

## US, NATO, Ukraine enhance interoperability with Rapid Trident exercise

By Sgt. 1st Class Chad Menegay and Capt. Aimee Valles 21 September 2021



*A Ukrainian soldier stands at the front of his formation during the opening ceremony for Rapid Trident 21, an annual Ukrainian-American training exercise, Sept. 20, at Central City Stadium, near Yavoriv, Ukraine. The exercise helps Ukraine to improve*

YAVORIV, Ukraine — Allied and partner service members from 15 nations officially started Rapid Trident 21, an annual Ukrainian-led, American-assisted training exercise, Sept. 20, with an opening ceremony at Central City Stadium, near Yavoriv, Ukraine.

About 300 U.S. Soldiers will work tactically alongside 6,000 multinational troops for the exercise under the banner of Partnership for Peace, a cooperative program for NATO and Euro-Atlantic partner countries.

“In unity and with Rapid Trident, we have opened a new page of history in the name of the future of our children, families, and people for peace, happiness and prosperity,” said Ukrainian Maj. Gen. Ihor Palagnyuk, commander of the training of the Land Forces Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

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“Our main job at Rapid Trident is to provide the methods and the tools to help enable the [Ukrainian] President's National Security Strategy and the Minister of Defense Security Strategy of building both partnerships and interoperability amongst partner nations, which will provide that foundation for deterrence against any further aggression,” said U.S. Army Col. Michael Hanson, co-director of Rapid Trident 21 from the U.S. side.

The exercise will also feature a brigade-level computer-assisted exercise with platoon-level maneuver training and another brigade-level field training exercise with security and stability operations to best train combat credible Army forces in Europe, and enhance readiness.

The nations involved in the exercise are: Ukraine, U.S., Bulgaria, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Pakistan, The Republic of Poland, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

U.S. participation involves the Washington Army National Guard's 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, deployed in support of the Joint Multinational Training Group Ukraine since April 2021. Additionally, some 150 other U.S. Army representatives will participate as mission enablers.

Rapid Trident 21 continues more than 25 years of partnership between the U.S. and Ukraine. Through efforts such as Rapid Trident 21 and the Joint Multinational Training Group Ukraine, the U.S. Army supports ongoing training efforts and enhanced defensive capabilities of Ukraine. Rapid Trident 21 is the final training phase, or culminating event, of an intense and realistic annual training exercise to prepare Ukrainian Land Force units for the challenges of real world situations and deployments.

“This exercise is not just another stage of military skills improvement,” said Ukrainian Brig. Gen. Vladyslav Klochkov, co-director of Rapid Trident 21 from the Ukrainian side, “but also an important step toward Ukraine's European integration. It will strengthen the operational capabilities of our troops, improve the level of interoperability between units and headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the United States, and NATO partners.”