



The Bullet'n



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"Supporting the Warfighter"

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An order of inclusion

By Rikeshia Davidson
JMC Public Affairs

**From Joint Munitions Command historical records*

"What a difference a day makes, twenty-four little hours..."

What a difference June 25, 1941, made; a day that created the landscape for federal employment equality. That date may not bear notable significance to the general public; but for African-Americans during that era, June 25 marked the beginning of desegregated government and defense employment.

On June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802.

This order encouraged "full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, in the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended success-



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Materiel Command Historic Context Series

Then A group (commonly referred to as a "unit") of production workers at the Twin Cities Ordnance Plant. Note that there are several women and one African-American in this group. Also note the uniforms and special shoes issued to the workers. The shoes are designed to not generate static electricity (TCAAP Public Information Office).

fully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders."

In twenty-four hours, African-Americans gained a privilege and a chance to contribute to an American effort. World War II introduced a great need for workers to support the war and with that executive order, African-

Americans joined the effort as well. In order for them to fill those jobs, there had to be a measure in place allowing African-Americans to legally do the job without being denied.

According to the Twin Cities Ordnance Plant Historic Plant Investigation, (Vogel & Crown)" The supply of available factory workers was consequently declining just at the time that industry was expanding. The labor supply shortfall was partly filled

by women, African-Americans, the elderly, and other formerly excluded groups. The TCOP or Twin Cities Ordnance Plant (in Arden Hills, Minn.) and other war industries created unprecedented opportunities for women, African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities to earn a livelihood."

"Looking Back" continued on page 3

For more information on African-Americans and the U.S. Army, visit:

http://www.army.mil/africanamericans/main_content.html

ARMY NEWS



Celebrating Diversity in the Army: African American History Month

"Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."

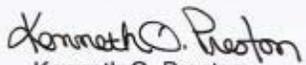
– Dr. Carter G. Woodson

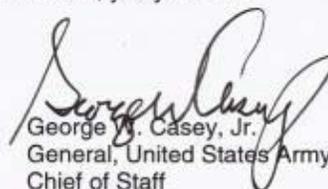
February is National African American History Month – an opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments of African-American Soldiers, Families, and Civilians who have served our great Nation for over 200 years.

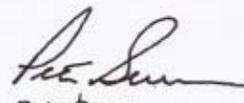
Today, we are Army Strong because we leverage and draw strength from the rich diversity within our ranks. At a crucial time in our Nation's history, African-Americans – military and civilian – are playing critical roles in protecting our Nation against the global, extremist terrorist network that attacked us on September 11, 2001.

America's Army is the best in the world at what it does. By respecting and leveraging our different backgrounds and experiences, perspectives and attitudes, skills and problem-solving capabilities, we will continue to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. We learn from our past and aspire to a better future. As General (Retired) Colin Powell said last year at the 60th Anniversary of President Truman's order to integrate the military:

Let's not rest on our laurels as long as there is one kid out there who grows up wondering, 'can I dream in America? Can I get to the very top?' The answer has to be, yes you can.


Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army


George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army

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The editorial content of The Bullet'n is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office at Joint Munitions Command headquarters. Contributions to The Bullet'n are welcome; contact information follows.

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Looking Back continued from page 1

Even though Executive Order 8802 removed pre-existing barriers, the creation of the order wasn't as simple as an overnight decision. Predating Executive Order 8802 was A. Philip Randolph. Head of the Brotherhood of Railway Car Workers, Randolph advocated the inclusion of African-Americans as government employees.

It is believed that Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 as a result of Randolph's threat to march on Washington, D.C.-- many years before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did so successfully.

Joint Munitions Command historian Keri Pleasant added a broader view to the impact of Executive Order 8802.

"In World War II the Ordnance Department owned over 112 ammunition installations and the contractors operating the plants hired between 10-20,000 workers at each plant during wartime periods -- we needed the whole country to come together to fill these positions," Pleasant said.

In addition, Pleasant said Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois employed African-Americans during World War I in the manufacturing sector but there were also African-Americans employed at the ammunition plants -- she just needed to locate the supporting documents.

She said, "The first decision was to search at the installation level (for supporting documents). It's often an EEO break out of employees that reveals the number of African-Americans." Pleasant added, "But then comes the task of finding historical files to further support their inclusion."

