Agile Spirit 25: Unity and Operational Readiness in the Heart of the Black Sea

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The exercise **Agile Spirit 25**, one of the most significant demonstrations of military cooperation between NATO allies and regional partners, concluded on August 6, 2025. For two weeks, over **2,000 military personnel from 14 countries** trained together between Georgia and Turkey, conducting live-fire operations, air drops, medical evacuations, and combat simulations. All with a common goal: **to strengthen interoperability, readiness, and stability in the Black Sea**.

Agile Spirit 25 saw the active participation of troops from **Georgia, United States, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland**, while the **Armed Forces of Armenia and Japan** participated as observers, highlighting global interest in regional security and cooperation. Now in its twelfth edition, Agile Spirit is co-directed by the **Georgian Defense Forces** and the **U.S. Army Europe and Africa**,

and remains an essential platform for cooperation among diverse armed forces.

“We have a shared goal: the security of the Black Sea region,” stated American Colonel **Will Cox**, co-director of the exercise. The main activities were distributed among various training centers in Georgia – including Vaziani, Norio, Krtsanisi, and Senaki – and in Turkey, with air drops conducted from the Incirlik air base to Kayseri.

The equipment used included **armored vehicles, U.S. UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters**, and a **Turkish Army AS332 Puma helicopter**, while the **Georgian Defense Forces** provided additional **combat vehicles and aerial platforms**. The Georgian command led the entire maneuver from the JTEC (NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center), accompanied by observers from the 7th Army Training Command, tasked with evaluating the capabilities of the training centers involved.

Complex Missions and Tactical Collaboration

Among the most significant moments of the exercise was the joint air drop between U.S. paratroopers and the **1st Turkish Commando Brigade**, conducted in Turkey. “A difficult and risky operation, where collaboration and coordination among allies are essential,” emphasized Lieutenant Colonel **Austin Commons**, commander of the 1-91 Cav squadron of the **173rd Airborne Brigade**.

The integration among the forces was not only tactical but also cultural and communicative. “Each country has its own command style and habits – explained Lieutenant Colonel **Jason Westmoreland** – but through mutual trust and dialogue, initial difficulties are overcome. From the eighth day, there is always a noticeable improvement in communication.”

Westmoreland directed the **Command Post Exercise** as division commander, providing crucial oversight to the **2nd Multinational Brigade**, composed of Georgian, U.S., and other NATO personnel. The goal was to exercise command and control, simulate complex scenarios, and test coordinated response capabilities to external threats, through the use of digital simulation centers.

Medical and logistical operations also played a central role. The **3rd Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment**, of the **1st Armored Division**, conducted MEDEVAC activities, hot and cold load training, and air transport, enhancing medical evacuation capabilities in multinational contexts. “Operating in mixed environments means explaining, validating, and standardizing procedures – said Captain **Andrew Caldwell**, HH-60 helicopter pilot –. It is crucial to know how and when to request MEDEVAC intervention. Agile Spirit provided us with a valuable opportunity to do so.”

Lessons Learned and Future Prospects

The training and strategic value of Agile Spirit 25 was widely recognized by the participating commands. Colonel **Davit Gagua**, commander of the JTEC, emphasized the importance of cooperation “in sharing operational experiences related to current global military challenges, mutually strengthening response capabilities.” A vision shared by Lieutenant Colonel **Giorgi Jalagonia**, commander of the **22nd Multinational Battalion**, who stated, “this is a rare opportunity to get to know different weapon systems closely and improve collective responsiveness.”

The exercise tested the entire command chain: from joint planning, to internal convoys in Georgia, to simultaneous coordination on multiple ranges and bases. “We learned to trust our leaders and operate independently while respecting the commander's intentions,” said Commons. A formative experience, not only for the American paratroopers but for all participating forces.

Agile Spirit, born in 2011 and led since 2018 by the U.S. Army Europe and Africa, continues to be a proving ground for improving the **combat readiness** of allied ground forces. In closing, Colonel Cox thanked the host countries: “Georgia and Turkey welcomed us with great professionalism. We will return for new exercises.”

At the final ceremony, among anthems, lowering flags, and lined-up soldiers, a clear message emerged: **the mission continues, relationships remain, and if called upon, these allies will know how to fight together**.

News link:
https://www.army.mil/article/287661/agile_spirit_25_concludes_with_unified_display_of_allied_strength_and_readiness