



Working with Plastic Explosives

Massachusetts National Guard trains at Fort Devens on best ways to **“BLOW STUFF UP.”**

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Combat Engineers from the Massachusetts National Guard recently trained with plastic explosives at Fort Devens, Mass. The 182nd Engineer Company

(Sapper), Massachusetts Army National Guard, conducted demolition training during their drill weekend using a variety of plastic explosive charges. Combat engineers use explosives to

disable minefields and other obstacles intended to stop friendly forces from advancing on the battlefield.

“Normally we use explosives for the purpose of destroying roads and bridges to prevent the enemy from using them,” said Army 1st Sgt. Michael T. St. Cyr from the 182nd Engineer Company. “We also clear minefields so our forces can advance to their objectives, but when we were in Iraq we also had six soldiers who were qualified to blow up improvised explosive devices.”


The range at Fort Devens provides a safe environment for the members of the unit to practice individual tasks of preparing, placing and detonating small explosive charges. After placing their charges the Soldiers could watch them explode from a protective trailer equipped with safety glass.

Army Staff Sgt. Michael Rosa made sure the newest Soldiers in the unit prepared their charges properly and safely but also made them feel comfortable by cracking jokes and making small talk with them about his passion for being a combat engineer.

“I really love blowing things up,” Rosa said.

Army Private Matthew Regis was new to the unit and the drill was his first opportunity to use explosives with the unit.

Regis said, “I became a combat engineer to blow stuff up,” Regis said. “I thought it sounded fun and figured ‘why not?’ ”

When the unit detonated a large underground-cratering charge the shockwave from the blast could be felt underfoot like a rippling wave causing all of the soldiers to laugh and enjoy their weekend doing what they love. 



At Fort Devens, Mass., Army 1st Sgt. Michael T. St. Cyr from the 182nd Engineer Company (Sapper) teaches Pfc. Brendan Dekoschak how to arm a bangalore charge for destroying obstacles.