As a historian, Pleasant seeks to locate historical documents that tend to tell the story from the plants, often during command assessments. "We ask that historical reports are accompanied by supporting documents -- we try to encourage people (historical officers) to give us that back up."

Most importantly she said, "Yes, we are out there asking -- we probably could ask more." But Pleasant noted that "we're trying to save more electronically."

The value of documentation of everyday and historical events is important to JMC. Questions concerning the command in earlier days as well as

how the ammunition lines looked some 68 years ago is no easy task, as command historian Pleasant explained. Joint Munitions Command historical data notes an increase in the hiring of African-American employees in such plants and there is the executive order that required it.

However, there is one ammunition plant that has unique, tangible evidence supporting a history that began with Executive Order 8802.

JMC's McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, formerly McAlester Naval Depot, houses an open account of what the plant was like following the executive order. The account gives a



U.S. Army photo courtesy of Pine Bluff Arsenal

And now Employees at Pine Bluff Arsenal in Pine Bluff, Ark.

the environment of the plants comes with a command as complex as JMC. "It's always good to find answers," said Pleasant. "These questions come up and will come up in the future."

While some of the defense plants directly affected by Executive Order 8802 are long gone, others remain open and operational. Determining

feel for the environment of the depot and efforts to keep the mission going despite obvious changes.

Ultimately, you cannot change history nor the circumstances that shaped it; but you can acknowledge and celebrate the journey thus far.

A historical look at McAlester AAP

The following is an excerpt from McAlester Army Ammunition Plant historical records, then known as McAlester Naval Depot. This account details events from 1943, a time when McAlester Naval Depot was home to some African-American Marines following World War II. Today, McAlester is one of Joint Munitions Command's key power projection platforms. As the nation's premier bomb manufacturing, and ammunition and missile maintenance facility, McAAP partners with commercial industry to expand capabilities and strengthen their position within the Department of Defense.

Racial Problems:

The State of Oklahoma has and enforces stringent racial segregation laws--commonly referred to as "Jim Crow" laws. Bitter resentment was expressed when it was learned that negro enlisted personnel, both Navy and Marines, were being assigned to the Depot, but the Commanding Officer declined to request their removal when it was obviously the Department's policy to use these ratings at this Depot. It appears that at least this part of Oklahoma is neither North where the negro is accepted, nor South where he is understood. Instead, the unenlightened natives of this area hold a bitter, resentful, and unreasoning hatred of negroes in general. In this atmosphere, the racial problem assumes potentially dangerous proportions.

In November, 1943, within a few days of the arrival of the present Commanding Officer, a near race-riot occurred at the main garage, due to a negro having entered a toilet room assigned to white employees. It was found that, although separate toilets for negroes and whites had been provided in the design and construction of the Depot, they were not marked by appropriate signs due to the contention of certain "agitators" that such markings constituted "discrimination". No serious objection was raised to the separate use, so long as facilities were maintained equal, but marking was resented. It was carefully explained that marking was necessary for all concerned, just as much so as designating facilities for "men" and "women". The incident passed, and all toilet facilities were marked. This demonstrated the value of complete understanding and full confidence.

There were other incidents, some quite serious, and potentially dangerous in the view of the racial attitude. In each case very prompt action was taken by officer of the Depot, a fact

which helped develop confidence in "official procedures". At first, the greatest danger was that unthinking elements of both races would try to settle disputes in "their own way". There were two cases of attempted rape of white women, but in each case the guilty man was apprehended by Depot authorities within less than an hour.

While little apprehension is now felt at the Depot concerning racial problems, this question continues the source of worry with respect to City of McAlester. Members of the local police force have several times demonstrated hot-tempered impatience, and it has been fortunate that military shore patrol have been readily available.

On the reservation, the general policy of a "Fair Deal for All" has been consistently followed. Consequently, men and women of both races have worked side by side for nearly two years in generally peaceful cooperation.

“I feel diversity is critical to establishing a balanced workforce. As our records indicate, yes, we employed minorities and women across time. However, if you were to critically examine the changes over time, the most significant thing you would find is the effect legislation and EEO policies have made (toward) diversifying the workforce, creating better and equal opportunities for all minorities.”

