

**DV**

**DesertVoice Magazine**  
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

March 21, 2007

# Detonation Duty

U.S., Kuwaiti ordnance teams join up to destroy unserviceable munitions



## Protecting your eyes is critical

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Do you have what it takes to become an EOD technician?

### On the cover

Capt. Gene Redding, commander, 221st Ordnance Company (EOD), while transporting C4 (foreground), during a detonation, March 12.

Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

As you gear up for combat, don't forget to protect your eyes.

Roughly 10 percent of injuries from combat on the battlefield are eye injuries, and Soldiers can easily reduce the possibility of becoming a statistic by wearing ballistic eyewear.

The protection Soldiers have gained from improved body armor has helped us survive, but NCOs must ensure their troops have adequate eye armor.

And it's not enough to check the block. They must also make sure the Soldiers wear the protective eyewear. Remember – Soldiers follow the standard, and NCOs set the standard.

If you're doing it, then they'll do it too. It all starts in pre-deployment when Soldiers receive the ballistic eyewear protection through the Rapid Fielding Initiative Program.

While deployed and using the protective eyewear, Soldiers can give feedback on what works and what doesn't – while also saving their eyes from damage.

This will help the next rotation of Soldiers getting ready to deploy, because the Army is continually monitoring and improving the armor available to protect Soldiers' lives and overall health.

But it all starts with putting the glasses on and protecting your eyes.

There are many things Soldiers need to protect their eyes from: shrapnel, sand storms and ultraviolet rays.

They can use the goggles for protection against sun, wind and dust, or the more versatile and light-weight Wiley-X glasses to



**Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe**  
**Third Army Command Sergeant Major**

see past the sun's glare.

Leaders must ensure that Soldiers are using approved eye protection, not civilian eyewear that doesn't meet the standards.

Here are some types of approved eyewear:

- Special Protective Eyewear Cylindrical System
- Ballistic Laser Protective Spectacles
- Sun, Wind and Dust Goggles
- UVEX XC Spectacles
- Eye Safety Systems

Interchangeable Component Eyeshield 2

- Wiley-X PT-1 Spectacles

- Oakley SI Military M Frame Kit (Ballistic)

When NCOs do their pre-combat checks, making sure Soldiers are wearing their approved ballistic eyewear is an essential part of those checks.

Without eyesight, Soldiers become a liability instead of an asset. When it's time for a five-minute break, leaders need to make sure their Soldiers' glasses are clean and functional.

They're looking to you – the NCO – for guidance, accountability and reassurance. Let them know they're doing the right thing by making sure you're doing the right thing.

Every day, young men and women head into combat and face uncertainty. But they can be certain the equipment handed to them will help save their lives.

It's up to all Soldiers, all NCOs, to strap on their body armor, get the job done and go home to their families.

Deployed Soldiers count down the days until they can see their families again – make sure you get to see their faces.

Do the right thing and wear your ballistic eyewear.

**“Patton's Own”**

# DV

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Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

**Joshua Covey, a forklift operator, carries a crate of tires to the TARP facility to be repaired and recycled. As many as 5,000 tires a month get fixed at the Camp Arifjan facility.**

## **When the rubber meets the road**

### **Tire recycling center keeping Army's vehicles on the road**

**Sgt. Thomas L. Day**  
**Desert Voice Staff Writer**

Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, is home to the U.S. Army's tire recycling depot for convoys coming back from Iraq.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rachel Rosenbaum, a Wisconsin native working for the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, supervises the shop, supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

ITT Industries, of Colorado Springs, Colo., is contracted by Army Sustainment Command to run the operation.

About 2,500 to 3,000 tires per month get fixed at the Tire Assembly Repair Program, according to Rosenbaum. In 2006 alone, more than 30,000 tires were fixed under Rosenbaum's purview.

Rosenbaum said her mission is, "To put together serviceable wheel assemblies to [save] Soldiers [time]."

Most of Rosenbaum's staff consists of civilian employees of the Army Materiel Command. Johnny Sanders, a Navy veteran, has been in Kuwait since April 2005, when the tire plant ran a makeshift facility out of two shipping containers.

