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U.S. Army Explosives Forensics Stakeholders Meet to Collaborate on Future Defense Capabilities

By Aerial Storey



Caitlin Sharpes and Dakota Discepolo, contracted scientists at DEVCOM CBC under the Olfactory Sciences Team, discuss the Working Dog Advanced Threat Assessment System with Ronald Colbeck, Supervisory Police Officer Kennel Master, and Nicholas Vertz, Police K-9 Handler, from the U.S. Army Installation Management Command. (U.S. Army photo by Ellie White)

Investigation, Aberdeen Police Department, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Army, and the Military Working Dogs (MWD) program at the U.S. Army Installation Management Command.

The purpose of the engagement day was to bring together users and interested stakeholders to showcase current technologies in action and gather feedback for the scientists and researchers to implement throughout their product development. Generating feedback and engagement from all individuals across diverse competencies is integral in protecting the Nation from chemical and biological threats. The Army Explosives Forensics program's goals lie in developing and augmenting technologies to locate, detect, and identify trace amounts of hazardous materials throughout the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosives (CBRNE) environment.

Nicole Bowes, a technical project manager at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division, explained the importance of seeing the developments firsthand and engaging with stakeholders across different areas of expertise, "It's been a really great event," she said. "It's nice to see the capabilities hands-on and get the status update on a lot of these developmental projects. A lot of the work that I do is later in the

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD – The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center (DEVCOM CBC) recently hosted the first Stakeholder Engagement Day for the Army Explosives Forensics program. This program aims to develop and augment sensor technologies for the semi-autonomous detection of explosives and other chemical hazards, supported by over 40 scientists and engineers across DEVCOM CBC, academia, industry, and other government agencies. The event included attendees from multiple government agencies, including the Federal Bureau of



development cycle, so it helps to monitor the progress as it gets to the end users. These types of events are good for us."

The event showcased a live demonstration of the MWD's ability to detect explosive materials in trace amounts. The demonstration displayed one of the many success stories of the innovative technologies developed at DEVCOM CBC. Another innovation from the Center includes the inkjet printing capabilities implemented with the MWD program to help train the working dogs in detecting explosives. CBC engineers print small amounts of explosive materials on sample coupons instead of using traditional bulk quantities and use them when training the dogs. The result of this program is a reliable, low-cost, effective solution that has enhanced the Army's training process.

Calvin Chue, a biologist at the U.S. Department of State and former DEVCOM CBC employee who worked in the development of dog training methods, attended the event and discussed the importance of engaging stakeholders throughout product development and the impact of seeing the progression of such products over the years. "It's fantastic to see the continued evolution and to validate the vision that we had ten years ago - to see that the need was there, and it's only grown since then. It's fantastic," he said.

The event successfully displayed the capabilities of DEVCOM CBC and, more importantly, gathered critical stakeholders together. Increased awareness of the current project developments in explosive detection through events such as this can significantly impact the forensics field and enable collaboration between the Center and its partners.

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For more information about the DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center, visit <https://cbc.DEVCOM.army.mil>

The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Chemical Biological Center (CBC) is aligned under the U.S. Army Futures Command (AFC) and U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM.)

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