



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

By Lieutenant Colonel Christian M. Van Alstyne and Mr. Stephen H. Porter

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 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 timely, specialized, and 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 first of a series of articles designed to address the layered support to civil authorities will detail the initial response force, which comes from the Title 32 forces—the WMD-Civil Support Teams (CSTs). Title 32 and Title 10 response assets will be described in separate articles in this series.

Background

In May 1998, President 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 10 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 to prepare for and respond to CBRNE incidents. Teams must complement and enhance, not duplicate, state emergency management capabilities. They must be able to deploy rapidly to assist a local incident commander 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 and 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 arrival of additional state and federal assets to help save lives, prevent human suffering and mitigate property damage.

The WMD-CSTs are able to 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 CSTs can respond quickly, accom-

plish their mission, and blend in with civilian vehicles at the scene. They provide initial advice on what the agent may be; assist first responders in that detection assessment process; and serve as the first military responders on the ground so that if additional state or federal resources are called into the situation, they can act as an advance party to provide liaison with Joint Task Force Civil Support. As experts in CBRNE defense operations, they can mitigate the consequences of any hazardous event, whether natural or man-made. WMD-CST response in a major CM event is illustrated in Figure 1.

Current Configuration

These 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 22 highly skilled, full-time National Guard members who are federally resourced, trained, and exercised, employing federally approved CBRNE response doctrine. Figure 2, page 14, illustrates the WMD-CST structure.

These units derive their origins in guidance from Congress, which stated the need to “establish and equip small organizations in each of the 44 states not receiving an initial Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection (RAID) element in 1999 to provide limited chemical/biological response capability.”¹¹ With RAID teams renamed WMD-CSTs, the first 10 teams were based in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, California, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylva-

