

THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE



Silent night, holy night ... Apache night

A 2-6 Cavalry AH-64 Apache helicopter patrols the sky near Brcko.

By Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO
350th MPAD

A trio of AH-64 Apache helicopters hover like giant menacing insects as they stare at a fixed point. Their whirring rotors whip the air over a farmer's field. From the ground it looks pretty scary, enough to intimidate civilian troublemak-

ers on the street. For Task Force 11, Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 6th Aviation Cavalry Regiment, based out of Commanche, the high-tech helicopters are used to supplement the military police peacekeeping forces on the ground. "We usually get on the scene first," said Maj. Tim E. Drake, operations officer for the forward detachment. One of the peace-

keeping tasks the cavalry choppers do is observe movements that can result in potential violence. Freed from the limitations of road blocks and traffic congestion, the Apaches can be on the scene of any disturbance within minutes. Their mission is to cover the Brcko

See **APACHE**, page 12

INSIDE	COMMENTARY	2
	WORLD WAR II	3
	SURVEY.	4
	PATROL	5
	SNOWBALL	6-7
	SANTA	9
	TECHNO ARMY	11

SFOR replaces IFOR

By LINDA D. KOZARYN
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — When IFOR's yearlong Bosnia-Herzegovina mission ended Dec. 20, SFOR's mission began. NATO's new stabilization force will include 8,500 Americans. While IFOR successfully completed the military tasks outlined

in the Dayton peace agreement, progress on civilian activities has been slow. "As a consequence, we believe that if the military force would leave now, those civil functions would not be completed, and there's danger of the war starting up again," Perry said. See **SFOR**, page 12

What they're saying

"We plan to have six-month rotations. The first rotation will basically be the forces that are there now."

— William J. Perry Secretary of Defense

"The number one aim here is preventing a spring offensive."

— Gen. George A. Joulwan NATO Commander in Chief

"If conditions change, I will not hesitate to come back with a request for more troops. Right now, 31,000 is sufficient to do the job."

— Gen. George A. Joulwan NATO Commander in Chief

"By helping to create peace abroad, you make America safer at home."

— William J. Perry Secretary of Defense

"Please remember that you are never far from our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers. Thank you for all you do to preserve our freedom and to advance democracy."

— President William J. Clinton

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

Information is power. If that is indeed the case, then troops must feel pretty powerless at times.

If you talk to soldiers deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a common complaint is that they are not always told all the facts about events that directly control their lives.

As NCOs, platoon leaders, and section chiefs, we owe it to our fellow soldiers to keep them informed on issues that are important to them.

Even if the news is not good, we should be honest about it.

When it comes down to it, integrity is the cornerstone of leadership. Once that is compromised, subordinates will no longer respect their leadership, and once reenlistment comes up, no longer stick around.

It is frustrating to have people who control your fate, mislead you



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

or withhold information.

Remember this the next time you are counselling a soldier or speaking in front of a formation.

Also, remember that the only actions and

words we can control are our own. We are duty bound to follow the orders of those above us.

However, if you feel you are not being levelled with by your senior leaders, you have an obligation to press them on their accountability and responsibility to tell the truth.

Never show disrespect, but insist on the truth.

HEALTH TIPS

By Dr. (Lt. Col.) JAMES A. GEILING Division Surgeon

Health maintenance should be taken seriously during these times of increased work/stress/fatigue. Many of you fall into this category; the recent optempo has placed great demands on many of us. By following a few guidelines, you can continue to perform at a high level.

• REST: We're all short on it, but try to get one or two good nights during the week.

Although difficult to do, many professionals believe in a "power nap", a 10-15 minute break during the day.

• DIET: We burn calories more efficiently if we eat throughout the day (i.e., several small meals, a.k.a. "grazing"). Try to maintain or even increase fruit/vegetable consumption. A single multivitamin each day may also be beneficial.

• EXERCISE: Maintain your aerobic fitness by exercising to get your heart rate up for 20 minutes, 3 times a week, plus warm up and cool down.

• CAFFEINE: Keep your intake down to several cups per day or less.

• TOBACCO: never chew or smoke.

• FLU SHOTS: Incidentally, this only prevents one strain of influenza. Contracting the illness, though, will make you combat ineffective and is a leading cause of death in the elderly and those with compromising medical illnesses.

• MENTAL HEALTH: The pace can wear us all down, and judgment can deteriorate.

Take an occasional break (mental TDY), attend to the needs of your family, and maintain your spiritual health.

If you have questions, you should contact the health clinic at your base. Many people are counting on you to take care of yourself.

