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21st Theater Sustainment Command Soldiers get some realistic urban 'sergeants' time' training

By Sgt. Fay Conroy

21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany -- The spire on the mosque glinted in the late afternoon sky. Soldiers huddled near the entryway to the house next door. Suddenly they rocked backward and then kicked open the door.



SGT FAY CONROY

Staff Sgt. Anthony Cardona, NCO-in-charge of the munitions section for the 21st Theater Sustainment Command's Special Troops Battalion (right) and STB mechanic Pfc. Michael Trischler kick open a door during urban operations training at a mock forward operating base on Panzer Kaserne in Kaiserslautern, Germany, Nov. 13.

This scenario did not unfold in Iraq or Afghanistan. It happened at a mock forward operating base at Panzer Kaserne here Nov. 13 during "sergeants' time" training for Soldiers from the Special Troops Battalion of U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

The training was designed to teach Soldiers to conduct Military Operations on Urban Terrain. On this day the training focused on entering and clearing rooms.

Set up to duplicate an Iraqi village, the FOB has a mosque; houses with couches and kitchen facilities; a village square; and a garage with broken-down cars. Conducting training in these realistic MOUT settings has become a vital part of today's training because so many military operations are now conducted in cities and surrounding areas.

"This is the kind of stuff you'll be doing 'downrange,' and this is the most realistic you'll see before going 'downrange,'" said

Staff Sgt. Anthony Cardona, NCO-in-charge of the munitions section of the STB's supply operations.

Even though the Soldiers completing the urban training were not typical combat arms troops, most said they understood the significance of the exercise.

“Being female doesn't mean that you are exempt from this kind of training, and it doesn't matter if you are in a section like staff judge advocate,” said Sgt. Dawn Davis, court reporter NCO-in-charge for the 21st's SJA office. “When I was ‘downrange’ I was an alternate for the third team back man, so if anything had happened to him, I would have had to jump in.”

One building on the FOB combined all the dangerous settings Soldiers could face in clearing a structure in a combat zone -- windows, an interior staircase, a small room, a long room that connected to a neighboring building, and an exterior exposed staircase.

“I thought that it was different because this building was much more complex. I knew most of the basics before this training, but I had never learned how to clear a staircase,” said STB mechanic Pfc. Michael Trischler.

The rest of the training consisted of techniques for preparing an entry team, entering buildings and clearing rooms and working together with other team members.

“I've really enjoyed this training. It's much better than just another PowerPoint slide show,” said Davis.



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