

## Training

Continued from Page 22

neighbor, established a State Partnership alliance in April 2004 to exchange military, civil and cultural ideas.

In Israel, the National Guard put its best foot forward when Lt. Col. Patrick Tennis, the Guard Bureau's deputy director of Domestic Operations, explained how the National Guard responded to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma which devastated the Gulf Coast in August and September.

Tennis also explained how the Guard's civil support teams and its chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, high-yield explosive enhanced response force packages (CERFPs) are trained and ready to support civilian authorities in the event of natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

The visit was an outgrowth of two previous meetings between Blum and Israel's Home Front leaders. Blum

visited Israel for a couple of days in September 2004. Gershon, who has had the Home Front command for 10 months, visited Blum in Washington last July.

The generals have discussed ways to explore such matters as emergency response to mass terror events and natural disasters, consequence management, and urban search and rescue.

The Guard delegation in November included the adjutants general from Oregon, Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, and from Washington, Maj. Gen. Tim Lowenberg, and Brig. Gen. Steve Saunders, director of Doctrine, Training and Force Development for the Guard Bureau. The group also included representatives from nine of the Guard's regional CERFPs.

They visited some of the world's most holy shrines in Old Jerusalem and they viewed some of Israel's most modern military facilities to learn about that country's culture.

The Israelis explained their sophisticated system for detecting and responding to an attack or incident

anywhere in the country and how an extensive network of sensors makes it possible for people at the national command center and for troops on the ground to share the same information.

The Americans were also escorted to the headquarters for Israel's 200-member National Search and Rescue Unit, whose reserve personnel are sent on missions around the world, and to the National Search and Rescue and Civil Defense School where the young Soldiers are trained.

### Military service mandatory for all Israelis

Military service is mandatory for all Israeli men and women when they turn 18, it was explained. Men serve for three years; women for two.

The Americans saw some of those troops sharpening their urban warfare skills at the Israeli Army's vast National Center for Ground Training, located west of the Gaza Strip and north of Egypt in the Negev Desert.

Yes, the National Guard leaders maintained that they lead solid Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. Lt. Col.

Bruce Holloman, commander of the CERFP in Colorado, told of how the 950 members of Task Force St. Bernard, which he commanded for three weeks after Katrina, were determined and proud to help their fellow Americans in Louisiana.

But the Guard leaders also acknowledged that they can learn some valuable lessons from the Israelis.

Capt. Michael Day, commander of a CERFP in California, said after watching two demonstrations at the search and rescue school: "They are a globally deployable force on the things that we want to be able to do in our own states and in neighboring states. I'd like to come back. I'd love to bring my search and rescue folks here."

The American general Blum and the Israeli general Gershon are making every effort to make that possible.



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