

Multinational exercise Rapid Trident kicks off in Ukraine

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By **U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs**



Photo credit **Staff Sgt. Brendan Stephens**

YAVORIV, Ukraine -- An international collective of military forces from Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Slovenia, Canada, Georgia, Poland, Serbia, the U.K., Lithuania, Estonia and the U.S. gather for Exercise Rapid Trident 2011. Rapid Trident is a multi-national airborne operation and field training exercise (FTX) in support of Ukraine's Annual Program to achieve interoperability with NATO.

YAVORIV, Ukraine -- Exercise Rapid Trident 11 kicked off today with an opening ceremony at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center here.

"This Partnership for Peace exercise provides all partner nations the opportunity to enhance your capabilities to conduct multi-national and combined coalition operations," said Kevin Volk, U.S. co-director of the exercise.

"This exercise will leave an impression in the history of rapid trident exercises because this year we will conduct airborne operations," said Maj. Gen. Vyacheslav Nazarkin, Ukrainian co-director of the exercise.

Rapid Trident 11 involves approximately 1,600 personnel and will consist of multi-national airborne operations, situational training exercise lanes and a field training exercise. In addition to U.S. Army Europe, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and Ukraine, participants include: Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Slovenia, Canada, Poland, Serbia, the UK, Lithuania, Estonia, California and Utah National Guard and U.S. Air Force Europe.

"It is very important that during this exercise we will be visited by leadership of Ukrainian armed forces and force commanders of participating countries," Nazarkin said.

Rapid Trident is a joint training and exercise program designed to enhance interoperability among Ukraine, the U.S. and Partnership for Peace member nations. This exercise will help prepare participants to operate successfully in a joint, multi-national, integrated environment with host-nation support from civil and government agencies.

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"In this safe training environment, I want us to maximize our cultural exchanges and the opportunity to cultivate new friendships," said Volk.

"We're here to show them our skills, professionalism and readiness to fulfill tasks in field conditions. I wish every participant high results in the exercise and success in their military career," Nazarkin said.