

## **DoD response to wildfires ongoing**

Firefighters and guardsmen from the Army and Air National Guard continue to battle the wildfires in Montana, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, and Utah. In September there were 123 active fires burning approximately 2 million acres of land.

This year's fire season has been long and unforgiving. Jessica Gardetto, a representative of the National Interagency Fire Center, spoke about this rough season, saying "Typically by the third week of September we see not as much fire activity, but we just haven't had that relief."

According to another representative of the National Interagency Fire Center, the fires haven't stopped since fall 2016, leaving responders stretched thin. Chris Wilcox recently stated in an interview that "all of our national wildland firefighting assets are committed." Wilcox went on to talk about working with state and local partners, including the National Guard.

The National Interagency Fire Center coordinates wildland firefighting efforts across the country.

**- Department of Defense**

## **FEMA, agencies respond to Hurricane Irma**

U.S. agencies are responding to Hurricane Irma, which struck Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in early September.

Personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed to the Caribbean in advance of the storm, including incident management assistance teams and urban search and rescue teams. FEMA is also providing meals and water to those affected.

The Department of Defense (DoD) is also involved in the response, providing personnel for urban search and rescue and evacuation operations. U.S. Southern Command is working closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, and U.S. Navy ships are providing additional support to the area.

Irma is forecast to be a category 5 storm it is very dangerous. People in potentially affected areas are encouraged to listen to the directions of state, local, territorial, and tribal officials.

**- Departments of Defense and Homeland Security**

## **DoD, WVU researchers combat opioid crises**

Researchers from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) and West Virginia University (WVU) have joined together to combat the growing opioid epidemic.

West Virginia has been hard hit by the opioid crisis. The state's indigent burial fund has run out of money six years in a row due to overdose deaths, and many counties see over 10% of residents are addicted to opioids. In response to this, WVU reached out to USU's Defense and Veterans Center for Integrative Pain Management, which has had success combating the misuse of opioids in the military.

The two universities' agreement will allow researchers from USU to use the tools they've developed to address opioid misuse in the military in a civilian environment. "Our partnership allows us to... expand treatment options for our state's residents to successfully combat opioid misuse," said Clay Marsh, M.D., WVU health sciences vice president and executive dean.

**- Department of Defense**