



43rd Civil Support Team assists local fire district

By Master Sgt. Richard B. Hodges

BEAUFORT, S.C. – Lt. Col. Paul Laymon, commander of the South Carolina National Guard's 43rd Civil Support Team, received a phone call early this morning informing him of a potential crisis situation in historic Bluffton, S.C. As a participant in the massive Vigilant Guard 2008 exercise taking place in Beaufort County, Laymon immediately assembled his advance team of six CST first responders and proceeded to the Palmetto Breeze Busing Co., site of the emergency scenario.

The South Carolina National Guard is hosting Vigilant Guard 2008, a National Guard Bureau-sponsored exercise designed to test the ability of the National Guard, along with federal, state, and local first responders, to react to a domestic emergency. This year's scenario began with a mock 7.3 earthquake centered in Beaufort County. After-effects of the earthquake will result in more than 50 various exercise-related scenarios at incident site locations throughout the county.

The Vigilant Guard exercise call to Laymon came from the South Carolina Joint Operations Center. It informed him that Bluffton first responders had responded to a call at a local bus company where two unconscious employees were found and a 'strange smell' was present. Following emergency procedures Bluffton first responders removed the victims and evacuated the area. Then they immediately contacted the South Carolina



Two members of the Recon/Survey element of the South Carolina's 43rd Civil Support Team, conduct an initial sweep of a suspicious area as part of the Vigilant Guard exercise held in the Beaufort, S.C. area Apr. 21. (National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Phillip Jones) (RELEASED)

National Guard and requested assistance. Within 30 minutes, Laymon's 43rd CST advanced on-site team was assembled and enroute to Bluffton. Arriving just after 8 a.m., the CST commander met with the incident commander, Fire Chief Barry

Turner of the Bluffton Fire District who along with Asst. Chief John Thompson, were on-scene.

As a resource of the S.C. National Guard, the 43rd CST is available upon request to assist local responders throughout the state in potentially

Beaufort and Charleston, S.C.: Still making history today



Charleston, S.C., in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck on Aug. 31, 1886. (Photographer unknown; courtesy of South Carolina Department of Natural Resources)

By Bill Boehm

BEAUFORT, S.C. - Cooled by pleasant breezes and warmed by the ever-present sun, the city of Beaufort (pronounced bew-fert) is South Carolina's second oldest city, founded in 1711. Beaufort's marine setting, marshy lowlands, and lush vegetation comprise today's relaxed surrounding in what is known as the "Low Country."

Beaufort also holds the distinction as the site where South Carolinians drafted the Ordinance of Secession, the document that eventually guided the state of South Carolina to secede from the Union in December 1860. Four months later, in April 1861, the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, 50 miles north. That War, as most know, divided the nation and wounded the Southern United States for many years, well beyond the war's end in 1865.

On April 21-24, 2008, however, Beaufort

CST CONTINUED...

hazardous situations that may include nuclear, biological and chemical contingencies.

"We're here to help the incident commander in assessing and responding to the situation," Laymon explained.

The ADVON (Advanced Echelon) team, as well as the whole CST, is here to advise, assist and report to the incident commander so that he or she can make informed decisions as to the proper response, according to said Tech. Sgt. Bryan Barnes, 43rd CST medical noncommissioned officer.

"The ADVON team comes in first to make sure it's safe for the rest of the team to come in," said Barnes. "We'll go in and do a quick survey to ensure the hazard is contained and that we're not setting up our footprint in the plume."

Barnes explained that the ADVON team is representative of the entire CST, "We have a commander and deputy commander, a medical NCO and a physician's assistant along with a lab officer (nuclear-medical-science officer), as well as a reconnaissance/survey element."

The 43rd CST, the only joint Army-Air National Guard unit in the state, is located in West Columbia, S.C., and is made up of 22 full-time National Guard members.

Based on the initial information received, Laymon and the CST ADVON team went to the busing company while the rest of the CST team

remained behind at a safe distance of six miles. Later, after Laymon determined that the entire team was needed and the area was safe, they were deployed to the site.

Laymon explained that the unit's main body remains six miles out awaiting his instructions after a reconnaissance, survey or pre-monitoring test of the area is conducted. The unit sweeps the area before bringing in the whole team.

"Safety is paramount," said Laymon. "My job is to make sure the area is safe for troops on the ground."

Three of the reconnaissance element/survey team members, Air Guardsman Master Sgt. Matt Sullivan and Tech. Sgt. Anthony Whigham, along with S.C. Army Guard member Sgt. Edward Edgerton all suited up in full protective gear which included rubber suits, gloves, boots, protective masks and self-contained breathing apparatus prior to conducting their sweep of the area.

