



HEADQUARTERS  
MULTI-NATIONAL BRIGADE (EAST)  
CAMP BONDSTEEL, KOSOVO  
APO AE 09340  
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### SPANISH SOLDIERS PARTICIPATE IN RAPID GUARDIAN

**CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo** – A company of Spanish and Italian soldiers from Task Force Tizona, Multi-National Brigade (Southwest), air-assaulted here on Jan. 15 as part of Rapid Guardian 03-1.

The multinational soldiers, commanded by Capt. Jose Gonzalvez, will be stationed at Camp Monteith for the duration of the month-long Rapid Guardian exercise. The exercise is an annual rehearsal that showcases NATO's commitment to the Balkans by deploying reserve forces on short notice.

The Spanish and Italian soldiers will conduct joint operations in Multi-National Brigade (East) with U.S. soldiers from the 2-2 Infantry Battalion, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), Vicenza, Italy, which parachuted into MNB(SW) on Jan. 15.

The troops that Gonzalvez commands specialize in mountain warfare. According to Gonzalvez, his troops have been to places such as Afghanistan to hone their expertise in mountain operations with international forces.

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Gonzalvez said the time his troops spend here is good because “they get to know more people, and learn different ways of doing things.”

Lt. Col. David Sage, commander of 2-2 Infantry, said he hopes his soldiers will get to understand “interoperability and gain a trust of their allies and that our allies gain a trust of our abilities.”

The Spanish company calls Jaca, Spain, a mountain village in the Pyrenees, home. Its mission in Spain varies dependant upon weather. In the winter the company trains in cold weather survival techniques, mountain climbing and light infantry operations.

During the summer, the Spanish troops perfect their climbing techniques, practice combat in mountain environments and continue light infantry training.

The Spanish troops will use their unique skills in Kosovo by establishing observation posts concealed in the snow. They are required to snowshoe to the OPs in order to maintain tactical and technical proficiency.

Gonzalvez advised other mountain troops that will be sent to the Balkans to “know the area they will be operating in and stay alert to keep safe.”

The Spanish and Italian troops are part of Task Force Tizona, based in MNB(SW). Tizona is the sword of Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, “el Cid,” a national hero in Spain during

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the Middle Ages who is credited with fighting off the Moors and unifying Spain.

For the first two weeks of their stay at Camp Monteith, Gonzalvez's soldiers will be working with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, which fall under the Southern European Task Force or SETAF. For the remaining two weeks, they will work directly with 2-2 Infantry.

The Tizona soldiers will be patrolling with 2-2 Infantry soldiers in their area of operations.

"We will use them to augment our patrol cycle and to increase our presence in sector," said Sage.

"Every army brings a different focus and a different skill and it will be interesting to see how they operate and what we learn from them and what they learn from us," Sage said. "That's the most important aspect of this mission."

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