



Welcome to Vigilant Guard

Welcome to Vigilant Guard South Carolina. Its very important that everyone understand the significance of this exercise, not only for the state, but for the region. It's important for everyone to be safe during this exercise and to understand how the results of this exercise will help to make us better as a state, region and nation to support civilian authorities at a time of natural disaster.

You are going to see many things over the next three to four days with a lot of operations intermixed with civilians and the local population. I need everybody to use their professional skills, their knowledge to do things safely, professionally and to put their best foot



forward so we can all learn from this exercise.

I look forward to a great exercise and I'll see you in the field.

Sincerely,
Brig. Gen. Les Eisner
Vigilant Guard 2008 South Carolina
Task Force Commander of Troops

Air Guard EMEDS team breaks new ground in Vigilant Guard

By Staff Sgt. Dan Heaton

BEAUFORT, S.C. - An Air National Guard Expeditionary Medical Support team will pioneer new territory in military medical training and education as part of Vigilant Guard South Carolina, one of the largest training exercises in the history of the National Guard.

The EMEDS team, comprised of 62 doctors, nurses and other medical specialists from Air National Guard units in seven states, will become the first team ever to complete its 5-year certification review during a field exercise and will also use the opportunity to provide more than 18 hours of professional continuing medical education, approved by the American Medical Association and administered through the state of South Carolina.

Vigilant Guard South Carolina, based in

Beaufort County, S.C., April 21-23, is an emergency preparedness training exercise based on a major earthquake that notionally will be centered in the Beaufort area. The exercise will bring together



Tech. Sgt. David Betts, of the 187th Medical Group, assembles an electrical distribution panel in a field hospital in preparation for the Vigilant Guard 2008 exercise on April 19, in Beaufort, S.C. (DoD photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp) (RELEASED)

Rubble pile creates realistic search and rescue scenarios



Danny Atchley, a member of the Response International Group team from Oklahoma City, explains the design characteristics that went into the creation of this unique training site. (DoD photo by Senior Master Sgt. Edward E. Snyder) (RELEASED)

By Spc. Erica Knight

BEAUFORT, S.C. - The National Guard will be conducting search and rescue operations in a rubble pile during the Vigilant Guard 2008 exercise April 21 - 24.

The Response International Group (RIG) from Oklahoma City built a structure that simulates a reinforced cement building that has collapsed.

The company has been in business for nine years but the experience of some employees covers almost 35 years including some who responded to the Oklahoma City bombing.

"At the Murrah building (Oklahoma City), there were a lot of things missing or lacking with the first responders," said Mike Shannon, owner of RIG and retired chief of special operations for the

EMEDS CONTINUED...

more than 3,000 National Guard personnel from more than a dozen states who will work together with local, state and other federal agencies to respond to the disaster.

The EMEDS team brings the medical skills that would be necessary to respond to such a disaster. For the exercise, the team will set up a 6-bed hospital near Beaufort.

Typically, EMEDS teams travel to the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in northern Michigan for a week-long certification exercise, once every five years. By being tested for certification during Vigilant Guard, the EMEDS team will save \$50,000 in training costs and gain flexibility in planning its future schedule, said Col. Henry Heard, commanding officer of the 187th Medical Group in the Alabama Air National Guard and commander of the EMEDS team for the exercise.

"This doesn't replace Alpena, but it provides another option for commanders," Heard said.

Heard said at the end of the exercise, the EMEDS team will turn over a blueprint for future EMEDS teams to be certified during such an exercise.

In addition to the certification review, local experts will be providing lectures and other training good for 18.25 continuing medical education credits and members of the EMEDS team are slated to work through 20 different ancillary training requirements.

In addition to the 62-member EMEDS team, a cadre of 10 data collector/controllers, including representatives of Air Combat Command, which is the certifying authority for the EMEDS team, will be observing the operation.

An important element of the training exercise is the opportunity for the EMEDS team to work closely with Army National Guard units, Heard said.

