

BCC offers HAZMAT course as part of Soldier for Life

By Jessica Healey
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Smoke surrounded overturned barrels, as individuals in hazardous material suits carefully approached. Once the barrels were slowly picked up to stop possible spillage, the area was declared safe, and the smoke cleared.

The individuals in HAZMAT suits were Soldiers working on their final exercise during the Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program July 31 at Barton Community College's Grandview Plaza Campus.

The program was part of a packaged course, which included Occupational Safety and Health Administration instruction, totaling 80 hours altogether.

"Barton Community College and Technical and Military Outreach Programs, in association with the Partnership for Environmental Technology Education, (or PETE), are proposing the establishment of a Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program for transitioning military personnel," said William Nash Jr., Fort Riley dean, Technical and Military Outreach, Hazardous Materials and Emergency Services Training Institute, Midwest OSHA Education Center, Barton Community College.

The proposed program will be included in an upcoming grant renewal through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

"It is actually three different classes, which were packaged to fit within the scope of our PETE grant focus," Nash said. "Fort Riley was selected as the pilot site. It's part of our Technical and Military Outreach programs, in which we focus on the total Army Fam-



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Soldiers carefully lift a potentially dangerous overturned barrel while wearing HAZMAT suits during a July 31 exercise for the Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program at the BCC Grandview Campus.

ily. Working with Fort Riley's garrison commander, (Army Career and Alumni Program) and military schools, we were able to leverage the consortium for the funding to conduct the pilot classes at Fort Riley."

The PETE grant will provide the program free to Soldiers, which would normally cost more than \$2,500. Soldiers will also receive college credit as part of a certificate and degree program offered through Barton Community College.

"Data gathered through student critiques, as well as instructor and consortium

observations, will be used to support our request for funding of the grant," Nash said. "This type of training is not only valuable in the work place, but essential during disaster response and recovery."

Several Soldiers attending the program agreed with Nash, saying they found the material to be valuable and felt it would be an asset when they searched for jobs.

"I wanted to solidify my education as I transition out of the Army," said Maj. Andrus

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Landry, Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Infantry Division. "I have a master's (degree) in environmental management, so with the OSHA safety training and this hazardous waste training added to it, hopefully, it will help me with my job search."

Hazardous material train-

ing and OSHA safety training are universal skills in the work place, Landry added, and every industry needs to be up to standard when it comes to safety.

"I would recommend this for anyone separating (from the Army).

"It does give you an extra advantage when you get out in

the transition process because everywhere you go, it's going to be needed," said Spc. Roberto Gonzalez, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div. "It's also a good idea to start getting ready for the transition process well in advance."