

the Talon



Operation Joint Endeavor, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Serving the soldiers of Task Force Eagle

Top Army NCO praises troops' intensity, work

By Spc. AARON REED
100th MPAD

EAGLE BASE — In a wide-ranging interview late last week, the top enlisted soldier in Europe praised soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division covering force for their "fiery" intensity and hard work.

"The thing that really impacts on me is that the intensity has remained high," Command Sgt. Maj. Riley C. Miller said. "People understand what they are coming in here to do, they understand the mission and the commander's intent, they understand the rules of engagement and they understand what they have to do in the time they've been given."

Miller, the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army, called the soldiers' fiery intensity comforting, because it showed the troops are well-trained.

"Because they're trained, they're safe," he said.

OPTEMPO

Addressing concerns about the frequency and length of recent deployments for Europe-based soldiers, Miller admitted that the operating tempo is high.

"We're doing a lot of things with a lot less people than we had five years ago," Miller said. "I think our leaders are doing all they can to slow the optempo as much



Spc. Aaron Reed

A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter carrying Command Sgt. Maj. Riley C. Miller on a round of visits to U.S. and coalition troops lands at "LZ Ugly" near Ugljevik.

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Battle captain saves officer

Quick action gets help to injured American

By Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO
350th MPAD

The chance to become a hero can happen at any time. For Capt. Manuel T. Deguzman, 32, from Alexandria, Va., that chance came at half past midnight, Nov. 21.

Deguzman received an urgent mes-

sage while working as the night-shift battle captain in the Battlestar at Eagle Base.

"A Tuzla-based International Police Task Force officer was in a traffic accident in the southern edge of the sector near Olovo," he said.

See **LIFESAVER**, page 12

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

During this Thanksgiving season, I would like every soldier in Task Force Eagle to take the time to give thanks for peace and the safe nature this mission has taken on so far.

Big Red One Soldiers should be proud that their vigilance is one of the main factors keeping this country at peace.

As I comment on the strong force that is providing support for this beleaguered nation, I cannot help but think about the true heroes of this deployment. I'm talking about the family support groups in the rear.

Soldiers, do not forget your loved ones back home who have you in



**Command
Sgt. Maj.
James W. Laws**
*1st Infantry
Division*

IN MY OPINION

THE TALON

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It is now a little over three weeks since the transfer of authority to the 1st Infantry Division. Soldiers of the Big Red One have closed in on the various base camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina and are making the adjustment to their temporary homes and work stations. As you go about your daily chores, keep in mind the potential hazards of your new area of operations.

Knowing your "turf" is essential. Soldiers need to stay alert and quickly familiarize themselves with their new surroundings. Keeping our soldiers safe is the number one priority for accomplishing the IFOR mission successfully.

Take the time to identify the potential hazards surrounding your areas. Do this by writing down what you think would be the appropriate actions or countermeasures that will help reduce the potential hazards you have identified. Then, implement those countermeasures, evaluate the situation and follow up for further actions. It is that simple. Every soldier has the authority to stop an unsafe act. Make that call!

Safety questions and tips:

■ **Heater Operations.** Do you know how to operate the equipment? Are you licensed to operate it? Do you know where the refueling point is located? Are there fire guards at night? What is the fire plan for the facility? Who is the fire warden in your facility? Do you know where the fire extinguishers are located?

■ **Weapon Safety.** Know where the weapon clearing barrels are located in your base camps. Primarily, you will find them outside the headquarters building, dining facility or any facility where there is a heavy

concentration of troops. Know the four-step process for clearing your individual weapon (M16A1 and M16A2 rifle or 9MM pistol) into the clearing barrel. You should be able to clear your weapon in your sleep!

■ **Motor Pool and Maintenance Operations.** Know the speed limits for operating vehicles in these areas. Every unit, should have at least one copy of the USAREUR Pam 385-15, Leaders Force Protection Guide. The maximum speed in mo-

NEWS BRIEFS

Reserve component soldiers able to sign up for NCO schools

There are two week courses available at the U.S. Army Reserve School in Augsburg, Germany for U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard units interested in sending soldiers to noncommissioned officer enlisted schools: Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, and Advanced Noncommissioned Course. The courses are offered in mid-January. For more information, contact the Reserve Component Liaisons at MSE phone 553-3493.

