

Improvised Explosive Device solutions exchanged at Exercise RAPID TRIDENT

Yavoriv, Ukraine — Exercise RAPID TRIDENT is a series of annual military exercises named after the state symbol of independent Ukraine, and has traditionally been held at the International Peacekeeping and Security Centre in Yavoriv, Ukraine since 2006. Exercise RAPID TRIDENT evolved from Exercise PEACE SHIELD, which was first conducted in 1998 and has been conducted 12 times since.

Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) techniques found their origins in the early days of the 2001-2011 war in Iraq. Today, these capabilities have been refined – there have been significant shifts from taking a defensive approach, such as protecting a convoy, to taking an offensive approach, such as attacking enemy command and control. New approaches are promising steps and contribute to unified land operations.



YAVORIV, Ukraine – A Canadian Combat Engineer talks to a Ukrainian Observer Controller during day two of the situational training exercise lanes at Rapid Trident 2014, Sept. 17.

Canadian soldiers from 5th Canadian Division (5 Cdn Div), headquartered in Halifax, Nova Scotia, joined forces with approximately 1,200 other soldiers from the 15 nations participating in Exercise RAPID TRIDENT 14 (Ex RT 14). They imparted the hard-won expertise they have gained through operational experience in recognizing and identifying IEDs along with the skills required to thwart them.

“Varied styles of IEDs were common in Afghanistan, with some being extremely complex. Canadian soldiers gained significant experience and knowledge in countering these types of IEDs throughout their deployments to Afghanistan. A team of our experts provided the Ukrainians, and all other nations participating in the field exercises, with their operational experience and the knowledge they would need to identify IEDs and the skills to react to IED threats,” explained **Maj David Burbridge**, Canadian Contingent Commander and Exercise Control (EXCON) personnel member for Ex RT 14.

Maj Burbridge is an Engineering Officer of the Royal Canadian Engineer and works at 5 Engineer Services Unit (5 ESU). He further explained the Canadian Army’s role in his capacity as Canadian Contingent Commander during the exercise, “Nine highly skilled C-IED troops from 4 Engineer Support Regiment (4 ESR), a unit of 5 Cdn Div, provided C-IED instruction during preparatory field exercise scenarios. This C-IED instruction was delivered in collaboration with highly-skilled Ukrainian C-IED instructors, to all soldiers deployed in the field training scenario. In addition, three staff officers from 5 Cdn Div and one from 2nd Canadian Division (2 Cdn Div), with experience in the operational planning process (OPP), occupied positions in EXCON, the exercise Multinational Battalion Headquarters, and the Multinational Brigade Headquarters, to mentor and assist their counterparts in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. A medical technician from Canadian Armed Forces Health Services Group supported the Canadian contingent.”

Throughout their participation, the Canadian C-IED instructors worked closely with their Ukrainian counterparts. In fact, Canada’s own C-IED Chief Instructor on the exercise gained valuable insight from a Ukrainian Master-Sergeant that could initiate a potential tweaking of C-IED tactics, techniques and procedures in select areas for certain threats, while the Ukrainians have learned a number of new C-IED techniques.

“A training exercise, such as Exercise RAPID TRIDENT, presents our Canadian soldiers with opportunities to acquire greater exposure and comfort operating within a multinational and multicultural environment,” stated Maj Burbridge. He continued, “The reciprocal knowledge transfer with counterparts from other nations continues to enhance our preparedness for future multinational operations.”

In collaboration with the Ukrainian Co-leader for the C-IED stand, the Canadian C-IED Chief Instructor planned and executed an extremely challenging training scenario, “My role involved working with my counterpart to tailor the complexity of the training scenario according to the experience level of the nations to further develop their professional growth and challenge their existing knowledge of C-IED.”

This was reiterated by Maj Paul Hurley, Brigade Deputy G3 for the exercise, “Although levels of experience may differ, logical thought process and professionalism is very similar across all nations. The training scenarios for this year’s exercise, while complex to tailor, were expertly executed and we have received the highest praise for the very professional delivery of each scenario.”

The first Exercise RAPID TRIDENT was conducted in 2006 and encouraged positive military relations between Canada and Ukraine. Colonel Sivack, Exercise Co-Director and member of the Ukrainian Land Forces stated, “Today, as we stand on the front line in defense of democratic values, it is important for us to feel the full support of our international partners. This training exercise will help us, not only improve our professional skills and interaction mechanisms, but also contribute to the strengthening of our moral unity in the face of modern threats.”

With the continually developing situation in Ukraine, the importance of cooperative multinational and interoperable training exercises is increasing. “Exercises like RAPID TRIDENT bring together soldiers from different cultures, backgrounds, and trades to learn new skills and exchange operational knowledge to increase their interoperability and military competency,” said Maj Burbridge.

This year, Ex RT 14 was conducted from September 11 to 28, 2014 in Yavoriv, Ukraine. Participating nations include Ukraine, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Moldova, Spain, Poland, Romania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Norway, Georgia, Latvia, and Lithuania.