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July 16, 2004

## RUSSIAN-SPEAKING AIR DEFENDERS BECOME KEY ASSET IN JOINT TRAINING FOR V CORPS BRIGADE AND MOLDOVANS

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**GIEBELSTADT ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany** -- The 6th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery of V Corps' 69th ADA Brigade hosted four Moldovan officers July 5-9 for a reciprocal training event between the brigade and the Moldovan air defense.



CAPT J. ADAM FALK

Col. R. Kirk Lawrence, center, commander of V Corps' 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, tries his Russian skills on a group of Moldovan air defense officers who visited the brigade for joint training, July 7. Lawrence studied Russian as a cadet at West Point.

Only one of the officers from Moldova, a small country between Romania and the Ukraine, spoke English, but the Soldiers of the 6/52nd had no problems communicating with their guests, thanks to special talent found within the unit.

Russian is the maternal language of Pfc. Igor Osipovich, a supply clerk in A Battery, 6/52nd, and Pfc. Dmitri Rodionov, a medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 6/52nd. The pair was tasked

to translate for this event because the Moldovans speak Romanian as well as Russian.

"We were lucky to have two Soldiers within the battalion who could speak Russian fluently. We really relied on Osipovich and Rodionov to communicate throughout the week," said 1st Lt. Tomi T. Krmpotich, the 6/52nd's assistant personnel officer and

officer in charge of the Moldovans' visit. "They both did a tremendous job translating and were commended by the chain of command."

Osipovich was born in Kazakhstan, a former republic of the Soviet Union. His family obtained a visa and moved to the U.S. when he was 9 years old. He did not speak a word of English at the time.

Born in Siberia, at the heart of Russia, Rodionov moved with his mother to Wisconsin at the age of 13. He learned to speak English in school while still in Russia.

"This was an awesome opportunity to become accustomed to a different Russian accent. I had never met a Moldovan before, so it was interesting just talking with them because they speak Russian differently," said Rodionov.

According to both Soldiers, escorting the Moldovan officers and translating was a great experience.

"Translating between high-ranking officers has given me the opportunity to see a side of the Army that I normally wouldn't as a supply clerk," said Osipovich.

"Both the Moldovans and our leadership were interested in comparing and contrasting the methods used by the two countries' militaries," said Rodionov.

"For example, they have a different view of lower enlisted (Soldiers). Unlike in our Army, when Moldovan Soldiers get into trouble, responsibility falls upon the commander. Our system places much more responsibility on the Soldier. It's not that either way is right or wrong, their system works for them, and our system works for us," said Rodionov.

“This was a familiarization visit,” explained Krmpotich. “It provided the opportunity for Moldovans to learn about our Army and us to learn about theirs. Osipovich and Rodionov were key in ensuring that this event was a success.”

The visit by the three Moldovan air defense colonels and one lieutenant colonel continued the 69th ADA Brigade's partnership with the country's military. Earlier this year, two officers from the brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Battery traveled to Moldova to familiarize that country's military with U.S. air defense procedures and airspace management.

“Our guests commented that this event went above and beyond their expectations by being well organized and professionally valuable. This was an outstanding event for all those involved. We built relationships that will hopefully last for years,” said Krmpotich.

