



# **Weapons of Mass Destruction—Civil Support Team: The Title 32 Initial Response Force**

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Since well before the attacks of 11 September 2001, we have recognized the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attacks on the U.S. homeland. A review of available information reveals a wide variety of asymmetric threats across the spectrum. These include attacks and other events where an adversary may use or threaten to use chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) weapons against the United States. Attacks on U.S. embassies abroad, the sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subways, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, and other incidents illustrate the reality of the threat. While security efforts have successfully prevented a recurrence of further terrorist strikes in the United States, it is only prudent to be prepared for some level of success on the part of our enemies. In addition to CBRNE counterproliferation and elimination operations, it is likely that military support of consequence management (CM) efforts will be required.

Beyond simply providing boots on the ground, the Department of Defense (DOD) can dependably bring to bear substantial command and control, logistical, and technical resources in response to requests for federal assistance. Historically, such a response had been organized on an ad hoc basis, with no specific units being committed to homeland

CM missions. However, a review of our ability to respond to disasters and WMD eventually led to several important pieces of legislation in the mid-1990s. The requirement for a timely, specialized, effective response to a WMD event, combined with the expectations put forth under the National Response Framework, points to a clear need for a well-orchestrated military CM response. There are several layered components of DOD support to civil authorities. This article is designed to address the layered support to civil authorities and will detail the initial response force, which comes from the Title 32 forces—the Weapons of Mass Destruction—Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs).<sup>1</sup>

## **Background**

In May 1998, President William J. Clinton announced that the Nation would do more to protect its citizens against the growing threat of chemical and biological terrorism. As part of this effort, DOD would form ten teams to support state and local authorities in the event of an incident involving WMD.

The WMD-CSTs were established to provide military-unique capabilities, expertise, and technologies to assist state governors in preparing for and responding to CBRNE

incidents. Teams must complement and enhance, not duplicate, state emergency management capabilities. They must be able to deploy rapidly to assist local incident commanders in determining the nature and extent of an attack or incident, provide expert technical advice on CBRNE operations, and help identify and support the arrival of follow-on civilian or military response agencies from the state or federal level. They are joint units that can consist of Army National Guard or Air National Guard personnel.

### Mission

The mission of WMD-CSTs is to—

- Assess current and potential hazards to personnel, animals, and selected critical infrastructure features from identified agent substances.
- Advise civil authorities on initial casualty medical management and casualty minimization measures.
- Assist with the arrival of additional state and federal assets to help save lives, prevent human suffering, and mitigate property damage.

The WMD-CSTs can deploy rapidly, assist local first responders in determining the nature of an attack, provide medical and technical advice, and pave the way for the identification and arrival of follow-on state and federal military response assets. Using a technologically advanced operational fleet, the WMD-CSTs can respond quickly, accomplish their mission, and blend in with civilian vehicles at the scene.

They provide initial advice on agent identification, assist first responders in the detection assessment process, and serve as the first military responders on the ground. If additional state or federal resources are called upon, they can act as advance parties to provide liaisons with Joint Task Force Civil Support. As experts in CBRNE defense operations, they can mitigate the consequences of any natural or man-made hazardous event. WMD-CST response to a major CM event is illustrated in Figure 1.

### Current Configuration

The National Guard teams provide DOD’s unique expertise and capabilities to assist state governors in preparing for and responding to CBRNE incidents as part of a state’s emergency response structure. Each team consists of twenty-two highly skilled, full-time National Guard members who are federally resourced, trained, and exercised, employing federally approved CBRNE response doctrine. Figure 2 illustrates the WMD-CST structure.

