DIRTY MEDICINE
PSYOP Co. gets dirty with combat medic training
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Canada, U.K. and the U.S. work together to train Civil Affairs Soldiers
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Pfc. Michael Klingsmith, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Warren Seegers attend to simulated wounds of Staff Sgt. James Sterling during a tactical combat casualty care course. The three Soldiers are assigned to the 316th Psychological Operations Company and participated in a combat lifesavers class as predeployment training.
Combat medicine is high-pressure, chaotic and downright dirty, something Grissom psychological operations Soldiers learned firsthand.

Nearly 50 Soldiers from the Army Reserve’s 316th Psychological Operations Company participated in a four-day combat lifesaver course here recently.

The course, which was held in conjunction with a month-long predeployment buildup, included 40 hours of classroom training and intense hands-on sessions that culminated with a written test and tactical combat casualty care course, said David Petroski, a contract CLS instructor with a Florida-based tactical training company.

“We’re here to save lives by teaching Soldiers and battle buddies life-saving skills in order to bring them back home, and that’s the bottom line,” explained Petroski. “It’s proven to work, and that’s why we do it — 100 percent, hands down it works.”

The U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) requires that all of its Soldiers be CLS certified and with the 316th PSYOP Co. deploying to the Horn of Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom later this year, a CLS class was arranged.

“This training was probably the most important training that we have done over the last month,” said Sgt. 1st Class Warren Seegers, 316th PSYOP Co. tactical detachment acting first sergeant. “The training was very stressful because you’re running around, so you have the physical aspect, plus you have the instructors putting the pressure and stress on you by yelling to put the chaos affect into it.”

On top of the hectic and, at times, chaotic training, the course forced Soldiers to get down and dirty with basic life-saving medicine.

“This is dirty-ditch medicine, so they’re going to get bloody, they’re going to get dirty, and there’s nothing clean, pretty or nice about this,” said Petroski.

“If somebody loses a limb with a traumatic amputation, you’ve got to get a tourniquet on that, you’ve got to stop the bleeding.

“If you don’t stop the bleeding, that Soldier is going to bleed out,” he added.

“With a femoral artery, you could bleed out in as little as three minutes.”

With that kind of pressure and with a life on the line, knowledge and speed are paramount.

“It’s about speed and not hesitating to do the things that they’re taught because that’s what’s going to save lives and bring people home,” explained Petroski. In just a few days, what Soldiers are taught during the course is quite extensive.

“In four days, we try to teach them what a paramedic has a career to learn,” said Petroski, who added that the main purpose of a CLS-trained Soldier is to stabilize the wounded and move them along in the echelon of care.

“They’re in the field, so their focus is to stop the bleeding and keep their airway open long enough for a helicopter or Humvee to take them to a medical treatment facility where they will get the medical care they need.”

Spc. Rebekah White, 316th PSYOP Co. psychological operations specialist, said she felt the intensity and realism of the training is what made it invaluable.

“It was really intense and there was a ton of good information,” elaborated White. “The training let me go over things I hadn’t thought about before, and I was able to correct them on the spot, which is a lot better than making mistakes in a place like Afghanistan or the Horn of Africa.”

Grissom is not only home to the 434th Air Refueling Wing, the largest KC-135 Stratotanker unit in the Air Force Reserve Command, but also three Army Reserve units and a Marine Corps communications detachment.

Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines routinely deploy from Grissom in support of the Department of Defense missions and U.S. strategic objectives.
Soldiers from the 316th Psychological Operations Company treated a fellow PSYOP Soldier with simulated wounds during a combat lifesaver course. The 316th went through more than a month of predeployment training, including the OLS course, prior to deploying to the Horn of Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.