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Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine



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Golden Knights — 50th anniversary

Biometrics on the ground and in the DOD

Story by the Biometrics Task Force Public Affairs Office

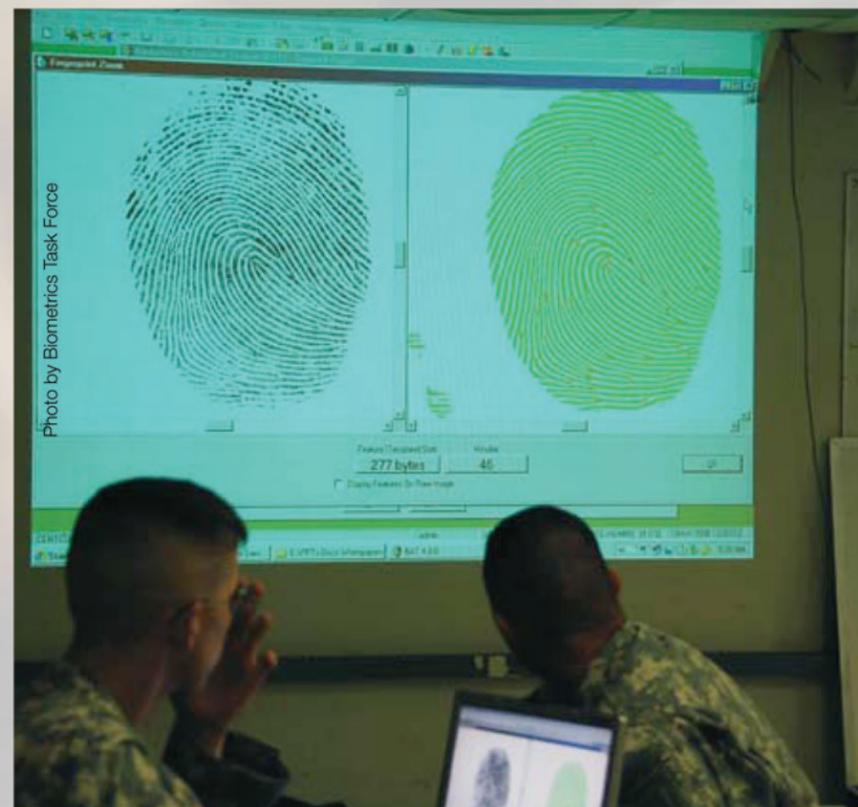
THE Biometrics Task Force, located in Arlington, Va., is a Department of Defense organization dedicated to developing new ways to protect the country using biometric applications. It leads DOD activities to program, integrate and synchronize biometric technologies and capabilities and to operate and maintain the DOD's authoritative database to support the national security strategy.

Biometric technologies used to verify identities employ such modalities as iris scans, fingerprints and facial recognition. They are being integrated into the framework of defense and security measures both at home and overseas. The Army is using biometrics to assist in identifying detainees in the war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan and in differentiating friendly individuals from insurgents and terrorists.

In Afghanistan, the Marines are using fingerprint devices, iris scanners and electronic databases to screen local residents applying for jobs requiring security clearances.

In 2007, some Iraqi personnel applying for selection into the Iraqi Police Academy were found to have biometrics that matched those of previously identified terrorists and insurgents. Others were found to match felony records in the U.S. The use of biometrics has clearly thwarted security breaches and helped prevent unwanted activities by the enemy.

"Interagency communication and compatibility greatly increases the use and feasibility of biometrics in



Soldiers proficient in biometric technology review minutiae points charted on fingerprints.

the global war on terrorism," said Lisa Swan, deputy director for integration at the BTF. "As a result, there's been visible and measurable movement in the advancement of biometric technology in recent years."

Developing biometrics standards is also taking center stage. Interoperability of systems within the DOD is of critical importance, as is data sharing amongst other U.S. government agencies and multi-national organizations.

In 2004, the DOD created a

centralized biometric database called the Automated Biometric Identification System. This growing repository is compatible with the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System used by the FBI so that matches can be made between the two databases. When biometric matches are flagged by the system, experienced examiners develop further actions and analysis.