**Keri Pleasant,
Joint Munitions Command historian**

Out West, Wyche visits Hawthorne Army Depot



U.S. Army photo by Tony Hughes

By Florence Dosh
HWAD Public Affairs

Water Treatment Facility Brig. Gen. Larry Wyche, commanding general of the Joint Munitions Command, stands with John Peterson, HWAD Army Facilities and Natural Resources Manager (**center**) and Col. Yolanda Dennis-Lowman (**right**), commander of Tooele Army Depot. The trio toured the site of two 500,000 gallon water tanks being installed as part of a new water treatment facility.

HAWTHORNE, Nev. – Brig. Gen. Larry Wyche experienced his first taste of Hawthorne Army Depot when he visited on February 10.

Wyche became the commanding general of the Joint Munitions Command last August and also serves as the commander of the Joint Munitions and Lethality Life Cycle Management Command.

The general is touring JMC installations to, as he put it, “meet the good people and see the great things they are doing in support of our warfighters.” Wyche brings more than 25 years of combat command experience to the ammunition mission.

Accompanying Wyche on his visit were Col. Yolanda C. Dennis-Lowman, commander, Tooele Army Depot; Joe Warring, HWAD installation advocate from JMC headquarters JMC; Capt. Matthew Hill, aide-de-camp to Brig. Gen. Wyche, and Dirrick Sterdivant, an intern in the headquarters Armament Retooling Manufacturing Support program office.

The group visited many of Hawthorne’s notable features, including the new water treatment facility under construction, Black Beauty Reservoir, several of the storage buildings, two of the operating buildings at the Western Area Demil Facility, and some of the depot’s many training ranges. The visitors also received an overview of the Marine Corps Test Program and saw testing operations on their ranges.

Wyche said that the visit gave him “an opportunity to experience more than he had expected.” When asked about what he found most interesting at Hawthorne, Wyche com-

mented on the fact that with the remote location, he was amazed and grateful for the dedication of HWAD employees. He also noted how Afghan-like the surrounding terrain felt.

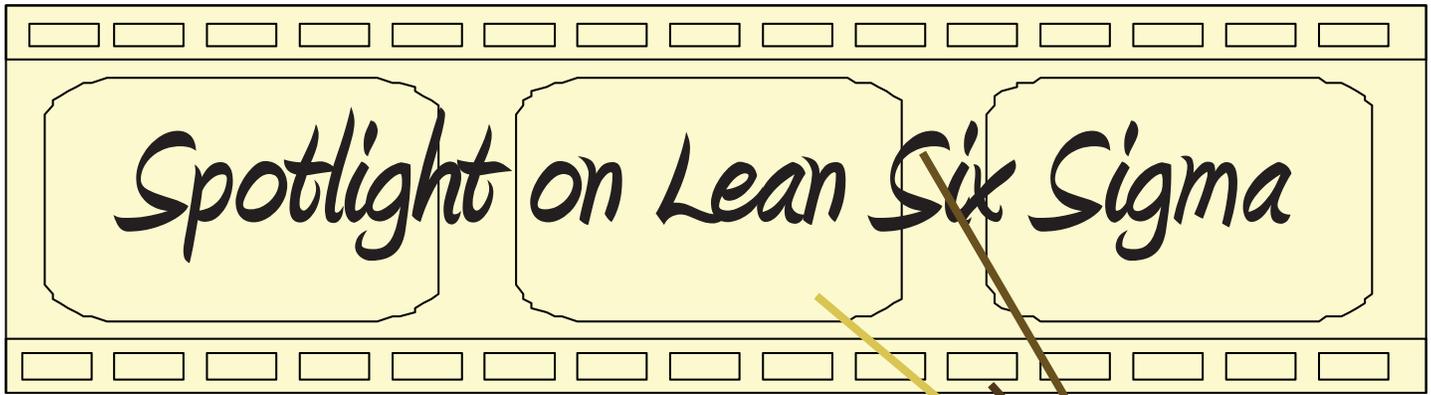
Wyche specifically wanted the depot community to know that they were “doing a magnificent job supporting the warfighters.” He added, “Never doubt you at HWAD are making a difference to our warfighters. I’ve been on the ground in Afghanistan and I’ve seen the look in the eyes of troops receiving a critical ammo air drop. Our warfighters understand their lives are on the line and they appreciate your efforts.”

