



peration
Tobruq Legacy
17 showcases
capabilities
range

By 1st Lt. Josef Danczuk



Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Harrison, the A Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, launcher platoon sergeant, briefs Romanian President Klaus Iohannis while visiting A Battery's tactical site. (Staff Sgt. Mark Kauffman/U.S. Army)

Soldiers of A Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, marched to Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in Romania, June 23. The road march spanned five NATO nations over 2,300 kilometers, and culminated with participation in Operation Tobruq Legacy 17. The unit deployed the Patriot Air and Missile Defense system, which includes Patriot Configuration III radar and Enhanced Launcher Electronic System launching stations. Despite the length of the journey to Romania and the potential difficulty of traveling through multiple nations by night, the battery flawlessly deployed the Patriot system to Mikhail Kogalniceanu Airbase.

This validated the battery's ability to rapidly deploy a historically long distance through Eastern Europe.

"I think the road march was a success," said Spec. Arthur Gould, an Enhanced Patriot launching station operator/maintainer from Fall River, Mass. "The Soldiers' motivation made the movement go very smoothly from start to finish. It's important because, for air defense, we need to be able to shoot, move and communicate. A movement like this proves we can do the move portion successfully."

Once at MK Airbase, A Battery immediately began preparations for Tobruq Legacy 17. This annual multinational NATO exercise combines numerous unique surface-based air defense systems from different nations into one

combined air picture and one engagement kill-chain. It allows the participant nations to exercise their ability to work together with their NATO allies and partners. Cooperation occurs both on the technical side, by establishing data and voice communications links, and also the tactical side, by conducting air defense engagements and reporting.

A Battery provided a live-air picture from their radar that was passed digitally through a variety of tactical data information links all the way to the Joint Force Air Component commander (JFACC). The JFACC was able to integrate air pictures from three surface-based air defense operations centers (SBADOCs) located in Romania, Czech Republic and Lithuania. By efficiently establishing and maintaining



Romanian President Klaus Iohannis walks through A Battery's tactical site during a visit at Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase. (Staff Sgt. Mark Kauffman/U.S. Army)

this data link, higher echelons had the tactical information they needed to command the combined air defense operations of multiple nations, stretching from the Baltic Sea in Lithuania to the Black Sea in Romania.

Sgt. Justin Foust, an early warning team leader from Eaton, Ohio, said interoperability exercises are extremely important for combined air defense operations.

"It was a great opportunity to see the direct impact that my role has on the battlefield, as well as having the chance to integrate air defense operations with our NATO allies." Foust said it was an excellent training event for new Soldiers who have never worked in a multinational environment before, as they gained valuable insight.

Such a large and important multinational air defense exercise was bound to attract the attention of distinguished visitors, and A Battery was excited to host these visitors and share information about the Patriot system with them. July 14, the president of Romania, President Klaus Iohannis, and the general of the Czech Army and chairman of the NATO committee, Gen. Petr Pavel, toured A Battery's tactical site. Soldiers from the battery provided information on how the Patriot system operates, including the capabilities of its radar, voice and data communications and engagement operations.

"It was a momentous occasion," said Cadet John Christian, an ROTC cadet from the University of South Florida. Christian was embed-

ded with A Battery throughout the exercise, granting him the opportunity to learn how a tactical unit operates as he prepares to commission as a second lieutenant this December. "It was definitely the highlight of my time here and of my entire ROTC experience," he shared.

Overall, A Battery succeeded in all areas of Tobruq Legacy 17, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining a free, whole and at-peace Europe. The Soldiers rapidly deployed to a tactical site at Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in Romania, proving they can move anywhere on the European continent to provide air and missile defense to any asset. There, the battery conducted live-air defense operations, established information links to connect to NATO operations centers, coordinated with other air defense systems, and achieved the interoperability essential to combined air defense.

Finally, Soldiers of A Battery forged meaningful relationships with representatives of a variety of nations, from the local forces who assisted on the road march, to the President of Romania. By working directly with them and informing them of the battery's capabilities, the Soldiers enhanced mutual understanding among NATO allies and continued to assure them of A Battery's will and resolve to the overall defense of NATO.

First Lt. Josef Danczuk is a A Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery platoon leader. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland College Park.