The units derive their origins from Congressional guidance that advocates the need to “establish and equip small organizations in each of the forty-four states not receiving an initial Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection (RAID) element in 1999 to provide limited chemical/biological response capabilities.”<sup>2</sup> RAID teams were renamed WMD-CSTs, and the first ten teams were based in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, California, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania,

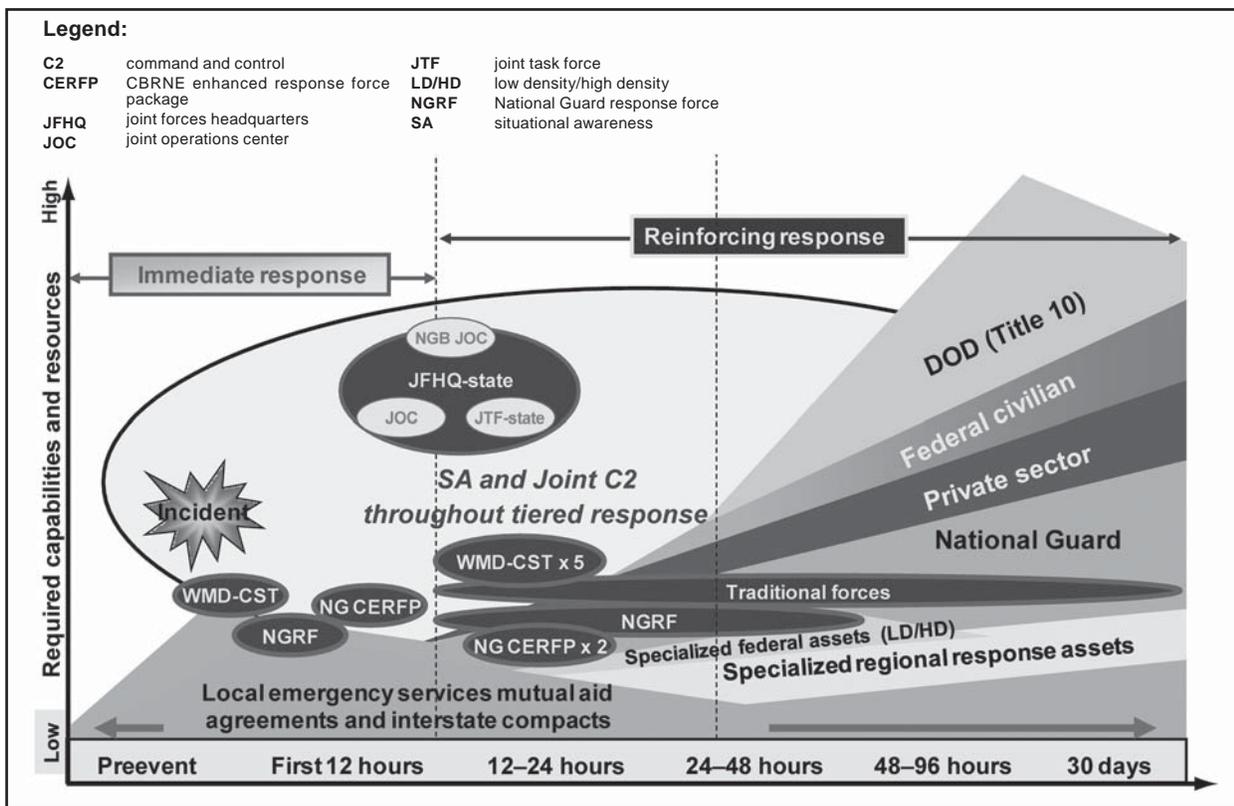


Figure 1. Response spectrum

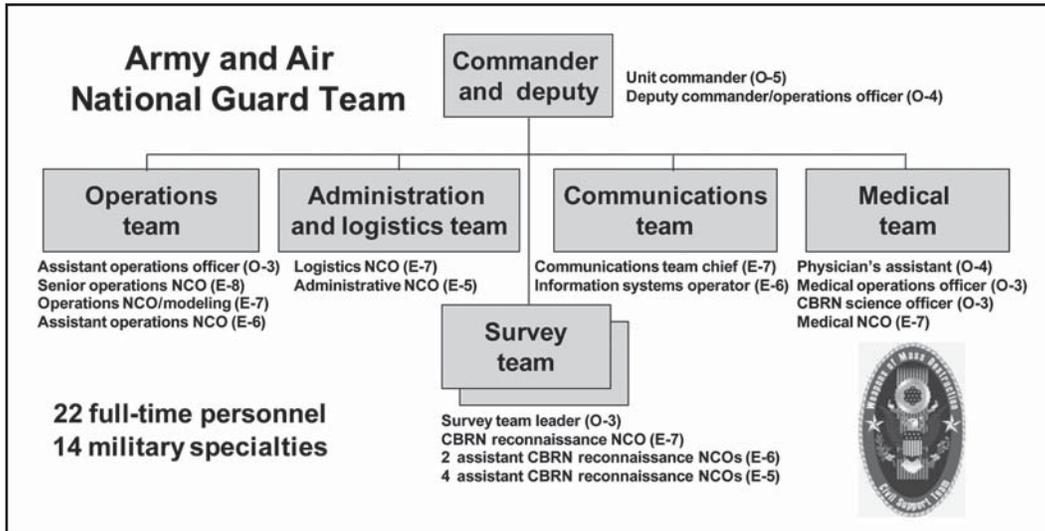


Figure 2. WMD-CST structure

Texas, and Washington. One team was fielded in each of the ten Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions. There is now at least one WMD-CST in each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. With Florida and New York receiving additional WMD-CSTs, the National Guard will soon have fifty-seven teams.

### WMD-CST Capabilities

In addition to executing the previously described mission, WMD-CSTs are also trained and equipped to—

- Detect and completely characterize an unknown sample of suspected WMD agents or substances present at an incident site. (See Figure 3.)

- Provide an on-site, mobile, analytical platform to perform analysis and characterization of unknown samples and provide assessments through reachback capabilities to designated state and federal agencies with additional technical expertise. (See Figure 4, page 22.)
- Determine the contaminated area and assess current and potential hazards to personnel, animals, and selected critical infrastructure features resulting from identified agent or substance presence.
- Advise civil authorities on initial casualty medical management and casualty minimization measures.
- Advise civil authorities regarding initial agent, site containment, and mitigation measures.



Figure 3. Gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer used to characterize suspected WMD agents or substances



**Figure 4. Hot-zone detection and sample collection**

- Advise civil authorities about the capability of additional support assets and assist with requests for such assets.
