

702nd EOD Soldiers train with Estonian civilian counterparts

By Capt. Jennifer Dyrzcz, 18 CSSB Public Affairs Officer

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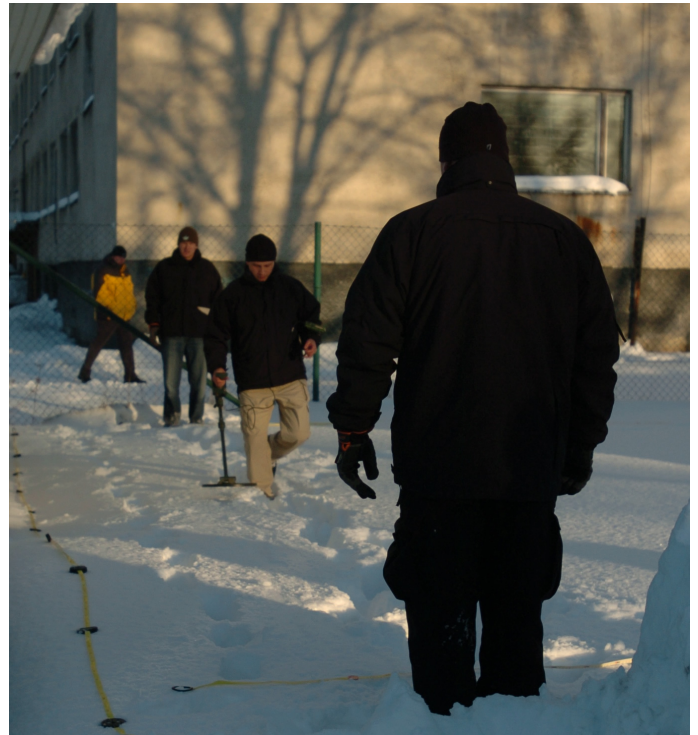
TALLINN, Estonia -- A team of Soldiers from the 702nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company trained with representatives from Estonia's EOD centers on Vallon detector systems in December. These systems were donated by the U.S. Department of State as part of their Weapons Removal and Abatement program.

"These improved Vallons are amazing, and we know we can use them every day with what we do. We took our old systems with us when we went to help with the de-mining in Georgia so we cannot wait to see what the improvements will do to help our program," said Vahur Allas, a senior EOD technician with the Estonian Northern-Regional Bomb Group.

The detectors use the magnetic field of the earth to pinpoint where unexploded ordnance, or UXOs, are located. The UXOs are magnetized and will cause anomalies in the earth's magnetic field, which the detector will identify, making it possible to locate them.

This training consisted of classroom time where the students learned how to work the computer programs, which are part of the system. And even with snow on the ground, the Estonian EOD students did field exercises outdoors with the equipment as they mapped large magnetic items in the ground.

"This course and the partnership we have with the 702nd EOD Co. and the Americans are great. Estonia is a small country, and we need friends, and we



Estonian Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians use Vallon unexploded ordnance detector equipment to map out possible UXOs in the ground during the field portion of their training in Tallin, Estonia. The training was led by a team of Soldiers from the 702nd EOD Company from Grafenwoehr, Germany. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Jennifer Dyrzcz, 18th CSSB Public Affairs)

are proud to serve with our allies in Afghanistan. So when the United States sees Estonia as a good partner, it gives me a very proud feeling. Of course we need to practice on the new equipment to be the best, but the U.S. led training helped to put us on that path,” said Vladimir Zabellevits, an EOD technician with the Estonian Northern-Regional Bomb Group. “The EOD community is international. We are all bound by the same job so in Estonia all we had to do is get off the plane and say ‘hi’ and we were welcomed like family,” said Staff Sgt. Geoff Dewitt, a native of Yeehaw Junction, Fla., who works as an EOD team leader with the 702nd EOD Co.