



**18th Engineer Brigade
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PRESS RELEASE

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Engineer brigade's security detachment hone skills in austere conditions

Story by Spc. Aislinn M. Amig, 18th Engineer Brigade PAO

MANNHEIM, Germany – In the early morning hours of Jan. 27, Soldiers from 18th Engineer Brigade's Personal Security Detachment rose from their snow-covered tents and began what would be another long day at the Lampertheim Training Area in Mannheim, Germany.

Their training exercise began well before sunrise Jan. 26 and ran around-the-clock until the afternoon of Jan. 29. Throughout the training, The Soldiers battled temperatures as low as 9 degrees Fahrenheit as well as ice and snow that seemed to never stop. A few days in the field are something every Soldier has come to expect, but as these Soldiers quickly came to realize, freezing temperatures provide for a whole new learning experience.

With a heater that malfunctioned just shortly after the exercise began, the few hours devoted to sleep the first day were quite a challenge. When asked to reflect on the overall experience toward the end of day two, nearly every Soldier simply stated that it was cold.

"It's harsh, but harsh training is good training," said Pvt. Ethan King, a gunner for the PSC, 18th End. Bde.

King worked tirelessly the first few hours ensuring the electricity for the tents was set up, heaters and generators were functioning properly, and lighting was sufficient.

On day one, after their Tactical Operations Center was set up, their next task was to ensure the base was protected against a possible ambush by Opposing Forces. They worked for hours setting up three watch positions with crew-served weapons, coordinating their quick reactionary forces and roving guards, and placing 25 M49A1 flare surface trips along the base perimeter.

Each evening as the sun set, Soldiers from brigade's technical headquarters section, playing the role of OPFOR, began their operations. Every evening provided different training scenarios, sometimes with the PSD doing a reconnaissance and ambushing the OPFOR.

Pvt. Frank Rienzi, a driver for the brigade's PSD, said his favorite part about the exercise was conducting nighttime operations.

"It's the closest thing to the real mission as it gets," said Rienzi.

After four days using practical applications to sharpen their battle drills, Soldiers from the brigade's PSD returned to the brigade headquarters in Schwetzingen, Germany, with insight on how they should better operate within a combat environment.

CUTLINES:



Pfc. Brandon Johns, a designated marksman for the 18th Engineer Brigade's Personal Security Detachment, constructs a ghillie suit during a training exercise Jan. 27 in Mannheim, Germany. Soldiers from the PSD are applying the knowledge and skills they've acquired over the previous months to prepare for future deployments. (Photo by Spc. Aislinn M. Amig, 18th Engineer Brigade PAO)



Sgt. Brian Quinonez, a team leader for the 18th Engineer Brigade's Personal Security Detachment, and 1st Lt. George Staggs, the executive officer for HHC, 18th Eng. Bde., use a sand table to discuss the next training mission. During a four-day training exercise in Mannheim, Germany, Soldiers from the PSD further developed their basic dismounted battle drills while being subjected to harsh winter weather. (Photo by Spc. Aislinn M. Amig, 18th Engineer Brigade PAO)