- Provide incident-related technical and situational awareness information to and from nationwide sources while at the home station, en route to an incident site, and while on-site through organic communications capabilities.
- Link to and augment civil responder communications systems as required. Maintain real-time, secure and nonsecure, operational communications with higher headquarters and the reachback network.
- Provide decontamination for assigned personnel and equipment and advise the incident commander on the setup of a decontamination site.
- Provide preventive medicine, medical surveillance, and emergency medical technician level medical care for assigned personnel only.
- Deploy rapidly by organic vehicles or nonorganic transportation assets such as air, rail, road, or water.
- Provide command and control of WMD-CST elements and limited augmentation assets and coordinate administrative and logistic support for WMD-CSTs.
- Participate in advanced planning, coordination, and training processes with potential supported or supporting local, state, and federal agencies; other WMD-CSTs; and DOD response elements.
- Execute the listed capabilities according to applicable state and federal laws within a state or territory or at a continental U.S. military installation when requested.

#### **Maneuver Support Perspective**

The U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center (MANSCEN), Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, received specified proponentcy in a memorandum from the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans in June 2002. In 2003, MANSCEN (in partnership with the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear [CBRN] School and the National Guard Bureau [NGB]) chartered an integrated concept development team (ICDT) to streamline support for the newly formed WMD-CST program. The ICDT and proponentcy enable MANSCEN to perform the functions of a branch proponent as listed in Army Regulation (AR) 5-22, including the development and documentation of the following:<sup>3</sup>

- Concepts.
- Doctrine.
- Tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Organizational designs.
- Materiel requirements.
- Training programs.
- Training support requirements.

