

Local, State, Federal and DoD Agencies Participate in Disaster Response Exercise

Press Release

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PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. "It was a nightmare; worst-case scenario. But that's what U.S. Northern Command officials had intended for "Determined Promise "04."

The exercise was designed to test USNORTHCOM's ability to respond to multiple, simultaneous homeland defense and federal relief efforts.

This year's exercise was combined with North American Aerospace Defense Command's (NORAD) Amalgam Virgo '04, which is a bi-national, multi-agency air security exercise. The simulated attacks came from land, sea and air.



Firefighters, Police and Military personnel from LA and the surrounding areas participated in the NORAD/USNORTHCOM sponsored exercise Determine Promise 04 and Amalgam Virgo 04.

Photo credit: Petty Officer 1st Class Shane Wallenda, USN

Scenarios in Virginia involved the simulated release of sarin and mustard gases, tunnel and bridge explosions and the crash of a truck hauling chlorine. Other targets were unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), launched from an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico, and multiple airliners with terrorists on board headed for Portland, Oregon and Ottawa, Canada.

The exercise also involved numerous incidents in California, including the simulated detonation of a "dirty bomb" in a Los Angeles harbor, derailment of a train loaded with hazardous chemicals in Ventura County and business jets swarming over San Diego in preparation for attack.

From Virginia to California, and Florida to Canada, the exercise tested the capabilities of NORAD and USNORTHCOM, local, state and federal agencies, said Marine Col. Gene Pino, NORAD's and USNORTHCOM's director of training and exercises.

"We are at war with a smart thinking enemy and we must continue to stay just as smart and think just as hard about these events as they do. When we stop doing that, I think that's when we'll be in danger," said Pino.

He noted that every exercise scenario was built on a strong intelligence platform to test the synchronization and sharing of information from the local to national level to ensure "we are poised to engage a threat."

More than 60 agencies, including local first-responders and state and federal emergency services, participated in the exercise, along with the Department of Defense.

"The exercise was an extraordinary success, improving the seamless interaction of these agencies," said Lt. Gen. Joe Inge, the Deputy Commander for USNORTHCOM. "From intelligence gathering and sharing to consequence management, America is much safer today from the terrorist threat, due to the all-out effort of each and every participant in this massive exercise," Inge said.

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The exercise was the fifth semi-annual training session for NORAD and USNORTHCOM since the Sept. 11 attacks.

NORAD is a bi-national Canadian and American command responsible for the air defense of North America. NORAD has jet fighters on alert throughout North America, supported by air-to-air refueling tankers, airborne and ground-based radar, surveillance systems and satellites.

NORAD officially began operations on May 12, 1958 to defend the airspace of the United States and Canada from long-range Soviet bombers. NORAD's mission continues to evolve to protect the citizens of the United States and Canada.

NORTHCOM has a two-fold mission: homeland defense and civil support. Specifically, it conducts operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories, and interests within the assigned area of responsibility. Additionally, as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, the command provides military assistance to civil authorities, including consequence management operations, to help mitigate crisis situations.