"The commands will ship their unserviceable tires and rims to the retroyard," Sanders said. The retroyard is what Sanders calls "a desert area with nothing but tires" where the tires are collected from Iraq.

"We will draw from the retroyard, bring them here to the shop, assess them, see if they're repairable," Sanders said. "Once we assess them, we break them down, put new parts on them and we'll reassess, using the new parts to make sure they're serviceable and return them to the fleet."

In January of 2006, the facility

moved into a larger, Clamshell tent. Its operations have since grown precipitously. Now, Sanders' maintains a staff of 74. Tires come into the TARP facility by crates.

Smaller tires are fixed by hand. Larger tires go to the Coats 9000 machine, a \$15,000, 1,600-pound machine that separates large tires from the rim. The recycling process, according to Sanders, usually takes about "an hour to an hour and a half" per tire.

Once completed, Prentice Girtman, an inspector, reviews the product. "All I do is look at the procedures, make sure they're doing them correctly," Girtman said.

The 401st AFSB established similar tire repair facilities in Balad, Iraq, an American compound in Qatar, and Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, which is just now being completed.

# Detonation

## U.S., Kuwaiti ordnance technicians destroy

**Sgt. Chris Jones**  
**Desert Voice Editor**

Standing on a sandy ridge overlooking the vast desert of Kuwait, explosive ordnance teams from the U.S. Army and Kuwait Air Force watched 8,000 pounds of explosives illuminate the sky, concluding a long day of work, March 12.

The Kuwait military is currently involved in a mission to destroy its unserviceable explosives, so EOD teams from Kuwait and the U.S. have been working together to get most of this complete before the harsh heat of summer arrives.

The destruction of 8,000 pounds of explosives March 12 was one of many detonations aimed to consolidate the Kuwaiti military's munitions stockpile, and another detonation – with 30,000 pounds of explosives, took place the following day.

Missions such as these are important to the safety of everyone in Kuwait, and they also boost the Kuwaiti economy, as it takes a significant amount of money to contain and safeguard munitions, according to Capt. Gene Redding, commander, 221st Ordnance Company (EOD), a Florida National Guard unit based near Jacksonville.

Together, Kuwaiti and U.S. EOD technicians successfully disposed of

70,000 pounds of explosives in the last week.

For many of the 221st EOD technicians, working with Kuwaitis is a rewarding experience that builds friendships and breaks cultural barriers.

"I think the interaction with them is great," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Morgan, an EOD team leader. "Their beliefs and cultures are different, but we're all in the military doing the same line of work. It's just different ways of doing the same thing."

According to Redding, the satisfaction of working with the Kuwaitis has as much to do with working alongside fellow EOD technicians as it does working with other nations.

"It's satisfying to [work] with another EOD technician, regardless of his nationality," the Jacksonville native said.

The operational tempo for EOD units in theater is always high, yet the 221st is split into teams working out of three countries – Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar. As such, Redding implemented a

plan to rotate the teams through Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar, with two primary objectives in mind: help his technicians gain experience and allow those who were in Iraq to unwind from the dangerous, intense work.

"Certainly the [operational tempo] is different in Iraq than Qatar," said Redding. "So it allows [the EOD technicians] to decompress."

Because there are a small number of Soldiers in the unit, EOD teams generally travel in packs



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

# n D u t y

## unserviceable munitions

of two, three at the most. For this reason, the Soldiers must make the most out the time and resources available. It also helps form bonds, said technician Sgt. James Everett.

“There’s really no ‘that’s your job, this is my job.’ Everyone does whatever needs done. There’s no room for squabble.”

Kuwait provides a unique challenge for EOD teams. The shifting sands cover and uncover munitions almost daily, said Redding. The Kuwait landscape can be a dangerous place to tread, with unexploded ordnances recalling the Gulf War.

“If you look around the desert, you see a lot of war remnants,” said Morgan, who served in Desert Storm as a member of the 101st Airborne Division. “It’s still not an entirely safe place to walk around.”

