

Civil-Military Cooperation teams find common ground in Rapid Trident 19

By Staff Sgt. Amanda Johnson, California National Guard September 19, 2019



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YAVORIV, Ukraine - Dust rose on a dirt road as a convoy of vehicles filled with multinational service members drove to a water pumping station on Sept. 17, 2019, near Yavoriv, Ukraine, with the purpose of establishing a strong relationship with the civilians who provide fresh water to more than 7,000 Ukrainians in the surrounding area.

When the convoy arrived at a small concrete building in the middle of a wooded valley, a collection of Ukrainian, British and American soldiers dismounted from the vehicles between several water wells.

"Today, we are going to assess a water facility and a power facility," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Nate Mitcavish, Civil Affairs Team Sergeant, B Company in the 407th Civil Affairs Battalion,

to the group of service members from Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States. Each person in the group is specialized in civil affairs skills that bring different perspectives to the formation of the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) teams. "An assessment consists of identifying the location of the facilities, points of contact for the facilities and anything relevant to the operation of the facilities: capabilities, fuel source, operational."

This CIMIC event is part of Rapid Trident 2019, an annual multinational exercise, which involves approximately 3,700 personnel from 14 nations, that supports joint, combined interoperability among the partner militaries of Ukraine and the United States, as well as Partnership for Peace nations and NATO allies.

The mission between Ukrainian, British and U.S. CIMIC partners during this exercise is to conduct soldiering skills and CIMIC tasks, said Mitcavish. It's focused on events ranging from small unit tactics to CIMIC-centric responsibilities such as populace resource control, mediation, negotiations, and conducting physical infrastructure assessments.

The group of a dozen CIMIC Soldiers discussed the information needed, and maximum and minimum capabilities for infrastructures that provide key public services such as water, electricity and viable life support. Hypothetical situations inspired alternate considerations. The diverse collection of professionals debated essential information critical to civilian and military services in any situation.

"We're also refreshing ourselves because we have participants from Ukraine army, Ukraine National Guard, United Kingdom, U.S. Army conventional forces civil affairs, and U.S. special operations civil affairs as well," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Thane Thompson, Operations Officer for the 353rd Civil Affairs Command. "We have people coming from many different units, and they're also of different levels of experience too."

The training culminated with assessments of a local hospital, a water pumping station and an electrical substation. The groups met with lead directors of each facility, establishing important relationships within the community and ascertaining information pertaining to regional capabilities, said Mitcavish.

"Following Rapid Trident, the U.S. presence in central and eastern Europe doesn't disappear," said Mitcavish. "We continue to support our multinational partners particularly through Operation Atlantic Resolve and where we have civil affairs teams working throughout this region to support our CIMIC partners."

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