



Soldiers from the Texas Army National Guard's 71st Brigade Combat Team of the 36th Infantry Division and the Romanian 26th Infantry Battalion "Red Scorpions" train in urban terrain.

Photo by Art McQueen

BUILDING ROMEX 05

Story by
Capt. Kevin Stoll

Approximately 1,800 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians gathered near the Romanian town of Babadag for a joint U.S. – Romanian exercise in August.

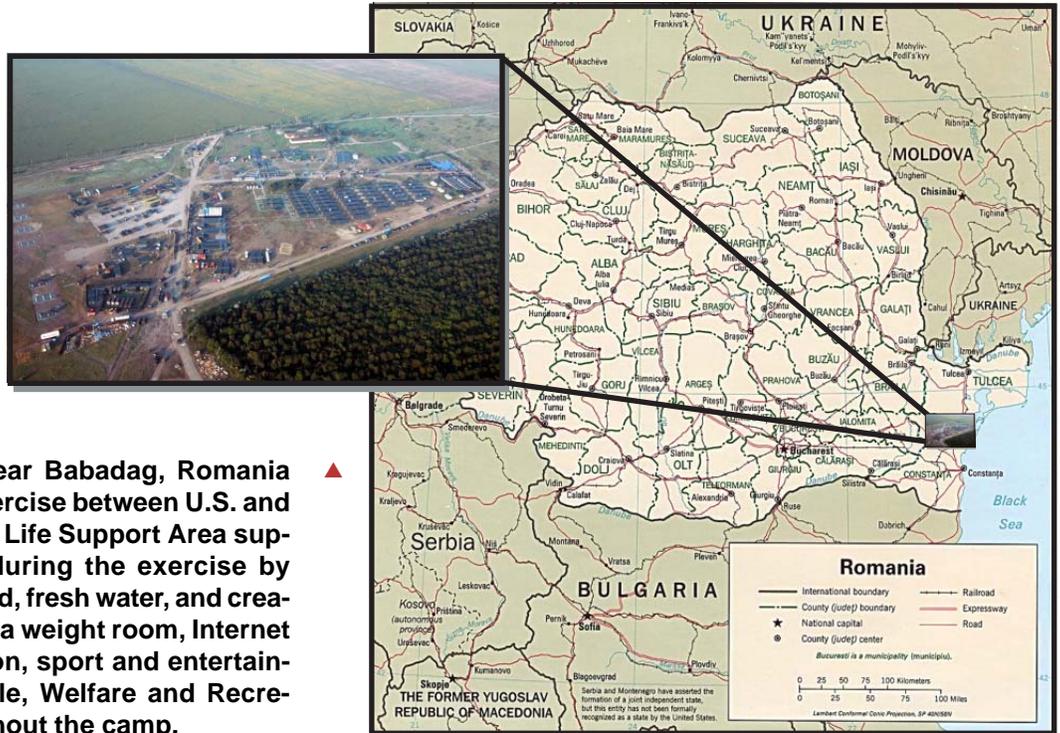
ROMEX 05 was a live-fire exercise focused on the interoperability of the new strategic NATO alliance with Romania, which was forged just over a year ago.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played an important role in making this exercise happen, in which members of the 71st Brigade Combat Team of the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division and the Romanian army prepared for operations in hostile environments,

while fighting in the Global War on Terrorism.

ROMEX 05 highlighted the importance of combined operations for the newly partnered American and Romanian armies, as well as the quick build up of quality bases for future contingency operations. During the two-week operation, both armies received training to increase the interoperability and working relationship between the U.S. forces and their international partners along the Black Sea.

The Corps' role began long before any training was conducted. Personnel from the Corps, in conjunction with members of the 1st Armored Division's Engineer Brigade, surveyed



ROMEX 05 located near Babadag, Romania was a joint live-fire exercise between U.S. and Romanian forces. The Life Support Area supported the Soldiers during the exercise by providing billeting, food, fresh water, and creature comforts such as a weight room, Internet cafe, satellite television, sport and entertainment areas and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities throughout the camp.

sites in Romania and assessed the suitability to support a training event of this magnitude long before breaking ground. The Babadag area was just one of the areas studied by the Corps who surveyed land, assessed the infrastructure, and analyzed environmental impact issues, said Paul Ramey, a senior master planner at Europe District.