It’s a dangerous job, said Everett, but it’s also a rewarding job.

“You’re [working] with explosives, stuff that can kill you,” said Everett. “People say, ‘oh, that’s such a dangerous job.’ Well, yeah. But it’s also fun. It’s so much fun. It’s exciting, and it’s rewarding work.”

The EOD technicians find constant reminders of their dangerous duty. Indeed, just a few minutes before the March 12 detonation, Redding received

a phone call informing him of a UXO incident on Camp Arifjan.

Responding to the UXO incident, Redding drove back to Camp Arifjan, where the 221st is headquartered during the deployment. Returning to camp late at night, Redding’s day still wasn’t done.

In the 221st, with each Soldier in a demanding role, Redding doesn’t always have the option of just being the commander; sometimes, like today, he sweats in the sun with his Soldiers, helping to prepare for a detonation.

“I wasn’t out there because I hadn’t done the dirty work for a while and just wanted to,” said Redding. “This job takes everybody.”

**(Left)** A technician with the 221st Ordnance Company (EOD) works with a Kuwaiti EOD technician to place missiles in a row to be destroyed by C4.

**(Right)** Photo series of an 8,000-pound explosive blast, March 12.

**(Watermark)** A close-up of an explosive blast in the Kuwait desert, March 12. Kuwait Air Force EOD personnel have been working with U.S. Army EOD personnel on a mission to destroy Kuwait’s unserviceable munitions.



Photo series by Sgt. Chris Jones



Courtesy photo

**(Left)** Discussing documentation with Kuwaiti army officers that will affect military policy, Maj. Timothy Mertssock works as a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive officer and liaison for the Kuwaiti army.

**(Right)** Maj. Timothy Mertssock, far right, stands with top Kuwaiti military officials as they watch joint training between American and Kuwaiti soldiers.

**(Bottom right)** Maj. Timothy Mertssock, far right, a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive officer with Third Army/U.S. Army Central, stands with top Kuwaiti military officials as they watch joint CBRNE training between American and Kuwaiti soldiers.

# Building relations, Breaking barriers

**Sgt. Sarah Scully**  
*Desert Voice Staff Writer*

Most deployed Soldiers wake up in a tent and go to work in a fortified compound surrounded by other Americans and a familiar culture.

But one Soldier has to work outside of his comfort zone and succeed in a foreign culture extremely different from American habits and approach to life.

When Maj. Timothy Mertssock arrives in his office every morning, he's the only American.

"It's different," said Mertssock, a 36-year-old chemical officer and native of Cherry Hill, N.J. "You have to first listen and build a relationship with your counterparts before you can work any actions or projects."

Working as a Third Army/U.S. Army Central liaison to the Kuwaiti army's

chemical section, he routinely works with Kuwaiti officers to prepare for potential chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive incidents.

Most Soldiers start their day by immediately checking their messages, catching up on events and meeting to discuss the day's priorities.

But Mertssock has a more relaxed and easygoing approach learned from his Kuwaiti counterparts – they share a light breakfast and tea while talking about the previous day and their families.

It's a tough challenge for time-concerned Americans used to barging straight into work issues.

"It's challenging because we are used to a suspense and a timeline," said Mertssock. "You just have to approach things differently."

But Mertssock has learned how to

embrace a foreign culture and do business by getting to know the men behind the rank and culture. He's also had to overcome a language barrier and learn some Arabic while the Kuwaitis also perfect their English.

"I enjoy getting to know a people and their language," said Mertssock, who wears a Kuwaiti crest on his left shoulder sleeve and Kuwaiti rank beneath his American Army rank.

"It's always an enlightening experience to find out there are good people everywhere."

And the Kuwaitis enjoy learning about America through Army ambassadors such as Mertssock.

"We are happy to see our friend working in Kuwait, helping us to protect our countries and keep its freedom," said Col. Mohammed



Photo by Sgt. Sarah Scully

# Looking at one Soldier's unusual mission in Kuwait

Yousef Shams Al-Deen, Kuwait Chemical Defense Directorate chief of operations.

