

# USNORTHCOM

The Department of Defense established U.S. Northern Command in 2002 to consolidate, under a single unified command, existing missions that were previously executed by other military organizations. USNORTHCOM's mission is homeland defense and civil support, specifically:

- Conduct operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories and interests within the assigned area of responsibility.
- As directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, provide military assistance to civil authorities including consequence management operations.

U.S. Northern Command plans, organizes, and executes homeland defense and civil support missions, but has few permanently assigned forces. The command is assigned forces whenever necessary to execute missions as ordered by the President. Approximately 1,200 uniformed personnel (representing all service branches) and civil service employees provide this essential unity of command from U.S. Northern Command's headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Admiral Keating assumed command of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command Nov. 5, 2004.



Adm. Timothy J. Keating  
Commander, North American  
Aerospace Defense Command and  
U.S. Northern Command

... The need for transformation is hardly new ... Pointing at the bad guys and saying, "You're not fighting fair" has nothing to do with winning the fight ... Transformation is about organizing and equipping to beat today's and tomorrow's threats.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the hijackers had knives that they knew they could get through airport security. They gained access to the airliner cockpits because the cockpit doors at that time were flimsy and pretty easy to enter. The terrorists then took over the airplanes. Some had trained here in our schools, and *just* to a degree sufficient for their purpose. Three of the aircraft made it to their targets, killing thousands.

Neither the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) nor the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) was organized or trained for shooting down domestic airliners. One group of hijackers failed to reach their target, either the Capitol Building or the White House, because brave passengers, with sufficient information, said "Let's roll" and were able to counterattack.

Now, as much as the military promotes unity of command, on that day we didn't have it for the military defense of our homeland. Why is that? If you will re-

member, we just did not think we needed it. Now we know we do.

On that Tuesday morning Sept. 11, a gorgeous day in New York and Washington, it started out as just another day for NORAD. Canadians and Americans were watching the skies and space beyond our continent for potential threats. We were looking outward. But it became tragically apparent that we could no longer focus only on those external threats. We had to start looking inward — and in a hurry.

Today, we do. The FAA and NAV CANADA interior radars now feed our air defense sectors. We launch jets when we see a problem. If a hijacking should become evident, we are not still sitting on the bench. We are going to engage directly, coordinating closely with the FAA and other relevant agencies.

We now have formidable, layered air defenses around the National Capital Region. It is an integrated air defense system including NORAD fighters, Department of Homeland Security jets and helicopters, and ground-based missiles, a good number of them, all closely coordinated with the FAA and other agencies.

We have NORAD aircraft on alert or con-

ducting irregular patrols all over the country, seven days a week, 24 hours a day ...

NORAD has flown almost 40,000 Noble Eagle sorties to protect Canadian and American airspace with not one severe mishap or accident. That's a credit to the people in NORAD and the young men and women who are doing the heavy lifting in the field. About three-quarters of the sorties have been flown by Air National Guard and Reserve forces. We are proud of that.

We want potential terrorists to know that they are not going to succeed. But you need to know that when we put an armed jet behind a civilian aircraft, our choices, by that point are limited, and they are not pleasant. If it's an airliner that has been hijacked and it's full of innocent passengers, we are already in trouble because other security measures have failed.

I recommend that we not kid ourselves. The noble passengers on United Flight 93 that day over Pennsylvania did what they had to do. We, in NORAD, will do everything we can to prevent a similar circumstance. But there could come a time when you, as a private citizen, traveling in an airplane, may have to step up to defend yourself.

It is not convenient to stand in a long line at the airport. But our airport security is a critical part of our nation's defense against terrorists. Those security personnel are just one part of a very complex, elaborate and sophisticated system that is structured to do the important job of identifying potential threats before those threats can do any harm.

NORAD armed jets are not the first option for dealing with hijackers; those fighters are just about the last option. But it is an option that we have today that we didn't have before 9/11. Fighting terrorists is a lot more than just organizing and training ourselves to handle a 9/11 situation better. And that leads us to your U.S. Northern Command.

On Sept. 11, the President and the Secretary of Defense had multiple commanders to talk to throughout the Defense community. Shortly after that they created one unified, regional combatant command for homeland defense. Just like the European Command, the Pacific Command or the Central Command, except there's one big difference: Northern Command's job, since its activation in October 2002, is to defend our homeland and to provide support to civil authorities whenever directed by the President or Secretary of Defense.