Location: Hawthorne, Nevada

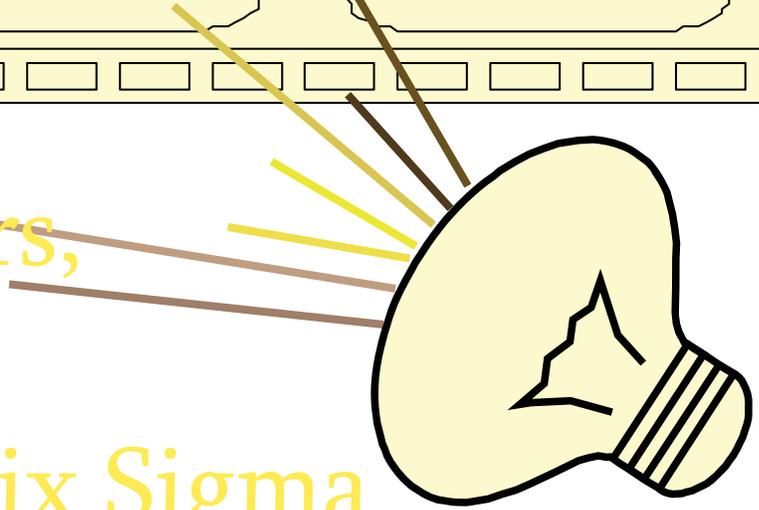
Commander: Lt. Col. Kimberly Gilbert-Mason

Mission: Hawthorne Army Depot receives, stores, re-warehouses, preserves and packages, monitors, renovates, demilitarizes and disposes conventional ammunition; issues conventional munitions; insures capability to ship/receive containerized munitions; operates calibration lab, maintains an International Standards Organization container maintenance/repair facility and maintains an ammunition maintenance capability. HWAD is the designated site for long-term storage of reused industrial plant equipment and will receive, store and be accountable for all industrial plant equipment.

Fact: The landscape at Hawthorne is dry, rocky and desolate, consisting of 147,000 acres of valleys and mountains. Units from the Army, Navy, and special operations receive training at HWAD.



Saving dollars, Space-- Thanks Lean Six Sigma



By Justine Barati
JMC Public Affairs
and
Toni McNeal
JMC Production Quality Management

Did You Know.....

McAlester AAP has saved \$9,967.92 per year and reduced redundant inspections thanks to Lean Six Sigma?

ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL, Ill.-- A team of subject-matter experts from throughout the Joint Munitions Command developed a new process that addresses excess inventory.

The initial evaluation of 153 items found that 43 items could be removed, resulting in a cost avoidance of \$2,391 in inventory program costs and clearing an additional 82,243 cubic feet at the government-owned contractor-operated and government-owned government-operated plants.

That is approximately 64 milvans worth of space. The team's task was to reduce the amount of industrial stocks in storage in order to save dollars and increase available storage space by identifying what stock can be excessed. They focused on the bomb and mortar programs.

The team determined that the accumulation of excess mate-

rial was in large part due to changes in procurement factors.

They analyzed the current process to identify excess inventory only to find out that there was no standard process used. The production manager usually reviewed existing inventory when new production was scheduled, but there was no disciplined process on how to review and what to do with residual material.

With the implementation of this new process, JMC will continue to have success in reducing storage needs and ensuring that money is well spent in supporting the nation's warfighter.



cost avoidance: An action taken in the present designed to decrease costs in the future.



U.S. Army photo courtesy of Tooele Army Depot

The business at hand Brig. Gen. Larry Wyche, commander of the Joint Munitions Command, discusses various on-going projects with Larry Mitchell, Tooele Army Depot welder.

By Ely Trapp

Tooele Army Depot Public Affairs

The commanding general of the Joint Munitions Command, Brig. Gen. Larry Wyche, visited Tooele Army Depot in mid-February, praising employees at the depot for their hard work and support to warfighters around the world.

The purpose of the general's visit was to learn more about Tooele's mission and capabilities through overview briefings and seeing, first-hand, sites supporting the ammunition mission to include storage areas, as well as understand the design, development and fielding of Ammunition Peculiar Equipment.