Using a modified military version of the John Deere 'Gator,' one team member drove the tracked vehicle while the other two monitored the area for contaminants. The Vigilant Guard exercise assists both the Guard's CST as well as local responders in working together as a team in the event of "real world" contingencies in the future.

"This exercise helps prepare us for future events such as natural disasters," said Bluffton Township Fire Chief Barry Turner. "It gives us the opportunity to work with the National Guard and their with us."

History CONTINUED...

serves as host to the site of something representative of this nation's unity, not its dysfunction. Here, the South Carolina National Guard administers Operation Vigilant Guard, serving to train its personnel in a simulated earthquake disaster exercise. The local Beaufort community, as well as the government of Beaufort County and other associated emergency management agencies, is participating in the exercise. The National Guard Bureau sent its Public Affairs Rapid Response Team (PARRT) to assist the South Carolina Guard in its duties. The disaster in this case is an earthquake centered in the Low Country, near the city of Charleston.

Besides Beaufort, only Charleston is older among South Carolina cities. A fabled Atlantic port city founded in 1670, Charleston became the most important trade center in the southern Colonies during British rule, a status that continued into the period after the United States achieved its independence after the end of the Revolutionary War. It remains to this day one of our country's best preserved cities, with scores of historic buildings, and a sense of place unmatched elsewhere in the modern South.

The disaster scenario for which the National Guard is practicing holds historical precedent. On August 31, 1886, Charleston experienced a serious earthquake that was felt as far away as Boston, Massachusetts, located about 1000 miles

north. Ninety-two people died in the disaster, and property damage totaled millions of dollars. Scientists considered this tremor the worst in the modern history of the southeastern United States.

This occurred a long time ago. Why should an earthquake that occurred 122 years ago even matter? This event carries great relevance because it vividly illustrates the havoc that natural disasters can cause. Presently, what local citizens in South Carolina and elsewhere care about is this: how will community leaders respond when bridges are damaged, or if fire or civil unrest commence in the aftermath of such a disaster?

Though this occurrence took place long ago in relative time, it is important to note that aftershocks from the quake took place nearly 100 years after the event. And, according to the South Carolina Seismic Network based at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, many seismic events ranging from the 3.0 to 4.3 magnitude on the Richter scale took place in the area from 2000-2005. This footnote underscores the need to maintain a high level of readiness and a prepared first response team in order to anticipate the possibility of such an event. Recent natural disasters such as the Loma Prieta, California earthquake of 1989 drive this point home.

National Guard underscores the necessity for practice in anticipation of natural calamity. Certainly, history has ways of repeating itself, and only we, as citizens of this country, can take note and act, so that we may improve our lot in the world.

NEWS BRIEFS

Indonesia jails and sentences 'key al Qaeda ally'

An Indonesian court has sentenced the alleged military commander of an al Qaeda-linked terror network to 15 years in prison. Abu Dujana is the alleged leader of the military wing of Jemaah Islamiyah, a group that is thought to be linked to al Qaeda. It aims to create a Muslim "superstate" across much of Southeast Asia. Dujana is accused of direct involvement in the Bali nightclub bombings of 2002 that killed more than 200, mostly Western, tourists.

Law enforcement tricked into buying faulty grenades

A Georgia military contractor tricked law enforcement agencies into buying faulty stun grenades, ultimately leaving three FBI agents injured, federal prosecutors announced Monday. Pyrotechnic Specialties Inc. is accused of relabeling and selling "flash-bang" grenades that the U.S. military rejected after its personnel were injured.

Teen could have made bomb in minutes, police say

A South Carolina high school senior arrested in an alleged bomb plot had the ingredients to assemble a bomb in minutes, police said Monday. Ryan Schallenberger, 18, was arrested Saturday after his parents called police when 10 pounds of ammonium nitrate, an oxidizing agent in explosives, was delivered to their home in Chesterfield, near the North Carolina border. Chief Randall Lear of the Chesterfield Police Department said.

WEATHER

Today

MOSTLY SUNNY	TEMP	78 F
PRECIP 10%	HUMD	58%

Tomorrow

ISOLATED T-STORMS	TEMP	79 F
PRECIP 30%	HUMD	62%

SAFETY TIP

"Safety - Never Off Duty"

Safety is something to be practiced both "on" and "off" duty. Never forget to keep safety in mind when at work or play. Safety is a 24/7 operation.