

Collaboration Is Key During Guard And First Army Simulation Exercise

HARTFORD, Conn. - In true collaborative fashion, National Guard and First Army members recently conducted a three-day Unified Defense Training Exercise at a Guard Distributive Training Technology Project (DTTP) Distance Learning classroom. Due largely in part to its state-of-the-art technology, computer laboratory, and location, the Hartford DTTP classroom helped provide participants with the proper tools needed to move through simulated exercises designed to practice the role of military support to civil authorities.

As a way to enhance the capabilities of the team members and to ensure readiness when needed to support the American public, exercises like these are required for First Army. This exercise was a multi-agency collaboration that included about forty representatives of the Department of Defense, Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States Coast Guard, State Office of Emergency Management and the Connecticut National Guard.

According to Major Howard Smith, who served as the Operations Officer, Response Task Force -East , "The capabilities of the Distance Learning Facility greatly enhanced our operations during the exercise. The CT NG personnel were all very knowledgeable, helpful and professional. Without the assistance of all the personnel in CT, our exercise would not have been as successful."

This particular simulation took members through a 24-hour exercise that dealt with hypothetical terrorist scenarios, and is

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one of many exercises defining First Army's role as a Defense Coordinating Element. It also demonstrates the military and civilian authorities' proficiency in planning, directing, and coordinating support to the incident commander in the event of an actual terrorist attack.

First Army, one of two continental Armies in the U.S., is a highly specialized team of Active Army soldiers, active Guard and Reserve soldiers and Department of the Army civilian employees. First Army improves readiness of Reserve Component forces, mobilizes, prepares, and deploys Army Reserve and National Guard units, conducts Homeland Security, certifies training of units and individuals, executes the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army program, and protects the Force.

In addition to Connecticut, the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts - part of the First Army Region - participated in this training exercise via VTC from their DTTP classrooms.

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