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Thursday, January 22, 2004

3rd BCT conducts MOUT training

By Pfc. Cheryl Ransford, 17th Public Affairs Det.

During training at the Schofield Barracks Military Operations in Urban Terrain site, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, along with Soldiers from 65th Engineer Bn. and the 25th Military Police Company, moved with focus and precision as they cleared buildings and searched the village civilians to single out hostile individuals Jan. 13.

The training -- which was one of the requirements for infantry battalions of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's Bronco Stampede -- tested Soldiers' ability to react to civilians on the battlefield.

The training began with a battalion air assault into the MOUT site. While one company controlled the perimeter, the remainder of the battalion moved into the city.

Civilians, portrayed by Soldiers of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., roamed the city, posing the first challenge to the advancing troops.



Photo(s) by Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

As Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. move toward an objective at the MOUT site, a civilian on the battlefield holds his hands out the window

This training was to focus on the cordon and search mission in preparation for combat in Afghanistan, according to Maj. Todd Miller, 3rd BCT plans and operations officer.

"This is a very complex and dynamic environment to operate in," said Miller. "This exercise challenges the Soldiers under similar situations the Soldiers might face in Afghanistan."

Repeated preparation for MOUT attacks and interaction with civilians helps the Soldiers get hands-on experience, teaching them how to enter a village and perform their mission correctly, said Spc. Mario Rosales, an M240-B machine gunner with Co. C, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt.

"In the past, when we have done this type of training we have always known where the targets are supposed to be, now the training is more realistic with varied targets. It teaches how to react to a variety of situations we may come across in Afghanistan," said Rosales.

According to Sgt. Eddie Fonoti, a Co. C, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. squad leader, the Soldiers are going to encounter civilians and will need to know how to deal with them properly. Training in this environment gets the Soldiers into the mental state of mind for the job they are going to be doing over there, he said.

"Our desired end-state of this mission is to have the entire enemy killed or captured, and their equipment captured as well, with no civilian casualties," said Col. Dick Pedersen, 3rd BCT commander. "We want to be on favorable terms with the civilians. We can't just come in and take over."

Rather than create "chaos" in a community, the Soldiers were taught to take out the enemy with as little disruption to the civilians as possible.

"This training has benefited not only the Soldiers, but the unit as a whole. Each company has gotten better as (the battalions) have gone through," said Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Coleman, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. command sergeant major.

"Not doing this training would have been a disadvantage," he said. "The timing for this training was good. It was great to have the opportunity to do this right before the deployment."