

Saber Strike Continues with Field Training Exercise

By Capt. Greg Jones, Saber Strike 11 CPIC

Saber Strike 11, a multinational exercise involving Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and the United States, started into its second week of maneuvers Monday, transitioning to more advanced training aimed at improving interoperability, and maintaining military relations between the participating countries.

The exercise transitioned from Situational Training Exercise, which features platoon and smaller elements training independently, to company level operations that integrate troops from all of the participating nations.

The training, which began Oct. 19 and runs through Oct. 29, includes urban patrol operations, cordon and search, convoy operations, and base defense. All of these tasks are designed to help prepare the participating units for upcoming deployments to International Security Assistance Force.

The exercise kicked off Oct. 18 with an Opening ceremony. For several days prior, units had been zeroing weapons, conducting individual training, and performing other preparatory tasks for the Situational Training Exercise.

During the days following the ceremony, units rotated through several training lanes. In convoy operations, soldiers fine-tuned their skills in conducting the type of convoy missions they can expect in Afghanistan. Urban patrolling found Soldiers conducting simulated patrols through an actual Latvian city, in conjunction with local law enforcement authorities. Cordon and search as well as other tasks commonly executed in operations with ISAF, rounded out the training program for the STX. For the FTX, the units will operate at the company level, with a battalion headquarters conducting multiple operations simultaneously.

The units from the various nations were integrated down to the platoon and squad level, so Soldiers of the different nations were literally operating shoulder to shoulder.

Saber Strike 11 marks not only the largest multinational exercise on Latvian soil in over a decade, it also gave many of the Soldiers opportunities to train with troops they have not yet trained with, but may find themselves fighting alongside of in Afghanistan.

“Train hard and intensely,” said Col. Igor Rajevs, Latvian Saber Strike 11 exercise co-director. “The harder it will be in training, the easier it will be in a multinational operation in Afghanistan.”

The U.S. participants in this exercise included elements of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard’s 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, The 172nd Separate Infantry

Brigade Combat Team, the 16th Sustainment Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command headquarters, U.S. Army in Europe headquarters, and other U.S. units.

“It’s good to train with different countries, it will be very interesting” 1st Lt. Jon Kriulins, a platoon commander in the Latvian Army said with a wide grin on his face. “I am excited to work with the Americans.”

Training with these countries gives all of the participating units an important opportunity to train with the very countries with which they will be operating in Afghanistan.

“The Saber Strike exercise benefits each nation involved by improving interoperability between each nation’s military, exercising multi-national command and control, improving our joint operational capabilities, and strengthening our regional partnerships,” said Col. Keith Sledd, Saber Strike 11 exercise co-director. “Each nation reaps significant benefits from [these] cooperative training efforts by improving the abilities of regional partners.”



Latvian Cpt. Dans Jansons (Center) communicates with Polish F16s during Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) training on the Adazi training area, Latvia. He leads an international class of JTAC students from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and the

U.S. during Exercise Saber Strike 11. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Stephens) Approved for Public Release.