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U.S. Engineer Battalion trains with Polish Forces

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HOHENFEHLS, GERMANY –Soldiers of the Polish military trained with the U.S. 8th Engineer Battalion in support of Combined Resolve XIII at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfehl, Germany, January 25, 2020.

The biggest issue the two units have encountered so far has been communication, not the spoken communication, but the technical aspect of interoperability. Some of the problems they have faced have come from working with different systems, some of which they haven't worked with yet. Although there have been some technical difficulties, the training has been beneficial to both sides.

"It's great to be out in the field, training with the unit," said Major Mark Pollak with the engineer battalion. "This is great weather that stresses the Soldiers and the systems, but that stress is what makes us better and helps us improve the interoperability of the nations here."

The engineer battalion is currently stationed in Poland supporting Operation Atlantic Resolve. The two militaries routinely work together in Poland, but the engineer battalion needed additional support during Combined Resolve. As a result the Polish military is assisting them with an additional security element and acting as their primary maneuver support element. This has also allowed the soldiers to improve their interoperability.

"Our battalion is conducting consolidated area securing tasks," Pollak said. "We are securing the logistic nodes, mission nodes, all the softer targets. Our mission is to secure against enemy special forces and criminal elements."

Combine Resolve XIII is an exercise, which involves military members from 17 countries who train together in order to increase readiness and enhance interoperability between allied and partner nations.

"There has been a great willingness to work with each other," Pollack said. "The soldiers are very willing to work with each other in the field and gain new skills from each other."