November per diem payment delayed

Due to a system error, the \$80 accrued per diem payment for November will not appear on the November Leave and Earnings Statement. To correct this error, servicemembers will receive \$160 on the December LES (\$80 for November and \$80 for December). The \$80 on the LES represents approximately 80 percent of the temporary duty entitlement. The remaining 20 percent for each month will be paid when soldiers file their final settlement vouchers.

Weekly weather forecast

	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION
Today	38/29	Moderate
Sat	42/34	Moderate
Sun	38/30	Moderate
Mon	41/32	Low
Tue	34/27	High
Wed	35/27	High
Thur	38/32	Moderate

Provided Nov. 27 by Internet Access Weather

Chief on cutting edge

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

EAGLE BASE — With chain saw and chisels in hand, the IFOR soldier stood ready to create his masterpiece. He watched as his assistant dumped out a block of ice on the working surface and then he set to work. During the next hour, the crystalline form of a majestic eagle slowly emerged as Chief Warrant Officer Robert M. Sparks cut, chiseled and shaved the ice.

"It's kind of hard, carving on this homemade ice because it's breaking and chipping," Sparks

said to the onlookers. "You can't get the ice to do what you want it to do, so you actually have to do what the ice will let you do. Down here in Bosnia-Herzegovina you have to adapt and overcome."

Sparks, a member of 22nd Signal Brigade, continued his demonstration by forming the shape of a holiday turkey from a large, broken chunk of ice.

"I came down to assist the cooks who are preparing the Thanksgiving meal, giving these guys some classes on ice carving," Sparks said. "They'll also be able to use the finished products."

After working with the turkey carving for over an hour, the entire tail piece suddenly broke off, but Sparks was not worried.

"This is the price you pay when you're dealing with ice," he said. "You got to expect that and not get disappointed when you break it because it is real fragile, just one of those things." Sparks explained how the broken piece could be fused back on with freon.

Sparks' easygoing attitude about his cre-

ations stems from over 10 years of experience in ice carving.

"I learned how to do it by watching somebody else do it, and picked up the ideas and techniques," said the Daytona Beach, Fla., native. "The next time I went to the field, I was in Utah or Nevada and all we had was ice to keep our

vegetables cold. I took a block of ice, a boning knife and a chef's knife and went out in the snow. Four hours later I had created an eagle. That

got me started and I've been carving ice ever since."

As he began working on an image of praying hands, Sparks shared more helpful hints with his students. He likes the temperature to be about 40 degrees outside or work inside a walk-in refrigerator. An intricate piece can take four or five hours.

"The eagle will last three to four hours, and the longer it goes, the better it will look," Sparks said. "I made the beak thicker than normal so when it begins to melt, it will look best at the peak time."

With nearly frozen hands and soaking wet clothes, Sparks put the last touches on his works of art and set them in containers to be stored in the freezer.

"I know I've done a decent job when the

soldiers who have stopped by to watch can recognize what it is supposed to be," Sparks said. "Anytime you can go the extra mile, it's good for the soldiers' morale."

"This is the price you pay when you're dealing with ice."

— Chief Warrant Officer
Robert M. Sparks



Sgt. Janet S. Peters

Chief Warrant Officer Robert M. Sparks uses a chain saw to shape a block of ice into an eagle.

Hard work makes Thanksgiving Day a treat

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

The dining facility at Eagle Base was a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach on Thanksgiving Day, thanks to the imagination and hard work of 1st Infantry Division and 2nd Brigade food service specialists. Festive, autumn-colored decorations floated from the ceiling over delicious-looking gingerbread houses, glistening ice sculptures and a

mammoth holiday cake.

"Everybody's had a hand in it, putting in long hours," said Sgt. 1st Class Mark P. Wells, food operations sergeant. "Every soldier added his own personality to the job, but they all worked together as a team."

The team consisted of Wells, Sgt. Abelardo Tijerina, Spc. Scott A. Sickels and Pfc. William Blalack, from 2nd Bde., and Pfc. Tina M. Graham, Staff Sgt. John R. Paladino, Cpl. Omar A. Lawrence,

and Pvt. John D. Vaughn, from 1st ID.