At U.S. Northern Command, I report to the Secretary of Defense, not the Secretary of Homeland Security. We intend to provide one-stop-shopping to deter, prevent or — should it come to that — defeat attacks against our homeland, and help civil authorities mitigate situations that threaten our lives and our property when the Secretary so directs.

Homeland defense doesn't mean we're just sitting around staring at our borders every day. We are as much *or more* interested than any other military command in what goes on around the world, in anything and everything that might be aimed at threatening Americans here at home. We want our fellow combatant commanders and interagency partners to capture or kill terrorists, before they come our way. We want this to be an *away* game.

While homeland defense is job number one, defense support of civil authorities takes a good deal of our effort, day-in

and day-out. At all times we are poised, dressed out, on call, ready for orders from the President or the Secretary. We will do this in support of a primary or lead federal agency. It could be the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, even the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

We do not do any of this uninvited or without top-down direction. We are not going to ride into town, as you see in the movies, saying to local officials, "Step aside boys, there's a new sheriff in town." Everything we do at Northern Command is by law, under the Constitution we swear to protect. And everything we do is part of a broader national security team.

A lot of folks seem to fall into one of two groups when they think about Northern Command: those who are afraid we will read their mail and spy on them, and those who fear we won't have enough authority or assets to do our job.

First, we are not allowed to collect intelligence, and we do not. We do not spy on anyone in the United States or Canada. Second, I assure you, we do not need to change statutory limitations, including the Posse Comitatus Act, to do our job. Why is that?

In this national team effort, we don't need the authorities that are already resident in federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is both a law enforcement agency and one of our five armed services upon whom we depend heavily and with whom we work closely at Northern Command. Northern Command supports these partners as directed and under law.

Your U.S. Northern Command is composed of people from all five military services, National Guard, Reserves, many fine civil servants and a fair number of contractors. Defending our homeland is not a new job. The National Guard and the Coast Guard have long and valuable experience doing just that, and we are capitalizing on their experience in every way that we can.

You may be familiar with the massive changes under way in our Coast Guard. The National Guard is also transforming its homeland defense role. In addition to providing a good number of the U.S. forc-

es currently deployed to Iraq, the National Guard is building toward the 55 individual weapons of mass destruction civil support teams authorized by Congress for our states and territories. We have 32 of them in existence, trained and equipped. Twenty-three more have been funded.

In addition, on their own initiative, 12 states have formed larger Guard teams, made up of about 100 highly trained personnel, for enhanced assistance to citizens in the event of a weapons of mass destruction incident. So, you might be asking, what does Northern Command have, and what does it really do? We have very few assigned forces at our disposal every day.

But we can draw on the huge resources of the entire Department of Defense, everything from battalions that can fight forest fires to airlift and staging bases for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster-responders; from satellite pictures of floods to C-130s that drop fire retardant; from Marines highly trained to detect ricin and anthrax on Capitol Hill to bomb dog teams that help protect the U.N. General Assembly. We can reach out and get all of that and much more.

At our headquarters in Colorado Springs, we have a Combined Intelligence and Fusion Center, a unique combination of talented professionals and sophisticated capabilities focused on sharing information and analysis with intelligence and law enforcement agencies ... the whole gamut: FBI to CIA; National Security Agency (NSA) to the Coast Guard; from the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Va., to the counterintelligence field activity that includes both American and Canadian experts.

We use this Intelligence and Fusion Center with resident experts and representatives from many agencies via an extensive secure digital network. We are watching and sharing analysis on subjects from rogue state missile activity, attempts to procure weapons of mass destruction, to the travel of known or suspected terrorists from one country to another.

We are intent on staying one step ahead of the bad guys, and we work hard with our interagency partners. If our job is to

defend you, you understandably expect us to be pretty good at our job. We think we are. More importantly, we are working hard to get better.

Also in Colorado Springs, we've established a Standing Joint Force Headquarters-North, a staff led by a general officer, focused on current events and ready to deploy on short notice to provide or support incident management leadership in the 48 contiguous states and Alaska. This portable headquarters has full-spectrum military and civilian communications capability — an impressive vehicle that we roll onto a C-130 that is always on alert.

