

Diligent Warrior 2004 concludes at Malmstrom



A security forces member tends to one of the accident victims, stabilizing him while waiting for medical personnel to arrive. In the background, tires burning in metal drums simulated the results of the exercise scenario, a collision between a payload transport vehicle and a fuel truck.



Photos by Marcus Wilson

Firefighters work together to try and put out the fire at the simulated accident scene. During the exercise, outside agencies, such as the City of Great Falls and Black Eagle fire departments, as well as National agencies such as the Department of Energy and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, were called in to assist and evaluate.



Photo by Roger Dey

Members participating in the decontamination process of the exercise on the second day get briefed before heading to the accident scene.

After two and a half days of nonstop operations, Team Malmstrom has proven itself capable of dealing with accidents involving the transportation of nuclear assets.

The Diligent Warrior 2004 exercise kicked off Monday morning when a call came in to the base reporting a civilian tanker truck struck an Air Force payload transporter semi-truck traveling along Highway 87, resulting in a fire and damage to the nuclear weapon on board.

The field training exercise was sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and hosted by the 341st Space Wing.

Following the initial reports,

Malmstrom officials received support from the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, National Transportation Safety Board, and state, county and city officials.

Observers were on hand at all locations of the exercise to note Malmstrom's strengths and weaknesses in responding to this type of situation.

All of these findings were discussed in a "hot wash" meeting held Wednesday, following the exercise.

A "hot wash" is when observers and senior leadership discuss ways to improve performance for the next exercise or real-world incident.

"I'm absolutely thrilled with the response Team Malmstrom provided

and the attentive, enthusiastic professionalism they all showed with a laser light focus," said Col. Everett Thomas, 341st Space Wing commander. "I am also very proud of the way the teams endured the weather that was thrown at us the first two days."

The purpose of the exercise was to validate the plans, policies and technical procedures currently in place to respond to real-world events involving nuclear resources, and to heighten the coordination and cooperation between federal, state and local response agencies.

This exercise did not involve nuclear weapons or radioactive materials, nor did it reflect an increased likelihood that a real accident might occur.

This is only the second time an Air Force ICBM base has participated in this type of exercise.



Tech. Sgt. Scott Woodland, right, an exercise controller from Malmstrom, keeps the fire burning that simulated the result of a payload transporter semi-truck colliding with a civilian fuel truck at the start of the Diligent Warrior exercise Monday.

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