

“Welcome to Italy”

437th Military Police Conduct Annual Training at Vicenza



By Second Lieutenant Kevin Harrold

Dare il benvenuto a Italia, or “welcome to Italy,” was the phrase that greeted 37 Ohio Army National Guard Soldiers earlier this year. They were members of the 437th Military Police Battalion participating in overseas deployment training (ODT) at the Caserma Ederle military complex in Vicenza, Italy. Their mission was to provide law enforcement and force protection support to the Southern European Task Force provost marshal’s office. The Soldiers helped the 13th Military Police Company provide security to Caserma Ederle and the Villagio housing complex.

“This was a great opportunity for our Soldiers to sharpen their garrison skills as well as experience a different culture. Our Soldiers did an excellent job,” said the noncommissioned officer in charge of the mission. This was the first opportunity for the battalion to perform garrison law enforcement duties since Operation Noble Eagle, the partial mobilization of Reserve Component forces that was part of the immediate response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. For that operation, the battalion’s 323d and 135th Military Police Companies deployed to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and the 838th Military Police Company deployed to the Military District of Washington to provide force protection and law enforcement.

The Ohio Army National Guard Soldiers trained in conducting patrol operations, writing military police reports and forms, performing defensive tactics, and enforcing local regulations and policies. The Soldiers worked side by side with US military police from the 13th Military Police Company, the *carabinieri* (or Italian national police), and contracted Italian security guards.

According to one Soldier, conducting military police work is basically standardized around the world. “The challenge was adjusting to the language and cultural differences of our Italian counterparts. Their training standards were a little different from ours too, but overall I enjoyed the experience,” he said.

Enduring long duty hours and inclement weather are two things that military police Soldiers deal with routinely. The Soldier has three years of experience, but admitted this was the first time he had the chance to do real-world training on an active military base. “It was very cold working the gates. We had to make sure no unauthorized personnel entered the base. When lives are at stake, you just deal with personal discomfort and do your job with excellence.” The mission was challenging, but it was not all work. Taking advantage of any time off, Soldiers toured numerous historical sights in the area. Some even traveled to Venice, which was only a 30-minute train ride from Vicenza.

According to another Soldier in the unit, being able to see the sights of Italy was amazing. This was her first time outside the United States. “It was exciting!” she said. “I thought it was good to experience another culture. I also think the younger Soldiers really enjoyed the chance to do actual (military police) work in a different country.”

Soldiers from the 135th, 323d, 324th, and the 838th Military Police Companies participated in the ODT. When it comes to going on more of this type of training, Ohio’s military police Soldiers can say *Siamo pronti*, or “we are ready.”