

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



RELEASE #2007-09-27-02

Sept. 27, 2007

U.S. NAVY SEABEES RENOVATING ROMANIAN CLINIC AS THEY TAKE PART IN JOINT TASK FORCE-EAST EXERCISE

By Tom Saunders

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU AIR BASE, Romania -- U.S. Navy Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 taking part in the U.S. Army, Europe-led Joint Task Force-East "proof of principle" exercise here are off to a good start on a project to renovate a Romanian endocrinology clinic in the base's neighboring city of Constanta.

The JTF-E Seabees will make interior and exterior renovations to the clinic during a three-month project that began Sept. 24.

The two-phase project began with preparation of the exterior of the facility for demolition work set for Day Two. The Day Two tasks included demolishing the facility's main stairway to enable the Seabees to build a handicap access ramp and new stairs. Following the demolition, Seabees plan to build forms and place concrete for the new ramp and stairs, then continue the Phase I exterior renovations by patching exterior stucco walls.



TOM SAUNDERS

U.S. Navy Seabees Constructionman Apprentice Andrew Pickenpugh, a steelworker (left), Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Stansbury, project superintendent (center), and Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Clark, a builder, clear debris during demolition of stairs leading into an endocrinology clinic the Seabees are renovating in Constanta, Romania. The Seabees, part of a contingent from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 based in Port Hueneme, Calif., are among American forces taking part in the ongoing U.S. Army, Europe-led "proof of principle" exercise for Joint Task Force-East in Romania and Bulgaria.

About six Seabees from the 25-person “Fighting 40” team supporting JTF-East are scheduled to work nine hours a day, six days a week for the next three months to complete the renovations. The Seabees will replace doors and electrical systems; renovate the clinic's bathroom and kitchen; patch and paint the walls, and make other improvements.

The budget for the project is approximately \$64,000. Of that, contractor S.C. Cyltoon received \$25,000 to replace the windows and repair the floor. The remainder of the project budget will go toward materials the Seabees will use in the renovation.

NMCB Forty, based at Port Hueneme, Calif., is a 600-person battalion that specializes in contingency construction, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. The team currently working here will rotate back to the U.S. in about five months, and will be replaced by another detail. The Seabees plan to maintain a continuous rotation to Romania and Bulgaria to upgrade military bases and perform civic assistance projects in the two Joint Task Force-East host nations.

The three-person Day One Seabees site crew at the endocrinology clinic included Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Stansbury, project superintendent; Petty Officer 3rd Class Martin Gomes, construction mechanic; and Constructionman Apprentice Andrew Pickenpaugh, a steelworker.

After completing much of their Day One tasks, the Seabees took a break. They talked and joked, but each also stared intently at the 4-by-10-foot patch of ground, envisioning the work that will get done.



TOM SAUNDERS

Romanian journalists film demolition of the main stairs of an endocrinology clinic in Constanta, Romania Sept. 25 by U.S. Navy Seabees Constructionman Apprentice Andrew Pickenpaugh, a steelworker (center), builder Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Clark, and project superintendent Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Stansbury (right) from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40, based in Port Hueneme, Calif. The Seabees, among American forces taking part in the ongoing U.S. Army, Europe-led "proof of principle" exercise for Joint Task Force-East in Romania and Bulgaria, are renovating the clinic during the exercise.

“It’s my first time working with Pickenpaugh and Gomes, but I can tell you that they’re as eager as I am to get their hands in the dirt and make this place better,” said Stansbury, and eight-year Navy veteran. “This place is probably the biggest challenge I’ve seen. I’m just wanting to get in there digging, making things better.”

Stansbury explained that the main goal of the clinic renovations is to provide essential upgrades to the clinic to ensure it meets current building codes for a

medical facility and properly care for its patients.

“Right now we’re getting ready to (demolish) the main staircase to build handicap access for wheelchairs. Then we’re going to move inside and renovate the patients’ rooms, doctor’s office, bathroom, kitchen and other things,” he said. “People need medical assistance, and we’re here to help the clinic be able to do its job better.”

Since first seeing the site in August, Stansbury said, he has worked to answer the "\$64,000 question": How can we best execute the mission?

Much of the renovation effort includes replacing plumbing and tearing down and rebuilding walls, as well as replacing about 18 doors. "I do feel that we can make it better for them," said Stansbury. "We’re going to do our best for them."

Each Seabee explained the importance of the mission as a community-building initiative.

“I volunteered to come out here. Any time I can volunteer to help the builders, I volunteer,” said Gomes, a mechanic who lends a hand where help is needed. “They have a lot of work to do at this place. It’s good to come out here and let people see that the U.S. is here to help out. That’s what we -- the Seabees -- do; help build up communities and let them know we support them. To be able to train in foreign countries, you have got to have the support of the people. You can’t just come in and start running around in vehicles. You need to have the locals wanting you here. This helps establish the community tie.”

Pickenpaugh, who said he also volunteered for the mission to join JTF-East, shared that sentiment.

“To come out here and do something for the Romanians will help us better our relationship with the locals,” he said.

“We take our work seriously and we try to give it the best we can give. We look at these projects like they are our own home or whatnot, and we want to make it happen, make it work right,” said Stansbury. “I hope the Romanians look at this and say, ‘They are committed to helping us.’”



www.hqusareur.army.mil