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National Center for Explosives Training and Research

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) maintains technical expertise, knowledge, experience and forensic capabilities related to explosives properties, mixtures, devices, products and forensics through the agency's National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR). The Department of Justice established NCETR (*pronounced "en-SEE-der"*) as a division within ATF's Office of Training and Professional Development after Congress passed the 2002 Homeland Security Act to train federal, state, local and international law enforcement personnel and to facilitate the conduct of cutting-edge explosives related research.

Strategy

Unsurpassed in the federal explosives training and research field, ATF's NCETR division develops, coordinates, conducts and facilitates the delivery of basic and advanced training courses for ATF personnel, law enforcement partners, the U.S. military and other federal agencies – both in the United States and at international venues. The division's goals are to foster arson- and explosives-related expertise and to promote interagency partnerships. NCETR consists of the following branches:

- **Arson Training Branch (ATB)** – ATB is responsible for providing advanced arson training programs at domestic and international venues to federal, state, local and international fire investigators. These efforts have been enhanced by the branch's partnership with the United States Fire Administration's National Fire Academy, located in Emmitsburg, Md. ATB also provides job-specific training for ATF's certified fire investigator, national response team, and the fire protection engineer programs.
- **Explosives Training Branch (ETB)** – ETB is responsible for the delivery of all ATF explosives training programs at the NCETR facility located at Fort A.P. Hill in Bowling Green, Va. The courses offer advanced training in bombing investigations and explosives disposal to local, state, federal and military students, as well as to ATF certified explosive specialists and industry operations investigators. Through its partnership with the Department of Defense Joint Improvised Explosives Devices Defeat Organization (JIEDDO), ATF shares its expertise with U.S. military bomb technicians before and during their deployments overseas.

- **Canine Training and Operations Center** – The canine center trains explosives and accelerant detection canines for state, local, federal and foreign law enforcement agencies. ATF has trained nearly 600 explosives detection canines and more than 130 accelerant detection canines since 1991. These ATF-certified dog and handler teams are located throughout the United States and in 21 foreign countries. The canine center also sponsors groundbreaking training to counter emerging threats such as those presented by suicide bombers.
- **International Training Branch (ITB)** – ITB is responsible for coordinating and administering advanced and specialized training programs for foreign law enforcement agencies. These programs include firearms, explosives, arson and post-blast investigation. ITB has trained law enforcement officers in more than 50 countries. ATF's active participation in the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) program also plays a role in training its foreign partners. At the ILEA academies in Bangkok, Budapest, Gaborone, and San Salvador, ATF agents provide specialized investigative information and deliver training relating to weapons, explosives and other areas of expertise. A senior ATF special agent serves as the Deputy Director of the ILEA-Bangkok.

The Future of NCETR

Congress appropriated funds to construct a permanent facility for NCETR at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala. This facility, to be completed in 2010, will consist of three explosives ranges, eight classrooms, laboratories, a conference facility and office space for ATF personnel and for partners from the federal, state, local and international law enforcement and explosives communities. The first of the explosives ranges will be available for training/research activity in August 2008.

The planned facility will provide explosives training for ATF personnel and for law enforcement and other first responders from the full explosives community. It will be used to promote and conduct research to improve the ability of ATF and its partners to investigate bombings, prevent diversion of explosives from legal commerce to the black market, and ensure the safe, secure storage of explosives.

Additionally, NCETR will have onsite access to the data and information-sharing resources of the United States Bomb Data Center. Integrating ATF's explosives training, research and information-sharing functions at NCETR will improve efficiencies within ATF and will enhance its efforts in each of these explosives disciplines. The new facility will improve cooperation and information-sharing across agency boundaries. Bringing together partners from the federal, state, local and international explosives communities will enhance ATF's mission, as well as the missions of other agencies. The interagency explosives community will be able to use NCETR to further their own explosives research, training, and information-sharing initiatives.

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The National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR) facility will integrate ATF's explosives training, research, and information-sharing activities under one roof. The facility, scheduled to be completed in 2010, will consist of:

- Three explosive ranges
- Eight classrooms
- Laboratory
- Conference facility
- Office space for ATF personnel and federal, state, local and international law-enforcement and explosives partners