

U.S. Army Europe trains senior allied leaders for joint, combined command

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

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GRAFENWOEHR TRAINING AREA, Germany -- Over the years U.S. Army Europe has trained tens of thousands of service members from across its 51-country area of responsibility here, building Soldier and unit capabilities and knowledge and theater security cooperation via a wide range of leadership, skill and war fighting training exercises and courses.

This month, from July 23 – 27, USAREUR added a new dimension to its ability to build the capacity of its European partner forces when it launched the Army's first Combined Forces Land Component Commanders' Seminar taught in Europe. The seminar takes training to the strategic level by bringing together senior officers to share experiences and build relationships while learning the techniques of leading and sustaining a combined land force component in a joint task force environment.

The participants – 23 officers from the U.S. and 15 European nations -- were primarily brigadier generals and senior colonels being primed for promotion or top-level leadership positions within their nations' forces. Their diversity reflects the diversity of the coalitions that comprise today's land component commands.

USAREUR commander Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, who hosted and moderated the seminar, said one participant told him only USAREUR could successfully put on such an event.

The seminar comprised 20 sessions taught by senior active and retired military and civilian experts representing U.S. and allied land, air and sea forces and other agencies involved in coordinated combat, stability and reconstruction operations. The sessions spanned the horizon of joint and combined multinational operations, from fundamentals to theater strategic perspectives; air, land and sea battle coordination; command relationships; logistics; special

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operations; intelligence; cyber warfare; influence and inform operations; working with government and nongovernment agencies; and understanding the political and interagency implications of operations.

While the seminar is aimed toward the type of structure and mission found in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, Hertling used an example closer to home as an illustration – COM KFOR, the Kosovo Force command. COM KFOR currently includes a German commander, an Austrian deputy commander, a Turkish operations officer, a French planner, a Greek logistics officer and Italian, U.S. and Portuguese group, unit and battalion commanders.

"The entire staff is made up of multinational formations for what is in fact a CFLCC in Kosovo," Hertling said.

Yet while many participants have taken part in CFLCC operations, Hertling added, they hadn't trained specifically to take on that role.

"Many of these senior leaders have been to Iraq or Afghanistan, and they've conducted operations with their forces, but they've never built from the beginning a combined land force component commander. We've never done that from the beginning of an operation," he said.

The weeklong event here, based on the CFLCC commander's seminar for U.S. and partner general officers at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., was a first step toward changing that. It rounds out other training events offered here and across USAREUR's 51 partner nations, and helps grow battlefield capabilities Hertling said were cobbled together at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom just 10 years ago.

To tailor the seminar for USAREUR's partnerships and missions, the seminar gives the War College curriculum a European twist.

"Here, because of the composition of the group it is possible to discuss also more – I would not say European point of view, but a European reality," said Brig. Gen. David Humar, a brigade commander in the Slovenian armed forces.

Col. Pierre Augustin, deputy chief of staff of France's land forces, said whether the seminar is here or in the U.S., there are advantages to bringing American and European commanders together.

"I would say if you're in the States the advantage is for the allies to be exposed directly in the heartland, in terms of military culture ... if you're in Europe the advantage is that it brings the U.S. mind-set into the European context and environment," Augustin said.

Hertling said that in bringing the seminar to Europe he asked how USAREUR could contribute to building its partners' land forces and their capacity at strategic and operational levels.

"What can we share with our partners who have contributed to ISAF and Iraq and Kosovo, to help them build their forces into organizations that the next time we're asked to go, they already have the skills, versus growing the skills in combat?," he asked. "Which is what we did ... in 2003. We brought together a bunch of forces that truthfully, did not all operate on the same level. We are now all operating on the same level."

Hertling said he could relate "about a hundred" examples of the challenges involved in bringing together members of forces from across USAREUR's footprint, with their broad diversity and myriad perspectives on security issues. He used the illustration of geographic neighbors such as Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia and Georgia, or the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which are all U.S. partners but have very different security concerns.

