

# THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

## PIGGY-BACKING HEAVY METAL

# HETs haul big guns to Glamoc range

By 1st Lt. MANUEL VIDES  
203rd MPAD

When Task Force Eagle needs to move some heavy metal it looks to the heavy equipment transport platoon of Company B, 123rd Main Support Battalion.

Moving tracked vehicles aboard the unit's special 40-wheeled, 72-ton capacity heavy equipment transporter carriers saves fuel and wear and tear on roadways and tracks, said 2nd Lt. Richard Wittingslow, platoon leader.

The HET platoon answered the call at the beginning of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. It moved all the task force's tracked vehicles from Hungary to the Sava River.

And last week it had another big job. The unit moved four 155mm howitzers, two ammo carriers, a wrecker and a command-post vehicle belonging to Battery B, 4th Battalion, 29th Field Artillery from Lodgment Area Lisa to a firing range at Glamoc, in IFOR's British area of operations.

No problem for the soldiers of the HET platoon.

"This is what we do all the time," said



Master Sgt. Phillip Wolke

A 155mm Howitzer sits atop a 40-wheeled, heavy equipment transporter trailer at Lodgment Area Lisa in preparation for a convoy to Glamoc.

driver Sgt. Norwell Jefferys.

Preparations for the four-day, 400-mile round-trip began in April, Wittingslow said.

"We've been planning this mission for over a month now," he said, before embarking. "I have been reconning the route to the pick-up point for a few weeks. The shortest route is not always the best route. Either the bridges are nonexistent or the roads are too narrow."

The mission enables the artillery battery to train with its own weapons.

"At Glamoc we will have the opportunity to take our own equipment and also calibrate our howitzers," said Capt. Kevin West, the commander of the first U.S. unit to use the facility. "If we go to Hungary's firing range we would have to use somebody else's equipment. I prefer

shooting our own guns."

He can, thanks to the HET platoon.

The first leg of the route took the nine HET vehicles and their military police escort through tight, single-lane mountain roads.

The 50-mile trek from Lukavac, the platoon's home base, to Lodgment Area Lisa, alone, took about three hours.

Although the winding roads and large number of pedestrians made driving ticklish, the trip was uneventful.

Coordination and prior planning paid off at the pick-up point. Drivers and their tracked vehicles drove onto the HET carriers with surgical precision.

Once the cargo was bolted into place, the convoy — nearly double in size now with the addition of several HMMWVs carrying each tracked-vehicle's crew — was ready to roll.

"This is not an administrative convoy, this is a tactical move, act as such," said Maj. Dave Anderson, 4-29th operations officer, during his safety brief.

The convoy returned to Lukavac for its first night on the road. It finally

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## SJA explains black marketing

By Spc. CESAR G. SORIANO  
29th MPAD

AAFES post exchanges are now up and running at most Task Force Eagle base camps — for use by authorized personnel only.

The Task Force Staff Judge Advocate and Chief of Staff recently distributed memorandums to help identify

and prevent black market activity — the sale or transfer of AAFES goods by authorized AAFES consumers to anyone not authorized PX privileges.

"IFOR ID cardholders and civilian employees other than local nationals in support of the IFOR mission are authorized to patronize this facility," said Brett Bartel, assis-

See Black Market, page 12

From the top

# R&R can lead to stressful staff shortages

Stress may be reaching a new high in Task Force Eagle as hundreds of troops take off for R&R, leaving their responsibilities to others.

Soldiers participating in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR have worked hard and deserve a vacation, but the loss of manpower can be tough on those who remain behind.

It's your job as a noncommissioned officer to carefully watch your troops during this phase of the operation. Some may return from R&R jubilant, only to fall victim to stress fatigue later.

One preventive measure for stress fatigue is tight unit cohesion and scheduling various



**Command Sgt. Maj. Jack L. Tilley**  
1st Armored Division

physical-training activities, such as volleyball.

Leaders should talk with their troops to find out what's going on with them. Often, soldiers want to maintain the "suck it up and deal with it" mentality and

try to hide the fact that they are down.

Those who are bothered emotionally by something going on at home or elsewhere may have difficulty focusing on the mission. Leaders should ensure their soldiers are communicating with their families.

Family separation, isolation and the mission requirements can contribute to stress.

Health experts tell us that stress weakens the body's defenses and makes soldiers more susceptible to illness.

Leaders should make sure their troops set aside time to read, listen to music, play games or watch TV to get their minds off the day-to-day stress. Sharing feelings with friends or a chaplain may also be helpful.

Stressed-out soldiers may not be getting enough sleep, good nutrition or maintaining their personal hygiene. Those who slack off on these basics may become run-down.

Don't let this happen to your troops. Keep an eye on them and if they need to be reminded to take care of themselves, do it.

Have your soldiers use the buddy system to watch out for one another. NCOs also should

look for stress symptoms, including anxiety, upset stomach, eating disorders and insomnia.

While it may be difficult to give your soldiers a weekly day off, try your best to arrange schedules so that everyone has at least a few hours off. Troops who work long hours without breaks are prime candidates for stress-related problems.

Of course, soldiers emulate their leaders, so NCOs, slow down. You can't run non-stop for 365 days. Slow your daily pace enough so you can sustain and stay focused.

Soldiers who are not dealing well with stress are encouraged to contact stress management counselors, who are available at several base camps.

Task Force Eagle troops, let's take care of each other.

Viewpoint

## To plan, or not to plan, that is the R&R question

I knew I wanted to do something different for my rest and recuperation yet I wasn't sure what.

For weeks I pondered over several sites in Europe. Still, I couldn't decide.

