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**June 16, 2008
SDNG-PA-06-16B-08**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Vehicle gives Soldiers eyes on target

By Sgt. Lance Schroeder, 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The convoy has been halted, and the Soldiers dismount and pull security. Ahead, near the edge of the road, sits a possible improvised explosive device just waiting for the next vehicle to speed by. As convoy commander, what do you do?

In the past, there were a few possible answers to this question: Call in the Explosive Ordnance Detachment, or send one of your own Soldiers to identify the device. Either way, you were jeopardizing the lives of your troops.

Now, there is another option. One that takes the danger out of the equation. Send in the MARCbot IV observational vehicle!

Members of the 166th Aviation Brigade of Fort Riley, Kan., conducted training on the Multi-function Agile Remote Control Robot IV as part of their base defense operations training lane Saturday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid during the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise.

“This technology allows maximum standoff, so the Soldier outside the wire can close the gap and make a positive identification on the target,” said Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Garza, Brigade IED Master Gunner for the 166th.

Garza, an instructor on the base defense lane, placed a special emphasis on MARCbot IV training for one specific reason.

“The Soldier doesn’t have to risk his life to determine if there is an actual threat,” Garza said.

Garza described the MARCbot IV, as a light, portable vehicle that is basically a remote-controlled car with a camera mounted on an adaptable arm.

This allows the average Soldier to approach a potential threat and get a good look at it, he added.

The Soldier uses a remote control unit to drive the MARCbot IV to the suspected explosive device. Once in position, the camera and arm are manipulated to see any aspect of the target, allowing a positive identification to be made. During this process, the Soldier is positioned safely away from the potential blast zone, said Garza.

Soldiers receiving the MARCbot IV training said they could see the obvious benefits.

“This is great training!” said Spc. Roseann Deming, a member of the Army Reserve’s 960th Quartermaster Company, Sioux City, Iowa. “I’ve received a great idea of what I need to know when I get deployed in the future, and the tools I can use to stay safe.”

“I know for a fact this is a life-saving tool,” said Garza, veteran of two deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. “Anytime we keep Soldiers away from the ‘Boom,’ that’s a life-saving tool.”

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High resolution photos will be available at the following Web site:

LINK: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/GC2008/default.aspx>

Photo Cut Lines:

080614-A-3871S-075.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Garza of the 166th Aviation Brigade, Fort Riley, Kan., uses the onboard camera to drive the MARCbot IV Observational Vehicle during base defense training Saturday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., as part of the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder) (RELEASED)

080614-A-3871S-115.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Garza of the 166th Aviation Brigade, Fort Riley, Kan., maneuvers the MARCbot IV Observational Vehicle during base defense training Saturday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., as part of the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder) (RELEASED)

080614-A-3871S-117.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Garza of the 166th Aviation Brigade, Fort Riley, Kan., uses a remote control unit to maneuver the MARCbot IV Observational Vehicle toward a target Friday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., as part of the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder) (RELEASED)

080614-A-3871S-152.JPG: The MARCbot IV Observational Vehicle uses its onboard camera to examine a possible improvised explosive device during base defense training Friday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., as part of the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder) (RELEASED)

080614-A-3871S-169.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class Alejandro Garza of the 166th Aviation Brigade, Fort Riley, Kan., maneuvers the MARCbot IV Observational Vehicle during base defense training

Friday, June 14, at West Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., as part of the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder) (RELEASED)

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION about the South Dakota National Guard, please visit our Web site at <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/default.aspx>

NOTE: The South Dakota National Guard will host the annual Golden Coyote exercise from June 7 – 21 in the southern Black Hills. More than 4,000 service members from 92 units representing 27 states and four foreign nations are participating in the exercise. The Golden Coyote exercise has been conducted for the past 24 years. The exercise provides relevant training opportunities in support of the war on terror and homeland defense.

Residents should be aware of an increase in military traffic throughout the Black Hills and an increase in the level of noise due to military operations. Aviation activity will be operating out of Camp Rapid and the Army Aviation Support Facility next to the Rapid City Regional Airport.

Aircraft will be primarily training on equipment and personnel transport missions as well as medical evacuation. Aircraft will respond to real-world emergencies during the exercise and remain in an all-hours-ready status during the exercise.

Spectators to military training are welcome, however caution is warranted and spectators are asked to remain at a safe distance from all moving military vehicles and aircraft to prevent injury to personnel or damage to property.