Col. Yolanda C. Dennis-Lowman, Tooele commander, provided the overview to the general, highlighting other parts of the depot's mission and capabilities to include many of the organization's private partnerships and development of innovative demilitarization equipment.

During his visit, Brig. Gen. Wyche thanked the Tooele staff for their hard work and stressed the importance of the current mission as the only west coast supplier of ammunition and materiel currently supporting global

operations, including missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are warfighter logisticians and supporters," said the general. "We will never say no [to the warfighter] as long as we have one gallon of gasoline left to give or one bullet to give. That is selfless service. Although you may not be in close proximity to the fight, your heart and service are equally important."

While on the installation tour, Wyche walked through Tooele's Pilot Model Shop, where he had the opportunity to see how the engineering and technical support for the APE mission is being carried out.

"Never think you're not making a difference," Wyche said.

"Our Soldiers thank every one of you for what they have. The look in their eyes when they see the ammo delivered will never be forgotten. Those Soldiers know that they have everything they need when they go to a firefight."

He placed a large focus on ensuring the Tooele team understood the Materiel Enterprise Task Force, one of three task forces put together by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

"Important Service" continued on page 8

At Tooele, work that makes a difference

Location: Tooele, Utah

Commander:

Col. Yolanda C. Dennis-Lowman

Mission: Tooele Army Depot is a storage site for war reserve and training ammunition. The depot stores, issues, receives, renovates, modifies, maintains and demilitarizes conventional munitions. The depot also serves as the National Inventory Control Point for ammunition peculiar equipment, developing, fabricating, modifying, storing and distributing such equipment to all services and other customers worldwide. TEAD provides base support to Desert Chemical Depot.

Fact: TEAD is located in an area rooted to American Indian history and culture. Early Desert Archaic Indians inhabited the Tooele Valley and portions of the North Area 11,000 years ago. The Late Desert Archaics, the Fremont culture and the Numic-speaking culture followed. The Goshute people, who currently inhabit reservations in the area, are descendants of Numic-speaking peoples.

Important Service continued from page 7

Wyche also had the opportunity to meet with industry partners working with Tooele on various missions including Safety Management Services, Inc. who is conducting sensitivity tests at Tooele's Test Facility. SMS is one of four Department of Transportation approved organizations authorized to transport explosive materials.



U.S. Army file photo

a partnership with General Atomics, who received a license the previous week to operate the equipment.

“We have a lot of potential here and we need to find a way to capitalize on that,” said Wyche.

At the conclusion of his visit to Tooele, the general emphasized improving understanding of the Depot's capabilities within JMC and the entire DoD. He also imparted some advice to Tooele employees.

Roger Hale, Tooele testing project manager and equipment specialist, explained that the technical skills within the depot have increased due to this partnership.

“The entrepreneurial spirit that I see here surprised me,” said SMS president, Robert T. Ford. “(TEAD employees) are responsive, skilled and safe. A lot of the follow-on work that we have received has been because of the TEAD partnership.”

Another partnership was visible at Hydrolysis, a part of the APE program, where Wyche ran the first licensed Cartridge Actuated Device/Propellant Actuated Device production run. The Hydrolysis was made possible through

“Taking care of the workforce is a top priority. We owe it to our younger workforce to be trained right,” said Wyche. “If you see potential in our young men and women, we have to make sure we develop it the right way.”

Wyche also emphasized that the continued training of the current workforce will always be a critical part of the success of any organization.

“[TEAD] is a good organization with a common focus,” Wyche said.

“Just remember that good leaders are not made in a day, they are made by the actions that you take daily.”

COMING SOON



**The
Bullet'n**



New Look!

Improved Design! COMING SOON

LOG ON TO
JMC online:

<http://www.jmc.army.mil>




Explosives + Safety = USATECS

By Jaime Thompson
DAC Public Affairs

McALESTER, Okla.--Bullets, bombs and grenades are the Joint Munitions Command's business. And if there's any group of people comfortable with things that go "boom," it's the JMC.

Thanks to the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety, JMC employees can continue to breathe easy knowing those things that go "boom," do so safely.

Fittingly, USATECS is a directorate within the Defense Ammunition Center and USATECS personnel are the Army's approval authority for explosives safety.