So I took my hippie brother's advice to try to live in the moment and not worry.

It always seems work for him — he's 24, a genius and trying to "find himself" in the Pacific Northwest wilderness.

"Flying by the seat of my pants" — literally — proved to be a learning experience and sort of fun, but I had complications and unforeseen expenses, too.

Clueless, I spent my first



**Sgt. Christina Steiner**  
203rd MPAD

two days wandering around Rhein-Main AB. I let my hair fly loose and wore the same grungy clothes every day (just as my brother). I felt liberated and without worry.

I browsed the PX five times and read a lot of magazines.

I meandered over to the club. I had two beers and quickly lost \$50 on the slot machines.

Then I booked a trip to Spain for some sun and a good beach.

For a few days it was warm enough to soak up some sun but still too cold to swim in the ocean or the pool.

One day I was hungry for something familiar, so I bought

a slice of cheese pizza from a stand that advertised its food as "fast, cheap and American."

Making international phone calls here was another challenge. I tried for four days to contact my unit. I found that to call international, I had to keep dropping in pesetas.

Dialing the appropriate country code combinations was also difficult. I reached operator recordings in Spanish, German and a Slavic language that said the number was not in service. Then I tried various variations of the number thinking a digit off. On the fourth day, a call finally rang through. I had reached Argentina! I gave up.

I explored the pretty coastline, a castle, the shops and streets and attended two local

festivals. I bought souvenirs and took a lot of photographs.

One of my favorite purchases was a beautiful, huge blue-straw sombrero that eventually proved to be a *huge* hassle. I couldn't find a box wide enough to mail the sombrero, so I carried it back with me.

My free-spirited hippie days were soon over.

On departure day at Rhein-Main, all I carried was my camera and sombrero. It was so big it kept swinging around and hitting people. The hat was too wide and tall to stow in the overhead bin or under a seat, so a flight attendant cleared a seat for it.

Finally I got to Lukavac in one piece. I enjoyed freedom but next time will probably have a plan A — maybe even a plan B, C and D.

# THE TALON

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# ACES offers college classes

By Staff Sgt. BRIAN BOWMAN  
203rd MPAD

When asked what they did during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, some soldiers will be able to give an educated answer.

Thanks to the Army Continuing Education System, in cooperation with three U.S. institutions of higher learning, Task Force Eagle soldiers are taking college classes, correspondence courses and receiving other educational services.

Never have deployed U.S. soldiers received such an array of educational opportunities, so early in a deployment, said Mike Tevnan, ACES educational service officer.

"One of the lessons learned from previous deployments ... was that soldiers deployed were sometimes not staying as competitive as soldiers in the rear because of a lack of military or civilian education," Tevnan said. "So the Department of the Army said we need to make sure soldiers get (educational opportunities)."

Tevnan and half a dozen ACES specialists arrived during February and March to set up education centers for soldiers.

They have established centers at Eagle Base, Lukavac, Steel Castle, Bedrock and Gentry Base, and will soon open one at Camp Angela.

During the spring semester, nearly 1,000 soldiers registered for classes offered by the University of Maryland, Central Texas College and the City Colleges of Chicago.

More than half of those enrolled were at Lukavac, where the first center was established.

And, while most of the students are taking general education classes such as English and Math 101, ACES Lukavac Education Services Specialist Manny Iglesias said one soldier, Chief Warrant Officer Kelly Fuller, recently finished the one class he needed to earn a bachelor's degree.

"The funny part is that (Fuller) was enrolled in two seminars with me (back in Germany) that were canceled because of a lack of enrollment," Iglesias said. "Then he got deployed.

"I thought he was going to kiss me when he saw me here (in Lukavac)."

Most students, however, are just starting down the path toward an associate's or bachelor's degree.

"I had no civilian education other than high school," said Pfc. Scott M. Vannatter of Company D, 123rd Main Support Battalion. "Right now I'm working on the basics, but I'm thinking about majoring in mechanical engineering."

The 21-year old, Muncie, Ind., native, said the classroom instruction has helped him enjoy classes such as English that he hated in high school.

"I was kind of surprised that they had actual classes," he said, "and not just video correspondence courses."

Tevnan said, however, that video and correspondence courses are also popular.

University of Maryland professor Steve Holowenzak has taught troops from Saudi Arabia to Iceland.

He said teaching on Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR is an honor.

"I love to be here with the soldiers," he said. "I have a lot of respect for the soldiers. ... They have their missions, their family and on top of all that, they pursue their educational goals too."

## News briefs

### Memorial Day message from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

"On this special holiday we pay tribute to and remember those in uniform who gave their lives in the name of freedom.

"The very soul of a nation is its heroes — the men and women who fought to define and defend its principles and its character. We are reminded that the courage, valor and ultimate sacrifice of the members of our Armed Forces have defined our Nation and changed the fate of the world.

We honor the memory of those who died during the early revolutionary

days at Concord, in conflicts around the globe for over 200 years and most recently in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"In 1861, at his first inaugural, Abraham Lincoln so aptly remarked, 'The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.'

"Thus, it is most fitting that we privately and publicly commemorate the sacrifices of our fallen comrades by placing flowers and flags on their graves. We must never forget that because of their selfless devotion to duty, we enjoy freedoms that are the envy of the world today.

"On this day of remembrance, I salute military members past and present — especially those who laid down their lives for this great Nation. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and I join millions of other Americans in pledging our resolve to protect and preserve the legacy which those who gave their lives bestowed upon us."

### Gospel fest scheduled

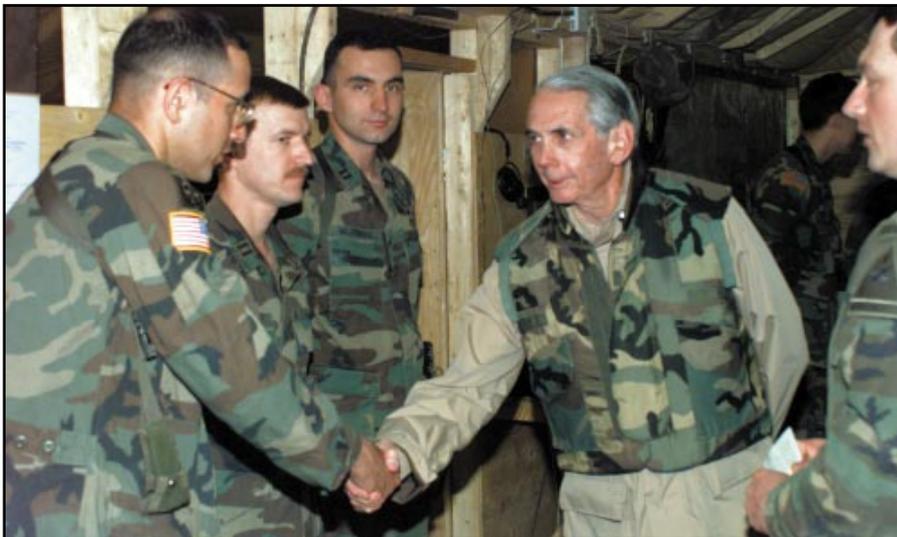
A gospel extravaganza featuring choirs from six Task Force Eagle base camps will be held at 1 p.m. on June 1 at Club 21 on Eagle Base.

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Leonard Ashford at 551-4102 or 558-5825.



Gen. John M. Shalikashvili

## Diplomatic handshake



Spc. John Jackson

U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, Donald M. Blinken, visits soldiers from Task Force Eagle's 2nd Brigade at Lodgment Area Lisa May 16.

# Ironsides' biggest bore blasts earthen bunkers



*Capt. Rhonda Reasoner*

Sgt. Steven Greenwood (foreground), Spc. Raymond Barrick (right) and Staff Sgt. Michael Byrd clean the bore of a 165mm demolition gun on an M-728 Combat Engineer Vehicle after it was used to destroy four bunkers in the zone of separation.

By Sgt. 1st Class GARY YOUNGER  
358th MPAD

Ask an artilleryman or a tanker who has the largest gun in the 1st Armored Division.

The answer might surprise him.

The largest barrel bore belongs to the combat engineers' M-728 Combat Engineer Vehicle, which fires a 165mm, high-explosive round capable of destroying bunkers and other large obstacles.

The 25-year-old CEV sits on an M60 tank chassis and also boasts a bulldozer blade and a crane.

"It's getting old," said 2nd Lt. Thomas Austin of Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion, "but it's still a very effective system."

Soldiers from Austin's unit recently unleashed the CEV's big gun for the first time during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR to destroy four well-hidden bunkers along Route Astro in the zone of separation.

Using the stand-off demolition gun was a low-risk alternative to sending engineers on foot to destroy the bunkers, said Capt. John Chaput, company commander.

"We don't have to put soldiers at risk because we can blow the bunkers from the road," Chaput said.

The area, which saw heavy fighting during the war, is still thought to contain mines, he said.

One anti-personnel mine was discovered near the site. U.S. explosive ordinance disposal specialist detonated the mine in place.

The engineers also took measures to protect local residents. Using a public address system, they cleared everyone from the blast area before destroying the bunkers.

The powerful, old, tracked vehicle proved its worth on this mission.

The four-member crew pulled the CEV up to its firing point, traversed and elevated its big gun.

On order, Sgt. Craig Grooms of Fairfield, Ohio, fired the specially-designed demolition round toward its target on the side of a mountain.

Spectators a kilometer away could hear the thunder of the CEV's big gun. They then saw a flash and flying debris as the round struck its mark.

Only 20 rounds were needed to destroy all four bunkers.

"It's great to be out doing this type of work," Grooms said.

"It's better to send us than sending foot soldiers," said crew chief Staff Sgt. Reginald McKnight of Gastonia, N.C. "We can get to the objective faster and safer."

There may not be too many repeat performances for the CEV. It is to be replaced soon by a similar vehicle mounted on a more modern M-1 tank chassis. This will allow the obstacle-destroying CEV to keep up with the speedier Abrams tank on the battlefield.

*Spc. Wendy M. Firestone, 203rd MPAD, contributed to this story.*

# Sod-busting soldiers till Victory Garden

By Spc. GEORGE ROACHE  
29th MPAD

COMANCHE BASE — Spc. Christine Tutor of Gillette, Wyo., grew up with her hands in the soil.

Every summer she planted a garden where she and her father raised vegetables.

Her grandparents had grapevines and an apple orchard she also helped tend.

Gardening was fun and relaxing, and she missed it, said the 23-year-old Apache mechanic with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation here.

But thanks to the Comanche Base Victory Garden, she can now cultivate her interest while deployed to the former Yugoslavia.

“Other people like playing the guitar or reading books. This is my hobby,” she said. “It’s very, very peaceful.”

Giving soldiers an outlet was just what 2-227th Chaplain (Capt.) Daniel E. Wackerhagen had in mind when he opened the garden.

“If you’re going to be here a long time in Bosnia, having a garden might make it easy,” Wackerhagen said. “You get the satisfaction of watching it grow. And it makes it a little more like home.”

The idea sprouted when

Wackerhagen, a gardening enthusiast, wanted to plant tomatoes outside his tent. It quickly grew into finding a space big enough for anyone else interested in the pastime.

Working with 4th Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Lawrence, he secured a one-acre space in an open field near the base dining facility.

Engineers had already ensured the land was clear of mines and were traveling across it regularly, Wackerhagen said.

And he was delighted to hear a local farmer say the soil was very good for growing vegetables.

“There’s nothing like a home-grown tomato,” Wackerhagen said. “Garden-fresh vegetables taste better, especially when you grow them yourself.”

The acre of land yielded 35 plots measuring 20 feet by 30 feet. Wackerhagen made them available on a first-come, first-serve basis. He also provided seeds for tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, radishes and carrots.

The garden program will also help beautify the base, Wackerhagen said.

An Oregon firm donated wildflower seeds to Chief Warrant Officer Angela Hurford of C Company, 7th Battalion, 227th. The two officers planted them around the garden and



Spc. Rob Bishop

**Chaplain (Capt.) Daniel E. Wackerhagen moves the first shovelful of soil in the Victory Garden at Comanche Base.**

elsewhere on base.

The garden officially opened in early May. So far, about 15 soldiers are in the process of gardening their plots using pick-axes and shovels, the chaplain said.

“It’s kind of different digging in the dirt with an entrenching

tool instead of a tractor and tiller,” said Spc. James Redd, 22, of D Company, 2-227th, a Shelbyville, Tenn., native who lived on a farm and helped his parents tend their garden.

“But hopefully, if things go good, you’ll get something nice out of it,” he said.

## 501st medics practice casualty evacuation techniques



**Soldiers lift a “casualty” onto a truck for evacuation.** 1st Lt. Al Swepson

By 1st Lt. AL SWEPSON  
358th MPAD

GENTRY BASE — Company C, 501st Forward Support Battalion recently taught their non-medical personnel how to properly evacuate casualties during emergency mass-casualty situations.

“We want to make sure everybody knows how to properly put a patient or casualty on a litter and take him or her to a designated location without causing further injury to the patient or themselves,” said Staff Sgt. Maria Montoya, noncommissioned officer in charge, aid station, 501st FSB.

The 32-year-old soldier stressed to the troops the importance of using their legs instead of their backs when lifting litters.

“We want to avoid injuries,” said Montoya. “We want to make sure they are ready, so they can do it properly.”

The Southgate, Calif., native helped instruct soldiers on how to properly perform litter carries going over different terrain. She also taught soldiers how to properly load tracked vehicles, trucks and helicopters.

Company C, the 501st FSB’s forward support medical company consists of evacuation and treatment platoons. The unit supports Task Force Eagle’s 1st Brigade.

“The treatment platoon runs the aid station, and the evacuation platoon is pushed forward to all the different units around the 1st Brigade sector, and is responsible for all evacuations back to the aid station,” said 2nd. Lt. Melissa J. Speer, evacuation platoon leader.

“We hope that a mass casualty emergency will never happen here,” Montoya said.

“But, we want to be ready if it does.”

# Eagles soar into Tal



**G**unnery requirements never stop — even while soldiers are deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina

The first Task Force Eagle unit completed the training last month at a range near Taborfalva, Hungary.

Troops from 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry climbed into buses in the 2nd Brigade area and traveled to the range, which is part of an old Hungarian military training area.

"The training will be standardized throughout the 1st Armored Division. Basically everyone will run the same tasks," said

Staff Sgt. Robert E. Anderson, master gunner for C Troop, 1-4 Cavalry.

Firing their weapons for the first time since

the start of Operation JOINT

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Clockwise from top left: Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry qualify with their M-16 rifles on a firing range; soldiers climb into tracked vehicles to begin gunnery training; combat leaders use a sand table to orient themselves to a range; an M-1A1 Abrams main battle tank returns from a qualification range.

Photos by Pfc. Jody Johnston, 358th MPAD

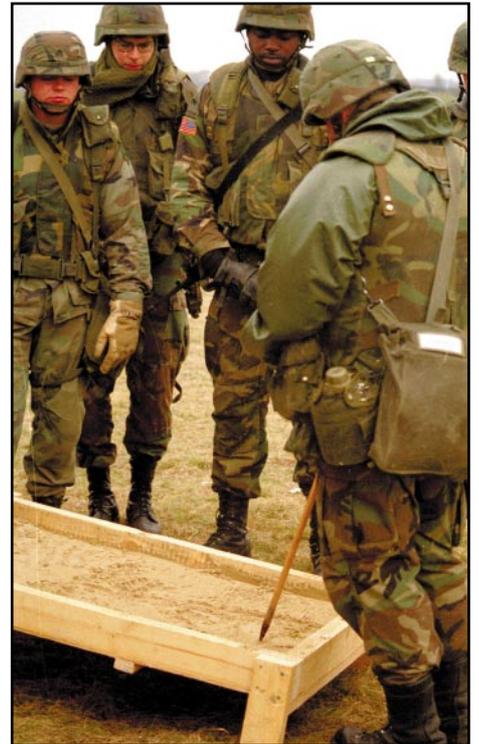
them a break from their day-to-day jobs in Bosnia.

"They (the soldiers) run through a series of tank and Bradley training tables (sequences), which gives them a chance to learn to work as a crew again," Anderson said.

In the gunnery rating scheme, tank and Bradley crews are evaluated on accu-

racy, the speed in which they identify and engage the targets and whether the individual crew members performed their assigned duties correctly.

After gunnery, troops receive a two-day pass in Budapest, Hungary to indulge in the luxuries of civilization again - a bed, bathtub and TV.



# Operation Picasso paints art on Lukavac



Staff Sgt. Brian Bowman

Spc. Enrique Esquivel of E Co., 123rd MSB, gazes at an exhibit during Lukavac's Operation Picasso art show.

By Staff Sgt. BRIAN BOWMAN  
203rd MPAD

LUKAVAC — Operation Picasso, the art show held here last week, not only allowed soldiers to display their work — it also gave the local population a chance to show U.S. troops some of their culture.

The three-day event featured dozens of art works in a variety of formats and entertainment by soldiers and local artists from Lukavac.

"Originally it was supposed to be just an art show," said Capt. Shari Corbett, who with 1st Lt. Dave Abke coordinated the event. "But Dave and I decided it needed something else."

So, during the evenings, entertainment kept things lively. The opening night performers included the base Gospel Choir and Asian Pacific dancer Pfc. Canita H. Rilometo of the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion.

"She was quite popular with the crowd," Corbett said.

The second night may have been the art show's highlight, as the Lukavac Dance Troupe demonstrated traditional Balkan dances for the soldiers. A local rock band also performed. The evening ended with several local citizens and soldiers dancing spontaneously in the street to the traditional music.

"All the (local national) employees dressed up the night the dance troupe performed," Abke said. "It was great having them here, expressing themselves and their culture."

The art displayed included a variety of media, including pencil, chalk dust, paintings, acrylics and more.

"We were very pleased (with the show)," Corbett said, "because it was something that started as an idea ... and

it came to fruition."

The original plans were for a month-long festival, but Abke said that couldn't be achieved due to problems with force protection.

"Overall in the future," he said, "I would keep it down to one or two days."

A panel of judges, primarily soldiers, picked the winning entries. They were:

- **First place**, "Hope," video, 1st Lt. Mike Kimsey, F Company, 123rd Main Support Battalion.

- **Second place**, "Task Force Eagle," ink sketch, Sgt. Samuel E. Everett, 440th Signal Battalion.

- **Third place**, "A Little Fly Circus," inking, Spc. Chris Crawford, Personal Security Detachment.

- **Fourth place**, "Price of Peace," sketch, Cpl. Edwin De La Cruz, 20th Explosive Ordnance Detachment.

- **Honorable mention**, "Jack of Hearts," sketch, De La Cruz.

- **Honorable mention**, "The Visit," ink sketch, Sasa Peric, local national.

- **Honorable mention**, "The Little Boy," pastel, Merima Kharlib, local national.

Kimsey received a CD player for first place; Everett and Crawford got portable tape players for second and third place; and De La Cruz won a puzzle for fourth place and a T-shirt for honorable mention.

Local citizens could not receive prizes due to customs restrictions.

## Religious leaders gather to discuss message of peace

By 1st Lt. AL SWEPSON  
358th MPAD

GRADACAC — It was not your ordinary religious gathering.

The participants — Bosnian Serb, Muslim and Croat religious leaders attending the recent 1st Brigade Joint Religious Commission meeting — do not recite passages from a Holy Book or join hands and sing spirituals.

Instead, they focused on a higher purpose — a lasting peace.

The 1st Brigade convenes the meeting to harness the religious leaders' influence, said Chaplain (Maj.) David C. Cook, brigade chaplain.

"My purpose was to gather the religious leaders from all three sides to foster a spirit of cooperation," Cook said.

"My hope is that, maybe we can help community development and increase aid to the

people who were displaced by the war."

Cook said that the JRC is patterned after the Joint Military Commission, which gathers military leaders.

He said he developed the JRC idea after attending his first JMC.

"They had at that meeting the official representatives of the (Bosnian) Muslim, Croat, and Serb armies," Cook said. "They sat down together and worked on some of the fine details of the peace accord: moving weapons to various locations, clearing minefields and roads and establishing a clear understanding of the inter-entity boundary line."

The first JRC was in March at Kime Base.

"My goal during the first meeting was to get them together, learn a little bit about one another and then make some very basic pledges: pray for one another, pray for peace and try to use our personal in-

fluence to get other people to work for peace," Cook said.

"The barriers fell rather quickly at that first meeting," he said. "They warmed up to talk and visit, and laugh and joke a little bit with one another."

The next month, Cook said they met at Kime Base with representatives of several Non-Governmental Organizations in attempt to increase their work in the 1st Brigade area.

"They did a lot of address and telephone number swapping so they could get an idea of what kinds of needs they had in their particular communities," Cook said. "The next week, two or three of these agencies went into a Serbian-held town which had not been receiving much help in the way of relief



1st Lt. Al Swebson

Chaplain (Maj.) David M. Cook, 1st Brigade chaplain, speaks with local clergy during a recent Joint Religious Commission Meeting.

work from the NGO's."

Cook said that the participants expressed the desire to hold the JRC meetings in each others' areas alternately.

As a result, the May JRC was held at the conference room of the Bosna Construction Company.

Cook said that the Serb religious leaders will sponsor and host the next meeting.

# Missile-toting 'turtles' provide air defense

By Spc. ROB BISHOP  
29th MPAD

COMANCHE BASE — Members of the 5th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery sit in wooden, sand-bagged bunkers, surrounded by camouflage netting and electronic equipment. Wires stretch out from the bunker and snake toward a nearby HMMWV.

On top of the vehicle sits a rack of missiles, making the HMMWV look like an extremely heavily-armed turtle.

The contraption is the Avenger and its job is to protect the base perimeter here.

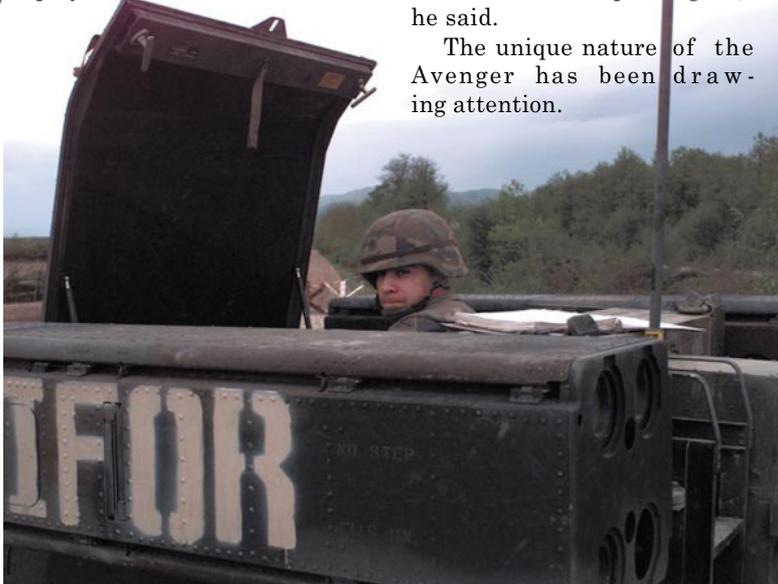
"It's a complete air defense weapon," said Sgt. Alex Alvarado, an Avenger team member.

With its Stinger missiles, .50-caliber machine gun and night-vision capability, the Avenger guards the perimeter 24 hours a day. They use night-vision equipment dur-

ing hours of darkness.

"One guy is always scanning for suspicious activity," Alvarado said. "Even when we do our daily (preventive maintenance), someone is in the bunker watching the perimeter."

The equipment the team employs is different from what they used during their last deployment.



Spc. Rob Bishop

"When we were in Saudi, we carried Stinger missiles on our backs instead of in a missile rack," said Spc. Jason Tuck, another member of an Avenger team. "Now we can carry more than we had in Saudi."

"But if something goes wrong with the turret, we can pull out a Stinger, slap a stock on it and we're humpin' again," he said.

The unique nature of the Avenger has been drawing attention.

"We have high-ranking officials come out and look at it sometimes," Alvarado said. "The roving guard stops and asks us questions about it or the engineers will come and look at it."

But the members of the Avenger teams take the mission and the attention in stride.

"After our shift, we go back to our tent or work out," Tuck said. "We like to take it easy after work."

While they're on shift, though, they continue to watch the perimeter from their missile-clad turtle, helping keep Comanche Base safe.

(Left): Sgt. Alex Alvarado, a soldier with Battery D, 5th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery watches the perimeter of Comanche Base from the turret of his Avenger HMMWV.

# Singing soldiers entertain 20 task force camps

By Sgt. 1st Class JACK LEE  
203rd MPAD

STEEL CASTLE — Six battle dress uniform-clad soldiers recently used song to transform the movie tent here into a scene out of the '50s and '60s.

The six were members of the United States Army Europe Band and Chorus. They spent the majority of their performance here singing tunes their audience's parents probably danced and dipped to.

But nobody seemed to mind. And nobody left early.

"I like the classic rock, the oldies, the surfer music," said Sgt. Mark J. Finn of the 20th Ordinance Detachment. "I've heard most of what they sang before."

The chorus split its 25 members into four teams to play 20 Task Force Eagle base camps in four days last week.

Performing in smaller groups was something new for many chorus members.

"This is more of a challenge," said Cpl. James Holland, a medical supply specialist, who sang here. "With all 25 chorus

members, you miss a note and it's probably not noticed. But with just six ...," he added with a shrug.

The chorus' members are soldiers with a variety of military backgrounds.

Membership in the chorus starts with an audition. One Task Force Eagle soldier auditioned immediately after attending a performance at Lodgement Area Alica.

"We first had him sing the National Anthem, then a song of his choice, 'LaBamba,'" said Lt. Col. Gary Lamb, USAREUR Band and Chorus commander.

"He then played the guitar and sang a country tune," he said. "We then had him match pitch with the piano. We accepted him on the spot. Now, the paper work trail starts."

That paper trail can take a while, say chorus members, but is well worth the wait.

"I'm doing something I always wanted to do, play the piano," said Sgt. Roman Moore, an administration specialist who auditioned in November 1994 and joined the chorus in June 1995.



Sgt. 1st Class Jack Lee

USAREUR chorus member Spc. Elizabeth Kennedy (right) sings to Spc. Kirk Royer while performing at Steel Castle.

Many of the chorus members who played here said they never dreamed their Army duty would be singing and dancing for the troops.

But their audiences are not solely soldiers. And they do not always perform in BDUs.

"We have period uniforms for World War II. Often we're in Dress Greens," said Lamb. "We also do a lot of 'fests.'"

The six who performed here also sang at Lodgement Area Alica, Mount Vis, Comanche

Base and for the Russian soldiers at Simin Hall, a Russian camp.

"The Russian soldiers wouldn't let them leave," said Command Sgt. Maj. George H. Nelson, a member of 1st Armored Division Artillery. "The chorus was limited with their songs anyway. But with the response from the Russians, each singer seemed to pull an extra song out — right there."

"They are some very talented young soldiers," Nelson said.

# Artist portrays 'forgotten' black tank unit

By Sgt. 1st Class GARY YOUNGER  
203rd MPAD

LODGMNT AREA LISA — Many soldiers study history as a hobby. One 2nd Brigade soldier has paints about the past in order to preserve a little piece of it.

Chief Warrant Officer Edmond Keith Foster, 41, of Fayetteville, N.C., is the brigade targeting officer. His duties here leave little time of art. But back at Fort Hood, Texas, where he is a member 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, he spends much of his spare time recreating the past on canvas.

"I like to paint something that teaches you something, that has some history behind it," the 16-year military veteran said.

One such painting depicts the heroics of 761st Tank Battalion, the first African-American tank battalion to fight in World War II. The 24-inch by 36-inch oil painting, made from a black and white print, is helping raise money to erect a monument at the main gate of Fort Hood, Texas, where the 761st trained.

The work entitled "Battle Tested," shows several members of the 761st preparing to go into battle. During its painting, which took more than five months, Foster read several articles on the unit.



Sgt. 1st Class Gary Younger

**Chief Warrant Officer Edmond Keith Foster displays his painting of the all African-American 761st Tank Battalion.**

"I started reading about these guys and I saw the history of them," he said. He also met a few surviving members so he could get a feel for the soldiers before he painted their likenesses.

The 761st hit the ground fighting on Nov. 8, 1944. By nightfall, its more than 700 soldiers had taken three towns and one hill from the enemy. One hundred eighty-two days later, the unit emerged with a stellar combat record: 11 Silver Stars, 70 Bronze Stars, 296 Purple

Hearts, four Campaign Battle Stars, three certificates of merit and eight battlefield commissions during action in six European countries.

"These guys fought for Gen. (George) Patton," Foster said. "He was getting his butt kicked a little bit so he called back to the United States and asked for the best tank battalion. He didn't know they were black until they got there."

The 761st captured Tillet (near Bastogne), sealing off the Marche-Bastogne Highway and cutting off the German army's supply route, forcing them into a retreat. The battle was part of what would later become known as the Battle of the Bulge, a key World War II battle.

"They never were recognized," the artist-soldier said. "You go to museums and you never see a word about them. I thought that was wrong."

To help raise funds for the memorial, the picture has been reproduced in prints and post cards. The proceeds will go to the estimated \$500,000 - \$800,000 needed to build the monument.

Foster hopes to someday become a professional artist.

He didn't bring his art supplies here but is looking forward to his return to Fort Hood where he can once again pick up his paint brushes and help preserve history.

## Residents to commemorate Tuzla cafe bombing

By ARIJANA SABANOVIC  
1st AD Public Affairs

May 25 was once a day for the young. But Saturday, it will be a day of sorrow in Tuzla.

Something horrible happened exactly one year ago in this city on a beautiful, warm, spring evening.

Seventy-two people were killed, and 124 were wounded when an artillery round landed without warning and exploded in the crowded Cafe District.

The youngest victim was a 2-year-old boy.

The explosion had a profound effect on Tuzla. It was the city's largest day of bloodshed during four years of war here.

Almost every young person in Tuzla knows somebody who was in the Cafe

District that evening.

Now, the survivors only have memories of the people who were killed.

One survivor, Jasmin Hadzimehmedovic, 33, was in the crowd when the round exploded.

"May 22 was my birthday, but I didn't have time to celebrate," he said. "So, I decided to celebrate on May 25. It was such a nice evening. Even now, I can remember the happy faces."

But the euphoria was shattered in an instant.

"I saw a bright flash. I didn't hear anything coming in. After that, I heard a lot of screaming and saw many bodies," Hadzimehmedovic said.

"I was laying on the ground, with a pain in my leg, between wounded and dead people."

Blood and body parts lay everywhere, he said.



Arijana Sabanovic

**The 72 victims of the May 25, 1995 shelling were laid to rest in a special Tuzla cemetery.**

"It was repulsive, but no one felt anything," he said. "We were like machines. You couldn't feel anything. But in that moment you only wanted to help the poor people."

"That night, my best friend ... she was killed. I only want-

ed to celebrate my birthday with her, she was only 21 years old," he said.

A monument to honor the victims will be unveiled tomorrow during a memorial ceremony held at the site of the explosion.

## PERSONALITIES OF THE WEEK

# Cowboy goes from steers to steering wheels

By Sgt. GREG HAGEN  
358th MPAD

CAMP STEVENS — It was always in his blood.

Growing up on the outskirts of a small town in Indiana, 25-year-old Army Spc. Shawn C. Flemming had dreams of riding a bull in a rodeo.

As a young boy, he spent most of his time roping and riding horses.

"I rode a bull for the first time when I was 12 years old," Flemming said.

"It's an amazing experience, your adrenaline is flowing and you feel like you're in a car crash."

He says he loves the challenge.

"It's trying to beat you, a 2,000-pound bull pitted against a 135-pound cowboy."

Flemming realized his dream and rode professionally for the National Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association. He says each year you ride for points and try to get enough to qualify for the National Rodeo

Finals.

While on the tour, Flemming says he got torn up pretty bad and as a newlywed, he felt it was time to move on.

"I decided to join the Army because it was always something that I wanted to do," he said.

Flemming traded in his cowboy boots and now each morning laces up a pair of combat boots for Company C, 3rd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, attached to 4th Battalion, 67th Armor. He is on his second peacekeeping mission after serving in Macedonia.

Up near the Croatian border here, Spc. Flemming is the unit armorer and a sniper.

Flemming also drives a 5-ton truck and has been able to see much of the Bosnia-Herzegovina countryside.

"It's good to see the people here began to settle down and return to their homes," he said.

However, Flemming adds, "As I drive around I can't help but stare at the steers in the fields."

