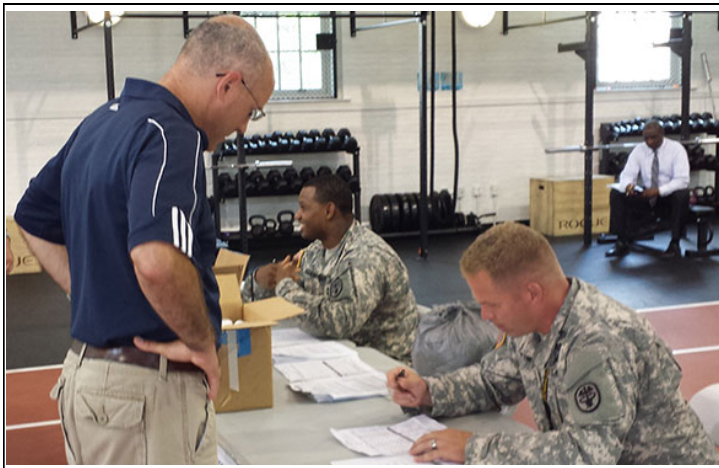


Exercise tests first responders, installation staff

Thomas Zimmerman, Carlisle Barracks Public Affairs Officer

Exercise tests first responders, installation staff



An exercise participant answers questions about his family's medical history at the Pandemic Point of Distribution as part of the Carlisle Barracks force protection exercise July 10. The POD would be used in all types of events where the post may need to distribute medical countermeasures or other needed mass supply distribution to our residents during a major catastrophe.

You probably didn't notice but Carlisle Barracks staff and first responders worked hard making sure that all residents, their Families and staff and faculty were safe after a Category 3 Hurricane hit the area and received a letter laced with anthrax.

Of course, this was all just part of the annual force protection exercise held July 8-11 that allowed the garrison and emergency response staff test their plans in the event of an actual emergency.

"It is important to exercise our plans to see what works and what needs improved," said **Barry Shughart**, Installation Emergency Manager. "We don't want to try out a plan the first time in a real situation and it also gets everyone familiar with the plans."

There are multiple agencies on post and off that play a role in crisis situations, both real and exercise. In addition to the law enforcement activities, the firefighters and EMTs have roles, the DFMWR executes a family assistance center, the IOC coordinates with the county and higher headquarters, DPW provides equipment and building expertise and the list goes on.

The scenario focused on the post's recovery from a major natural disaster while dealing with a terrorist

attack in the form of an anthrax letter, which was part of a national, coordinated attack. The installations' force protection staff had to decipher and connect the dots on intelligence and law enforcement reports and working with the command to ensure the post was as prepared as possible in the event of an attack. In the end while the attack injured two post personnel, a wider threat was avoided thanks to the quick actions of the entire emergency response team.

We had the opportunity to work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health on the Strategic National Stockpile distribution from the state and a Pandemic Point of Distribution,” said Shughart. “We used this opportunity to exercise the state's distribution, fully establish and exercise our Point of Distribution operations. This is a plan that would be used in all types of events where we may need to distribute medical countermeasures or other needed mass supply distribution to our residents during a major catastrophe.”

As part of the exercise Carlisle Barracks also established a Family Assistance Center, a place where residents can go during a crisis to get things like mental health counseling, food, showers, shelter, lodging, ID cards, Red Cross help and more during an actual emergency.

This exercise was different than those in the past as it ran over the course of four days, instead of the traditional one-day exercise.

“Our exercise program has 32 capabilities we have to exercise every year and some were able to test like we did with the Active Shooter exercises in a few buildings this year, DES's exercises they do each month and our Quarterly Tabletops, “ said Shughart. “The end of year annual Installation Full Scale exercise is a culmination of all these tasks. Spreading it out allows us to experience a more realistic exercise that is closer to how it will probably happen, most events will take more than one day. It allowed us to conduct Recovery operations, which has been a shortfall with most installations and is now a focus that IMCOM wants installations to exercise.”