From site plan submissions to hazards classifications, and even chemical agent safety, USATECS helps ensure the well-being of Soldiers, civilians, contractors and the public.

To ensure the success of that mission, the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board and the military services are developing software--the Explosives Safety Siting system.

The software will automate the explosives safety site planning process. In addition, it will augment the installation's geographic information system map and real property inventory with explosives safety data.

Then, that data will allow ESS to perform quantity distance analysis and place the appropriate quality distance arcs on a map.

It will also develop quality distance tables and a memo that can be used to submit the site plan through command channels.

"This software will reduce the time that safety professionals spend on developing and reviewing explosives safety site plans, thus giving them more time to perform mission-critical duties," said Lyn Little, a logistics management specialist with USATCES.

ESS requires that data be formatted in accordance with the DoD's Spatial Data Standard for Facilities, Infrastruc-

ture, and Environment.

Often a "data cleansing" effort is required to implement ESS since GIS data for many installations is not SDSFIE compliant.

The software consists of two distinct programs: the ESS Toolkit and ESS Site planner. ESS Toolkit assists the installation in the process of getting their data ready to run site plans.

This preparation ensures the data is SDSFIE compliant and links the data from the GIS map with the data from the installation's real property inventory and the explosives safety data. With a separate process, the ESS site planner actually performs the QD analysis and assembles the site plan packages.

The Explosives Safety Board has established a goal that all site plan submissions must be automated by the year 2011.

JMC funded the installation of ESS at all JMC plants and depots, and at Military Ocean Terminal, Sunny Point, N.C. USATCES is seeking Army funding to implement ESS at all remaining Army installations in time to meet the 2011 goal established by DDESB.

The DAC-led project to implement the software at all JMC plants and depots is partially completed. The main effort on this project is being performed by personnel from the Naval Facilities Engineering Command's Engineering Service Center who serve as the DoD program managers for the ESS program, with support from personnel from JMC installations.

The Mission

The U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety was established in 1988 by a General Officer Steering Committee formed to review the Army's explosives safety program. Our challenge is to implement sound vigilant explosives/chemical agent/ordnance and explosives safety principles. USATCES is an element of the Defense Ammunition Center, McAlester, OK.

Ready, Reliable, Lethal JMC takes its expertise directly to Soldiers



Ammo LAR Mark Combs stands outside of the Logistics Support Element office in Fort Hood, Texas, but to JMC headquarters he's the Ammunition Logistics Assistance Representative for the 407th Army Field Support Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

By Justine Barati
JMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas--Many at Joint Munitions Command may not realize that we have an ammunition expert stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

This man is skilled in working with all types of conventional, chemical and missile related ammunition. His name is Mark Combs, and he is assigned to the 407th Army Field Support Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Logistics Support Element.

"I provide assistance to unit and brigade levels commanders, while providing technical support to the brigade ammunition warrant officers. I keep unit points of contacts up to date on newly fielded ammunition and ensure explosive safety is adhered to while on the ranges. I conduct malfunction investigations and provide feedback to the Joint Munitions Command on probable cause and recommend proper courses of action. I am the voice of JMC that faces the warfighter and the voice of the warfighter that faces JMC," said Combs.

Combs is a Quality Assurance

Specialist, Ammunition Surveillance, Ammunition Logistics Assistance Representative working for JMC. JMC is the provider for bombs and bullets to America's fighting forces -- all services and all types of conventional munitions.

The experience of Ammo LARs is highly valued, and they deploy to combat zones. While deployed, the Ammo LARs "provides classes to soldiers at the unit level, which include proper storage, handling, transportation, explosive safety, and accountability of Class V items."

"I provide training to Army school trained Ammunition Specialists (89 Bravos) in item recognition, inspection, classification, proper packaging, markings, safe handling of packaged/unpackaged munitions, and proper storage procedures," said Combs.

He recently returned from Mosul, Iraq. There, he assisted Soldiers at the ammunition supply point with unit turn-ins, provided technical assistance and answered questions relating to the types of the munitions received."