The soldiers devoted several days to each piece, usually working from midnight to 4 a.m.

Wells added that Pennine Services deserved thanks as well.

"They worked hand in hand with us to ensure the soldiers have a great day with quality food and a nice set-up," Wells said. "The shrimp boat display and canoe were part of the entry-

way display. I thank them for their support, they're a great outfit."

Despite all the hard work in decorating, cooking and baking, the food service personnel at Eagle Base felt it was worth it.

"It was fun but tiring," Lawrence said. "You have to have the patience to sit there and do it. You have to put your heart into it. For me it was sort of like stretching out to uplift the spirits of others, bringing home closer for the soldiers."

Earth movers shake up Blue Factory



lot is being built to support the logistical operations of the 299th Forward Support Battalion. It is essential that the pad is a solid surface capable of holding even the heaviest of vehicles.

"Right now the area is all mud and ponds," said Spc. James E. Mulvey, a heavy construction equipment operator.

"Anytime we build, we need a dense surface to work on, otherwise whatever is put on top of it is just going to sink," Mulvey, 22, from Kansas City, Mo. said.

However, this predicament will not stop these soldiers from completing their mission. They rearrange and alter the terrain to suit their needs. In addition, earth movers intend to take advantage of what Mother Nature has to offer. By using lime mix and fly ash, which are by-products of coal mines, they've found a way to overcome the inadequate terrain.

"We are going to mix it with the soil so when we compact it, it will be almost as hard as a concrete surface," said Sgt. 1st Class Lynn A. Betts, Company B platoon leader.

Another dilemma the platoon faced during the preparation of the 150 by 250 meter area was ensuring the area was mine safe.

"I was covered from head to toe in full body armor. Metal was put all around the outside of the dozer, and we lined the inside with sand bags. Then we strapped a mine rake onto the front end," said Betts, 34, from Orem, Utah.

"I chose myself for the proofing of the field because I didn't want to put my soldiers at any greater risk than they had to be," Betts said.

Capt. Anneliese M. Steel, company commander said, "This is the first time the soil stabilization process is being tried out here."

The project's completion date is set for the first week of January, and then the platoon will assist with the construction of two parking areas on Guardian Base.

"They have a real can do attitude," Steel, 31, from Toledo, Ohio said. "They take a lot of pride in what they create because they're leaving their signature on the work that they do."

By Spc. CHERYL A. KRANING
100th MPAD

Soldiers, fresh in country, are realizing everything is fast and furious here at the Blue Factory in

Bosnia-Herzegovina.

However, the Earth movers of the 62nd Engineers haven't had any problems adapting to their new environment.

Presently, they are constructing an equipment parking area on unstable soil. The

Spc. Cheryl A. Kraning
Pfc. Lael J. Pugel operates a small emplacement excavator to dig a drainage ditch at Guardian Base.

First snow



Monday, 7 a.m.

November 25, 1996

Tuzla Air Base

Bosnia-Herzegovina



Photo by Aiutante Giuseppe Melillo

Refuelers pump up mission

By Staff Sgt. BRENDA BENNER
100th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — Imagine that you are hauling fuel along mountainous roads, shrouded by darkness. There are no center stripes, reflective markings, or highway lights. Only an occasional small, broken piece of railing separates you and the edge of the cliff. Instead of a HMMWV, you are challenged with controlling a 70-foot fuel tanker, weighing in excess of 10 tons.

The petroleum supply specialists of Company A, 299th Forward Support Battalion, move thousands of gallons of "JP 8" fuel across northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although many of the enlisted are quite young, they drive the nearly 70-foot long fuel tankers better than most soldiers.

Pfc. Angela K. Vera, 21, a petroleum supply specialist from Hawley, Minn., is one of these calm-nerved, steady-handed drivers.

"We have long days," Vera said. "We're often on the road from early mornings till late at night. It takes a lot out of us. It's stressful most of the time."

Stopping at 2 or 3 base camps each day to deliver fuel may not seem difficult, but at a hay wagon's pace, it makes for a very long journey.

