

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

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil  
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815  
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



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### U.S. ARMY EUROPE SOLDIERS 'BECOME THE ENEMY' TO HELP TRAIN THEIR COMRADES FOR DEPLOYMENT

By Pfc. Michael Syner

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

**HOHENFELS TRAINING AREA, Germany** -- While a major focus of the Army is to instill a "got your back" mentality, the Soldiers of U.S. Army Europe's 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry fight their comrades routinely -- not to cause physical damage, but to help prepare their fellow troops for deployments to combat zones.

Rather than lecture on battlefield theory or flip through PowerPoint slides detailing tactics used by the military leaders of yore, the Soldiers of the 1-4th use realistic, interactive training scenarios based on real experience, and "become the enemy" to teach the lessons of combat.

Each company of the 1-4th deploys routinely to Iraq and Afghanistan to glean up-to-date information on the real enemy from real battlefields. Each deployment ensures the 1-4th's troops and leaders know how enemy strategies are changing, and the best ways to preempt and counteract them.

"I deployed last year to Iraq, and now I am 'an insurgent,'" said 1st Lt. Robert Dansen as he put his combat experience to use harrying soon-to-deploy troops from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, during the brigade's recently completed Mission Rehearsal Exercise here. Outside "the box" -- Soldier-slang for Hohenfels'



PFC MICHAEL SYNER

Role-playing as an 'insurgent,' Staff Sgt. James P. Rondell of U.S. Army Europe's 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry places a simulated improvised explosive device to harass a convoy from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division during the brigade's Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Hohenfels (Germany) Training Area Nov. 18.

active training areas -- Dansen is a platoon leader like any other in the Army. But once he sets foot inside the box he is a terrorist leader responsible for countless roadside bombings and the destruction of U.S. military assets.

During the 2nd BCT's exercise, Dansen led his entourage of "insurgents" in assaulting the brigade's Soldiers with improvised explosive devices, convoy ambushes, and even kidnappings -- all simulated, of course, and all in the name of training. And all as realistic as the lieutenant and his "enemy forces" can make it.

"It is good training for the Soldiers deploying," said Dansen. "We make it as realistic as possible."

Even the political aspects of combat make their way into the training. Members of the unit being trained must earn the trust of "citizens" in the "Iraqi towns" that are part of the exercise, so that the Soldiers can provide aid to those communities, better root out "insurgents," and counteract the influence those enemy forces may have had on a community.



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A Soldier from U.S. Army Europe's 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry posing as an 'enemy insurgent' is searched by a member of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry of 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team during the brigade's Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Hohenfels (Germany) Training Area Nov. 18. The 1-4th provided the "enemy forces" for the exercise designed to prepare the 2nd BCT for its pending deployment to Iraq.

"The COBs (role-players acting as "civilians on the battlefield") are brought into the exercise having a few established behaviors. The one that most Soldiers in training will easily recognize is a distrust of the (American) Army," said Dansen. "We try to use that to our advantage, like the real enemy does."

The "insurgents" are able to hide easily among the COBs, as both groups dress in apparel common to Iraq. This allows the enemy to move among the training unit undetected, moving weapons from one place or

town to another and using "homes" as temporary safe houses. These capabilities add to the training's realism by allowing the "insurgents" greater ability to move their assets and attack Americans with little or no warning.

While these strategies and attacks may leave 2nd BCT Soldiers cursing, they don't leave them maimed or killed, just better trained. Most troops exposed to the 1-4th's tactics seem to ultimately appreciate what the training is doing for them -- exposing their

weaknesses so that they can take steps to correct the problems that created those weaknesses, and doing it in a far safer learning environment than combat.

“We tell them what they are doing wrong and how to fix it,” said Lt. Col. David Batchelor, an observer/controller with the “Timberwolves,” one of the groups that serve as the dividing line between opposition forces and the unit in training. OCs are the ones responsible for telling Soldiers, “You, you, and you are dead” following a training scenario or attack by the 1-4th, and the ones who present the after-action reviews that tell those Soldiers what they did right in each training event and what still needs work.

“The Soldiers may be a little upset sometimes about losing some assets during training, but they are always more than willing to change up their strategy if it leads to mission accomplishment,” said Batchelor.

The 1-4th is not an unchanging element, either, and its members adapt and grow as needed to continue challenging the various units coming through their territory. This was demonstrated during the MRE when Dansen’s squad was ordered to limit their activities for a while in an attempt to confuse the brigade and keep its troops off-balance.

“We get guidance from (our) battalion on how to operate. Usually they dictate what kinds of actions and a rough number of aggressive actions to take in a day, but leave us to figure out the finer details,” said Dansen.

For example, the team may be directed to use harassment techniques on the unit training; to engage them in a head-to-head kinetic battle, or to simply jeer the training troops as they patrol.

During this MRE Dansen’s team has been doing a lot of harassing.

“Pretty much, set up an IED, wait until a convoy passes, detonate the IED, fire a few shots, then run away,” the lieutenant explained. “Which is pretty much what the enemy is doing ‘downrange.’”

While Dansen is wreaking havoc in the training environment, he said he believes the job his “enemy troops” are doing is preparing Soldiers to fight and survive on the real battlefield.

“I know that I am doing something good for other Soldiers; something that will get them prepared for war,” Dansen said. “I know that I will keep Soldiers alive by being a ‘bad guy.’”

