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Public Affairs Office

Illinois Guardsmen conduct team-building exercise for state troopers

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Cassidy Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Guardsmen with the Illinois National Guard (ILNG) Counterdrug Task Force conducted a team-building exercise toward the end of a weeklong leadership training course for approximately 60 Illinois State Troopers at the Illinois Military Academy on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 9.

"The troopers will have to build a team with their subordinates once they are promoted to supervisor," said Michael Zerbonia, Colonel of Operations with the Illinois State Police and Land Forces Component Commander for the Illinois Army National Guard. "This training fits perfectly with the intended goal of transitioning the troopers to be effective leaders in the field."

Out of the 60 troopers going through the training, roughly 10 will be promoted within 45 days and another 20 promoted in the spring, said Zerbonia.

"My intent for the troopers was to learn to work together," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Starks of Peoria, Illinois, lead instructor and civil operations manager for the ILNG Counterdrug Task Force. "Also, we want the troopers to look at different aspects of their work; for example identifying their weaknesses and strengths; critical thinking and making quick decisions under pressure."

The overall training objectives included: understanding good leadership behaviors; gaining insight into personal patterns; interpersonal and communication skills; handling stress; empowering, motivating and inspiring others; and leading by example.

"I liked the exercises because they were critical thinking, different leadership skills and being able to communicate without using your voice," said Special Agent Tarod Deeder of Winchester, Illinois, Illinois State Police, Division of Internal Investigations. "It put you in situations where you can apply that to our type of work, because we rely on communication and technology."

This is the second time the Illinois State Police has conducted the leadership training for the troopers. The first was held earlier this year and they plan to continue holding two per year in the coming years, said Zerbonia.

"We have the resources and the expertise and it just made sense for us to facilitate the training," said Lt. Col. Eric Smith of Springfield, Illinois, the ILNG Counterdrug Task Force coordinator. "This isn't a core mission for Counterdrug, but we have

an enduring relationship with the Illinois State Police and anything we can do continue that relationship we will."

When not conducting team-building exercises, the ILNG Counterdrug Task Force assists law enforcement agencies to disrupt and deny illicit drug financing, production, transportation and distribution in order to reduce the drug threat to the homeland while collaborating with community-based organizations to build and support drug free community coalitions.



(Left) Michael Zerbonia, Colonel of Operations for the Illinois State Police, listens to Staff Sgt. Joseph Arnold of Pleasant Hill, Illinois, as he describes the team-building exercise he is instructing to approximately 60 Illinois State troopers at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 9. Arnold is an intelligence analyst with the Illinois National Guard Counterdrug Task Force that conducted a team-building exercise during the troopers' weeklong leadership training. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Joseph Arnold of Pleasant Hill, Illinois, an intelligence analyst with the Illinois National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, describes the goal of a team-building exercise he is instructing to approximately 60 Illinois State troopers at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 9. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs)



Illinois State troopers communicate with each other during a team-building exercise facilitated by members of the Illinois National Guard Counterdrug Task Force at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 9. Approximately 60 troopers participated in a weeklong leadership training course designed to enhance their skills as supervisors. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs)



(Left) Special Agent Tarod Deeder of Winchester, Illinois, Illinois State Police, Division of Internal Investigations, works with fellow troopers during a team-building exercise facilitated by members of the Illinois National Guard Counterdrug Task Force at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 9. Approximately 60 troopers participated in a weeklong leadership training course designed to enhance their skills as supervisors. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Aleah M. Castrejon, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs)

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