

Operation Mountain Move 2008 was a National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) full-scale patient reception and movement exercise. Federal Coordinating Center (FCC) Denver coordinated and executed the event conducted 9 - 11 September 2008. The exercise was managed utilizing a unified command headed by the Jefferson County Incident Management Team, located in Golden, CO. The primary reception area (PRA) was Butts Army Airfield on the Ft. Carson Military Post in Colorado Springs.

The exercise scenario focused on the city of Salt Lake City, UT. The exercise simulated an earthquake that occurred in the Wahsatch Mountains of Utah. There was major structural damage and injuries in cities and rural areas along the Interstate 15 corridor from north Provo to Salt Lake City and areas east into the mountains. It injured and displaced thousands of personnel. The drill coordinated military, civilian, and law enforcement agencies including National Guard aircraft as well as civilian air and ground ambulances. The FCC Denver Patient Reception Team transported 125 simulated patients to hospitals in Denver, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction and Summit County Colorado. The volunteer 'patients' were officer and enlisted Iraqi veterans who recently returned from overseas deployment and were awaiting their next military assignment. They were in full moulage (make-up) which required the FCC Denver Patient Reception Team (detailed from the Evans Army Community Hospital staff) to quickly triage each patient and determine what hospital was most appropriate for transport and treatment. Colorado has 35 statewide hospitals that participate in NDMS and provide surge capability for state and national disaster events. Other participating agencies included USNORTHCOM, Department of Defense, US Army Medical Command, Ft. Carson Headquarters and numerous state and local emergency response organizations.

Operation Mountain Move 2008 provided Fort Carson Headquarters, Colorado Springs OEM, Denver OEM and local county officials with interagency emergency response training. Command and control management, and inter-operable communications highlighted the objectives for this exercise and future events. Hundreds of city and county emergency managers with emergency response teams routinely drill in preparation for this type of event and afforded the opportunity to test the latest technology for rapid response. Operation Mountain Move 2009 will assess the same capabilities but will include inter-state patient transfers and multiple FCCs within FEMA Region VIII.

Operation Mountain Move is executed on a limited budget and must compete for resources each fiscal year. Almost all of the participating agencies, including civilian hospitals and patient transport organizations, donate their time and equipment for a successful Colorado emergency response capability. FCC Denver is extremely appreciative to all the teams that continued their support throughout this exercise and then deployed to Texas for the 'Real World' Hurricane Ike mission. Their individual dedication and support to this annual effort is a true inspiration to every community, FEMA, and the Department of Homeland Security. This was also an excellent opportunity for local media to observe a genuine collaborative effort under realistic conditions while training for a large scale medical emergency.

Exercise Setup



Exercise Coordination



MM 08 Air Ops



Patient Reception Team



Salvation Army



KKTV Channel 11 Colorado Springs News Release 10 Sep, 2008

Fort Carson Hosts Emergency Drill

Reported By: David Nancarrow

The nation has come together as Hurricane Ike makes its way to shore. A massive drill that took place at Fort Carson Wednesday keeps in mind a national disaster can happen anywhere at any time.

Mountain Move 2008 was a statewide practice run for the National Disaster Medical System. The federally supervised team coordinates efforts between emergency military responders, and local authorities, which watch over streets every day.

The NDMS was working with a scenario that had an earthquake hitting Utah, causing an overwhelming number of injuries.

The overflow of patients were transported to Fort Carson for immediate attention.

"We're in the red area, the critical care area and we got eight or nine patients all at once," said Mark Quinn, an NDMS physician's assistant.

The patients Wednesday were actually soldier volunteers, acting out their injuries for the NDMS team. More than a hundred Ft. Carson troops stepped up to take on the role, jumping at the chance to share their first hand experiences from battle to make the training more realistic.

"These guys need to be just as prepared as we do if a situation was to occur, whether we're out training somewhere, or something freak happens, they need to be ready just like we do," said SPC Chris Mossburg nursing a fake broken foot.

The state-wide effort extended as far as Grand Junction and other cities, where hospitals expected to receive the patients and complete the scenario.