"By creating and sustaining a biometric database, DOD not only has

records of known threats, but can help identify those threats in active operations," said David Lohman, deputy director for support at the BTF. "Hundreds of high-value individuals were identified in fiscal year 2008."

One of the BTF's main areas of focus is to support institutionalizing biometrics training for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. The BTF enables its partners in the biometrics field to offer much-needed training, and conducts bi-weekly secure video teleconferences with the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom biometric cells. These teleconferences include all continental U.S.-based support organizations,

ensuring complete and timely support to warfighters.

The BTF is currently involved in briefing senior Army officers on the value this training can add to war efforts. The task force also supports orientation sessions for key leaders assigned to biometric cells in Iraq and Afghanistan, and programs for operator-level training for the battlefield. Using the current biometrics cells in Iraq and Afghanistan as models, biometrics footholds throughout the combatant commands are also being established.

Collection devices are increasingly becoming more sophisticated and visible in operations.

The Biometric Automated Toolset, a laptop-based computer system, has been deployed to collect biometric data and store it on a central server in a secure network. Currently, there are more than 1,000 active BATs in Iraq.

The Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment, similar in size to a large camera, connects directly to the BAT and matches inputs against a biometric watch list of up to 10,000 individuals. The HIIDE is a rugged, shock-resistant collection and identification device. This handheld device was put to use in an Iraqi village near Baghdad International Airport, and led to a significant decrease in violence in and around the village. By using



Air Force Staff Sgt. Dennis J. Henry Jr.

A Soldier uses the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment system to fingerprint and photograph new Iraqi police recruits at the IP Academy in Mahmudiyah, Iraq.



Spc. Gregory Summers uses a biometric scanner to input a newly graduated electrical engineer into the pay system before the engineer can receive his first paycheck, at an electrical sub-station in the Abu Ghraib area of Baghdad, Iraq.

the HIIDE to verify credentials, not only did the residents benefit from increased security, the police increased influence and authority with village residents. Almost 7,000 of these devices have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In December 2008, the BTF opened a demonstration room at its offices in Arlington, Va., to showcase this equipment and how it's being used. This area allows visitors to see and touch some of the systems that are used for physical access, logical access,

and the identification of known or suspected terrorists and enemy combatants. Some systems displayed are currently in use, while others will be examples of how biometrics may be applied in the near future.

Technology-driven exercises undertaken by the BTF this past year have tested nearly 50 new and emerging biometric technologies for operational effectiveness.

"These efforts support the BTF's mission to provide enhanced identity management capabilities across the community and to identify new technologies that support the needs of the warfighter," said Swan.

Thanks to ever-evolving biometric technology coupled with the vision of the DOD and the dedication of the individual services, the ability to identify and detain suspected enemies and terrorists continues to improve and ensure the ongoing safety of U.S. citizens at home and abroad. ♦

Biometrics in the light

By Dr. Myra Gray, Biometrics Task Force

BIOMETRIC technology implementation has increased in recent years and is helping protect the nation by keeping it more secure. New, lightweight, multi-modal devices make distinguishing between an insurgent and a civilian in a war environment easier.

Two such technologies, a laptop-based system deployed as the Biometric Automated Toolset, and the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment, capture fingerprint, iris and facial data.

The Biometrics Task Force conducts standards conformance

testing of these tactical devices. The BTF also operates and maintains the DOD's authoritative biometric database to support the national security strategy. By creating and sustaining a biometric database, DOD not only has records of some known threats, but can help identify those threats in active operations.

A 2004 bombing in Mosul, Iraq, brought to light a need for a system that would more securely monitor and grant access to only authorized individuals. The Biometric Identifications System for Access was developed and has since been used by analysts to issue more than 220,000 military base

access cards and permanently bar more than 800 individuals from having access to U.S. facilities in Iraq. This smart-card-based system has increased base and checkpoint security with the use of biometrics-enabled badges and employee screenings.

Biometric technologies, especially those that can easily be used on the battlefield, are making a difference in the current fight against terrorism by protecting both the warfighter and the homeland. Ongoing assessment and evaluation of biometric equipment will help enhance effectiveness and efficiency of those technologies. ♦