

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



2007-09-04-1

Sept. 4, 2007

U.S. ARMY EUROPE COMMANDER VISITS SOLDIERS TAKING PART IN JOINT TRAINING IN ROMANIA

By Pfc. Michael Syner

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU AIRBASE, Romania -- Gen. David D. McKiernan, United States Army Europe commanding general, visited here Aug. 29 to meet with Soldiers and leaders and observe ongoing joint training of Romanian and American forces.

McKiernan began his visit at the headquarters for Joint Task Force-East. The task force, an organization composed of U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force personnel and Romanian forces, is taking part in a "proof of principle" exercise that is helping to define future basing and training in the region.



PFC MICHAEL SYNER

Shortly after his arrival, McKiernan shared lunch with Romanian and American JTF-E Soldiers and leaders in the airbase dining facility, and then set out on a walking tour of the installation. The general stopped to chat with military and civilian task force personnel during the visit to locations such as the base's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facilities,

Gen. David McKiernan, U.S. Army Europe commanding general (third from left) and USAREUR Command Sgt. Maj. Luniasolua Savusa (left) get a tour of joint U.S.-Romanian training at the Babadag (Romania) Training Area from Lt. Col. Thomas Matsel, commander of USAREUR's 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery (second from left) and 1-94th operations officer Maj. Seth Pilgrim. The tour of the training area was part of McKiernan's Aug. 29 visit to U.S. and Romanian leaders and Soldiers taking part in the ongoing Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise.

Army and Air Force Exchange System Shoppette, indoor firing range simulator, U.S. Navy Seabee facilities and various JTF-E divisions.

Following his tour, McKiernan took time to reenlist five Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery, who became the first U.S. Soldiers to extend their Army commitments while serving with JTF-E.

McKiernan then took part a press conference with Romanian and Polish television and print journalists, joined by the deputy chief of the Romanian general staff, Lt. Gen. Ioan Sorin. The pair fielded reporters' questions about the mission of JTF-E, the proof of principle exercise, and the necessity of joint operations.

McKiernan told the journalists that the training is the extension of an enduring alliance with Romania that strengthens USAREUR's commitments to Europe's theater security cooperation, and stressed that the Americans are guests in the country who will provide growth to the region, absorb Romanian culture, and work hard to be "good stewards" of the environments in which they train.

"We should always train in a joint, coalition environment," McKiernan said, noting that many U.S. Soldiers are taking part in the exercise under Romanian leadership.

Reporters asked the general several questions about millions of dollars in contracts for improvements to the airbase and associated facilities in the area, and McKiernan assured them that the majority of those contracts and sub-contracts are going to Romanian companies and workers.

Following the press conference, McKiernan capped his visit with a tour of the Babadag Training Area, approximately 90 minutes' drive from the task force headquarters, where he spent time with Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 94th Infantry and the Romanian 341st Battalion and watched the troops conducting individual training and live-fire marksmanship.



BILL ROCHE

Gen. David McKiernan, U.S. Army Europe commanding general (right) answers a question from a reporter during a press conference at Mihai Kogalniceanu Airbase, Romania Aug. 29. McKiernan was joined in the conference by Lt. Gen. Ioan Sorin, deputy chief of the general staff of the Romanian army. The conference was part of McKiernan's daylong visit with U.S. and Romanian leaders and Soldiers taking part in the ongoing Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise.

“I think it is important that we exchange equipment, tactics, and experiences,” McKiernan said. “It is a great idea to have American Soldiers firing Romanian weapons, and Romanian Soldiers firing American weapons, because we’ll learn how to operate better as a coalition.”



www.hqusareur.army.mil