THE TALON

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Following a father's footsteps

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

Being a soldier in Bosnia-Herzegovina is more than serving a military mission, it is becoming a part of history. Years later I will be able to tell my grandchildren that I was a part of the peacekeeping mission called Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. No doubt I will pull out my photo album and reminisce about convoys, guard duty and Army chow. My grandkids will point at the smiling soldier holding an M-16 and say, "Grandma, was that YOU?"

Whether this operation is ultimately successful or not, makes no difference. I was a part of it, and I am proud that I rose to the challenge of being a full-time soldier away from home and family for eight months. I am a part of history-in-the-making and also history repeating itself. Fifty years ago there was another Sergeant Peters serving in the Army in Europe. He was my father, and as I perform my military duties I feel honored to carry on a proud tradition.

Frederick Peters was 19 years old when he found himself in an Army uniform overseas. He had a fiance, a mother who loved him and hopes for the future. Leaving home was not something he wanted to do, but it was something he had to do. Freedom must be earned and fought for. It doesn't come easily. A young man's ideals found expression on an enemy beach, far away from the cornfields of Indiana.

During my two weeks of R&R, I had the profound experience of visiting that very same beach. With my father's memoirs in hand, I strolled on what was once labeled Utah Beach in Normandy, France.

Standing on the historic stretch of beach, I tried to envision what it was like for my father to jump out of the landing craft, struggling to keep his head above the turbulent waves. Making it to land, soaked and exhausted, he then found himself in the midst of a terrible carnage. The sight and sounds of death must have been terrifying. As hard as I tried, I could not fully picture what my father and all the other soldiers had to endure that day.

I walked over to a preserved concrete machine gun nest and found an older couple enjoying a picnic supper of bread and cheese with wine. Hearing them speak English, I introduced myself and found they were from Ohio! I don't know what their connection was to D-Day, but she asked to look at my father's book. Opening it to the page where he described his experience on the beach, the woman read his account out loud until she was overcome with emotion. She shed silent tears for the heroic soldiers who had risked everything for the sake of freedom. Handing back the book, she quietly said, "Thank you."

In that instance I was one with my father, the young sergeant who chose to serve his country whenever it needed him. It was then that I understood why I had to come to Bosnia-Herzegovina. I had grown up with stories of World War II, and always felt a deep pride in that 19-year-old boy from Indiana. He had been a part of our nation's history, and now it is my turn. In my own small way, I have continued the ongoing fight for peace. I am proud to be a soldier like my father before me. I sincerely hope my son does not have to be the third Sergeant Peters; but, if he does choose to wear the uniform, I am sure he will bring honor to the name.

NEWS BRIEFS

280th Support Center

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia—As the covering force settles into the theater of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, some units realign to continue providing support to 1st Infantry Division. Such is the scenario for the 280th Support Center, Rear Operation Center, a 7th U.S. Army Reserve Command unit based in Hanau, Germany.

In support of phase V of the mission, the unit will continue to provide liaison teams affectionately called the 'Rat patrol' to 1st ID, after having completed the task of running a division rear at Base Camp Sava North.

The 'Rat patrol's' experience traveling throughout the Task Force Eagle area of operation will be a great asset to SFOR elements said Maj. Steven P. Dykes, operations officer. The resident of Puyallup, Wash. said it's the caliber of the soldiers that determines the success of every mission. "Their performance takes away a lot of the leadership stress."

Reenlistment news

Soldiers who reenlist for Bonus entitlements in the deployed theater will receive the entitlements "tax exempt." This includes all further annual installments until the complete bonus increments are paid.

Soldiers who decide to cash in accrued leave, may do so "tax exempt," with one clause. The only tax exempt portion of the accrued leave is the portion earned while in the deployed theater.

Retention control points for specialist and sergeant have changed. Specialists may now stay on active duty for 10 years. Sergeants may stay for 15 years. All other ranks remain the same.

Soldiers who require retention actions or have questions, may contact:

Tuzla Main 11D Bldg. 16 — IPN 323-7181

SFC Sharpsteen — VSAT 7155

SFC Lawson, SGT Rodriguez,

1/7FA — MSE 553-5130

Guardian Base — MSE 553-2110,

SGT Williams

Camp Dobol/Demi — MSE 553-

7320, SSG Danielly

McGovern Base/Camp Colt — MSE

553-7221/7211, SSG Lowry

Camp Bedrock — MSE 553-6110, SSG

Buff



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

1st Lt. Stephen Ruth, Company A, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry and translator Jelena Bukarica sing Christmas carols at McGovern Base.



Sgt. Tim Pinkham

Sgt. Robert A. Welfley (left) and Spc. Corey G. Ivey carefully check for explosives under a blanket covering an automobile.

