



ROTC cadets learn skills and leadership at NSC

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By Mike Casey

Combined Arms Center-Training

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. - Fifteen Army ROTC cadets from Nebraska had some fun and learned some valuable lessons Friday at the National Simulation Center (NSC).

The event was hosted by the TRADOC Capability Manager for Gaming (TCM Gaming), which is part of the NSC.

The cadets from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska-Kearney were introduced to Virtual Battlespace 2, a commercial serious game program that the Army uses to train soldiers. The program generates an avatar for each soldier, and NSC simulation experts taught the cadets how to maneuver their avatars in the simulation.

Then the cadets were divided into a red team and a blue team to conduct simulated missions in a village in Afghanistan. Using laptop computers, the cadets navigated their avatars through the village streets and fired simulated weapons.

Anthony Rolfe, a senior analyst for TCM Gaming, noted how the cadets quickly embraced the serious game training and learned from their experience.

"They understand how they can use gaming to quickly progress from entry-level skill sets to proficiency in preparation for live training," he said.

The blue team's avatars rode in a Stryker vehicle into a village defended by red team insurgents. In the first exercise, all of the blue team members became casualties.

After the first exercise, Lt. Col. John Blankenhorn, professor of military studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, told the blue team: "You have to take decisive action when you dismount from a Stryker. You just can't stand in the open." Blankenhorn led the cadets on their visit.

In the second exercise, the blue team learned to use the Stryker's .50-caliber machine gun and defeated the red team.

Cadet Nathan Carda's avatar was manning the machine gun. "It was fun," he said. "We made some mistakes and learned from them."

Cadet Tim Kahnk found the training session engaging. "It was really interesting and very informative," he said.

Rolfe said the experience will help make the cadets better officers and facilitate their development as leaders.

Blankenhorn agreed.

"The visit offers the cadets a good look at the integration of simulation and technology into training," Blankenhorn said. "It shows them how important it will be for them to bring virtual training to their soldiers."

TCM Gaming and the National Simulation Center are part of the Combined Arms Center-Training, which supports and develops training support and training development throughout the Army.