

## Carlisle Barracks, local emergency responders support each other for life-saving response

By Thomas Zimmerman 25 April 2018



*A member of the Cumberland County Special Reaction Team checks on a "victim" during the 2017 Carlisle Barracks full scale exercise. The Army and local responders often train together to better protect the larger community.*

*Cumberland County Constable Jeff O'Donnell and "Trejsi" conduct a K-9 sweep of a bus before the Army War College New York City staff ride. Carlisle Barracks has a number of mutual aid agreements like this with the local community.*

While you probably know that Carlisle Barracks first responders are always on guard to protect and respond to emergencies on post, they also partner with local emergency responders to help the larger Cumberland County area.

Carlisle Barracks has a number of mutual aid agreements with the local community that help provide a mechanism to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services.

The post fire fighters are a prime example of this community partnership as one of the engines at times respond to local emergencies, provide expertise, equipment and hazmat capabilities that local companies may require. Carlisle Barracks has mutual aid agreements with Carlisle Borough, North Middleton Township and Middlesex Township, and

Cumberland County Team 200 HAZMAT for voluntary fire department support to Carlisle Barracks in the event of an emergency.

A recent example of this was the support provided by the Barracks fire department for a major accident on I-81 April 23 that involved two tractor-trailers and shut the northbound lanes down for more than seven hours.

“We were dispatched to Interstate 81 for a vehicle accident with a hazardous material leak as one of the trucks was carrying multiple hazardous chemicals,” said Jim O’Connell, Chief, Fire & Emergency Services. “We assisted the Cumberland County Haz-Mat team with helping identify what was leaking and was part of the entry team to investigate and contain the leaking chemicals so it could be turned over to the cleanup company.”

When a Carlisle Barracks engine assists the local community, an engine is identified by the Cumberland County Emergency Operations Center to assist in the event of an emergency here. Carlisle Barracks supports an average of 100 mutual aid fire calls a year.

Other relationships include the Cumberland County Special Reaction Team and the explosive detection teams, as evidenced by support from the Cumberland County Sheriff’s office before the recent New York City staff ride. Cumberland County Constable O'Donnell and Trejsi and Cumberland County Deputy Sherriff Homa with "Keisel," both provided an explosives sweep before the buses were boarded as the Carlisle Barracks K-9 was in training.

“It is a great benefit to Carlisle Barracks to have mutual aid agreements,” said Bob Suskie, Director of Emergency Services. “We have a finite number of on-duty first responders, equipment and assets to deal with a complex crises and these agreements provide us access to an infinite amount of support from Fire and Emergency Services departments as well law enforcement agencies to assist us during emergencies.”

In addition to these examples, Carlisle Barracks and the local agencies also work together during exercises like the full-scale exercise hosted each July here. The exercises provide an opportunity for both communities to practice how they would respond to a real-world emergency and also fulfill annual training requirements at little to no cost.

“It’s not often that we get to work together, side by side in a real-world situation with our counterparts off-post,” said Barry Shughart, Installation

Emergency Manager. “Also, by hosting these exercises together we’re able to help meet multiple requirements for multiple organizations at the same time. In a time of constrained resources for everyone, this is very important.”

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