Infantry patrols zone of separation hot spot

By Sgt. TIM PINKHAM
350th MPAD

McGOVERN BASE — The house looks innocent enough. With its new roof and newly installed glass windows, it stands out among the bombed-out buildings in the town of Brod.

Because it stands out, it is a possible target for a bomber who might wish to discourage refugees from rebuilding their former homes in the zone of separation.

For the five soldiers on patrol from 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, part of their job is to ensure the house really is as innocent as it looks.

"We are checking for any type of explosive in the house or on the route itself," said Sgt. John D. Mazurek, patrol leader. "We also monitor and report all movement within the ZOS."

McGovern Base, where Task Force 1-18 is headquartered, sits within the ZOS, as do several towns nearby.

Mazurek, who is from Grand Rapids, Mich., said movement in the ZOS is restricted from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. each day. The few families who have moved back into their rebuilt homes here must remain inside during the night hours.

Another member of the patrol, Staff Sgt. John J. Chandler, 35, is a military policeman attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division. A dog handler, he and his female bomb dog, Kyra, a Belgian Malnoise, have been together for a year.

Mazurek pointed out the dog always enters first when they clear houses. The point man then follows her in and visually

checks the house for trip wires, booby traps or explosives. He also checks around the house and nearby buildings or automobiles. Sgt. Robert A. Welfley, from Mifflintown, Pa., is the point man for this patrol.

As the patrol moved down the road from house to house, the soldiers maintained five meter intervals between each other. Mazurek said this was a safety precaution, because if someone stepped on a land mine or unexploded ordnance and it exploded, it could take out an entire squad.

While the houses were being cleared, Spc. Corey G. Ivey, and Pvt. Steven A. Logan, provided front and rear security for the patrol. If they see anyone in the ZOS or notice anything unusual, they report it immediately to Mazurek.

Throughout the patrol, the soldiers keep in touch with their company. Cpl. Clay P. Bloyer, carries the radio and reports the patrol's position every 15 minutes.

"If anything happens, these guys know what to do in any situation," Mazurek said.

From time to time, Mazurek halted the patrol to establish a temporary observation post. The soldiers listened for any sounds of movement in the ZOS and scanned the surrounding landscape with their night vision goggles.

Mazurek said he has no trouble getting his soldiers to go on patrol. "They are always willing to do it," he said. "Actually, I'm lucky, because some people you have to kick in the butt, but not my guys."

Mazurek hopes every patrol is as uneventful as this one was. However, he knows he and his soldiers are well trained to meet any eventuality should someone attempt to shatter the peace in the ZOS.

Peacekeepers seek answers

By RENATE BOHLEN
98th Area Support Group

Eyes and ears of Task Force Eagle are scattered all over the American sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina providing information crucial to keeping soldiers safe during peace enforcement and stabilization operations here.

Soldiers of Company C, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion visit local communities to find out people's concerns, thoughts and issues. Questions focus on how locals feel about NATO troops and about units positioned in their area. Soldiers also try to find out if locals receive humanitarian aid and what their concerns in general are.

"The primary mission of my force protection team as they're going out gathering information is to find out where the next crisis is going to be. One of the primary reasons why we want to know that is so we can make sure the soldiers who go in to deal with that crisis have the right level of protection to get the job done," said Capt. David O. Tiedemann, company commander.

While the overall mission is to maintain a peaceful environment and to enforce the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the immediate mission remains force protection and keeping soldiers safe.

"Safety is paramount. We can always fix mission problems later, but we can't fix a soldier who gets killed because we didn't take the correct precautions to ensure his or her safety," Tiedemann said.

Since his soldiers are scattered all over the American sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tiedemann had the opportunity to see the different camps.

"I like the mess hall at Dobol, the PX in Tuzla and the force provider tents here at McGovern Base," he said. "Each camp has its own unique personality and they all have something to offer."

A normal workday for Tiedemann is 16 hours, but he said his soldiers average about 12 hours a day. Because of the workload, Tiedemann said he finds it difficult to give soldiers an entire day off.

"My company alone is doing the mission of a battalion, and the battalion is doing what an entire MI brigade was doing," Tiedemann said.

Ambush on Route Sparrow

By Spc. AARON REED
100th MPAD

High in the mountains of Republika Srpska, four heavily-armed military police vehicles pulled off the narrow, winding road and set up an observation point.

Almost before the MPs had a chance to set their parking brakes and identify their fields of fire, one gunner screamed: "Incoming!" It was the beginning of an epic battle.

"We've been ambushed lots of times," said 1st Lt. Cecilia L. Armendariz, a platoon leader with the 411th Military Police Company. "We'll be going down the road, and the kids will have tons of snowballs stockpiled, waiting for us."