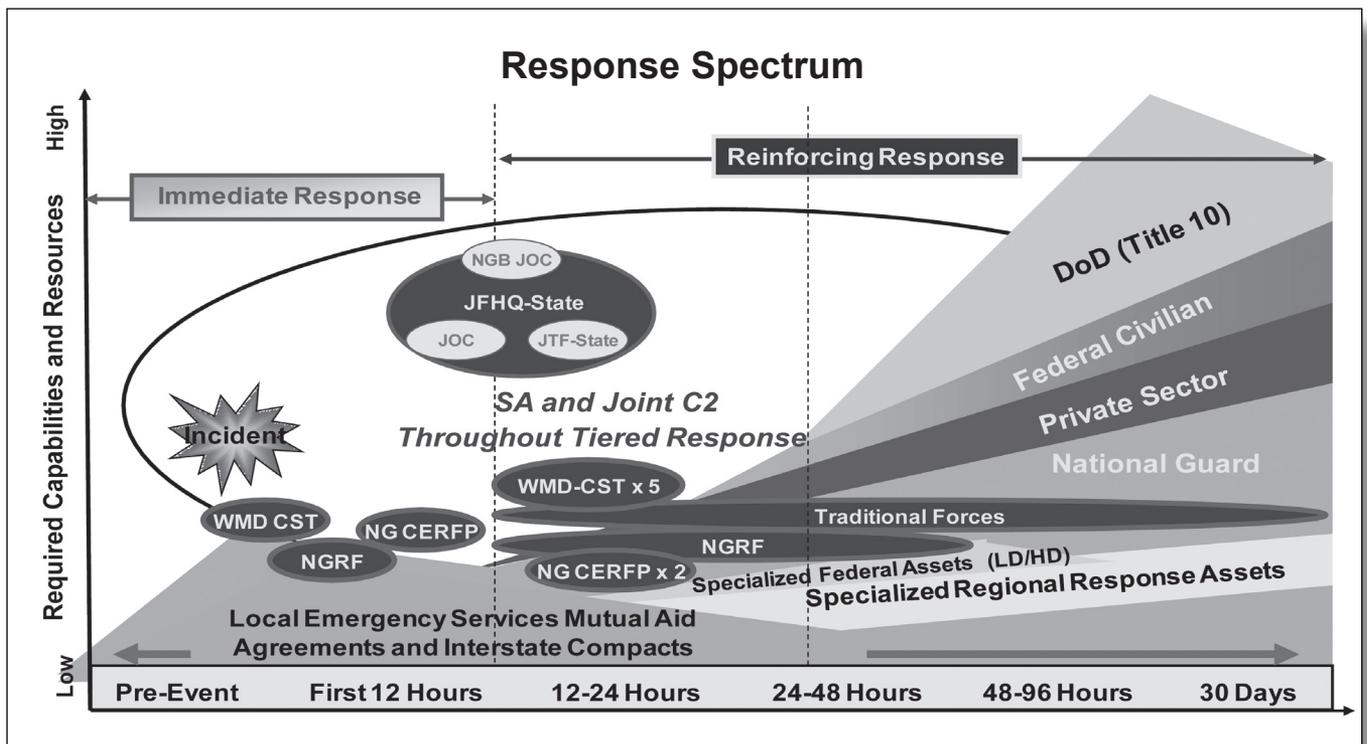


Figure 1

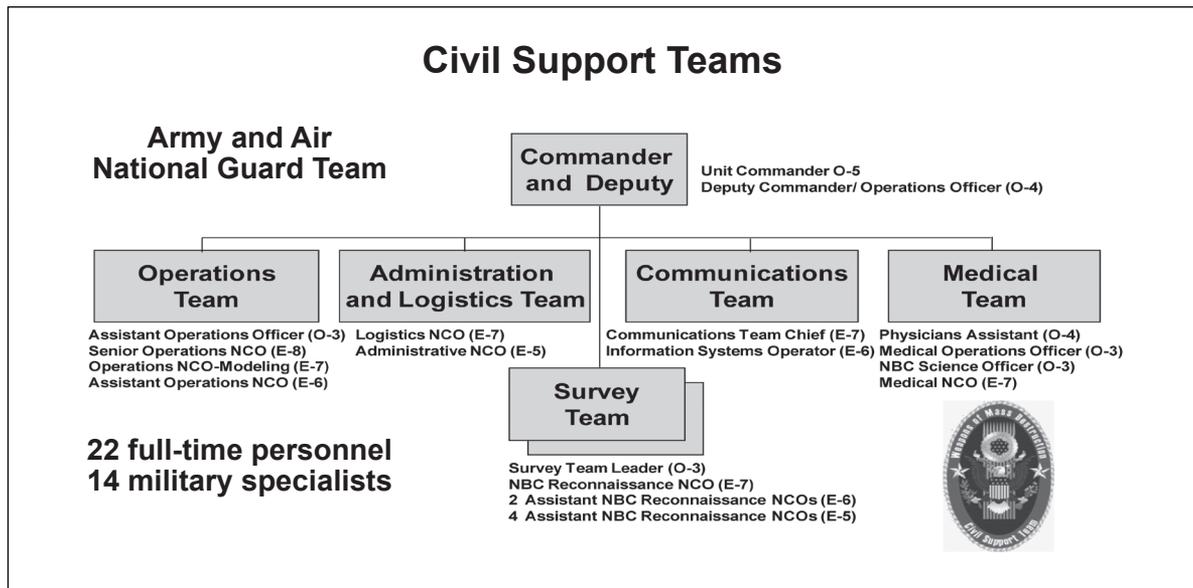


Figure 2

nia, Texas, and Washington. One team was fielded in each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency regions. There is now at least one WMD-CST in each of the 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands with Florida and New York receiving CSTs, the National Guard will soon have 57 teams.

CST Capabilities

In addition to being able to execute the previously described mission, CSTs are also trained and equipped to—

- Detect and completely characterize an unknown sample of suspected WMD agents/substances present at an incident site, see Figure 3, page 15).
- Provide onsite mobile analytical platform to perform analysis and characterization of unknown samples and provide assessment through reachback capability to designated state and federal agencies with additional technical expertise.
- Determine the current contaminated area, and assess current and potential hazards to personnel, animals and selected critical infrastructure features resulting from identified agent/substance presence.
- Advise civil authorities on initial casualty medical management and casualty minimization measures.
- Advise civil authorities as to initial agent/site containment and mitigation measures.
- 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 home station, en route, and 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 reachback network.
- Provide decontamination for assigned personnel and equipment and advise incident commander on setup of a decontamination site.
- Provide preventive medicine, medical surveillance, and emergency medical technician-level medical care for assigned personnel only.
- Rapidly deploy by organic vehicles and/or nonorganic transportation assets such as air, rail, road, or water.
- Provide command and control of CST elements and limited augmentation assets and coordinate administrative and logistic support for CST.
- Participate in advanced planning, coordination, and training processes with potential supported or supporting local, state, and federal agencies; other CSTs; and/or 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 United States Army Maneuver Support Center (MANSCEN) at 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 CBRN School and the National Guard Bureau, chartered an integrated concept development team (ICDT)

