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RELEASE #2008-07-23-03

July 23, 2008

ROMANIAN, U.S. SOLDIERS TAKE PART IN REALISTIC COMBINED TRAINING AT JOINT TASK FORCE-EAST FACILITY

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BABADAG TRAINING AREA, Romania -- Authentic terrain, nerve-wracking injections and rigorous carries set a realistic tone for Romanian and American Soldiers training here July 14.



SGT AIMEE MILLHAM

Soldiers from the New Mexico National Guard's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Brigade carry a comrade role-playing as a "wounded Soldier" into a vehicle to protect him from simulated "enemy gunfire" during combined training with Romanian forces at Joint Task Force-East's Babadag Training Area, Romania.

"I can't recreate the conditions they face downrange, but I can certainly replicate them," said Lt. Col. Michael Borg, commander of Task Force Vampire, when explaining that combat lifesaver-trained Soldiers are actually required to give their colleagues role-playing as "wounded Soldiers" an intravenous line if their mock injuries call

for it.

Soldiers from the Romanian Land Forces' 3rd Company, 21st Mountain Battalion, and

the New Mexico National Guard's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Brigade participated in the joint squad-level training at this Joint Task Force-East training area.

The training included maneuvers on a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site, where 21st Mountain Battalion Soldiers practiced a scenario that required the troops to go into a mock town and apprehend a high-value enemy target.

Sgt. 1st Class David Renehan, a Task Force Vampire observer/controller called the Romanian squad training at the MOUT site “one of the best squads we’ve seen here.” Two of the Soldiers cleared five buildings in the mock town and “killed” two insurgents on their own.

“They just rushed in and knocked it out,” Renehan said.

This training was followed by entry control point training during which Romanian and American Soldiers up an ECP and had to tackle various scenarios, including the attempted entrance of unauthorized and wanted enemy personnel into a friendly forces installation.

“We need more training like this. For most of us, it’s the first time, and it’s the first time I’ve used (the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, a system similar to laser tag games that records when a Soldier is “hit” during training),” said Romanian Staff Sgt. Marian Gherghinis of the 21st. Gherghinis said that because he has deployed to Iraq, he could attest to the fact that the training was realistic and should adequately prepare Soldiers to go to combat.

In addition to the realism the terrain and equipment give to the training, real-world occurrences such as shepherds wandering through the MOUT site here add to the realism of Babadag. Something like this is likely to happen in a combat zone as well, and Soldiers would have to work around it, Renehan said.

The MOUT site here has been up and running for nearly four weeks and there are improvements planned for the near future. For example, furniture will be placed inside the containers that replicate small structures in the mock town to add realistic obstructions for Soldiers to face when clearing buildings.

Borg said such added stressors are necessary in training.

“The harder you work out here. The more lives you’ll save ‘downrange,’” he said.



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