"These roads are very narrow and everyone is in such a hurry to pass us. Many times we have to get around all those horse drawn carts...it is not easy. Sometimes we hold up traffic because we can't drive at normal speeds with all the weight we're pulling. These trucks average about 15 mph going up steep hills."

Driving endless hours a day is not the



Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner

Pfc. Denitia M. Johnson, a petroleum supply specialist from Dearborn, Mo., loads a fuel hose after completing a tanker transfer at Camp Mc Govern.

only task the fuel specialists tackle. Each base camp destination may be a relief from the driving, but not a break from work.

Fuel must be transferred to other tankers kept at the camps, or into huge fuel bladder bags.

"We use a big four inch hose when we transfer fuel from one tanker to another," Vera said. "It takes a short time to complete. Each tanker has a control panel to adjust the valves for either sending or receiving the fuel."

To gauge the amount of fuel being transferred, they must climb up on top of the rigs and manually check the fuel levels through an opening in the tank. After several observations they determine when to shut down the pumps.

"Everything smells like fuel by the end of the day," said Pfc. Denitia M. Johnson. Johnson, of Dearborn, Mo. "It gets on the hoses, our gloves, and on our clothes."

Originally from the 201st FSB, Johnson is assigned to the 299th FSB for the unit's stay in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The company's executive officer, 1st. Lt.

Carter E. Honeycutt, 27, of Elizabethton, Tenn., knows he has a very hard working and competent crew.

"Our mission is to receive, store, and issue several classes of supply to everyone," Honeycutt said. "Pushing fuel is one of our largest supply missions, it is very demanding. These soldiers are performing in an outstanding matter. They know their mission is important."

With the initial challenges now behind them, the approaching winter weather is one of their major safety concerns.

"Even the weather we're having right now is bad enough," Vera said. "Our tankers slide easily on these rain slick roads, especially when they are full of fuel. We have to be very cautious. The roads up through the mountains have nothing on the sides to provide a buffer for us. Just think what it's like in the winter."

The endless mission of the petroleum supply specialists is summed up best by Vera.

"Everyone is using fuel, so we'll always be working."

Aviators look back on successful deployment

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

A sea of mud greeted Company D, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation, 4th Aviation Brigade to Bosnia-Herzegovina when they deployed for Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR 10 months ago. Tasked to perform aerial reconnaissance, search for snipers in Sarajevo, es-

cort VIPs and provide a show of force, the 227th attacked their missions with enthusiasm despite the tough conditions in which they found themselves.

"Our pilots have flown over 6,000 flight hours," said Capt. Dean Keck, Company D commander. "Each flight hour translates to 14.7 man hours of work and they've done it safely and efficiently."

Battalion soldiers also drove over 175,000 miles without accident. The forward arming and refueling point platoon handled thousands of gallons of jet fuel without a single mishap.

One of the 227th's most important missions took place during the national elections in September. Helicopters from the 227th took part in a joint air attack exer-

cise — a show of force — conducted for American, British, Russian and former warring faction leaders.

"This has been a career-defining experience," 1st Sgt. Ronnie Garrett said. "It has tested the soldiers, taught them to be flexible, and we have almost rewritten the record book. But I'd give all those records back to get these soldiers home safely."

Army/Navy classic gets personal

By Sgt. TIM PINKHAM
350th MPAD

McGOVERN BASE — Serving in the Army or the Navy runs in the Murphy family, but agreeing on who will win the Army-Navy football game doesn't.

"Army doesn't have a chance," said Navy Command Master Chief Michael J. Murphy, 42. He is the senior enlisted sailor among the 334 Seabees in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who are members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40.

"Army will leave the field victorious," said Spc. Patrick L. Murphy, 23, a M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle driver with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

Michael, who is living at Camp Colt, is the father of Patrick, who is now living at McGovern Base.

For about four days after Michael arrived at Camp Colt, Oct. 10, his tent was less than 200 yards from Patrick's tent, before Company C moved to McGovern.

They spent time together every evening getting caught up on old times. Michael was given a ride in a Bradley, and Patrick was shown the Seabees' construction equipment.

"Our task is to decommission camps," said Michael. The Seabees came to Bosnia-Herzegovina from Rota, Spain, and are scheduled to leave by Jan. 15. Among the camps they have helped close, or are working on, are Sneed, Zeugner, Wellington, Burke, Kuntz and Hampton.

Future closings will include Walker, Stevens and the Kime complex.

"We are completely self-contained," Michael said. "If the Army left, we could stay here by ourselves."

The Navy Chief said the Seabees have their own vehicles, gallery, armory, supply, postal and crew-served weapons. Tanks are about the only thing the soldiers have here that the Seabees don't.

Deployments are a regular way of life for the Seabees, Michael said. They rotate on a regular basis, spending seven months at home port, then seven months on deployment. His trips abroad have included visits to Latvia, Albania, Turkey, England, Scotland, Crete, Italy and Sicily.

Michael said he believes Patrick joined the Army to avoid regular deployments, but noted his son has been gone longer on his first deployment than he has ever been in 23 years in the Navy.

While his father recently arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Patrick is scheduled to leave the country Nov. 25, exactly 11 months after his company was deployed. Although he was married to his wife Nicole two years ago he said he has only been home for a total of three months since then. Beside his time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he has spent time training in Czech Republic, Ukraine and Poland, along with Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr in Germany.

Michael said his wife Elizabeth is jealous of him, because he

is with their son in Bosnia-Herzegovina, yet she has not seen Patrick and Nicole since their wedding.

Married for 23 years, Elizabeth lives in Port Hueneme, Calif., with the two youngest children, Robert, 18, and Veronica, 14.

Another son, Raymond, 20, is a Lance Cpl. assigned to the Marine Corps Security Force Company, Training Command, Chesapeake, Va.

"It's the military that's kept us apart and the military that brought us together," Michael said. "I told Patrick, 'I didn't write, but I showed up, does that count?'"

"I'm very impressed with him," said Patrick about his father. "As a kid, you know he goes to work, then he goes away for seven months. Now I get a chance to see what he does. I get a chance to work with him. There's no

greater feeling for me. I'm proud of my dad and like to show him off," he said.

Michael said he is equally proud of his son, who he said is dedicated to the military.

"You want the best for your kids," Patrick said. "You want to be able to share in their professional life. Being there is real important. I will never forget this — being in the mud with him in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I believe what we're doing here is right. The people here need to stop fighting," he said.

The Murphys plan to watch the Army-Navy game Dec. 7, with each loyally rooting for his own service academy team.



Sgt. Tim Pinkham

Task Force Eagle soldiers watch Staff Sgt. Eric Williams spike a football at McGovern Base. The annual Army-Navy football game will be played Dec. 7, in Philadelphia.



Firefighters race to the rescue

Realistic training challenges soldiers, airmen

Sgt. Andrew Aquino

Soldiers from 323rd Engineer Platoon, firefighters from Dorado, Kan. take part in a simulated helicopter crash and rescue exercise at Tuzla Air Base.

By Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO
350TH MPAD

Flashing lights and wailing sirens of emergency vehicles caught the attention of Eagle Base soldiers as the vehicles roared toward the airfield.

Bodies lay across the tarmac as flames burned among scattered wreckage. But these flames were out in only a few minutes after being shot with plumes of water from the fire fighting equipment's water cannons. Several "wounded" soldiers were carried off by hand and on stretchers to receive first aid.

Columns of billowing smoke rising from the Tuzla valley had set the stage for a joint Army and Air Force fire exercise to test soldier and airmen level of preparation in case of a real emergency.

There was not much left af-

ter the exercise was over but it was another successful day for the soldiers of the 323rd Engineer Platoon, Firefighters from Dorado, Kan.

The scenario involved a make-believe midair collision of two blackhawk helicopters, said Capt. William B. Middleton, the company's commander and Task Force Eagle Fire Marshall. One of the helicopters crashed and burned while the other made a hard landing on the airfield. The survivors suffered various injuries.

"We responded in good time and performed well," Middleton said. "We assisted the Air Force by providing water resupply and extra manpower. It's important to have those resources available if there actually were a major incident," said the 29-year-old commander from Oxford, Kan.