At Fort Monroe, Va., we have our Joint Task Force Civil Support focused on incident management support to civil authorities if a terrorist uses a weapon of mass destruction. We have seen anthrax and ricin used in our country, so we know that this is a very real and formidable threat.

We have also formed a Joint Force Headquarters for the National Capital Region, to focus the efforts of all the armed services in protecting the seat of our federal government. For example, our command center in Colorado Springs had chat rooms linked with more than 120 agencies during the President's State of the Union Address. Last year, the system did not exist.

In Texas, we have established a Joint Task Force North, expanding on our 16 years of military support to more than 430 different federal, state and local law enforcement agencies fighting illegal drugs. They also address a broader counterterrorism issue we have learned: Today, drug smugglers and terrorists have more in common than they did five years ago.

We are working closely with the National Guard to dual-hat Guard officers as joint task force commanders, so they can simultaneously command state and federal troops in support of major events. We have used this dual-hat structure to great effect for the G8 Summit, both political conventions, Operation Winter Freeze along the Canadian-U.S. border and the state funeral of President Reagan.

We also sent forces to Jacksonville, Fla., for the Super Bowl. A lot of forces have been

deployed for your protection, most of which you did not see.

We have created a Technology Partnership Council with the Department of Energy, its national laboratories and other leaders in science and technology to make sure that there is cooperation among agencies in supporting the technological advances that will help us do our job in protecting you.

We have joined with nearly 100 academic institutions to build a Homeland Security and Defense Education Consortium to help grow the intellectual capital we need to defeat global terrorism.

U.S. Northern Command assisted other federal agencies in hurricanes, wildfires, the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy, domestic terrorism events like the National Capital Region snipers and ricin in the Senate offices. And we have responded to increased national alert levels dictated by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

We have conducted seven major exercises that have helped us earn our spurs as a major combatant command. To date, 115 federal, state, local, tribal [Native American] and multinational organizations have participated, including seven of the 10 FEMA regions, and we have conducted field-training exercises in seven separate states. Our exercise program is completely interwoven with the Department of Homeland Security's national exercise program; and we participate frequently in unilateral exercises as a coordinated team. You should expect nothing less as taxpayers.

In support of the U. S. Strategic Command's global integrated missile defense mission, we are preparing to provide command and control for the initial ground-based mid-course missile defense of our homeland.

At NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, we are doing much that is new. We grow into solutions with hard work and experience. Now, it is naïve to think that you can purchase answers. So we are not going to over-invest in unproven technologies or new approaches. We always try to think big initially, start small, and scale as fast as necessary.

We work with many other partners: fed-

eral, state and nongovernment organizations, such as the Red Cross and private industry. On any given day at Northern Command, we have 59 resident representatives from other agencies. They are available full-time, working in [or near] our headquarters.

More than ever before, we are redefining jointness and interoperability. It is not a good idea to shake hands for the first time and exchange business cards at the scene of a disaster site. So we are spending a lot of time working across the interagency community to form new important partnerships.

Critical to our work is the sharing of intelligence and information. Every day, we analyze all sorts of intelligence data to understand what terrorists are doing, and to lead-turn upcoming seasonal and national events. For example, you may not be able to predict a hurricane or a forest fire, but you can predict hurricane and wildfire seasons. And, at the macro level, you can prepare for them. That is also what we are trying to do in our global war on terror.

Those of you in business [like us] do not like surprises. In defending our homeland, we do not care for them one bit. Since private businesses own 85 percent of the critical infrastructure in America, and since businesses are hit by disasters too, and since industry produces the vast majority of our equipment, we are very interested in partnering with business.

General Omar Bradley once said, "Wars are won by the great strength of our nation, the Soldier and the civilian working together." If your command or company has an idea or product that you think could help us defend our homeland or support civil authorities, we are anxious to talk to you.

Let us all remember that today we are a nation at war. Our fight against terror will be a long one, fought against an enemy with no desire to negotiate terms of surrender. This war is going to test more than our strength. This war will test our resolve to defend and encourage freedom around the world ...

*Editor's Note: Edited from Adm. Keating's remarks to AFCEA West, Feb. 3, 2005. CHIPS*