

VICE Program a Hit with Greening Participants

By Sharon Rushen
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The Greening participants get ready for virtual battle. (Sharon Rushen)

FORT MONMOUTH, N.J. - The Virtual Interactive Combat Environment Program at Fort Dix helped 35 Fort Monmouth interns acquire a first-hand experience of a day in the life of the Warfighter's shoes. The training simulation, conducted April 1, marked day two of the five-day Greening Course.

Each intern was placed in a small group and rotated through four stations, each of which featured an activity focused on combat training. The VICE program, a virtual simulation battle ground, was one of the four activities that the interns participated in on April 1.

Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Turner has been running the program since its launch at Fort Dix in May 2007. Turner estimated that two to three thousand people have participated in the VICE program. He has been impressed with the positive feedback in the exit surveys.

"Most of the responses are very positive," Turner said. "It benefits the Soldier to where they can practice something that they were just taught and be able to do it, look and see what they did, go back and start over again."

After each group was split into teams of four and five, each team member was given a weapon and put in a small, enclosed area next to one another. Each team had a team leader, three team members and a squad leader.

he teams worked in Iraq and Afghanistan, maneuvering their way through a battlefield of armed enemies and improvised explosive devices. The sounds of explosions and gunshots were mixed with the commands of Turner and the team members. After each group finished their mission, Turner showed them what they had done as a team and how to fix their mistakes.

"Make sure you know where your Soldiers are," Turner said. He went on to explain "situational awareness," or knowing what's happening in one's environment.

As each group became more acquainted with each other, the level of enthusiasm grew. Teams huddled before redoing their mission and different members took turns playing the squad leader - a position that led and directed his or her Soldiers through the battlefield. When teams survived exploding IED's or defeated enemies, smiles and "good job's" were traded



A VICE squad leader lines up his target before continuing on his group's mission. (Photo by Sharon Rushen)

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amongst each other.

Robin Robinson, an acquisition contract specialist, has been working at Fort Monmouth for five years and enjoyed the learning experience.

"I think everybody needs to see it; regular, government people, everybody needs to see it" Robinson said. "It will help everybody, so they know that their focus is about the Warfighter; I know when I have to award something, I am going to try to do my best to do it fast so we can get the Soldier what they need to survive out there."

Richard Alvarez, Greening Course program coordinator for the Communications-Electronic Research, Development and Engineering Center, is in charge of the Greening Course. The five-day course runs four times per calendar year. Greening includes informational lectures, training at Fort Dix, a rappel course and concludes with a brief helicopter ride.