"Ammo LARs bring a lot of knowledge base I don't think soldiers get during their initial Military Occupational Specialty training. When Soldiers come to Fort Hood their chances of working with ammunition on a routine basis is rare. When the unit is notified to deploy, the 89Bs



U.S. Army photo courtesy of Mark Combs

Advisors in the field Ammo LARs serve as advisors here, instructing two Soldiers in Iraq about the correct security requirements and inspection points for the AT-4.

are expected to remember what was taught to them 12 to 15 months earlier -- that's where we provide the 'most value' to the warfighter," said Combs.

He says he uses mentoring techniques to teach the 89 Bravos about ammunition responsibilities. "We are not there to dictate to a soldier how to complete a particular task; we are there to make recommendations and prevent them [the Soldiers] from causing injury and death to themselves and the folks around them. They can benefit from our experiences."

When Combs is back in the office at Fort Hood, he spends a lot of time at the various types of firing ranges. "I see a lot of units on the ranges on any given day. During my range visits I answer their ammunition questions," he said.

Combs enjoys working with Soldiers and said that is why he chose to become an Ammo LAR. "Working one-on-one with Soldiers whether at home station or in a deployed environment is the most fulfilling experience I can have," he said.

He is one of JMC's Ammo LARs, civilians in mandatory mobility positions. He is currently assigned to Fort Hood. Because he is in a mandatory mobility position, he is reassigned to different Army units throughout the world every five years. He began his assignment at Fort Hood in May 2005.

JM&L LCMC's Safety Spot Check

Report:

128 Active Army suicides

in 2008

By Media Relations Division, OCPA

WASHINGTON -- The Army released its 2008 data on suicides and highlighted its efforts to reduce suicides in the force.

"We want the families who have lost loved ones to suicide to understand how deeply we feel their loss and that we are committed to doing everything possible to prevent this tragedy in our Army," said Secretary of the Army Pete Geren.

"Progress depends on coordinated efforts across our entire Army - across all components, jurisdictions and commands, and on effective work with our government partners - the VA and the National Institute of Mental Health.

To ensure the level of leadership and coordination we need, Gen. [George W.] Casey, [chief of staff of the Army], and I have asked Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, to lead our efforts and ensure that we are working together effectively and that we do everything we can as rapidly as possible."



To identify Soldiers at risk for suicide and to intervene appropriately, the Army will conduct a stand-down within a 30-day window running February 15 to March 15, 2009.

The stand-down will include training for peer-level recognition of behaviors that may lead to suicidal behavior, and intervention at the buddy level. The stand-down will be followed by a chain-teaching program focused on suicide prevention, from March 15 to June 15, 2009.

For the fourth consecutive year, the Army has seen an increase in suicide rates. There were 128 suicides last year in the active Army, with another 15 cases still pending a determination, according to data compiled by Army human resources officials. This was up from 115 suicides in 2007.

Over the past two years, the Army has increased its efforts, and has enhanced resources and initiatives aimed at identifying and mitigating the causes of suicidal behavior. Key to these efforts is eliminating the stigma associated with seeking mental health care. "We need to help our Soldiers and their Families understand that it's OK to ask for help," said Chiarelli.

Additionally, the Army is in the process of implementing a Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program which will enhance resiliency and develop a total fitness program for Soldiers,

Highlights

- **2008 report:**
128 Active Army suicide deaths
- **February 15-March 15:**
30 day Army Stand-down
- **In development:**
Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program
- **For Soldiers and Families:**
BATTLEMIND training
- **JMC Suicide Prevention Training:**
March 2-6, 2009

Families, and civilians to help them thrive in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict. Programs are also being offered to help Soldiers deal with difficult situations and circumstances.

The Army's BATTLEMIND training helps prepare Soldiers and their Families for the stressors of war, and also assists with the detection of possible mental health issues before and after deployment. It informs them about the common signs and symptoms they may experience when readjusting after a combat deployment.

"Strong Bonds" is a specialized training program for single Soldiers, couples, and Families to assist them with communication tactics to improve relationships and build skills that enhance relationships and strengthen resiliency.

Leveraging the expertise of the NIMH, the Army and NIMH signed an agreement in October 2008 to conduct long-term research to identify factors impacting the mental and behavioral health of Soldiers and to share intervention and mitigation strategies that will help decrease suicides.

During the study, which is expected to last five years, the NIMH may interview Soldiers, their Families, and their parents. The study will include Soldiers from each component of the force - Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve.