

Asymmetric Warfare Group Built a Fake City in Virginia to Train US Troops

By [Global Research News](#)

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[Gismodo](#)

Of interest to GR readers, this report on the training of US soldiers in the art of Asymmetric Warfare

A shiny new city recently opened in northern Virginia's Caroline County. It has a school, a church, a mosque, a subway station, and even an embassy that, at five stories, may be the [county's tallest building](#). But nobody lives there.

That's because the 300-acre complex at Fort A.P. Hill is the U.S. military's newest \$90.1 million training center. Run by the Asymmetric Warfare Group, a special mission originally formed in 2006 to deal with IEDs, the fake town will help train soldiers in the unique challenges of urban warfare. It will "replicate complex operational environments," in the army's own words.



Military strategist David Kilcullen was in New York City earlier this week to talk about the future of urban warfare at the World Policy Institute... [Read...](#)

In the emerging world of 21st century conflict, the battlefield is [no longer the countryside but the city](#). At this new Asymmetric Warfare Training Center (AWTC), soldiers can train to crawl through small spaces like ceiling ducts and even maneuver across subway platforms.

In full, the urban complex of the AWTC include stores, a gas station, school, soccer field, church, mosque tunnels, subway platform, and a bridge built to the Virginia Department of Transportation's specifications for demolition calculations. The subway trains look exactly like that of the DC Metro's, down to the logo. In addition, the AWTC has the usual barracks and firing ranges.

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The AWTC is a fake city, an in-between place, an Epcot-like conurbation that seems neither here nor there. The school is built in the style of those in Iraq and Afghanistan. The subway looks exactly like DC's. A Protestant-style church and a mosque sit not too far apart.

The [National Training Center at Fort Irwin](#) in California also features fake Middle Eastern villages, complete with vendors selling plastic bread and meat. The dimensions of an artificial village—from the width of the streets to the height of the steps—are all calculated to replicate an Iraqi one. Aside from learning to navigate a foreign city, soldiers there also

have to learn how to maneuver through the social and cultural challenges of being abroad. Actors roam the streets, as civilians or bad guys or even as gruesome casualties. Read the entire [fascinating account](#) from Gizmodo's own editor-in-chief Geoff Manaugh's trip there with Nicola Twilley in 2012.

Meanwhile, Virginia's AWTC only had its ribbon cutting ceremony a little over two weeks ago, so we've yet to see exactly how battles there will play out—but we've reached out to find out a little more about the simulated future of combat at the AWTC. [[War is Boring](#)]

Update: The eagle-eyed [Graham Jenkins](#) points out this incredible fact. The Metro cars at the AWTC, which are numbered 1090 and 1091, were the same pair that derailed on the Red Line last August.

Top photo of Asymmetric Warfare Group training by [Lt. Col. Sonise Lumbaca](#). Other images from [video by Lt. Col. Sonise Lumbaca](#)

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