“He is a proactive officer who never hesitates in giving advice to improve.”

As an advisor, Mertsoc helps the Kuwaiti soldiers learn techniques to combat any CBRNE dangers by deciding what equipment to purchase and by having American Soldiers teach the Kuwaiti soldiers CBRNE skills.

“The Kuwaitis have a lot of potential – they want to learn,” said Mertsoc. “They just need equipment to further develop.”

American Soldiers routinely teach Kuwaiti soldiers how to respond to CBRNE events and help them

become self-sufficient.

“In the end, they can do it themselves,” said Mertsoc. “We’re helping them develop how they’re going to react.”

And the Kuwaitis are also teaching Mertsoc how to react to a foreign culture and succeed.

“It’s a nice surprise to get this opportunity – it’s just incredible to experience the culture,” said Mertsoc. “It’s different, but in a good way.”

Now that he has only a few months left before re-deploying back to the states, how does he mark his success?

“If they see a professional in the U.S. Army, and they respect that individual, then I’ve done my job.”

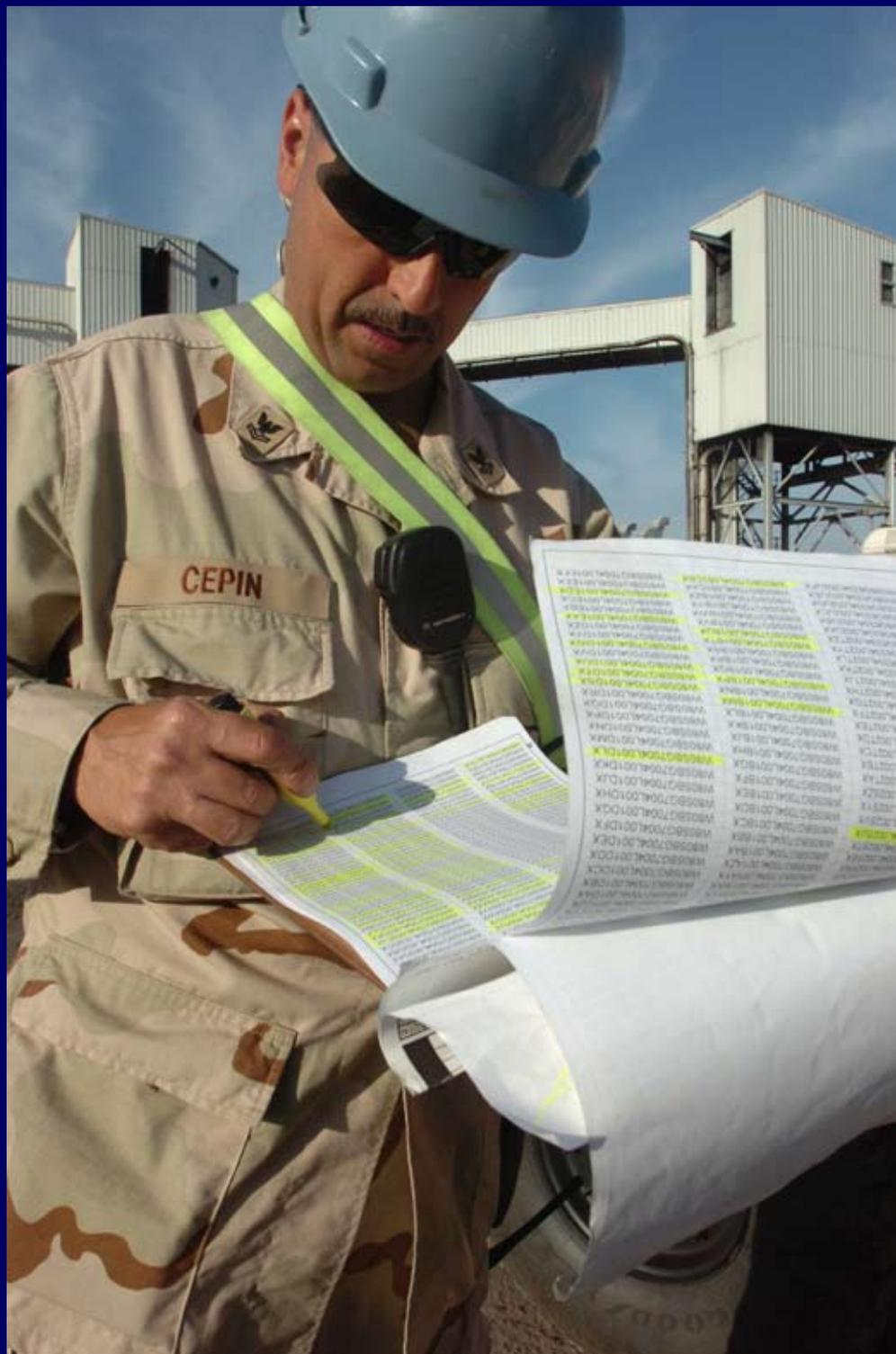


Courtesy photo

Kuwait

# Humvee

# Deliv



## Rollin' on

**(Right)** Petty Officer Second Class Je storekeeper inventories the humvees and March 8.

**(Top right)** All of the new humvees of theater are uparmored and fit for duty on Iraq.

**(Bottom right)** After the vehicles were they were immediately driven out of the tured to move north.

Photos by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

# very

## Hundreds of new uparmored humvees arrive at Kuwait port



# out

ff Cepin, a Navy  
riving in theater,

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# Oh, oh it's **magic**

## Captain uses talent to fight fire, bring joy to children

**Spc. Debrah A. Ledesma**  
**Desert Voice Assistant Editor**

A kid's dream come true.... a firefighter, a magician and an American Soldier all rolled into one.

Capt. Michael Leister, the battalion personnel officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 142 Field Artillery Regiment, uses his talent as a magician to teach children fire safety.

