

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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### U.S. ARMY EUROPE TEAM'S TRAINING SUPPORT CENTER ADDS REALISM, VALUE TO EXERCISE IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA

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**MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU AIR BASE, Romania --** Methods of training Soldiers have evolved and changed throughout time, and today's technology continually provides ever-greater possibilities for bringing realistic battlefield scenarios to the troops, teaching them to fighting more effectively, wherever they may be.



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U.S. Army Europe and Romanian Soldiers taking part in the Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania, train on developing marksmanship skills in the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 system set up at the base by experts from the Training Support Activity-Europe, part of U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command.

Romanian and American Soldiers currently taking part in the Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise here are reaping the benefits of technology that allows them to train smarter, safer, and at less cost, thanks to a fully functional Training Support Center established here by experts from the Training Support Activity-Europe, part of U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command.

The TSC here is a personification of the JMTC's "Projecting Training Power – Anywhere!" motto. TSC's Grafenwoehr, Germany-based specialists have built a comprehensive center that offers leaders a broad range of tools to help them to solidify their Soldiers' basic warfighting skills.

The flagship of the center – and the one that gets most Soldiers’ attention – is the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000.

The EST 2000 is a computerized indoor multi-lane firing range that uses real weapons that have been modified to fire “electronic bullets” at images of real-world scenarios projected onto large screens. Those scenarios are based on a variety of actual combat lessons learned that allow the EST to be used for individual and collective training.

The system provides training on 11 of the Army’s most common individual and crew-served arms designed to replicate the feel of shooting, including weapon recoil. The trainer, which helps Soldiers improve marksmanship and rules of engagement skills in a safe, low-cost environment, is in wide

use in the Army. Multi-National Division – Baghdad officials announced the opening of an EST 2000 in Iraq in July, and officials there say combat troops who have trained on the system have reported significant improvements in marksmanship skills.



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(From left to right) Pvt. 1st Class David A. Bolet from 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery; Romanian Pvt. Constatine Banu of the 341st Infantry Battalion, and Spc. Michael Entzel of the 1-94th practice additional reflexive fire skills at the Joint Task Force-East headquarters on Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania. The training was conducted to reinforce and expand upon techniques the group had just practiced on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 system set up at the base by experts from the Training Support Activity-Europe, part of U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command.

It’s easy to see why the EST -- essentially a video game on a grand scale -- captures young Soldiers’ attention. Once the lights on the “range” go out, a scenario is introduced that challenges skills from zeroing a weapon, to manning a security checkpoint in Iraq, to engaging dozens of simulated enemy troops firing and moving towards the trainee.

More than 300 U.S. and Romanian troops have completed EST qualification here prior to heading out to real ranges for live firing, said JMTC’s Edward Bogawitch, the TSC manager here.

“The EST is great,” said Romanian Pvt. 1st Class Iancu Petre, an infantryman with the 341st “White Shark” Infantry Battalion. “I really enjoyed it.”

While the EST stands out amid TSC's capabilities, it is just one of many devices the center offers to enhance training here.

Another standout is the Call for Fire Trainer, which is similar to the EST but requires troops to pinpoint targets and for artillery support on an enemy's coordinates.

"The training the Romanians received in basic rifle marksmanship; collective, team and squad training in the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000; and ... in the Call For Fire Trainer has proven beneficial not only to the Romanian Soldiers, but to Task Force Deep Steel (the task force made up of Romanian and U.S. Soldiers training in the "proof of principle") during the execution of the joint task force training exercise," Bogawitch said.

Good as it may be, though, no simulator can entirely replace the feel of a bullet escaping the barrel of a weapon or natural outdoor conditions. For that there are real ranges here.

JTF-E's four U.S. Army standard ranges are used to train marksmanship and rapid reflexive fire techniques, said Bogawitch. A 25-meter range is a short distance from the JTF-E headquarters here, and the other three -- a modified machine gun range; a modified record fire range, and a combat pistol qualification range -- are on the Babadag Training Area, approximately 75 kilometers to the north. JMTC members built those ranges, he said, and provide ongoing range operations support for them.



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A Soldier with the Romanian army's 341st Infantry Battalion live-fires on one of four ranges set up at the Babadag (Romania) Training Area by experts from the Training Support Activity-Europe, part of U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command, for Soldiers taking part in the ongoing Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise.

The TSC team has also added to its "arsenal" with Ultimate Training Munitions -- think paintball with an M4 rifle -- and associated protective gear, Bogawitch explained, that can be used in concert with a Mobile Military Operations in Urban Terrain trainer brought in from the Hohenfels (Germany) Training Area.

The Mobile MOUT is a transportable training system that can be arranged in various ways to help simulate realistic situations Soldiers may encounter while in combat. It consists of shipping containers that can be assembled into fairly elaborate urban "buildings" that may contain stairwells, balconies, trap doors or other structures. To add

to the system's realism, battlefield effects such as smoke, sounds, smells or pyrotechnics can be added, while integrated audio and video recording systems can capture training in the facility for after-action review.

In addition, TSC officials plan to bring a Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer to JTF-E. The HEAT system is a full-sized replica Humvee that simulates the vehicle rolling over to teach troops how to safely escape in a real accident.

Bringing the HEAT trainer to the exercise also illustrates another dimension of the TSC mission here. Bogawitch said plans are for the simulator to Romania after it deploys to Bulgaria to be used for training Soldiers participating in the phase of the "proof of principle" that will take place at the Novo Selo Training Area there.

"What is really unique is that the JMTC is providing a joint training environment for both the U.S. and Romanian (armies) not only in Romania, but also for the U.S. (forces) and Bulgarian army in Bulgaria," Bogawitch said.

And while they may not be as sexy as the EST 2000 or Mobile MOUT, the TSC facility here is also stacked to the rafters with a wide array of other training items, including Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System units for recording simulated battlefield "hits and misses;" dummy AK-47 rifles; medical training dummies, and even low-tech items such as public address systems and generators that can be used by units here to support their training activities.

The idea is for the TSC here to provide task force Soldiers with all the training support "comforts of home."

"TSC Romania currently has a basic load of training aids, devices, and simulators that units would find at their home station TSC," said Bogawitch.

The TSC director said he truly feels that the services and products his team is providing are making a difference for JTF-E Soldiers and furthering the mission of U.S. forces training with their coalition partners.

"What is really satisfying is seeing firsthand the results the units achieve in meeting their training objectives through the use of the equipment that we provide as part of our support package here," Bogawitch said.



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