



Romanian Land Forces Maj. Gen. Alexandru Rus presents an award to Lt. Col. Rafael Pardes during the unit's "Completion of Mission" ceremony Jan. 13. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jenny Lui)

OPFOR battalion marks completion of 5-year mission in Afghanistan

By Joint Multinational Readiness Center Public Affairs Office

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HOHENFELS, Germany -- Members of the Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr military communities along with representatives from the Romanian Army joined together here Jan. 13 during a ceremony to officially recognize the completion of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment's 5-year mission in Afghanistan.

Since 2006, the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment has maintained a company-size element deployed as part of a Romanian Battle Group in Afghanistan's Zabul province. During the nine consecutive International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) rotations they augmented the Romanian Land Forces with personnel, enablers, and operational experience, while the Romanians developed and improved their own capacity and interoperability.

“It was a great honor for our battalion commanders to have embedded in their units a company from your battalion,” said Romanian Major General Alexandru Rus, Chief of Strategic Planning Directorate, Romanian Land Forces. “This unique partnership highlights the special relationship between us. Together we have succeeded to keep open a vital economic corridor and to achieve so far COMISAF’s requirements.”

Due to the success of this unique partnership and other conditions in theater, last year, Romania deployed a second battalion and a brigade tactical command post, signaling its increased commitment to ISAF.

“You can be very proud,” said Brigadier General Steven L. Salazar, Commanding General of the Joint Multinational Training Command. “You served your nation, ably supported the Romanian Task Force and provided hope for the Afghan people of Zabul Province.”

Their continuous deployments, while serving to provide stability and security to the people of Afghanistan, also enhanced the unit’s unique OPFOR mission at JMRC by providing them with first-hand, personal knowledge of today’s tactics, techniques and procedures, as well the current battlefield trends as they relate to both U.S., Allied and Combatant forces.

“This is not the last great thing that Soldiers serving under the Warrior banner will do,” continued Salazar. “Apply your experiences to train the forces – U.S. Army in Europe forces as well as our allies.”

Their experiences has also enabled the Joint Multinational Readiness Center to positively impact rotational units’ mission rehearsal exercises and allowed them to experience realistic training—thus better prepared for their mission.

More than 1,400 Soldiers from 1-4 IN deployed during this five year mission number of them earning valorous awards which included 1 Silver Star, 21 Bronze Star Medals w/V Device, 48 ARCOMs w/V Device and one Soldier’s Medal. Over the last four deployments, 40 Soldiers earned the Purple Heart.

Eleven Soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives in the defense of freedom.

The mission came to a conclusion this week with the return of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment’s Team Cherokee to Hohenfels.

For more information about the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and the JMRC, visit the Web site at <http://www.jmrc.hqjmtc.army.mil/>.