When Leister's not deployed with the Arkansas National Guard in support of Third Army/ U.S. Army Central, he works as a firefighter. Although he is trained to save lives whether in a fireman's uniform or a Soldier's, Leister goes the extra mile and performs magic shows for children that incorporate fire safety.

"I've been doing magic for ten years," said Leister, a Van

Buren, Ark., native. "I started as a sophomore in college."

Now Leister performs before crowds of up to 900 people in his state of Arkansas, he said.

Fighting fires and teaching young children is important to Leister.

"It's the best job in the world," he said of being a firefighter.

And Leister is indisputably one of the best. He won firefighter of the year last year at Fort Smith, Ark, where he works for the city fire department.

Leister uses his shows to involve the children so they can better understand fire safety and learn to feel comfortable around the firefighters who work to save their lives.

"I perform magic to music," he said, "and there's a lot of audience participation."

"He's extremely good at it," said Spc. Brian Harris, a human



*Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Ledesma*

**(Above)** Capt. Michael Leister, the battalion personnel officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 142 Field Artillery Regiment, works at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

**(Below)** Capt. Michael Leister is seen in the costume he wears for his performances as a magician. Children, as well as adults, enjoy the entertainment and fire safety lessons in his show.



*Courtesy Photo*

resource specialist who works with Leister in the same unit and shares an office with him, on Leister's magic.

Although Leister gets his share of ribbing from "the guys," he loves what he does.

"I get a lot of crap over it," laughed Leister, "but it's worth it."

# Fad free nutrition

Information provided by  
Lt. Cmdr. Paul D. Allen

Fad diets have been around for ages. Atkins was published in the 1960s and the grapefruit diet has been around since the 1930s.

There are so many fad diets that one would have difficulty naming them all, so forget trying them all.

So which ones work, taste good, are easy and safe? The answer...none of the above.

## Start a routine of healthy habits

Keep it simple

- Eat three servings of vegetables a day.
- Take it easy on the meats.
- Make those bowls of ice cream few and far between.

