

# 2nd Brigade previews Kosovo operations

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BAUMHOLDER, Germany—Protestors yelling, "KFOR go home! We don't want you here! Go away! Go back where you came from!" brazenly wave cardboard signs bearing anti-U.S. slogans in front of soldiers carefully observing the scene.

Moments later a squad of soldiers clad in riot gear appears on the scene and faces off against the protestors. On command, the squad begins tapping their batons against their shields and stomping their boots as they advance toward the protestors. The ominous rhythmic cadence forces the crowd back momentarily but they continue their taunting. A rock is suddenly hurled at the soldiers from within the crowd of protestors, then another and another.

The squad holds its formation and

continues to advance amidst a hail of rocks that bounce off their shields. Realizing the fruitlessness of their efforts, the protestors give up and retreat. The squad withdraws and reforms at a safe distance. Calm is restored.

A voice breaks the silence. "As you can see, the protestors have left the scene so the squad has regrouped at a safe distance. Are there any questions?"

The soldiers were real, their equipment was real and the rocks were real, but the protestors and the confrontation were only part of a brief scenario presented to soldiers from 2nd Brigade during a recent riot and civil disturbance demonstration. The scenario was part of several equally realistic demonstrations of operational techniques that will prepare soldiers for their mission during the upcoming Kosovo deployment.

Other demonstrations included techniques used to conduct searches in homes, manning and controlling

checkpoints, responding to civil disturbances, and conducting mounted and dismounted patrols.

The real training came the following week when soldiers from 2nd Brigade began their Individual Readiness Training, exercising all the techniques demonstrated to them the week before.

As the demonstrations came to a close, Maj. Gen. George Casey, 1st Armored Division commander, dropped in on the more than 500 soldiers assembled at the airfield. Casey looked over the formation momentarily before ordering them to break ranks and fall in around him. In this more approachable and informal setting, Casey emphasized the importance of their readiness and training and talked about what 2nd Brigade and Division Artillery may expect in Kosovo.

He explained that the strategy for preparations in support of peace operations is "To validate that every unit, every soldier can fight." He added that every soldier should be able to do his job under demanding conditions and still be able to fight while being confident in their equipment, their weapons systems and in their fellow soldiers.

He continued by pointing out that "Our most precious commodity here in Germany, given we've got the Kosovo mission, is the time that we spend training soldiers and leaders to fight." Casey said it was his commitment not to send any untrained soldier into harm's way. "So we've got to use the majority of our time in Europe on war-fighting training."

"We have developed what we call Task Force Falcon FARS, Flat Ass Rules. Every sergeant and every leader in this brigade combat team needs to get a copy of them and needs to inter-

nalize them. They are the keys to being good soldiers every day." He added that these FARS are also a key element for being successful in Kosovo. They are:

- Security and safety are your first priority of work.
- Iron discipline by every soldier, every day, no complacency.
- Enforcement is always ROE based, even ended and impartial.
- Apply the golden rule, treat everybody with dignity and respect.
- Maintain awareness of your surroundings at all times.
- Patience. Don't rush to failure.
- Every operation is deliberately planned, risk assessed, well coordinated, documented, rehearsed, executed and debriefed.
- Maintain and secure your equipment. It'll take care of you.
- Task Force Falcon soldiers take care of each other. That's what this is all about. Everybody looking out for their buddy's back.

The second element of success in Kosovo, said Casey, is to "Advance civil implementation. That's our job, a safe and secure environment. Let me tell you just by being there you will advance civil implementation. You don't even have to try. Our natural aggressive nature will carry us forward. You will leave your sector in Kosovo better than you found it because that's the way you are. You're American soldiers and you're aggressive and you're proud of what you do and you know that you can make a difference and you will."

"The last thing is bring everybody home. I'm not someone who believes that the American people won't tolerate casualties. I've sat in a meeting behind the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs when he looked the President in the eye and he said, 'We're going to get casualties in this



A soldier demonstrates a thrusting technique with a riot baton to soldiers from 2nd Brigade.

air war, Mr. President.' Mr. President gulped and said, 'I understand.'"

So the American people don't understand and shouldn't understand needless casualties." He paused before continuing to address this sensitive issue. "There's been several American soldiers killed there. Two of them were killed in a speeding 113 (armored personnel carrier). It turned over. The soldiers weren't wearing

seatbelts. They could've lived. One soldier was killed when his vehicle struck a land mine. He didn't have his protective vest on. He didn't have his Kevlar on. I've seen HUMVEEs sustain a mine strike and people survive. The American people don't and shouldn't have to accept needless casualties."

"So be good soldiers everyday, advance civil implementation, bring everybody home. Pretty simple."



Scouts undergo an equipment inspection during a demonstration for 2nd Brigade soldiers.