

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Learns Critical Urban Terrain Combat Skills in Field Exercise

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PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — As the Army continues to evolve its Counterinsurgency warfighting doctrine, Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Space Battalion are remaining combat ready by utilizing the most recent equipment and best training environment available in today's Army.

In an effort to fully train Space Soldiers to operate in an urban environment, Headquarters Company of the 1st Space Battalion planned, coordinated, and conducted a "live fire" exercise at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain range, utilizing replica M4 carbine paintball rifles to obtain a near real effect of performing actual dismounted military maneuvers. Company Noncommissioned Officers were responsible for teaching Soldier the basics of urban operations and how to combat operate in urban terrain.

With an operations order including intelligence of enemy situation and most likely courses of action, squads of five to six Soldiers were given tasks and objectives to complete inside differing scenarios, testing their ability to react to enemy contact, ambushes, and move under direct fire. The squads were forced to implement Army warrior tasks and drills such as engaging targets in urban operations, evacuating a casualty, and breaking contact with the enemy in order to successfully complete each task and objective. Several senior Noncommissioned Officers and 1st Space Company Officers acted as opposition forces during the rigorous training.

From noisy Muslim prayers played through mosque speakers, to the low hanging power lines and bricked off courtyards, the urban training site offered an eerie feeling of a genuine Iraqi village. The training was as real as the company could make it. The objective was to put the Soldiers in situations which not only tested their knowledge of essential warrior tasks, but also their ability to assess a situation and react with the right combination of combat tactics.

At the conclusion of the exercise, several Headquarters Company Soldiers commented on the effectiveness of the training. "You had to put multiple skills together in order to successfully accomplish the mission," said SGT Matthew Olevano. "When paintballs are flying all around, and the confusion of the situation sets in, it took an intense amount of concentration to understand how to react."

SPC Gerald Genus observed, "The training gave me a chance to use real-world combat techniques that we had been taught to lead and maneuver my team through a successful mission; using paintball rifles to simulate actual small arms fire made the training fun and very realistic."

During an assignment to U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, it is vitally important for low density Military Occupational Specialty Soldiers who fill Headquarters positions to remain vigilantly familiar with the skills and tactics utilized on the front lines.

"We are doing these individuals an injustice if we fail to fully and accurately train them on all mandatory Army Warrior Tasks on a yearly basis," stated Company 1SG Steven Adams. "We must give our Soldiers the necessary skills that will prepare them to functionally operate while they are deployed in the future."

Although the exercise was proven a huge success, the Company has bigger plans in mind for the near future. In May the Headquarters Company will send a handful of Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers to train with the 10th Special Forces Group on Fort Carson in an effort to significantly increase their level of fighting proficiency. These Soldiers will learn from the best in the business, and then return to the Company to increase their knowledge and build upon the skills they have learned.

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A Squad of Soldiers from HHC, 1st Space Battalion tactically maneuvers within an urban environment just after being engaged by opposition forces in an ambush.



After being engaged with small arms fire, this Squad prepares to eliminate the threat by performing a flanking maneuver. As one team engages the opposition, another team will break contact and maneuver to a position of advantage. *Photos by SSG Stephanie Weber*

