



Photos by TONY SUBRIZI

Fellow Medhat Abuhantash, right, interacts with two cultural role players in the village of Medina Jabal at the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, Calif.

CNE SSC Fellows visit JRTC, NTC

Story by
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Capital and Northeast Fellows from Aberdeen Proving Ground accompanied by the CNE Senior Service College Fellows director visited the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, La., Nov. 16 through 18 and the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, Calif., Nov. 18 and 19.

The trips to two of the Army's three "dirt" combat training centers provided unique experiential education and represents one of the core components of the SSCF Program: a field study or Warfighter trip.

The purpose of the visits to the Army's premier training facilities was to provide first-hand, eyes-on exposure to the latest technological advances in testing, training and end user application in a stressful environment that replicates the current operating environment; observe the vital role that the JRTC and NTC play in preparing individuals, leaders and units for combat deployments; observe leaders demonstrate leadership competencies of directing people (coaching/teaching, managing conflict, and team development) and leading change to attain results (creativity and innovation, resilience, problem-solving and adaptability); and gain a deeper understanding of the modular, brigade-based force, its capabilities, and how it meets the requirements of the geographic combatant commanders.

The JRTC mission is to "conduct tough, realistic, multi-echelon, joint and combined arms training to develop bold innovative leaders able to deal with complex situations; flexible, skilled Soldiers imbued with the Warrior Ethos; and highly proficient units capable of conducting operations across the

full spectrum of conflict."

The JRTC fields a world class opposing force which allows them to develop and implement scenarios reflective of the COE such as linked events incorporating the latest enemy tactics, techniques and procedures.

These events are intended to exercise all of the battlefield operating systems and are characterized by joint, inter-service, interagency, multinational and coalition participation that features operations in more than 20 villages with more than 600 buildings, and includes more than 1,000 role players, including more than 200 cultural role players. In turn, this provides, a learning environment that is facilitated by instrumented after-action reviews, and continuous feedback from expert trainers/mentors.

At the JRTC Operations Group, the Fellows received a command brief from the operations officer which provided rotational objectives and training methodology highlighting pre-rotational training, engagement training, situational training exercises, theater based, live fire training, command post exercises, and force-on-force exercises. The briefing also addressed how the COE is replicated with dynamic battlefield effects such as improvised explosive devices, vehicle borne IED, suicide bombers, indirect fires, and rocket propelled grenades that when combined with civilians, non-governmental organizations, foreign security forces, insurgents, foreign fighters, and militia come together to "make the battlefield come to life."

After the Operations Group command overview, the Fellows heard from the senior trainer/mentors representing Brigade Command and Control, Task Force 1, 2, 3 and 4, who described the most prev-



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alent observations and trends occurring during the rotational unit's mission rehearsal exercise. The final Operations Group briefing addressed the emerging concept of embedded Company Intelligence Support Teams, along with their collective development, equipping, and employment. The Fellow's time with the Operations Group was punctuated with a visit to the "maneuver box" where they visited the villages of Sadiq, Sulliyah, and Forward Operating Base Forge. Each of the urban sites realistically replicates a village and a FOB that could be found in a multitude of locations throughout the COE. The Fellows were given an in-depth Fort Polk Command Briefing by the JRTC and Fort Polk Chief of Staff Col. Rick Bloss where he described the many ongoing initiatives, planned activities, and modernization effort.

Transitioning to Fort Irwin, Calif., the Fellows were welcomed by the NTC Chief of Staff, Col. Joseph Wawro, who provided them with a rundown

of the NTC and Fort Irwin, specifically addressing their training methodology; the preparation of units for combat; the development of scenarios reflective of the COE; the development of adaptive, agile leaders; the forging of partnerships; and ongoing initiatives.

The Fellows toured the Division Tactical Operations Center and while there, they received a rotational in-brief which provided them with an overview of the ongoing MRE that focused on force on force play.

Next, the Fellows received a terrorist explosive network brief which described how IEDs are constructed and employed. Afterwards, SSCF Fellow Corde Lane, playing the role of a trigger-man, demonstrated the relative ease of using an IED against a high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle when he effectively detonated a series of faux devices. Prior to transitioning to the "maneuver box," the Fellows received a series of briefings from members of the Joint IED Defeat Organization at the Army Center of Excel-

lence Detachment, focused on Terrorist Explosive Networks, Robotics/IED exploitation and biometrics.

These presentations provided context and set the stage for the Fellows' visit to the village of Medina Jabal. At the time of the visit, the village was occupied with a "fully engaged civilian population," foreign security forces, active insurgents and criminal elements all of which when combined provided an extremely complex background reflective of the current COE.

While there, the Fellows gained a deeper appreciation for the complicated nature of the modern battlefield as they watched the rotational unit interact with the villagers, national governmental forces and respond to the numerous threats generated by the local insurgents.

The visit to the JRTC and the NTC provided a unique opportunity for the Fellows to view and consider the many leadership challenges faced by Army's leaders as they collectively defend national interests.

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