

1AD soldiers delve into teaching children mine awareness

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Sgt. Kenneth J. Stewart, tank gunner, Co. A, 1-35 AR, uses a mouse trap as a prop to demonstrate for the "children" where they can be located and how they can be set off.

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo—"I walked into the first sergeant's office to talk to him about something and he was on the phone talking to someone. In the middle of the conversation he said, 'I have just the man for the job.' and the next thing I know I'm at Camp Bondsteel learning how to teach mine awareness to children," said Sgt. Brent J. Eichelberg, armor crewman, Com-

pany B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment.

The Swedish Mine Awareness Training Team, Swedish, British and Polish forces from Multinational Brigade (Central) and United States forces from Multinational Brigade-East met to learn how to teach mine awareness to kids using a program developed by the UN and UNMIK

(United Nations Mission in Kosovo).

The purpose of the mine awareness training we received is to teach us how to teach school children about

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1-35 AR

mine awareness; how to be aware of mines, what they look like, what can happen if they come across a mine and what to do if they do see one, Eichelberg explained. The Swedish mine awareness team is teaching the class because they are the only one qualified to teach children now.

Kosovo Forces use soldiers to conduct this training because children tend to look up to them and listen to what they have to say, said Capt. Roger Pattersson, instructor, Swedish Mine Awareness Training Team.

The first-day participants

learned mine awareness classes that would be given to adults to familiarize themselves with the material. Then they learned how to take that information and turn it into a class that children can understand and pay attention.

"The difference between teaching children and adults is that children can't sit down and listen to someone lecture for 40 minutes, so we try to teach other soldiers how to use games and visual aids when teaching kids," Pattersson said.

The soldier teaching the school children can't use real mines or grenades as a prop, because the children see that and wonder why it is safe for the soldier to touch it but not them, added Sgt. Robert Moy, mine advisor, 2nd Battalion, 6th



Using visual aids that children can relate to, Sgt. Brent Eichelberg, armor crewman, Co. B, 1-35 AR, rehearses teaching a mine awareness class to soldiers posing as the school children, during recent multinational mine awareness training. Sgt. John S. Puddy, tank gunner, Co. C, 1-35 AR, serves as the interpreter for the training.

Engineer Regiment, United Kingdom.

On the second day, soldiers in the

class had the opportunity to use all of the training they received and turn it into a class while other members of the class pretended to be children in one of the local Kosovar villages.

"Putting the students up in front of the other students to teach, gives them an opportunity to feel what it will be like up in front of a classroom of kids," said Lance Cpl. Alan Lee, British mine awareness training team. "Everyone evaluates each other, so we learn what we could possibly do better when the time comes that we actually have to teach the class to children."

On day three, soldiers wrapped up the classes with a quick after action review.

"I think this is a better way of informing the people of Kosovo about the danger of mines and it's a great way to keep up our international relations and stay in good standing with the people here," Eichelberg said.



Stewart steps on a mouse trap during one of the practice classes to demonstrate how easy it is to set off a mine.