



Photo by Specialist Jessica D. Zullig

## ENGINEERS TRAIN IN REAL "FIRE POWER"

By Specialist Jessica D. Zullig



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**A 573d Clearance Company Soldier sprays foliage with flames during a test of the GTS.**

**F**lamming brush and debris were whipped by the afternoon breeze at a range near Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, during a Ground Torch System (GTS) exercise for Soldiers from 4th Platoon, 573d Clearance Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. The GTS will be added to the engineers' arsenal to combat improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by clearing foliage that can conceal the explosives along patrol routes. The system expels a burning gel-like fuel that covers the targeted area and eliminates the concealment.

Roadside foliage makes it difficult for patrolling Soldiers to spot hidden IEDs. Units equipped with GTS will be able to eliminate that foliage and make it more difficult "for the enemy to get out there and hurt our people," said the GTS instructor. Soldiers received in-depth training about safety precautions, standard operating procedures, fuel mixture, and factors such as atmospheric conditions that can affect the system's capabilities. After that training, the Soldiers performed a live-fire exercise to learn what the GTS can do. The system is another tool the company can use to better accomplish the mission by helping Soldiers see threats on the side of the road.

The brigade's mission is to clear roads, and the company is the spearhead of that. They have to go out and make sure the road is cleared of all IEDs during the daytime or nighttime. The GTS allows them to complete their mission, and when the company's mission is completed, it means the brigade's mission is completed. 

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