



PENTAGON FORCE PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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PENTAGON ANTI-TERRORISM FORCE PROTECTION: Protecting Those Who Protect Our Nation

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It is said that a successful terrorist only has to get it right once, while successful antiterrorism/force protection (AT/FP) professionals must get it right all the time – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, without fail.

It can be a daunting task for anyone concerned about protecting themselves and their property from a terrorist attack. So imagine being responsible for protecting a 280-acre complex, located in the heart of one of the world's busiest urban centers, that is perhaps one of the most iconic symbols of American power, and has already been the target of one of the most audacious acts of terrorism in history. The challenge might be seen by some as overwhelming.

One of the organizations charged with protecting that complex, the Pentagon Reservation, is the Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA) Antiterrorism/Force Protection Directorate. In addition to the Pentagon Reservation, the directorate is also responsible for AT/FP at the more than 100 Department of Defense (DoD) leased facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR) as well as the soon-to-open Mark Center, which will eventually house more than 6,000 DoD workers.

According to PFPA AT/FP Director Jim Pelkofski, antiterrorism force protection is considered by DoD as an operational mission area.

“AT/FP, as programmatic as it can be, is not a program; it’s a mission,” he said. “And with a mission comes an attitude: I’m going to create a hard target, I’m going to be well-armed, I’m going to be visible, and I’m going to give a perennial show of force so that anybody looking from the outside in realizes that this one’s too hard. This is not the target for me.”

Pelkofski believes PFPA’s Pentagon Police Directorate (PPD) ultimately bears most of the Agency’s AT/FP burden.

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“PPD is the muscle of this agency – they are the hard target,” he said. “We help them with aspects of their mission; help them to build their muscle with things like the random antiterrorism measures program, force protection measures, and others.”

The “help” he and the rest of the directorate provide includes numerous programs and projects designed to “harden the target” and reduce the likelihood of a successful terrorist attack.

The directorate hosts a monthly Threat Working Group made up mainly of representatives from PFFA directorates, but also including interested organizations like Washington Headquarters Services, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Defense Intelligence Agency and others, who work together to evaluate and respond to real world threats in a timely manner.

“We meet monthly,” said Pelkofski. “We share threat information, go over what we know, and keep the working group warm so that in the event of a crisis or incident, the players know each other, they’re not looking around and asking ‘who are you?’ It’s just a matter of calling it away and bringing the people together.”

The Antiterrorism Working Group meets quarterly to coordinate larger AT/FP resource and program issues. Pelkofski says it is not threat-driven, but instead is more about discussing AT/FP requirements or vulnerabilities that may require resources or work.

In addition to answering to PFFA’s chain of command, the directorate is also the point of contact to U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) for AT/FP of the Pentagon and DoD leased facilities in the NCR. As the military combatant commander for the North American continent, NORTHCOM is in charge of the military’s AT/FP mission in its area of responsibility.

Overseeing random antiterrorism measures (RAMs) is another important function of the AT/FP directorate. As the name suggests, RAMs are random security measures that routinely change the look and type of force protection measures being used by DoD facilities. Their random nature is designed to reduce certainty about overall force protection measures, defeating surveillance attempts and making it difficult for terrorists to accurately predict what challenges they would face in an attack.

One of Pelkofski’s top priorities is updating the comprehensive NCR Pentagon Facilities Antiterrorism Plan.

“We’ve been working to update it for the last year,” he said. “And after we’ve reviewed and thoroughly updated it to 2011 standards, we’ll update it annually to make sure it remains current.”

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Surveillance detection is a mission that recently moved into the AT/FP directorate.

“Rik Kirchner and his team conduct surveillance detection for the Pentagon Reservation – they’re looking for who’s looking – and his program has been recognized during a joint staff integrated vulnerability assessment and by other outside assessors as the best they’ve seen,” said Pelkofski.

The directorate also conducts vulnerability assessments and program reviews for DoD leased facilities. This includes not only looking for areas that can be improved, but also providing advice and guidance on how to achieve increased AT/FP readiness.

This is another of the directorate’s major responsibilities: developing AT/FP plans and programs. According to the plans and programs division head, Rob Abramowitz, it’s a wide-ranging task. “We’re charged with drafting, writing, revising, and coordinating the AT/FP plans and program elements for all existing DoD leased facilities,” said Abramowitz.

For newly leased or built facilities, there’s even more work to be done.

“We evaluate potential sites and, once a site is selected, generate specific requirements for things like site layout, security access, and entry control points,” he said. “We also develop concepts of operations that integrate all the AT/FP technology solutions. We build the occupant emergency plan which is the nuts and bolts of what to do in an emergency.

“You get to a 90 percent solution when the facility is occupied,” said Abramowitz. “Then, after they’ve been in the facility a while, and you know the work flow of the building, you test the plans, you evaluate all the things that you’ve conceptualized, and when it works you sign it and you have an AT/FP program.”

Once the plan is complete Abramowitz says current AT/FP policy requires a comprehensive annual review.

Another major responsibility for the directorate is conducting AT/FP training for everyone who works in the Pentagon and DoD leased facilities. (For more on the AT/FP directorate’s training program see PFPA Press Release #11-004 “Sometimes Training Ensures *Nothing* Happens.”)

It sounds like a lot, and Pelkofski says it is, but he also says he and his team are able to succeed because of the support of the rest of the PFPA team.

“It’s collaborative, it’s teamwork. What I saw when I got here was that the directorate is stocked with extremely knowledgeable, dedicated professionals, and I was proud to join them. That goes

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for AT/FP, and it goes for PFPA overall. We have 17 different directors and AT/FP is integrated throughout the agency because we touch every piece of it. The dedication level in this Agency approaches what I saw in the Navy while in command of my ship, and that is the highest compliment I can pay to any organization – just totally dedicated to the mission, totally dedicated to protecting this facility.”

- PFPA -

NOTE TO MEDIA: Below thumbnail photos are available as high-resolution .jpg files upon request.

Contact Paul Taylor, Pentagon Force Protection Agency, paul.taylor@pfpa.mil, 703-695-4618



Chief of AT/FP Surveillance Detection (SD) Division, Rik Kirchner, provides weekly PPD roll call briefings on continued persons of interest and recent trends of suspicious activities.



(left to right) Facility Antiterrorism Officer, Joseph Odom, PFPA Antiterrorism Integrated Vulnerability Assessment Team members Walter Jones and Howard Gillespie, along with PFPA's Facility Antiterrorism Officer, Linwood Barrett meet to discuss vulnerabilities of the Pentagon Executive Motor Pool.

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Facility Antiterrorism Officer Joseph Odom (right) listens as WHS Building Manager, Tim Magalis (left) shows PFFA Antiterrorism Integrated Vulnerabilities Assessment Team member, Nayan Das (center) one of the many inspection points in the motor pool building.



Countersurveillance operation by Surveillance Detection Team Shadow Unit.



Among the tools at the disposal of the Surveillance Detection Division is a special purpose Surveillance Detection Vehicle.



Shadow Unit members provide over-watch of Emergency Response Team and Explosive Ordnance Disposal activities.

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