13, a large-scale joint exercise. Exercise Vibrant Response was a training event for the national CBRN tiered response force. The exercise focused on Department of Defense support of civil authorities in a consequence management role. Task Force Guardian is part of DoD's scalable response capability to assist civilian responders in saving lives, relieving human suffering, and providing critical support to assist community recovery following a catastrophic CBRN incident.

Surgeon cell hones skills during Vibrant Response

by Sgt. Bethany McMeans
131st MPAD

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. (Aug. 8, 2012) – Amidst the hustle and bustle of the Vibrant Response 13 exercise, the Soldiers that form the brigade surgeon cell are training to use their skills in case a real disaster strikes.

This is the first time the Brigade Surgeon has an actual cell instead of being a one-man advisor, said Sgt. 1st Class Lyndon Peters, the Vibrant Response 13 noncommissioned officer in charge of the brigade surgeon cell, 161st Multi-Medical Battalion of the Alabama Army National Guard.

“This is the first time the cell has been implemented in the exercise,” said Spc. Kevin Couch, a combat medic for the 31st Chemical Brigade of the Alabama Army National Guard. “We are getting a handle on everything by learning from those individuals who have been here before and building upon it to make our job more efficient and effective.”

The brigade surgeon cell is responsible for collecting and disseminating information as well as giving the commander of the exercise an accurate report of what is happening on the medical side, said Lt. Col. Stephen Roberts, brigade surgeon, Headquarters Detachment 31st Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Brigade.

“This is an excellent opportunity to sharpen skills administratively,” said Couch. “By doing so, we can improve upon our ability



Bethany McMeans/photo

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. – Lt. Col. Stephen Roberts, the Brigade Surgeon, and Maj. Donald McArthur, the Deputy Task Force Surgeon, of the HHD 31st Chemical Brigade, review medical information in the Brigade Surgeon cell during the Vibrant Response 13 exercise

to provide efficient, quality care to both the military and civilians involved.”

“Training like this will help the military be more prepared to assist should something happen,” said Peters. “A good thing about this being the National Guard is that we are more civilian friendly, because we are civilians as well, which makes for an easier and better equipped force to deal with the situation.”

The Vibrant Response 13 exercise prepares the military’s specialized response forces to assist civilian authorities in saving lives and relieving suffering following a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident. The exercise consisted of more than 9,000

personnel that participate in field training and command post events. Members of the Alabama National Guard are part of the specialized federal response force called the Command and Control CBRN Response Element (C2CRE).

The Soldiers of the brigade surgeon cell expressed excitement about being part of such a large and historical exercise. Everyone in the exercise is learning and relying on each other in order to have success.

“The most important thing is to keep a cool head and do our best,” said Couch. “I’m proud to be a part of this exercise and am looking forward to seeing how the next few days play out.”