Armendariz and her platoon from Camp Deml regularly patrol Route Sparrow and the surrounding area. "We sit and monitor traffic, look for any type of mass movement on either side, watch for illegal checkpoints and that kind of

thing," the El Paso native said. "The area we have now is real quiet. Since we've been patrolling regularly, both sides have been very good at complying with the General Framework Agreement for Peace."

The soldiers, outnumbered at least two to one by children returning from the morning school session, said the snowball fight was more than just a welcome diversion.

"The kids are pretty cool," said Spc. David J. Curtin, a gunner from Richmond, Va. "We work hard to build some camaraderie with them and show them we're not here to give them a hard time." Curtin and other members of the platoon believe the investment in good will is paying off.

"The kids are the best thing about these patrols," said Pfc. Yvette S. Trapani, a gun-

ner from Westerly, R.I. "They feel safe with us, and they're always friendly."

Spc. Eugene E. Weiser, a driver from Farrell, Penn., found himself under attack from two directions.

"I've been up on Hill 1326 for a while, and this is the first time I've been out around the kids," he said during a short truce. "I love it."

The diminutive opposition forces, ranging in age from six to 11, said the feeling was mutual. "I liked the snowball fight," said Sladjana Djokic, well prepared for the battle by dodge-ball games in school. A budding diplomat, Djokic refused to declare a winner in the contest.

"I think we played equally," she said. "I hope we get to play again."

"We've been ambushed lots of times. We'll be going down the road, and the kids will have tons of snowballs stockpiled, waiting for us."





(Top) Pfc. Yvette S. Trapani, a Westerly, R.I. native and gunner with the 411th Military Police Company, watches for oncoming traffic at a mobile observation post on Route Sparrow. (Bottom, facing page) Spc. Eugene E. Weiser, a driver from Farrell, Pa., smiles as Sladjana Djokic launches a snowball at close range. (Bottom, middle) Sgt. Steven W. Davis, a team leader and gunner from Montgomery, Ala., shares his dwindling supply of candy with a young girl. (Bottom, right) Spc. David J. Curtin, a gunner from Richmond, Va., jumps up from behind the cover of his turret hatch to field a snowball. (Photos by Spc. Aaron Reed)



Children share Christmas spirit with troops

By Staff Sgt. ANNA M. PRUSAITIS
100th MPAD

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia — Bringing peace to the Balkans hopefully also brings a brighter future to the children of these countries.

With the Christmas spirit of hope and the brightness of candle flames, some local children sang Christmas carols for soldiers from Task Force Pershing.

A group of 18 children between the ages of four and six years of age wore angel costumes and tinsel halos as they performed a Christmas program during church services.

The children from the Golden Coin children's home carried bright candle lanterns as they walked in a procession, singing carols in their native lan-

guage, and *Silent Night* in English.

Milka Zaric, a teacher with the Golden Coin, said the children practiced for two weeks getting ready to perform for the soldiers.

On the bus ride to Sava North, the children were unable to contain their excitement.

The children kept hollering "Amerikanci, Amerikanci, IFOR, IFOR, IFOR," with big smiles on their little faces, said the Serbian teacher.

Part of their program involved the children gathering in a circle and one at a time stepping into the center of the circle to tell what the true meaning of Christmas was to them.

Father Ilija Jerkovic, director of the Golden Coin, administers to about 1,000 Bosnian refugees.

Jerkovic, a Franciscan priest and Bosnian refugee himself, presided over the Catholic service at which the children performed.

The children's home is an education and rehabilitation center.

Physical therapy, treatment for the emotionally disturbed and traumatic shock are among the services they provide.

But on this night, the children forgot their fears and lost their anxieties. On this night they celebrated peace and hope for a better future with soldiers who sacrificed Christmas with their own families to be here.

The little children provided soldiers of Task Force Pershing with heartwarming moments and a beautiful Christmas memory not soon to be forgotten.



Sgt. Janet S. Peters

Spc. Justin J. Crawford, fire inspector for Eagle Base, explains to chaplain's assistant, Staff Sgt. Rondal H. Lang, that Christmas lights bought in the U.S. must be used with a converter or they will overload the circuit and melt.

Fire mission wins few friends, but saves lives

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

He's the guy who is taking away all your comforts — privacy curtains, electric heaters and propane cook stoves; but the Eagle Base fire inspector may be saving your life. Spc. Justin J. Crawford just wants soldiers to be careful.

The 323rd Engineer Platoon (Firefighters) from El Dorado, Kan. came to Bosnia-Herzegovina in July not only to fight fires but to prevent them.