- Manpower requirements (except as provided in AR 600-3).<sup>4</sup>
- Coordination of proponent initiatives with user units.

In January 2001, a controversial DOD inspector general audit identified a number of problems with how the WMD-CST program functioned. For example, personnel assigned to a WMD-CST were receiving training according to the NGB training matrix, using more than thirty-five commercial and government vendors. In 2003, the Civil Support Skills Course was established at Fort Leonard Wood to replace the previous Emergency Assessment and Detection Course and provide training for all WMD-CST members before they could assume positions on the teams. Now highly regarded across DOD, the course accomplishes in eight weeks what had taken months to complete, greatly benefiting WMD-CST training readiness. In this accelerated training, CBRN responders still receive certifications recognized by their civilian counterparts. As directed by the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, MANSCEN and NGB were able to streamline WMD-CST program support using the following standard Army business practices:

- Systems Approach to Training process.
- Training validation at a structure and manning decision review.
- Written requirements documents.
- Organizational design review.

Today, by using a community of practice, we have resolved most of the issues identified in the audits and have established mechanisms for continuous improvement and feedback. A 2005 Government Accounting Office audit and report on WMD-CSTs found a high state of readiness, indicating that the efforts of the NGB, MANSCEN, and the U.S. Army CBRN School had remedied initial program shortcomings. Due to the new and evolving nature of the WMD-CST mission and the fact that WMD-CST members must be trained to the level of their civilian counterparts, much of the training was redundant and required significant time to complete. That training lasted 8 months, and the Soldiers and airmen (who make up about 25 percent of the WMD-CST) are only on station for 36 months before they come “off contract.”

January 2009 marked the 10th anniversary of the original ten RAID teams—now WMD-CSTs—arriving at what was then the U.S. Army Chemical School for training at Fort McClellan, Alabama. In what many consider a forward-thinking “evolution” in military affairs, our DOD forces successfully created fifty-five highly trained and capable CBRN response units ready to support America’s responders and communities. Representing 90 percent of DOD’s immediate CBRN response capability and trained to both civilian and military standards, the WMD-CSTs represent a CBRN and CM capability found nowhere

else in the world. The success of the WMD-CST program can be found in congressional action calling for a federal WMD response capability, the efforts of the ICDT partners in supporting a new program, and the dedication of WMD-CST Soldiers and airmen standing ready over the last decade to support responders in hundreds of CBRN and CM responses. 

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>“Title 32” refers to U.S. Code (USC), Title 32, *National Guard*.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers are normally activated to full-time duty in one of three ways: USC, Title 10, *Armed Forces*; USC, Title 31, *Money and Finance*; or State Active Duty. Under Title 10, a servicemember is a full-time Soldier who is subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), receives federal benefits, and is protected by all federal laws such as the *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994* and the *Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003*. Servicemembers activated under Title 31 remain under the command of their state governor and adjutant general, but are paid by the federal government. They cannot exercise command over Title 10 Soldiers, are not subject to the UCMJ, and have only limited protection under federal laws. State active duty Soldiers are under state command only and are paid by their state. They are not subject to the UCMJ, receive no federal protection, and can exercise no command over federal Soldiers.

<sup>3</sup>House Report 105-825, “Domestic Preparedness Against Weapons of Mass Destruction,” from *Making Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1999*, Library of Congress.

<sup>4</sup>AR 5-22, *The Army Force Modernization Proponent System*, 6 February 2009.

<sup>5</sup>AR 600-3, *The Army Personnel Proponent System*, 28 November 1997.

**References:**

*National Response Framework*, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, January 2008.

*Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994*, 13 October 1994.

*Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003*, 19 December 2003.

USC, Title 32, *National Guard*.

USC, Title 10, *Armed Forces*.

USC, Title 31, *Money and Finance*.

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