



NEWS RELEASE

30th Medical Command
Public Affairs Office
LTC Carol Fontanese
DSN 371-3350
06221-17-3350
carol.fontanese@us.army.mil

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30th MEDCOM (DS) Soldiers partner with German medical unit to conduct Maginot Line Staff Ride

SCHOENENBOURG, France – Peaks of white snow cover artillery blocks and outposts that line the avenue of approach to Fort Schoenenbourg, France where Soldiers of the 30th Medical Command (Deployment Support) and the Sanitaetskommando II participated in a staff ride Dec. 14.

Fort Schoenenbourg is one of the most famous fortified defense systems of the Maginot Line located just south of Wissembourg in the far northeast corner of Alsace.

The Maginot Line was a line of concrete fortifications, tank obstacles, machine gun posts and other defenses which France constructed along the border with Germany in the wake of World War I.

During the staff ride, the 30th MEDCOM Soldiers were able to learn about and understand the historic events that led to the creation of the Maginot Line and the purpose, capabilities, and limitations of its use.

“To better understand where we are now and to chart a course for the future, we need to study history and compare the various events” explained Lt. Col. Frank Golden, 30th MEDCOM intelligence officer and staff ride coordinator. “Historical and current events will never be identical, but the more you know about the past, the better you can prepare for the future,” explained Golden.

German Soldiers of the Sanitaetskommando II (2nd Medical Command) and the Lazarettregiment 21 (21st Field Hospital Regiment), Rennerod, Germany, participated in the staff ride along with their American counterparts.

“The cooperation is valuable between both of our units in order to establish contact, get to know each other, and build a basis for future cooperation,” said Fregatten Kapitaen (Lt. Col.) Udo Schmalstieg, operations officer for the Sanitaetskommando II, Diez, Germany.

Soldiers discussed the dynamics that promoted the shift in French military doctrine and culture and compared it to the forces that are shaping the transformation in U.S. military doctrine and culture today.

They also talked about the importance of greater joint and coalition partner military operations.

“I did not expect there would be more similarities than differences between the German and American Army,” said Oberleutnant (1st Lt.) Olaf Lemmer, operations officer at the Lazarettregiment 21. “I enjoyed talking to the American Soldiers because they are open-minded and will share their ideas openly with us,” said Lemmer.

Staff rides were developed to expose Soldiers to the dynamics of battle, the human dimensions of warfare, and especially those factors which interact to produce victory and defeat.

“It was an honor for me to be invited on the staff ride,” said Oberstabsarzt (Maj.) Dr. Kerstin Hirland, a dentist with the Sanitaetskommando II. “I hope this won’t be the last time our units get together,” said Hirland.

Story by Lt. Col. Carol Fontanese, 30th MEDCOM Public Affairs Officer. For more information please contact her at the email address or phone number listed above.