Quick Reaction Force

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129th MPAD

SLAVONSKI-BROD, Croatia— As the siren screeches through the air, soldiers began pouring out of their tents and into waiting HMMWVs. One could almost hear their hearts pounding as soldiers rush by. Their weapon, LCE and rucksack clink together as if they are fighting their own war. Cries of "we're the last two, last two" and "let's go" dance through the air and within minutes fade as the vehicles move out.

This was the scene as 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry increased threat level and security posture of the Slavonski Brod fixed bridge to 100-percent during a quick reactionary force drill.

"Usually the soldiers don't know that it is a drill," said Sgt. Joe D. Martnez, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Dallas. "The adrenaline gets going just as if it was real."

Everyone reacts to situations in their own way, and this situation was no different.

"You don't have time to be nervous. You just have to react," said Pvt. Miguel A. Aquino, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Monroe, N.Y.

"I heard the warning, and started moving as fast as I could," said Spc. Joseph I. Shammos, a light infantryman from Colombia, Md.

Because the bridge is the military link between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the main supply route, extensive measures are taken to make these drills as real as possible.

"The only thing that would be different if this was real, would be the firing of rounds," said Sgt. Brian A. Field, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Middletown, Calif. "Other than that, we do everything else the same."

Clockwise from top: Sgt. Bobby R. Daniels, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry takes aim... A soldier double times to his position... Pfc. Joseph W. Burt holds down the fort... Two soldier play dead during the exercise... SFOR troop covers the main gate... *(Middle)* Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry soldiers set up their position... Pfc. Michael D. Hendershot works on the shoulder of a fellow soldier.

Photos by Spc. Janel R. George