

## NATO Soldiers learn to work as one during Bold Quest - ACT

Written by Staff Sgt. David Bruce, Army News Service  
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It's been said that the whole is sometimes greater than the sum of its individual parts. One example of this is when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, commonly known as NATO, was formed to check Soviet expansion after World War II.

While the Cold War is now over, the NATO alliance continues to be relevant in the post-9/11 world. NATO troops continue to serve in Afghanistan, and alliance member states participated in the invasion of Iraq. The recent employment of NATO airpower over Libya fully illustrates the capability of the alliance and its importance on the world stage.

At the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, the Bold Quest 2011 exercise is yet another example of NATO countries coming together to work as one.

The exercise is a multi-faceted capability assessment designed to test the interoperability of command and control, communications and computer systems with a focus on combat identification.

The exercise seeks to test technologies driven by the need to provide tools to make warfighters more effective in engaging targets while minimizing the risk of fratricide by both ground and air forces. Participant nations include Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States and NATO.

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During Bold Quest, technologies developed by different countries are being tested, said German Air Force Lt. Col. Holger Ziedek.

"The German system is called DSID, Dismounted Soldier Identification Device. It is mounted on the Soldier's weapon and uses a laser to interrogate (identify) a target. Sensors worn by the Soldiers answer the interrogation," said Ziedek.

The information gathered is transmitted to combat identification servers. Ziedek said the goal of the system is to reduce friendly fire incidents.

"We are testing this technology in a mixed force to develop a common standard for different forces," he said. The multinational aspect of the exercise allows the various militaries to see how their systems will work with other nation's systems.

"I am grateful for the experience," said French Air Force Sgt. Jerome Fromentin. "Work in this kind of exercise makes our system more efficient. It's good to test our system with NATO -- it increases our compatibility," Fromentin said.

The information that is uploaded to the combat identification servers is also used by aviators, who can use the information to avoid friendly casualties while providing ground support fire.

"Sharing of all information with other nations is the goal, to communicate," said French Air Force Maj. Laurent Pourtalet. "It's important to see how our system, Link 16, works with the Mirage 2000 (fighter aircraft), and can adapt to the German system. Communication is everything."

The interoperability of these systems, from the ability of dismounted Soldiers to identify friendly units to the improved ability to coordinate ground support aviation from different militaries, extend to a human level as the personnel from NATO states work together.

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"It's a cool, new experience, being in a new country," said German Air Force Staff Sgt. Phillip Davis. "The American Soldiers are friendly guys. This type of exercise is important because here, we all work together. Here we can train."

*Photo: Pfc. Marius Ehinger, from Karlsruhe, Germany, of the German Air Force, uses the Dismounted Soldier Identification Device attached to his weapon to interrogate targets during Bold Quest 2011 held at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Ind., Sept. 10, 2011.*