Fire Marshal Capt. William B. Middleton presents updates at force protection and mayor's meetings. Updates are also given to base camp coordinating agencies and the 1st Infantry Division safety office. If the deficiencies are not corrected, a memo is sent to the chief of staff.

Crawford awards a memorandum of commendation to those who maintain fire prevention standards.

"He's taken a program that was nonexistent before and made a viable inspection system that provides life safety information to commanders that they can use to insure they protect their people," said Staff Sgt. Steven Moomey, fire inspector for Task Force Eagle. "He and all the firefighters have done a great job."

"A lot of places I go, there is very minor stuff that needs to be fixed," Crawford said. "I get complaints that it won't be comfortable, but fire is no joke. It doesn't care who or what it burns. A tent we set fire to at Camp Molly took only 37 seconds to burn. That's how long it takes us to get out the door of the fire station!"

A full-time firefighter with the Sedgwick County Fire Department in Wichita, Kan., Crawford has seen the destruction a fire can cause.

"We had a house fire in January and it was 30 degrees below zero," Crawford said.

"The victims sat in their truck for warmth with only their pajamas on and no shoes on their feet," he said. "It was all they had left. It put a pit in my stomach because I had a warm bed to go back to."

"It's not a money-making business but it's a chance to put my knowledge and skills to work. I like helping people," he said.

Santa Claus comes to McGovern town

By Spc. CHERYL A. KRANING
100th MPAD

They saw a fat man in a funny red hat.

Is it him? Is he here? Just who was that?

Their pulses quickened as they held back their shouts.

It couldn't be — they said the fog kept him out.

He bolted through the door with a loud boisterous greeting.

They jumped from their seating for the glorious meeting.

The troops climbed on his lap, some larger than he.

Hey Santa, St. Nick, what did you bring me?

Soldiers of McGovern Base, young and old, were lining up for the chance to tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas. "I asked him for an electric razor, a pet dog, and a one way ticket to Ohio," said Spc. Wayne P. Browne, a Bradley turret mechanic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 118th Infantry.

After the wish lists, and only after owning up to being naughty or nice, the troops' spirits were lifted even higher as Santa handed out Christmas gifts that were donated through the American Red Cross.

Mrs. Marsha J. O'Doherty, Red Cross station manager, said they've received ap-

proximately 1,500 packages for service-members of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. "The gifts are being sent direct, from all around the world, and quite a few of them are anonymous," said O'Doherty, 39, from Fitchburg, Mass. "That's a true gift. These people don't want anything in return; they just want to give to the soldiers."

"It's a real morale booster. Like myself, there are a lot of single soldiers out here... I don't have anyone else, so it makes me happy knowing that someone is thinking of me," said 24-year-old, Senior Airman Angel Magallanez of Detachment 1, 1st Air Support Operations Squadron.

Chief Warrant Officer Cliff R. Gilliland, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot attached to the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), also wanted to give something to the troops. "I volunteered to be Santa, because my Christmas wish will be answered when I see everyone smiling," said Gilliland, 31, from Fairbanks, Alaska.

"Yesterday we were told that Santa Claus was fogged in, so we didn't think he was going to make it," said Sgt. First Class Joann M. Butler, a postal supervisor for the 38th Postal Company. "But we all kept wishing."

Gilliland, who has been playing Santa for the past five years, said this is his first time doing it for adults. "Everyone is a kid at heart, and the only difference is the size of the gift orders. I've had more requests today for high dollar items such as cars and trips to the Caribbean. Children tend to lean toward the smaller things like trips to the playground."

Members of the Red Cross, stationed at Eagle Base, Tuzla, were in charge of Santa's itinerary this year. "Today was our first outing in which we dressed up as elves and went with Santa," O'Doherty said. "Santa's next stop is the Tuzla Valley area, and from there he is off to Croatia."



Spc. Cheryl A. Kraning

Santa teases Sgt. Robert Ramos, a cannon crew member for Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, about not receiving a gift unless he promises to be a good boy next year.

Maj. Gen. Meigs' holiday proclamation

I would like to wish all the joy and happiness to each member of Task Force Eagle. Holiday decorations are up everywhere, special holiday shows are coming to visit our camps, and units are planning to celebrate the holidays with religious services, parties and music.

I want you all to remember that your efforts are greatly appreciated by our nation, the people of this country. I too appreciate

your sacrifice and service, and I want to thank each of you for your contributions.