"We bring medical specialists, but we don't

have equipment. So we need to work together with the Army to provide us with tents to sleep in, to coordinate a place to eat and bringing in the tents and cots and all the equipment we need to create a hospital," he said. "We provide the medical knowledge, but someone else has to provide the infrastructure."

Just days before the exercise was due to begin, Heard said gearing up for Vigilant Guard has been a very positive experience.

"People are coming together, understanding that we all have to work together to accomplish our mission," Heard said.

Which is exactly one of the goals of an exercise like Vigilant Guard, said Brig. Gen. Les Eisner, deputy adjutant general for Army in South Carolina and the commander of troops for Vigilant Guard 2008.

"The National Guard brings trained personnel from around the country who are able to support a community that has suffered a disaster. Vigilant Guard allows us to test our capability and develop relationships with the local and state agencies we would be working with," Eisner said. "The EMEDS brings an important medical expertise that can be relied upon in a disaster."

For Master Sgt. Tina Moore, a member of the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th Medical Group, working on the exercise is an opportunity to increase her own readiness to respond to an emergency.

"It is an incredible learning experience to be able to interact with the Army and the civilian resources," she said. "It is incredible to see all these people come together to be ready to help out a community in an emergency."

Personnel making up the EMEDS team in Vigilant Guard S.C. came from the 187th MDG, Alabama; 169th MDG, South Carolina; 143rd MDG, Rhode Island; 107th MDG, New York; 117th MDG, Alabama; 158th MDG, Vermont; and 188th MDG, Arkansas. Support personnel also came from the 20th MDG, South Carolina; and 149th MDG, Texas.

Rubble CONTINUED...

Oklahoma City Fire Department. "I wanted to make a difference for the community."

The structure being used at Vigilant Guard took about two weeks to build and is 2,000 tons of concrete, steel reinforcements and rubble. The pile is bowl shaped so that the RIG team can observe and assist in an emergency situation. All of the tunnels begin on the outside and run to the center of the structure.

This structure will be rebuilt and adjusted every night to set up for another day of rescue work.

"It's a challenge because the structure is dynamic, everything has to be replaced," said Shannon. "If (the structure) is not maintained it can cause a catastrophic collapse."

The Beaufort Fire Department will be taking



over the structure after Vigilant Guard. It will be available to rescue squads and emergency response teams for training.

The RIG team builds these piles mainly for the National Guard and other military organizations.

"There are 23 structures at Fort Gruber, Okla. that are a mixture of collapse and hazmat," said Shannon. He hopes to have another five built there by the end of 2009.

NEWS BRIEFS

Battles leave 81 dead

MOGADISHU, Somalia – Two days of fighting between government and Ethiopian troops and Islamic militants in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, have left 81 civilians dead and more than 100 wounded, a local human rights group reported today. "We are condemning the warring sides in the strongest terms for violating human rights and committing war crimes against civilians," a spokesman for the group said.

PM vows not to let Iraq become 'the new Somalia'

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is calling on political parties to unite against armed groups in Iraq, a spokesman said Sunday, warning that "Iraq cannot be the new Somalia." "It is a clear message," al-Maliki spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said of the situation in Iraq. "We cannot accept the presence of armed groups."

Clinton and Obama escalate attacks in Penn.

READING, Pa. – Capping a frenzied final weekend of campaigning in Pennsylvania, the Democratic presidential candidates escalated their attacks on each other in speeches and in a last-minute barrage of advertisements on Sunday, aiming at voters who are still undecided just two days before the state's marathon primary battle culminates.

WEATHER

Tonight

CLEAR TEMP 65 F
PRECIP 0% HUMD 67%

Tomorrow

SUNNY HI 79 F
PRECIP 20% LOW 57 F

SAFETY TIP

"Safety - Our First Duty"

Remember to stay hydrated throughout the Vigilant Guard exercise. Drink plenty of water during the day to keep your body from experiencing dehydration. Watch your buddy and those appointed under you to ensure they are keeping themselves properly hydrated.