German medics work toward U.S. Army Expert Field Medical Badge

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GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Sgt. Ramon Hernandez, a member of the 8th Medical Company (Logistics), mentors German 2nd Lt. Felix Worner, assigned to the Sanstff Mainz hospital, while qualifying on an M16A2 rifle July 28. As part of the pre-qualification required for participation in the 2011 U.S. Army Europe Expert Field Medical Badge Standardization and Testing candidates must complete the weapons qualification, an Army Physical Fitness Test, and Basic Lifesaving Skills in order to participate.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – As U.S. and German candidates cross the finish line of a two-mile run together, Soldiers of one nation supported soldiers from another in their efforts to earn the right to participate in the 2011 U.S. Army Europe Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) Standardization and Testing.

This was the first step in a three-phase pre-qualification for the EFMB that NATO allies are participating in from July 31 to Aug. 13 at the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

"Our Expert Field Medical Badge is a very prestigious badge and it is seen as an honor and is very tough to get," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Starling, range safety officer and small arms master marksman, 8th Medical Company (Logistics).

In order to make it to the testing phase of the event, multinational candidates had to pre-qualify and meet U.S. Army standards.

"We had to do what is also necessary of the Americans," said German Sgt. Dustin Nicholas, 4th Company, 21st Hospital Regiment. "During the first week we had to do an APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test), weapons qualification and CPR training."

Five German Soldiers arrived with little time for preparation before the pre-qualification phase began in late July.
“You’ve got to admire them,” said Master Sgt. Harold Pharis, the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the Surgeon’s Office, 21st Theater Sustainment Command. “They only have a few days to learn our weapon systems and a few days to learn our PT system.”

Consistency throughout the EFMB is a priority so that each candidate has a clear idea of what is expected, said Starling. “By having a valid PT test and weapons qualification, we give them the chance to do the same things (U.S.) Soldiers get to do so they can rightfully qualify for that badge the same way (U.S.) Soldiers do,” Starling said.

Although the standards may be different than those of the German Army for some of the pre-qualification events, the Soldiers were expected to meet those requirements easily, said Master Sgt. Abdel Guzman, NCOIC of the 2011 USAREUR EFMB.

“The Bundeswehr has sent us some of the finest to compete in the event,” said Guzman. “I think every one is going to achieve this badge.”