One of the major missions for the Corps during ROMEX 05 was to conduct construction quality assurance, which is a value-added function the customer receives from the Corps. Quality assurance is the process of ensuring the contractor meets the specifications of the contract because oftentimes the customer does not possess the technical engineering knowledge to enforce the technical portions of the contract.

“This project was uniquely challenging in that it allowed us to refine and develop all of the general engineering skills required to build a city from the ground up,” said John Gerlach, a project engineer from New York District who provided quality assurance.

Some logistical issues were also tackled prior to the training exercise’s beginning.

“We analyzed how you could move troops and equipment in and out of the area and any environmental concerns that might cause

problems,” Ramey said.

In addition, the team of surveyors addressed issues of where to place key facilities on the site so troops could move conveniently from billets to latrines or from the motor pool to the dining facility without compromising the standard of living.

“You have to put the billets far enough from the motor pool and other noisy areas,” Ramey said.

“This project could not have been accomplished without the direct involvement of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. (The Corps’) understanding of contractors and the Army made it possible for the contractor to provide a quality and timely product at cost, on time and above expectations.”

The Life Support Area provided billeting, fresh water, food, electricity, communication and sewage, as well as, other miscellaneous



Photo by Capt. Kevin Stoll

- ▲ Soldiers from the Romanian 26th Infantry Battalion “Red Scorpions” load and fire mortar rounds during the ROMEX 05 exercise.
- ▼ A 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) stands by as a Romanian “Red Scorpion” is brought on board by Soldiers from the 71st Brigade Combat Team.

provisions, to include a weight room, Internet cafe, barbershop, satellite television, sport and entertainment areas, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities throughout the base camp.

All of the major construction was accomplished in less than eight weeks and in time to house the first Soldiers of the advance party that arrived on July 6th from Texas. ShipSup Ltd., out of Turkey, was the general contractor working under the Corps’ guidance. The contractor was selected and awarded the contract on May 6. The original cost estimate was for \$14 million, but the contractor was able to do it for under \$10 million. The Corps’ quality assurance team lent their expertise while the contractor spearheaded the construction mission.

“Not only did they (the Corps) guide us through the building process whenever there were bottlenecks, but

they also provided valuable information that will definitely improve our future planning (capability),” said Tefvik Moran, the ShipSup project manager.

On the user side, the response to all of these amenities provided has been positive.

Both Soldiers and their leaders inhabiting the camp were greatly impressed by the easily-deployable sleeping units, office spaces and dining

facilities, Ramey said

upon his arrival with the team to assess the LSA.

“The living conditions for the Soldiers were outstanding,”

said Maj. Keith

Dupont, operations and training officer for 1st Armored Division’s Engineer Brigade. This exercise has raised the bar for quality of life and construction standards for short-duration military



ROMEX 05 Public Affairs Photo



◀ **Maj. Gen. Florian Pinta, deputy head of the Romanian Armed Forces General Staff, is given a site orientation and construction progress update by Capt. Kevin Stoll, a project engineer from Europe District during a visit to the ROMEX 05 Life Support Area.**

Editor's Note: Capt. Kevin Stoll from Europe District, performed both quality assurance and project engineer duties during the construction phase of ROMEX 05 alongside a team from the North Atlantic Division which included: John Gerlach, a project engineer from New York District, Master Sgt. Rick Albanese, an Individual Mobilization Augmentee from Long Island, N.Y., and Master Sgt. Melvin Cosely, an Individual Mobilized Augmentee from the New York District.

deployments.

"This project could not have been accomplished without the direct involvement of the United States Army Corps of Engineers," said Dupont. "(The Corps') understanding of contractors and the Army made it possible for the contractor to provide a quality and timely product at cost, on time, and above expectations. The contractor and the Corps of Engineers developed a win-win relationship that produced complete mission success."

Following the exercise, all the buildings and tents were removed from the area. Once again the site looks much as it did when the engineers began surveying months ago.

"Everyone worked together very well. I'm a civilian but I feel very connected to the military," Ramey said. "I got a lot of support and in turn felt like what we did was important."

Taking a lead role in ROMEX 05 has paid great dividends for the Corps.

The expertise and skills gained from this project has strengthened Europe District's institutional knowledge base and enhanced technical competencies. With help from other districts, the Europe District is more capable of leveraging engineering and construction support assets to support expeditionary forces throughout the European Command's area of responsibility.

John Gerlach, a project engineer from New York District, inspects the footing for a wooden guard tower that Romanian carpenters are building for the ROMEX 05 exercise. ▶



Photo by Capt. Kevin Stoll