

Army Safety Augmentation Detachment:

Making the Difference in Today's Mission

By Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Bill Ramer and Fred Fanning

Army Safety Augmentation Detachment (ASAD) personnel are an essential piece of the Total Army safety and can be a priceless addition to any deployment mission—whether for war, peacekeeping, or training. The key is to know whom they are and how to get them on your team. The information in this article will help engineer unit commanders and staff officers prepare and execute missions by identifying a source for safety support.

In the fall of 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina was moving toward approval. A NATO-commanded multinational military Implementation Force (IFOR) would monitor and help ensure compliance with the agreement on military aspects and fulfill certain supporting roles.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, an American Army general commanded both the Multinational Division North and Task Force Eagle. Included in the division were a Nordic-Polish Brigade, a Russian Brigade, a Turkish Brigade, and an American Brigade and Aviation Regiment. This multinational mission had unique requirements, and civilian safety personnel played an important role in helping commanders and leaders implement a safety program that supported the requirements. However, there were not enough of these personnel to cover all areas and to stay on the job for the hours, days, and months that they were needed. Most engineer units do not have their own organic civilian safety personnel, and it may be difficult to obtain support from the civilian safety personnel assigned at division and corps levels. The solution for Task Force Eagle was Army reservists from the Army Safety Augmentation Detachment.

ASAD personnel are individual mobilization augmentees with the U.S. Army Reserve. They are officers and warrant officers assigned to the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Safety Office. These personnel receive basic training and education in tactical and operational safety.

ASADs bring to an operation the experience of their military background from active duty, reserves, and National Guard. Since they are still active soldiers, their perspective is focused on the needs of their fellow soldiers as well as the need to support the mission. Their training helps to focus this effort and join with the civilian safety personnel (when available) and the ongoing safety program of the deployed unit. This tie-in is critical and will allow the ASAD to join an already-formed team and contribute to the effort to improve hazard identification and control-measure implementation.

ASADs have served during Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, and Desert Storm, as well as operations in Haiti and Somalia. ASAD personnel in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary provided continuous operational safety support to U.S. forces traveling to and from and operating in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. Using these personnel was a critical element from the time they began training until they reported for duty. Since each unit makes a choice about where its safety program is established in the command structure, ASAD training stresses the need for adapting operational safety to the command structure and the constantly changing operational environment. They work for the unit or task-force commander, and their bottom line is protecting the soldier and thereby protecting the force.

The utility of ASADs is seen best in their ability to provide a command with operational military safety personnel with field experience. They do not implement the unit safety program—they enhance and sustain it. They provide safety staff officers at the brigade, division, and corps levels. Statistics indicate that soldiers in Operation Joint Guard were actually safer in theater than in their respective garrisons in Germany and CONUS. Seventy-five percent of the Army's casualties are "self-inflicted" through accidents. ASAD personnel are the only staff officers whose sole focus is reducing these incidents and sustaining the ground combat power available to the ground commander. They are proud to have been there. The Task Force Eagle motto says it all: *Protect the soldier, protect the force!*

If commanders are interested in ASAD support for their next mission, operation, or training event, it is essential that they understand the program and the support that can be provided. An official request must be sent through the chain of command to the FORSCOM Safety Office. It is also essential that the unit Reserve Liaison Officer be involved. There are specific requirements for which ASAD support can be used, and in some instances a presidential call-up must occur before support can be provided. In addition, in some cases there may be costs incurred by the unit for this support. The best approach is to outline the specific requirements of the unit and make a formal request to the FORSCOM Safety Office to provide the costs and availability of ASAD personnel. For Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard, the time and effort spent getting ASADs approved and on the ground were well worth it.

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