Spc. Chad H. Mayberry, 21,

of Parsons, Kan., was the driver/operator of fire engine No. 12. His job was to resupply Air Force trucks with water.

"I think the operation went smoothly," he said. "We learned a lot from it."

Mayberry is a civilian firefighter when not deployed as a reservist.

"I enjoy the job and the challenges that go with it," he said.

"This exercise is important to see how proficient we are in our job and to see how well we can work together with the Air Force," he said. "We're here to support them and they're here to support us."

Fire truck driver/operator Spc. Justin J. Crawford, from Udall, Kan., said the exercises are invaluable because they help maintain firefighting skills.

"We haven't done a lot of real-live runs out here, so it

keeps you in focus," he said.

Sgt. Lester W. Kaiser 35, from Lincolnton, Kan., said the accident and basic recovery exercise helps the team remain proficient as firefighters.

"We're called to assist with water and manpower, which keeps us at top form," the team chief said. "It shows that we were able to work well together with the Air Force."

During their annual training exercises, the 323rd normally moves into installations such as Forts Riley and Polk to work with civilian firefighters.

"The difference here is that we actually moved into an area and took over the department."

As his first deployment overseas, this has been a learning experience for Kaiser.

"The experiences gained from this deployment have made me a better soldier," he said.

EAGLE BASE — We have all seen them — those maps of Bosnia-Herzegovina speckled with thousands of minefield markings. We know to avoid them above all else, but there is a group of engineer soldiers who literally can not avoid them — it is their mission's priority to find them.

A small team from the 1st Infantry Division's Engineer Brigade produces those maps through painstaking work at the Mine Action Center.

"The purpose of the center is to collect all the former warring factions' mine data," said 1st Lt. Victor A. Ames, mine action center officer in charge.

Ames, 27, of East Grand Forks, Minn., said that it is a monumental task.

"We analyze the reports, plot the mined areas on the maps and distribute the maps to IFOR personnel and

civilian organizations.

Besides gathering the majority of mine information from the parties to the agreement, the MAC also receives field reports from IFOR troops and various organizations, both military and civilian.

"The 1st Armored Division compiled 50 binders of information while they were here," Ames said. "In just three weeks we have received 70 to 80 reports. There is no end in sight."

For Spc. Matthew Q. Manus, 21, a combat engineer from Opportunity, Wash., minefield reports dominate nearly every minute of his daily work routine.

"I spend most of my time looking through the volumes of binders and working through the computerized database to determine if a reported minefield is a new one," Manus said.

Investigating the reports and finding the exact locations on maps requires an enormous amount of concentration. One

instant of confusion can cause hours of backtracking.

Terrain analyst Sgt. Randall E. Roland, 25, from Zepher Hills, Fla., spends hours a day scrutinizing map overlays on a light table.

Both Manus and Roland agree that the most stressful aspect of their work is the critical need to be as accurate as humanly possible.

"The Parties to the Agreement read their grids differently than we read ours," Manus said. "We read right, then up. They

EAGLE BASE — "They are the hardest working guys in show business, but you never could tell it, because you don't hear them on the radio or see them on TV," said Capt. Mark E.

Martin, operations officer for the 356th Broadcast Public Affairs Detachment.

While the spotlight shines on the broadcasters of the American Forces Network, the real driving force is the behind-the-scene technician.

"The broadcasters are the

people behind the microphones and in front of the cameras, but the technical side of the house is where our bread and butter is. If the signal isn't going out over the air, what good are we?" said Staff Sgt. George F. McNamara, program director of AFN Bosnia.

All of the base camps in theater are equipped to receive the AFN signal either via radio or television. It is the responsibility of the four highly skilled technicians from the 356th BPAD to install satellites and transmitters at the camps and ensure the signal from Frankfurt, Germany is uninterrupted.

When complications arise, the technicians respond almost immediately. "If something isn't working, they are the guys who jump through hoops to fix it," said Martin, 36, from Wilkes Barre, Pa.

"Our goal is to have the system up and running within 24 hours from the time we receive the call," said Sgt. Robert V. Deberry, a 41-year-old radio and television repairer from Denver.

