

CPT Joseph Leppert, Space Operations, Officer for the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground based Mid-course Defense), takes aim during the unit's trip to the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 at Fort Carson, CO.



RANGE DAY

100th Missile Defense Soldiers Take Aim at M-9 Range

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SFC Bryan Ginnetti, planning and operations noncommissioned officer, and CPT Robert Waddington, assistant planning and operations officer for the 100th Missile Defense Brigade, walk onto the live shooting range during the unit's pistol qualification range at Fort Carson.

FORT CARSON, Colo. – Under a sunny sky at the Army's Mountain post, Soldiers from the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground based Midcourse Defense) brushed up on their marksmanship during a visit to the range March 10.

For a unit better known for sitting in front of computer screens, getting the chance to hone basic Soldiering skills was a nice change of pace.

To better prepare themselves for the live range, 100th Brigade Soldiers practiced on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, Fort Carson's electronic indoor range.

The EST 2000 is an effective way to train Soldiers without the waste of ammunition and the use of real weapons. The program provides a realistic representation of a qualifying range and the guns used, although fake, are exact replicas of the real Beretta M-9 pistol. The gun uses a laser to communicate with the program and act like bullets hitting the target.

"There was value-added to utilizing the EST 2000. I would recommend that tool to any unit who does not fire their assigned weapons on a monthly or quarterly basis, or who might just require some additional marksmanship instruction," said CPT William Shanahan, commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

Soldiers took part in familiarization training in addition to work with the EST.

"The basic goal was for everyone to qualify. In order to do this, we conducted EST 2000 training, and primary marksmanship instruction prior to, and on the range," said Shanahan.

Many of Soldiers came out to the range just thinking about hitting the 16 targets they needed to qualify.



SGM Herbert Rodriguez, operations sergeant major for the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD), shoots his M-9 pistol at the targets, during the unit's pistol qualification range.

“My goal was to qualify,” said SPC Cristina Cost, an assistant Local Area Network (LAN) manager for the 100th. “This was only my second year of qualifying with the M-9 and I didn’t have the confidence I would qualify, but I did.”

But a few Soldiers wanted to aim for a higher goal.

“I set out to do my best,” said SGT Brenden Good, an assistant LAN manager. “[I] was hoping to shoot expert and I did very well. I got 29 out of 30.”

Overall, the day was a success according to Shanahan and other brigade senior leaders.

“In my opinion, it went very well. Sixty-one personnel showed up, we had a 100 percent GO,” said Shanahan.

As with every Army training event, there were challenges the leaders from the 100th had to overcome and learn from.

“Working with Fort Carson always presents a set of training challenges due to the different training philosophies between the Active component and the National Guard,” said Shanahan. “We overcame and conducted a very successful small-arms qualification. We now have a better idea of the process, and the requirements Fort Carson has to train, and we will continue to refine our process to always improve training.”



CW1 Adam Johnson uses the electronic version of an M-9 pistol during the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD) trip to the EST 2000 at Fort Carson. The unit later went to the live range on Fort Carson to qualify.