During this holiday season, far away from our families, it's important that we take care of each other, and recognize the family we have in soldiers, airmen, and civilians here with us. It might not be the usual way we celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or Ramadan, but we can show our friendship and concern for each other in many

ways. It is a time when we need to remember past holidays, and memories of joy shared with our family. But it is also a time to turn to our family here, and help those around us take time to rest and join in the holiday celebrations. We need to watch for our buddies who are tired or depressed, and bring them into our holiday celebrations.

We are engaged in a very complex mission, a mission

intended to give peace to a people who have been so damaged by war. This is a season when we celebrate the wonderful gifts of freedom and peace we have received, from our religious faith, and from our nation. I pray that we will join together to celebrate the peace and joy which have been given to us.

M. J. Meigs
MONTGOMERY E. MEIGS
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

■ TECHNOLOGY

GI Joe takes on Information Age

By Spc. DANIEL M. PASCHALL
100th MPAD

“We came, We saw, We surfed the net.”

Scribbled on a bathroom wall in a tent city base camp, this message speaks for an age in which information is king and technology is power.

The Information Age has already changed the landscape of education and business. Now soldiers of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR are seeing firsthand how the push for information through technology has changed the military.

“I am doing things over here I couldn’t do in the Gulf,” said Lt. Col. Lou Marich, chief of plans and operations for Task Force Eagle. “Technology advances quickly, and it’s allowing us to do more, faster.”

Because of fax machines, e-mail, telephones, copiers, computers, local area networks, satellite communications, video teleconferencing, global positioning systems and high tech radios, soldiers are getting more information than ever before.

But Marich said the quality of information is much more important than the quantity.

“There is such thing as too much information. You have to filter out what’s good and what’s not. That’s the reason for a chain of command.”

Soldiers in the field may not have the luxury of accessing the internet or communicating

over e-mail, but Marich said those same soldiers are still in the information loop. Technology advances at the division level translate into more reliable information for soldiers in the field.

“The chain of command filters out what soldiers need to know,” Marich said. “More dangerous than a (computer) virus is a flood of information that clutters the battlefield picture. It’s like looking at a radar screen. The chain of command has to be able to decipher pertinent indicators from the background clutter.”

Maj. Max Atherton, who writes daily reports based on information delivered from the field knows about dealing with an abundance of information. He thinks the army is much better off now than it was 20 years ago.

“Division commanders today have a better idea of what happens on the

ground than ever before. Because they have more information, they are better prepared to apply the right assets to each situation.”

Both Marich and Atherton believe the Information Age is not going to change the structure of the army as much as it has corporations in the civilian world.

“We are in a different business,” Marich said. “What information can do for the Army is promote timely, accurate and complete reporting.”

Atherton agreed. “Soldiering hasn’t changed much in many respects since armies fought with swords. It’s the nature of the beast,” he said. “A soldier has the 300 meters around him to be concerned with, and he has his hands full with just that.”

Marich said soldiers who doubt the power of information technology are missing the point. “Information may not always filter down, but commanders today have a better picture of what’s happening on the battlefield than in the past, and that makes every soldier more effective,” he said.

One of the main problems with technology is the speed at which it improves.

“Technology is growing by leaps and bounds,” Atherton said. “I remember in 1984 when my battalion headquarters had only one computer. Today people can’t do their job without computers.”

The army embraces technology, and everyone should understand the importance of staying on top of it.”



Big Red One hits net with new home page

By Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO
350th MPAD

The 1st Infantry Division hit the information superhighway running recently with its own home page on the internet.

Maintained by Task Force

Eagle’s automation section, more than 800 internet users have visited the Big Red One’s home page since it first appeared on the World Wide Web Dec. 3.

Anyone with a computer and internet access can read

about the 1st ID and its operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Visitors to the site can download *The Talon*, Task Force Eagle’s newspaper.

Net surfers can also read about the history of

the 1st ID.

Individuals wishing to send holiday greetings to soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina can leave e-mail messages at the website’s mailbox.

Reach the site at: <http://www.1id.army.mil>.

Peacekeeper finds irony in base name

By Sgt. TIM PINKHAM
350th MPAD

McGOVERN BASE— Meet McGovern from McGovern. Sgt. William McGovern III is an M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle gunner with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, stationed at McGovern Base.

"I get ragged on," said McGovern, about the coincidence between his name and his duty station. "The first week I was here, the ladies at the laundry point got a kick out of it. A lot of times it's more of a burden than anything." He said many of the local civilians don't believe it when they

read his name tag.

The Task Force 1-18 soldier said he is no relation to 1st Lt. Robert M. McGovern, for whom the base was named. Robert McGovern, who was with the 5th Cavalry Regiment, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his gallant service which resulted in the loss of his life, Jan. 30, 1951, during the Korean War.

