

# 230th Military Police Company Partners With Macedonian Army, Prepares Unit for Deployment

*By Sergeant Adrienne Killingsworth*

“First, we will drink coffee.”

Those were the words of Major Slavco Cvetanoski, the commander of the Republic of Macedonia’s Army Training Area Krivolak, when he met with leaders of the 230th Military Police Company, 95th Military Police Battalion, on 12 March 2010. Before any actual issues could be discussed, the business of forging friendships and partnerships needed attention. Only after a tray of fresh Macedonian coffee had been delivered to the table and every soldier had taken a seat could the true work begin.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to work out the details and update the logistics and schedules associated with a joint training exercise to be conducted by the Soldiers of the 230th for the Macedonian army. But, as with many successful interactions between foreign militaries, cultural protocol was considered just as important as military protocol—during the meeting and throughout the upcoming exercise.

From 11 to 22 March 2010, thirty-six Soldiers from 1st Platoon, 230th Military Police Company, deployed

to Krivolak and Pepelishte, Macedonia, to take the lead in a crew-served, weapon training exercise designed to prepare Macedonian military police, ranger, and special forces soldiers for their upcoming Special Operations Regiment deployment to Afghanistan with the 86th Brigade Combat Team from the Vermont National Guard.

The exercise, which consisted of several days of training in the classroom and on weapon ranges, introduced more than ninety Macedonian soldiers to the U.S. Army M2 .50-caliber machine gun; M249 light machine gun, squad automatic weapon; MK19 automatic grenade launcher; and M240B machine gun—all U.S. Army weapons that the Macedonians would need to be familiar with when they linked up with the 86th Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan. Because the Macedonian soldiers were already experienced marksmen, the familiarization training was merely a supplement to their already extensive knowledge of weapons. The success of the Macedonian soldiers at the weapon ranges was a testament to their readiness and to the hard work and dedication that they put into the classroom training.

Macedonian army Lieutenant Colonel Zoran Blazevski, the chief of operations for the Special Operations Regiment, said that the Macedonian army may receive its own supply of crew-served weapons in the future and that having ninety-two trained and experienced personnel would be very beneficial to the force. Blazevski also said that the Macedonian army hopes to replicate the weapon range training for other soldiers in the future.

The military-wide importance of the training was emphasized when a delegation from Allied Joint Force Command Naples visited the Krivolak weapon range on 19 March. The delegates were led by their commander, Admiral Mark Fitzgerald.

The U.S. military relies on strong partnerships with other militaries to successfully complete the mission in Afghanistan.



**A team leader with the 230th Military Police Company instructs a Macedonian soldier while another Macedonian soldier looks on.**

The involvement of the 230th Military Police Company in Macedonia was a testament to the U.S. dedication to these partnerships.

As important as the weapons training was from a strictly military perspective, the exercise also provided American and Macedonian troops with a chance to expand their horizons and interact with each other on a more personal level. Many of the Soldiers who participated in the exercise recognized the value in the duality of the mission and appreciated their unique opportunity to visit Macedonia with Macedonian soldiers as their “tour guides.”

According to a platoon sergeant from 1st Platoon, 230th Military Police Company, in spite of the language barrier, a “common language among soldiers” helped the training to run smoothly and the mission to be a success. As seen time and again, the camaraderie between

soldiers—of any countries—can transcend borders and language barriers to quickly form bonds that are nearly impossible to break.

The friendships that had been established were obvious as the 230th Military Police Company prepared to depart Macedonia. The soldiers traded unit patches, exchanged e-mail addresses, and said their final goodbyes, expressing their hopes of seeing one another again. And as the Macedonian soldiers make their way to Afghanistan, they leave behind a unit of U.S. military police Soldiers who are proud to have provided support for their mission and who are personally invested in their success.

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