

NSA Panama City participates in annual force protection exercise
By Re-Essa Buckels | NSA Panama City Public Affairs

PANAMA CITY, FL – This year’s annual Navy-wide, anti-terrorism force protection exercise officially kicked off at Naval Support Activity Panama City, February 1.

“Exercise Citadel Shield and Solid Curtain will test our ability to execute our mission and ensure the protection of our people, equipment and facilities,” NSA Panama City Commanding Officer Cmdr. Kevin Christenson said.

The two-week exercise will occur February 1-12. These exercises are not related to any current threat; rather it is designed and executed to increase readiness and to deter or respond to potential security threats.

“Just remember that we are doing this to make sure we are able to do what we need to do and must do to respond so it’s a partnership ... the community helping us out,” Security Director Leon Leath, NSA Panama City, remarked.

Leath also noted the exercise centers around security.

“Making sure the training is robust so we can look at and really answer some (hypothetical) questions,” Leath explained. “Making sure the resources are there so we can properly do what we need to do.”

The two exercises occur back-to-back and include reality-based situations. Sailors and security personnel will be perfecting their tactics, training and procedures and honing their skills to ensure they remain the premier fighting force that defends the nation every day.

It is Navy policy not to discuss specifics of force protection measures, including exercises, so information of that nature will not be released to the public. Citadel Shield focuses on security personnel’s response to simulated threats while Solid Curtain uses simulated events to test incident command and communications between units.

“These scenarios ensure we train like we fight, fight like we train. It’s important to practice these drills so we are ready to respond to real world events,” Christenson added.

There will be times when the exercise will cause increased traffic around the installation or delays in the installation access. Residents may also see or hear security activities associated with the exercise.

Christenson stressed extreme caution while driving as first responders may be in the roadways directing traffic or responding to a scenario.

“Our neighbors, base personnel and family members may experience increased traffic along Thomas Drive or delays at the gate,” Christenson said. “We ask for your patience and understanding during the next two weeks.”

Measures have been taken to minimize disruptions within local communities and to daily installation operations.

“We’re working closely with our sister agencies, our local (law enforcement) agencies ... we coordinate with them,” Leath said.

NSA Panama City officials encourage the public to stay tuned about potential exercise impacts by following the installation’s Facebook page (@NSAPC).

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