Add exercise to the routine

- Add aerobic or cardiovascular exercise to your daily plan.
- Get moving.
- Remember that a bowl of ice cream is close to the caloric equivalent of running 5 miles.

Remember moderation

- Eat a variety of foods but get the nutritious foods in first. Then go for dessert.

For more information go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov), [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) or [www.shapeup.com](http://www.shapeup.com)

## Just One Question...

### What were you doing this time last year?



**"I was ready to go to Camp Shelby for deployment. I had one month left to go with the Ohio National Guard. I worked there full time."**

Staff Sgt. Anthony Doty  
Command Sergeant Major's Detail  
1-174th Air Defense Artillery  
Cincinnati, Ohio



**"Training for this deployment. Weapons' qualification and weapons' training with different weapons in Eglin Air Force Base."**

Sgt. Tommy Burns  
Equipment Operator  
1-86th Engineer Company  
Dothan, Ala.



**"I just finished [Advanced Noncommissioned Officers' Course] and was on my way home to Crown Point, N.M. I was enjoying the time I had left before I came here."**

Sgt. 1st Class Jerrold Brown  
Platoon sergeant  
25th Inspector General  
Crown Point, N.M.



**"This time last year, I was getting ready for my SATs. I just graduated last year."**

Private John Allegra  
Combat Engineer  
115th Infantry Regiment  
Ellington, Conn.



**"Going to school at Lexington Community College and working."**

Sgt. Marcie Stone  
Intelligence analyst  
Task Force AVCRAD  
Frankfurt, Ky.



## Hometown Hero

**Spc. Stephanie Lehman**  
Intelligence Analyst  
1-111th Aviation Regiment

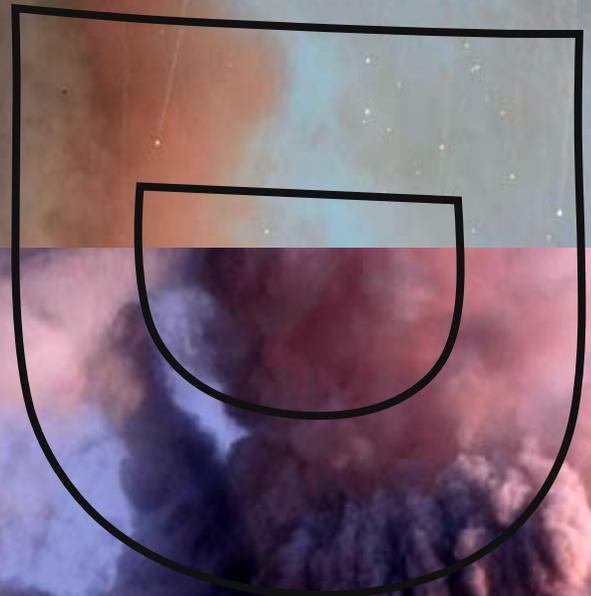
Intelligence analysts, like Lehman, supervise, perform or coordinate collection management, analysis, processing and dissemination of strategic and tactical intelligence.

**Lehman talks about why she misses Boston, Mass.**

**"I miss the cold. Right now it would be a little bit chilly but sunny and warming up for spring."**

**“People say, ‘oh, that’s such a dangerous job.’ Well, yeah. But it’s also fun. It’s so much fun. It’s exciting, and it’s rewarding work.”**

**-Sgt. James Everett,  
221st Ordnance Company (EOD)**



# Do you have what it takes?

- Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
**Qualifications:**
- Must be a PFC through SGT (SGT non-promotable and with less than 1 year time in grade)
  - Male and female Soldiers with two years active federal service may apply
  - GM Score (maintenance) 104 / 105 (Depending on test date)
  - Must be eligible for top-secret clearance
  - Must have normal color vision
  - Must have a valid state drivers license
  - Cannot be allergic to explosives
  - Physical Profile of at least 111121
  - Must successfully complete interview process
  - Volunteer for the EOD program
- For more information, visit  
<http://www.bragg.army.mil/eod/>