But USAREUR is in a unique position to successfully build relationships with each of its partners on multiple levels, the general said. Hertling recalled his days as commander of the Joint Multinational Training Command, when forces from the Republic of Georgia first began training at JMTC, and noted that USAREUR has since helped those forces train and grow and develop from bottom to top, from the tactical level to the operational and strategic levels. As a result, he said, Georgian forces are now able to routinely contribute two battalions to ISAF operations and want to build their brigade operations capabilities.

"Complexity" would be the word to define what allied leaders can expect in combined land forces operations. In every briefing, in every discussion, complexity was heard time and again.

The most contemporary illustrations of that term came from British Maj. Gen. Tim Radford, chief of staff of ISAF's International Joint Command, in a briefing on combined and joint land components in current operations in Afghanistan. Joining the seminar via video teleconference from Kabul, Radford said Afghanistan is a complex battle space where commanders need leadership and vision to successfully balance combat operations with a myriad of considerations and the wishes of the Afghan people and the many disparate agencies acting there.

"It is a complex environment. It's a very congested battle space, and there are lots of competing equities right across Afghanistan, particularly here in Kabul," Radford said. "We've got NATO; you've got the contributing nations, and every nationality has its own caveats and its own views on how the campaign should be conducted."

In addition to the historically conventional components of operations, seminar participants looked at new and emerging complexities on the modern battlefield.

Speaking to participants about the fundamentals of CFLCC and joint operations, German Gen. (Ret.) Hans-Otto Budde said today security is defined by asymmetric and hybrid threats and a myriad of traditionally nonmilitary factors that challenge commanders' confidence and character.

"Security can no longer be understood in only one connection -- as a purely military term -- but comprises social, demographic, economic and technological aspects today," Budde said.

"There are going to be conventional force issues; there are going to be terrorists; there are going to be criminal networks; there are going to be other threats," Hertling said. "That's what's going to add to certain of those complexities. You have other things, new types of threats like the cyber threat, missile defense threat, transnational terrorism, and it just keeps building and building in complexity, and we talked with all these commanders about that and said, 'OK; how can we plan for operations like that together in the future?'"

Hertling said there was a moment during the event when a switch was flipped, and it dawned on participants that they could be called upon one day to lead a CFLCC rather than to just support one. At that moment, they began asking challenging and difficult questions about how to do that, the general added, and the seminar turned out to be more successful than he had expected.

"There have been some fascinating exchanges, some very mature questions, some very interesting insights in how to do business....not as a contributor to the United States but, in fact, as a potential leader of a contingency operation," Hertling said.

Hertling also agreed with many of the seminar's participants who said the seminar was as much about building relationships and trust as improving knowledge and skills.

"In the future we will face a necessity to cooperate with many very different armies ... there will be differences (in) tactics, (in) plans. That's why I strongly believe in the necessity to understand the armies with which we are going to operate," Budde said.

"We need to know a lot of things other than military tactics and techniques," Humar added. "Events such as this here in Grafenwoehr help us to know better each other and to build trust."

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) William Webster, a 37-year Army veteran who led the 3rd Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom and later commanded Multi-National Division-Baghdad, served as senior mentor for the seminar, sharing his experience as a seasoned land forces commander. He said the seminar would pay dividends in future multinational operations and missions.

"There is a strength that comes from synchronized operations amongst allies, and if we talk about, in relative peace, how we will work together in times of crisis, it will make it much easier to make us successful when we do so. And so we want these senior leaders to go back to their nations feeling confident that they've made new relationships and that when they are faced with a difficult set of tasks, they can rely on the rest of us to participate."

About us: U.S. Army Europe is uniquely positioned to advance American strategic interests across Eurasia and has unparalleled capability to prevent conflict, shape the environment and, if necessary, win decisively. The relationships we build during more than 1000 theater security cooperation events in more than 40 countries each year lead directly to support for multinational contingency operations around the world, strengthen regional partnerships, and enhance global security.