U.S. ROTC cadets visit Exercise Rapid Trident 2013 in Ukraine

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YAVORIV, Ukraine -- A Ukrainian soldier (right) briefs U.S. Army Reserve Officer Training Cadets participating in the Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency program on training taking place at Exercise Rapid Trident 2013, during a July 11 visit to the exercise. Rapid Trident is a U.S. Army Europe-led, multinational field training and command post exercise occurring at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center in Yavoriv, Ukraine July 8-19 that involves approximately 1,300 troops from 17 nations. The exercise is designed to enhance interoperability between forces and promote regional stability and security. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Cole)

YAVORIV, Ukraine -- U.S. Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets visited Exercise Rapid Trident 2013 here July 11 as part of the Cultural Understanding and Learning Proficiency program.

CULP is a U.S. Army Cadet Command program that sends cadets from universities across America to other nations, to allow the cadets to spend up to three weeks abroad immersed in a foreign culture. Cadets travel in a small group with cadre and focus on humanitarian service, host nation military-to-military contact, and education on the social, cultural and historical aspects of their assigned country.

"These are leaders who are probably going to meet their counterparts a few years down the road somewhere else," said Master Sgt. Reginald Stewart, the cadre leader on the trip. "Being able to have that cultural awareness is going to make them a better leader."

The cadets visited Rapid Trident to gain an understanding of the multinational training and operations U.S. Army Europe and the Army conduct.

While visiting Rapid Trident the cadets observed field operations and training exercises. A Ukrainian soldier demonstrated how to employ smoke grenades, and the cadets watched a training exercise involving enemy troops taking over a vehicle checkpoint before being suppressed by coalition forces.
Cadets also climbed inside the Ukrainian BTR-80 armored personnel carrier that provides close fire support, reconnaissance, combat support and patrol mission capabilities on the battlefield.

While in Ukraine the cadets are also teaching Ukrainian cadets English at the country’s Land Forces Academy in Lviv, and participated in a humanitarian mission to bring toys to children at a local orphanage. Before finishing their program, the cadets will tour a monastery in the Carpathian Mountains.

"The experience here has been amazing," said Bohdanna Stolar, a ROTC cadet at the University of New Haven. "As a cadet none of us thought that we would get that experience to work with other militaries and to see how they [train]."

Stolar was born in Ukraine and left with her parents when she was four months old. This is the first time she has returned to the country. She said it has been "completely beneficial" to her personally to see her motherland first-hand, and added that the military interaction should pay dividends for the Army.

"It benefits us to see how we can help our Army and how we can lead with other militaries," said Stolar.

Visit the Rapid Trident website for up-to-date photos and information.

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