Without the system up and running, troops miss out on the four live radio shows originating from Eagle Base, the hub of AFN Bosnia.

A mixture of music is broadcast to suit just about everyone's taste.

Without the technicians who possess the expertise to operate the transmitters and satellites, soldiers would not be able to hear these familiar tunes on 101.1 FM, Bosnia or 103.5 FM, Croatia. Without the behind-the-scene stars — there would be no AFN.

MILLER from page 1

as they can and to compensate for the optempo we've endured."

Miller said that one way USAREUR plans to compensate soldiers for time spent away from their homes and families is to give troops as much time as possible before throwing them back into training cycles.

"The standard has been established to give them as close to 90 days as possible," he said. "It's not only get-back-on-your-feet time from the operational aspect, it's time to get new people in. It's also time to rediscover the spouses we left behind and the kids we haven't seen in months."

COVERING FORCE AND SFOR

Noting questions in the media about whether the smaller 1st Infantry Division force could enforce the peace as effectively as the more heavily armored Old Ironsides contingent it replaced, Miller predicted the new troops will be just as effective.

"I think the soldiers we've got today, regardless of numbers, are good," Miller said. "I think that they're so well-trained that we're going to prevent a lot of the incidents that there is the potential to have here."

While Miller would not rule out the possibility of some Big Red One troops becoming part of the follow-on stabilization force,



Spc. Aaron Reed

Command Sgt. Maj. Riley C. Miller talks to reporters at Eagle Base.

or SFOR, he did say he thought that the deployment would be limited to 179 days.

"We've got a clear mandate for a quick covering force. I really anticipate that the covering force will stay here until about mid-March," he said.

Quality of life

Miller said the Balkan deployment is not an easy one, but added that he thought many soldiers came to Bosnia with false expectations. "A lot of the soldiers I've talked to have said life is not as grim as they thought it would be," he said.

Miller added, though, that without some of the creature comforts that have been added in the last 11 months, the soldiers would no doubt still do a great job. "I think that without the cot, without the heater, without the warm food, they'd still be just as focused and ready to do exactly what our mandate says and what our leadership asks them to do," Miller said.

Miller extended his congratulations to all of the U.S. services and to the multinational soldiers participating in the operation.

"I'm basically convinced that soldiers are soldiers no matter where they come from, and good leaders cause good soldiers," he said. "I think we have been blessed with all the nations sending their absolute best to this theater."

"The families in Central Region and the families of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines across the world have a lot to be proud of because the conduct of the people here exemplifies everything that we've always believed in."

LIFESAVER

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The message requested a medical evacuation of the injured American officer, but there were many questions, uncertainties and details that had to be quickly ironed-out.

First there was a question about the authority to perform medevac operations so far out, at the southern edge of the American sector.

Second, a severe weather warning limited flights to emergency operations only, so Deguzman had to be sure that the request was authentic.

The transcribed message showed only a four-digit grid coordinate, which wasn't enough for a medevac flight to quickly find the site in dark and rain.

Those problems, combined with the necessity to relay the call through the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry regiment's battle captain near Olovo, made Deguzman's job even tougher.

After confirming the officer was American, Deguzman ensured legal clearance through the staff judge advocate's office and sent a helicopter.

Deguzman instructed the pilot to follow main supply route



Sgt. Andrew Aquino

Capt. Manuel T. Deguzman at work in the Task Force Eagle tactical operations center, the Battlestar, from where he directed the medical evacuation of an American IPTF officer.

Skoda to the approximate point of the accident scene.

Cars at the road intersection where the accident occurred flashed their lights to help identify the site from the air.

Landing at a nearby bus parking lot, the Medevac chopper picked up the injured IPTF officer and was enroute to the

Blue Factory by 1:30 a.m.

At the MASH, the officer was listed in stable condition with broken ribs.

"There were many lessons learned from this incident," Deguzman said. "We now have a better understanding of what we need to do in a situation like this.

As battle captain for 1st Infantry Division's operations branch, Deguzman said that the medevac mission was the most excitement he'd seen since he arrived in-country last August.

"It's a good feeling knowing that I actually did something that made a difference," Deguzman said.