Hapsite Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer

- Analytical Instrument (gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer)
- 35 pounds
- National Institute of Standards and Technology - 86K Chemical Library
- 4-Hour downrange capability

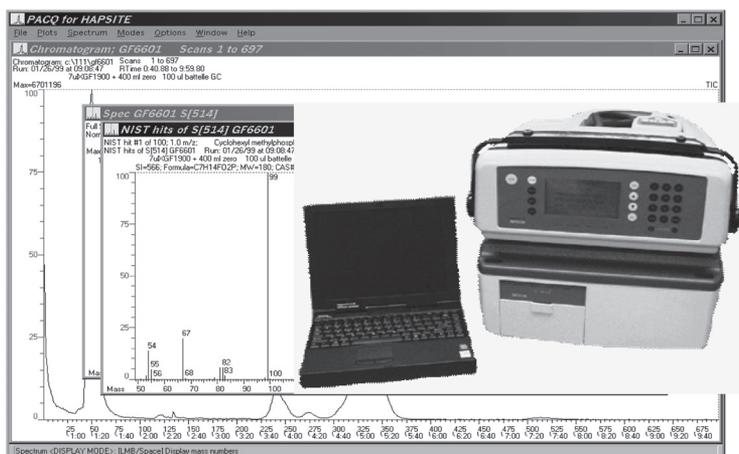


Figure 3

to streamline support for the newly formed CST program. The ICDT and proponenty enable MANSCEN to perform the functions of a branch proponent as listed in Army Regulation (AR) 5-22, *The Army Proponent System*,³ to include development and documentation of the following:

- Concepts
- Doctrine
- Tactics, techniques, and procedures
- Organizational designs
- Materiel requirements
- Training programs
- Training support requirements
- Manpower requirements (except as provided in AR 600-3, *The Army Personnel Proponent System*)⁴
- 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 National Guard Bureau (NGB) training matrix, using more than 35 commercial/government vendors. The Civil Support Skills Course was established at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in 2003 to replace the previous Emergency Assessment and Detection Course and provide training for all CST members before they could assume positions on the teams. Now highly regarded across DOD, the course accomplished in 8 weeks what had taken months to complete, greatly benefiting CST training readiness. In this accelerated training, Soldiers and Airmen 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 CST program support using the following standard Army business practices:

- Systematic approach to training process
- Training validation at a structure and manning decision review
- Written requirements documents
- Review of the organizational design

Today, through the use of 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 GAO audit and report on the CSTs found a high state of readiness indicating that the efforts by the NGB, MANSCEN and the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School had remedied initial program shortcomings. Due to the new and evolving nature of the CST mission and the fact that CST members must be trained to the level of their civilian counterparts, much of their training was redundant and required significant time to complete. That training required 8 months to complete, and the Soldiers and Airmen (the teams are about 25 percent Air National Guard) are only on station for 36 months before they come “off contract.”

January 2009 marked the 10th anniversary of the original 10 RAID teams—now CSTs—arriving at 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 55 highly trained and capable CBRN response units ready to support America’s responders and communities. Represent-

ing 90 % of DOD's immediate CBRNB response capability, and trained to both civilian and military standards, the CSTs represent a CBRN and CM capability found nowhere else in the world. The success of the SCS 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 CST Soldiers and Airmen standing ready over the last decade to support responders in hundreds of CBRN and consequence management responses.



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Endnotes

¹United States Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers are normally activated to full-time duty in one of three ways: Title 10, Title 31, or State Active Duty (SAD). 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. SAD 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.

²House 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.

³Army Regulation (AR) 5-22, *The Army Proponent System*, 3 October 1986.

⁴AR 600-3, *The Army Personnel Proponent System*, 28 November 1997.