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U.S. ARMY EUROPE SOLDIERS PROVIDE VITAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO JOINT TASK FORCE EXERCISE

By Spc. Stephen Decatur

21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office

MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU AIR BASE, Romania -- From the bullets in their rifles to the clothes on their backs, troops at Joint Task Force-East here depend on Soldiers of U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Sustainment Command to get the job done.



BILL ROCHE

Fuel handlers Spcs. Patrick Jeudy (foreground) and Andrew Sneed of the Bamberg, Germany-based 240th Quartermaster Company finish up a mission to fuel generators for the Joint Task Force-East dining facility at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania Aug. 24. The company, part of U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Sustainment Command, arrived in Romania in July to take part in the U.S.-Romanian "proof of principle" exercise for the task force that is ongoing through October.

USAREUR Soldiers are at this base near Constanta, Romania taking part in a "proof of principle" exercise for the task force, in concert with Romanian and Bulgarian forces, as well as U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy personnel.

That exercise is designed to help set the framework for future basing and operations here, said Maj. Christopher Foote of 16th Sustainment Brigade, the task force's director of logistics.

To support that goal, the task force relies on the efforts of 72 21st TSC Soldiers who provide many of the support

operations necessary for the more than 1,000 military personnel and civilian contractors in the exercise.

The 21st TSC Soldiers provide a wide variety of services including inspecting ammunition, representing the Army in civilian contract operations, repairing and fueling vehicles, and fixing weapons.

Soldiers of the 612th Movement Control Team coordinate all movement of supply shipments and convoys in the area, and coordinate with the Romanian customs agency to bring Soldiers and material into the country by land, sea, and air.

Soldiers from the 106th Finance Battalion handle USAREUR Soldiers' financial concerns; convert U.S. dollars to Romanian lei, and have issued more than \$86,000 in casual pay. Military police from the 92nd MP Company provide on- and off-post security in conjunction with Romanian MPs.

In some cases, the mission depends on the expertise of just one or two individuals.

Staff Sgt. Sean Cook, an ammunition inspector with 23rd Ordnance Company, is in charge of the shipment, storage and accountability of all the ammunition JTF-E uses during training. For Cook, the responsibility goes hand in hand with the satisfaction of knowing that he's needed.

"Being the only ammo guy on the installation, it's nice to know that you're the subject-matter expert," he said. "That makes me feel pretty important," Cook said.



SPC STEPHEN DECATUR

Pfc. Joshua Fischer, a heavy vehicle mechanic from the 317th Maintenance Company of U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Sustainment Command, inspects a U.S. Air Force water tanker at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania Aug. 31. The more than 70 21st TSC Soldiers who conduct support operations at the base are a vital part of the joint U.S.-Romanian "proof of principle" exercise for Joint Task Force-East.

A team of 16 Soldiers from the 317th Maintenance Company work alongside a similar number of their counterparts from 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery to meet the diverse repair and maintenance needs of JTF-E, caring for equipment that includes radios, weapons, light and heavy vehicles, generators and even night vision devices.

Sgt. Johny Mathurin of the 317th is one of only two generator mechanics in the task force.

"The mission starts with power," Mathurin said. "Whatever they need with regards to power, we do the best we can to get it going."

To meet the demands of the task

force, the two mechanics have set up power systems with a variety of military and civilian generators, providing necessary electricity for day-to-day operations. The Soldiers embraced the challenge of working with unfamiliar equipment, because their skills were so critical to the success of the task force.

Their civilian counterparts also maintain some of the smaller generators to provide heating, air conditioning, water, laundry services and other needs. Romanian workers also staff the post exchange, barber shop and dining facility. Each of those services and others require contracts and military oversight of those contracts.

Sgt. 1st Class Demetrius Jordan of the 16th Sustainment Brigade is JTF-E's contract officer's representative for food supplies. He is responsible for ensuring that the contractor provides the services specified in the contract, including supplies for the dining facility here, which serves 800 diners per meal, as well as about 200 Romanian and American Soldiers in the field each week at the Babadag Training Area about 75 kilometers northeast of Constanta. Every week Jordan must account for tens of thousands of contract dollars, but he says the best part of his job is making sure that Soldiers are happy with their meals.

"It's the one time in their day they can sit down and relax," he said.

The 21st TSC team is an integral part of laying the groundwork for future operations here, so as the JTF-E concept is just evolving, they might also consider themselves pioneers.

"In five to 10 years when you'll see a major installation here, we can look back and say, 'Hey, we started that,'" Cook said.



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