William McGovern, 26, hails from Long Island, N.Y., but he has been assigned to the same unit in Schweinfurt, Germany, for all of his six years in the Army.

This is the second peacekeeping deployment in two years for McGovern, who has been in Bosnia-Herzegovina since October.

His company was in Macedonia from October 1995 to April of this year.

"I'm doing the job I was told to do," McGovern said, about Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. "I think it's useful; it is a just cause."

Being an infantryman isn't for everyone, but it definitely is for McGovern, whose pride in his job shines through as he speaks.

"As the infantry, you're the final line," he said. "In combat, the air force can bomb it, the artillery can shell it, the tanks can shoot at it and the multiple launch rocket system can missile it, but nobody can own it until the infantry walks through it."

Specialist performs unplugged at McGovern

By Sgt. JACK SIEMIENIEC
350th MPAD

It's not exactly Carnegie Hall, but when Spc. Eric A. Gamble sits down with his guitar on the windowsill of a roofless, bombed-out building along Route Arizona, his platoon mates know there will be music.

"I like to fingerpick," he said as his fingers dance over the strings, picking out notes. For a moment, listeners forget the player is wearing a helmet and flak vest, surrounded by sandbags and concertina wire.

Gamble, an infantryman with the 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, lives at Checkpoint Alpha One, just south of Orasje in far northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Having practiced the guitar for 11 of his 21 years, it seemed only natural he would bring two with him when his unit deployed in October. What may be unique is that the Bellbrook, Ohio, native carved a map of Bosnia-Herzegovina on the front of one guitar, and each day he cuts another mark in it, counting the days his platoon has been in country.

"I play anything from blues - Southern Delta Blues - to a little bluegrass up to hard-core punk," he said. He credits a relative and a good bargain with getting him started in music.

"I bought my first guitar from a cousin for \$30. I thought it was pretty cool. I took lessons for three years and took what I learned and ran off with

it; did my own thing."

Now, he said, his favorite influences are Delta bluesman Robert Johnson and folk singer Norman Blake.

"I play everyday; it passes the time. Some people meditate, I play the guitar and enjoy the good feeling. What I play depends on what mood I'm in," he said. "Maybe I'll think about my girlfriend or think about being away. Playing - it'll change your mood, but always to the positive."

Gamble said he never really pulls his guitar out specifically to entertain the platoon, but he won't stop if they happen by the room he calls home at the checkpoint.

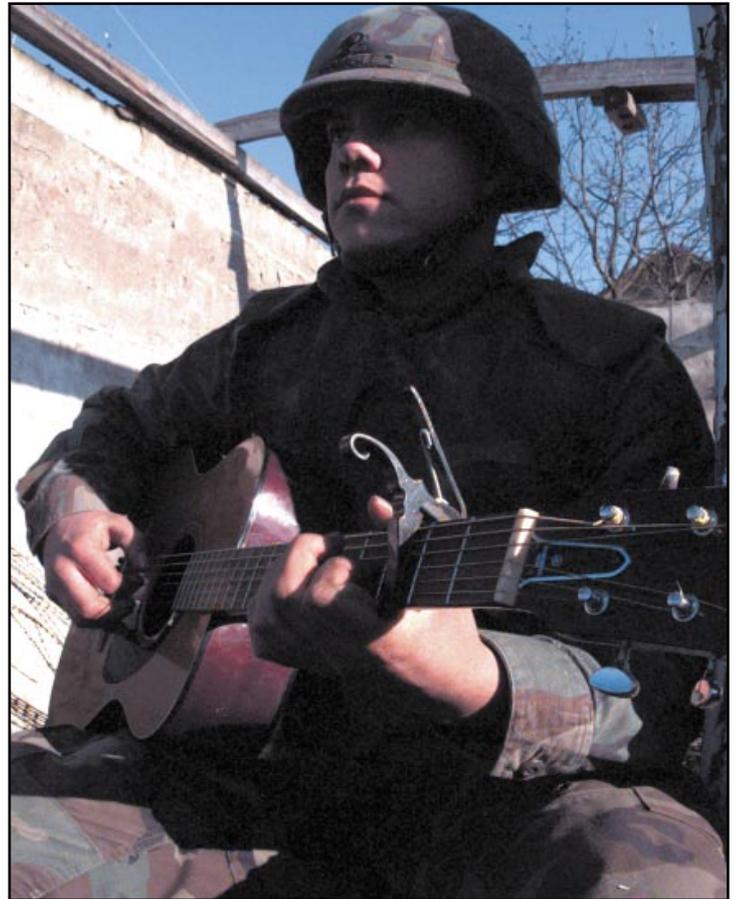
However at the unit's home station in Schweinfurt, Germany, it's a different story.

