



177th Civil Engineer Squadron trains with NJ State Agencies for World Cup Security



Photo By Airman Alex Cadavid | U.S. Army Spc. Gordon Trotman,... [read more](#)

WEST WINDSOR, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES

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Story by Airman Alex Cadavid

177th Fighter Wing - NJ Air National Guard

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ATLANTIC CITY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.J. - Airmen from the 177th Civil Engineer Squadron of the New Jersey Air National Guard participated in a training exercise with the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (WMD-CST) from the NJ National Guard and NJ State Police Hazmat Response Team at Mercer County Park in Mercer County, NJ, in preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup,

July 31, 2025.

The exercise included briefings, command coordination, safety procedures and joint decision-making tasks in a hazardous environment. The training prepared the units for real-world emergencies whether they involved chemical, biological, or explosive devices.

“We scheduled and prepared the exercise with direct consultation and support from our partners at the 21st WMD-CST, National Park Service and the NJ State Police,” said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. David Bernal, 177th Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team superintendent. “The 177th EOD team’s objective was to provide explosive hazard support to our law enforcement partners.”

During the exercise, the 177th EOD team used a Man Transportable Robotics system during a simulated hazardous material scenario before the 21st CST sampled and identified the material. In a follow-on scenario near a mock concert stage, EOD Airmen performed on-site mitigation procedures alongside partner agencies.

“Honestly, I think the biggest part of this was the interoperability between us, the CST and the state police,” said U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Robert Wittig, an EOD technician with the 177th CES.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup kicks off next June in NJ, which will be a hotspot for many games, especially the final, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford. The 21st WMD-CST and NJ State Police Hazmat Response Team will be conducting additional training exercises to prepare for the expected influx of people due to the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

“We want our Airmen and the public to know that interagency training and joint operations are routinely conducted to ensure public safety and security,” said Bernal.

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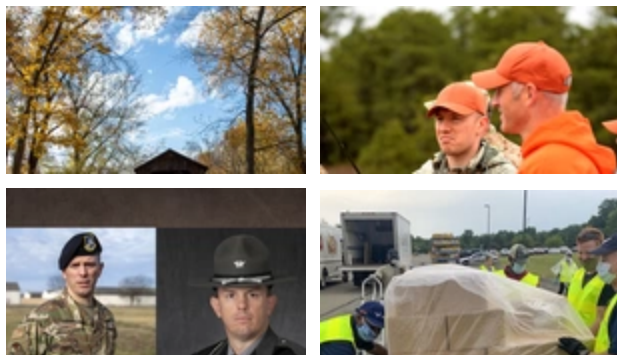
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