Driving convoys along the



Sgt. Greg Hagen

**Spc. Shawn C. Flemming, a former professional rodeo cowboy, sits in the cab of his 5-ton truck, Rodeo Rose.**

bumpy roads here is a long way from the fury of an angry Brahman bull which Flemming knows.

In the windshield of his 5-ton he proudly displays its name, Rodeo Rose.

This leaves no doubt about to where Flemming's mind might be wandering as he

crawls into his sleeping bag each night on a different type of range.

Asked if bull riding was in the future, he smiled and replied as he stared out over the camp's perimeter.

"Riding bulls will always be my passion, those eight seconds just seem to last a year."

## Philadelphia Eagles' loss is Task Force Eagle's gain

By Sgt. 1st Class JACK LEE  
203rd MPAD

STEEL CASTLE — One 362nd Engineer Company soldier took a little longer to get here than the rest of his company.

However, it wasn't Spc. William Hurst's fault.

Task Force Eagle soldiers are required to wear flak vests. But the Army doesn't stock many large enough for an NFL lineman.

So Hurst waited at Fort Bragg, N.C. while a special vest could be made to fit the 6-foot-7-inch, 290-pound former University of Pittsburgh tackle.

"It was made to fit me," said Spc. William Hurst, a welder whose body composition allows him to exceed the Army's weight standard for his height.

"When we looked on post and didn't find one, we looked to a civilian-made one," said Capt. Heather Armstutz, company commander. "Then the 18th Airborne Corps got involved and ordered it from Directorate of Logistics.

"We finally got it the end of February," Armstutz said.

Hurst also had difficulties finding size 15 cold weather boots.

"When we found out the supply system didn't have them, we went out and bought

them," said Amstutz. "We used a Visa card."

His seven-foot sleeping bag is a civilian purchase item, too. For a while Hurst used two bags, until the one ordered through a big and tall store arrived.

The cot is a tad small, too.

"The Army has worked hard to take care of me," said Hurst. "I know I don't fit the general norm. But it only gets to be a problem if you let it become a problem."

Hurst began his football career in the sixth grade. He was always bigger than the other kids, and his skills earned him a full scholarship to Pitt.

Then, he was given a shot at the Philadelphia Eagles.

"I was there (training camp) for two weeks when I got hurt — my rotator cup, the ligament that gives the arm a full range of motion and keeps the shoulder in the socket," said Hurst.

"I'm blessed in a lot of ways," he said. "I played football for 13 years, and made it a lot further than a lot of guys do. I got a full scholarship to school, and I'm only nine hours short of a degree.

"I was trying out for the Eagles, got hurt, and cut. It's business," Hurst said.

The former Philadelphia Eagle now seems content as a member of Task Force Eagle.

He spends his time keeping the heavy equipment of his unit up and running.

"With all of the road work, our equipment is getting pretty beat up," Hurst said.



Sgt. 1st Class Jack Lee

**Vertically-gifted soldier, Spc. William Hurst, tackles a vehicle problem.**



Master Sgt. Philip Wolke

**Spc. Christine Ybarra of Company C, 123rd MSB, braces a tracked vehicle.**

## **Black Market,** from page 1

tant manager of the Eagle Base PX.

Authorized personnel include all IFOR soldiers (including non-NATO countries) and all civilian, non-local employees of the Department of Defense and contractors, such as those employed by Brown & Root, Inc.

Capt. Ken Clifton of the SJA

office said local citizens may not shop at the PX.

"The PX sells us the chips, drinks and cigarettes tax-free," he said. "The local government does not generate any tax revenues on these sales."

Under the Status of Forces Agreement between NATO and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the local government cannot be deprived of its right to collect revenue from its citizens.

"For many local citizens,

these (PX) products are a luxury. Buying cigarettes on the economy can be expensive," Clifton said. "For these reasons, the 'black market' offers an alternative to some."

Another SJA officer, Capt. Tim Grammel, said black market activity is being curtailed in several ways.

"AAFES is constantly checking ID cards and the MPs are monitoring the PX," he said.

U.S. military personnel

caught selling, trading or bartering tax-free goods are subject to punishment under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Soldiers found guilty can receive a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and confinement for up to two years. Civilian employees engaging in black market activities face both administrative and disciplinary action and termination.

## **HET,** from page 1

reached Glamoc on the morning of its third day, after spending a scheduled night at a British Army base camp in Kupres.

Two bridges along the way could not support the weight of the loaded HETs, which weigh 46 tons empty. The convoy stopped and off-loaded cargo before each bridge. The HETs and tracked vehicles then crossed separately and safely.

On the other side, crews reloaded the HETs and the convoy proceeded.

"Team effort, coordination and prior planning contributed to the tremendous success of this mission," Wittingslow said.

Wittingslow's unit will have plenty of opportunities to repeat their success.

Every task force field artillery battery has a date in Glamoc this summer.

And their equipment will get there courtesy of the HET platoon.

## *Reaching for the Sky*

*Fearing the unknown, not knowing what's yet to come,  
Where do I turn, where can I run?*

*Can I trust my heart, dare I turn to lose again?  
Will I survive the next onslaught, will I know where to begin?*

*What will I lose the next time fall?  
What's left to spare, when the winner takes all?*

*Silence gives time to clear the mind,  
Knowing a safe path isn't that far behind.*

*Laughter can cure a once ailing heart,  
Put back together the pieces that once fell apart.*

*Say there is a chance, some hope left for me,  
That when I close my eyes, my dreams can't elude me.*

*To go about my days with my head held high,  
To continue dreaming my dreams, while reaching for the sky.*

*Something once bleak, has brightened with time,  
The emptiness has left, leaving peace behind.*

— Spc. Tammi K. Jann