"Sometimes in the barracks I'll sit in the hallway and play and people will stop and listen."

His playing has even drawn the attention of his battalion commander, Lt. Col. Stephen Layfield, himself a picker.

"The colonel and sergeant major (Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight Anderson) were here on Thanksgiving Day to visit and see how we were. He (Layfield) was looking at our living space and saw the guitar, so I played a little. Then he played a little bit - a little bit of blues - he was pretty good."

Although he plans to continue playing the guitar his whole life, he says his future lies elsewhere. "Astronomy



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Spc. Eric A. Gamble, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, plays a tune for soldiers at McGovern Base.

was my first interest for as long as I can remember," Gamble said.

"My mom got me a telescope and I looked at nebulae and galaxies. I had star charts. I tracked the orbital path of Saturn."

Gamble is planning on leaving the Army at the end of his enlistment to go to college and study particle physics.

"I've always wondered why

things are the way they are. 'Why is the sun orange on the horizon? Why is the sky blue?' I'd just love to be a scientist, but I don't know if I have the patience to take the time to learn," Gamble said.

The stars and a laboratory may be his future, but Gamble's present is sitting along the side of a road in Bosnia-Herzegovina ... sweet music flying off his fingertips.

APACHE from page 1

area, looking for suspected illegal road blocks and choke points.

"911 is a good way to describe what we do here," Drake said. "We're used more for reconnaissance and making sure the inter-entity boundary lines are kept clear, and the main supply routes are open. We watch to make sure buses are not driving crowds of people to some rent-a-mob demonstrations."

The Apaches are armed with high-tech video equipment that captures images with the finest detail.

"The images are so precise, that if we were to photograph a crowd gathered on the street from some distance in the air and someone passes a pack of cigarettes to someone, we could tell you what brand that they were," Slocum said.

It is considered the most effective piece of on-board equipment. Information gathered on the tape is sent to higher headquarters and intelligence units.

The recordings can get a lot of facts about vehicles and uniforms and accurately report on interesting hostile actions.

Helicopter pilots must follow proper procedures as they voice out and record

what they see. They need to be professional and careful not to editorialize or make comments.

"You never know where those tape are going to be forwarded," said Michael J. Slocum, Transportation commander of Troop B. "When those tapes are sent to higher headquarters for review, you don't know who could be watching them. It could be the president of the United States."

The cavalry set up shop at Camp Colt, near the country's northern border Dec. 8.

"This is part of an experimental test bed to see how an aviation unit would do in a forward deployed area," Slocum said.

As a forward operating site, Camp Colt is strategically close to where action could flare up.

Located on the Posavina Corridor, Camp Colt sits on a strip of land that connects two Bosnian Serb areas.

With Bosnian Muslim controlled areas to the south and Bosnian Croat territory

to the north across the Sava River, Apaches at Camp Colt are just minutes away from areas of potential uprisings.

In addition to rapid-response capability, another reason for moving a contingent of aircraft to Camp Colt is the weather.

Heavy fog and cloud cover in the Tuzla valley sometimes prevent helicopters from flying.

"It's actually warmer here than it is at Tuzla West," said Drake, 36, from Jupiter, Fla.

"These people still haven't seen much snow fall. When we first arrived here, people were expecting everything to be covered with snow. So far the weather has not been a problem."

Slocum said life at Camp Colt is good. "Everybody likes it here," he said. "They have a PX, a gym and a dining facility."

"We really don't miss many of the creature comforts of Tuzla West. We're fine as long as we have our cots, and the tents have heaters."

"911 is a good way to describe what we do here. We're used for making sure the inter-entity boundary lines are kept clear."

— Maj. Tim E. Drake

SFOR from page 1

"When we went in with IFOR, we went in as the biggest, meanest, toughest dog in town, because we were concerned we might face a military conflict," he said. The goal was to intimidate any forces that might oppose NATO. None did.

The United States deployed 8,500 soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a covering force in October. Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division protected the IFOR redeployment and will cover the arrival of the stabilization force. Some of the soldiers will become part of the new force. No soldier will serve in Bosnia-Herzegovina for more than a year, Perry said.

The stabilization force will perform many of the same duties as IFOR.

"That physical presence is probably the single most important function they can perform both in terms of war deterrence and in terms of maintaining [peace]," Perry said. IFOR gave Bosnia-Herzegovina a year of peace.

"The stabilizing force will sustain those gains and provide security for another 18 months.



Santa waves goodbye to soldiers of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR at McGovern Base. Santa visited bases throughout Task Force Eagle before heading "North."

Spc. Cheryl A. Krating