ATF, military expand collaboration against IEDs

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Program to Include Staff Position at JIEDDO's Joint Center of Excellence at Fort Irwin and Extensive Explosives Training

WASHINGTON - The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today that it has expanded its program to help the U.S. military combat the use of improvised explosives devices (IEDs) by terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The expanded program, under a Department of Justice initiative, includes detailing an ATF special agent certified explosives specialist to the staff of the military's Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) Joint Center of Excellence (JCOE) at Ft. Irwin, Calif., and assisting in the training of military bomb technicians before they deploy overseas in post- blast explosives investigations and homemade explosives.

Under a memorandum of agreement signed late last year by ATF Acting Director Michael J. Sullivan and JIEDDO Director Montgomery C. Meigs, a retired U.S. Army general, the ATF detailee will be the Department of Justice's representative to JCOE and provide technical instruction for the roles ATF and other Justice Department components play in the Combined Explosives Exploitation Cell (CEXC) in Iraq and the Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC) back in the United States.

CEXC provides immediate, in-theater technical exploitation and operational analysis of the IEDs that insurgents have used against multinational forces, and assists in the development of measures and procedures to counter the insurgent bombing campaign. TEDAC exploits and analyzes the returning IED components, confirming the intelligence received by CEXC for assessment and eventual sharing with law enforcement and U.S. allies.

"This agreement and the military's decision to have ATF assist in training its bomb techs further strengthens the collaboration essential to winning the war against terrorism," Sullivan said. "We're proud to be able to share our well-established expertise in explosives training and investigations with our comrades in uniform."

"This is an additional element in our ability to combat IED networks worldwide," added Meigs. "This partnership with the ATF in the global war against terrorism will help both organizations tremendously."

Under the military post-blast program, ATF will train six classes of military bomb techs this year at its National Center for Explosives Training and Research at Ft. A.P. Hill, Va., and elsewhere. ATF, in conjunction with the U.S. intelligence community, will also develop and offer a course on homemade explosives, more and more of which are making their way into terrorist and criminal IEDs.

ATF, which regulates the U.S. explosives industry and has jurisdiction for investigating bombings and other explosives incidents, is one of the world's leading explosives investigative and training agencies, providing that expertise to the U.S. military, State Department, and local, state, other federal and foreign law enforcement in the United States and overseas.

Since 2001, ATF's National Center for Explosives Training and Research has trained almost 6,000 bomb technicians and investigators in explosive disposal and investigative techniques. ATF also provides explosives training to the new Iraqi Police Service and at the International Law Enforcement Academies in Botswana, El Salvador, Hungary and Thailand.

ATF operates the U.S. Bomb Data Center, the Department of Justice's repository for all explosives and arson information and databases. One of those databases, the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS), allows state, local and other federal law enforcement agencies in the United States to share information about bomb and arson cases and incidents. Another, DFuze, is an international and multilingual explosives database that ATF and other international law enforcement agencies use to share information and intelligence on explosives incidents, devices and methods, and firearms. In 2006, Australia joined ATF, Britain, Colombia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Northern Ireland and Singapore as a participant in Dfuze.

ATF is also the Department of Justice's lead agency for the training of explosives and accelerant detection canines, providing instruction to other federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies in the United States and around the world. To date, ATF has trained more than 760 explosives detection canines and

handlers in 16 countries, including Iraq; 617 of those teams are still working. More than 400 explosives detection canine teams are deployed internationally, and 116 teams domestically, 34 of them with ATF special agent handlers.

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