

THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

Combat soldiers power down

By Spc. AARON REED
100th MPAD

This is a story about 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery. It's about a combat unit sent to keep the peace. It's about adapting. Overcoming. Taking care of soldiers and building leaders for the future.

This is a story about a unit that — on a smaller scale — reflects much of the challenge and promise of today's Army.

"It's one thing to prepare for operations other than war, it's another to get out here and actually do the job," said Capt. William T. Hunt, the artillery unit's assistant plans, training and operations officer. "There's very little air threat here, so we do perimeter security."

But guarding the Eagle Base perimeter is just one ADA mission. The battalion also provides the base quick reaction force, or QRF, as well as the division reserve. The battalion tactical operations center serves as an alternate to the division TOC, and, like

the commanding general's staff, the battalion staff runs two battle update briefings everyday.

Air defense artillery soldiers patrol both the interior and the exterior of Eagle Base, and through Battery D's Avenger platoons at Camp McGovern, they keep an eye on the night around the still-troubled town of Brcko.

"This is not a traditional ADA mission," said Hunt, a Miami, Fla., native. "It's a challenge."

Like many units in the post-draw-down Army, 4-3 ADA is being tasked to do more with less. One way the battalion has met this particular challenge is by decentralizing responsibility, a philosophy Hunt called "power-down." In a power-down atmosphere, sergeants, specialists and privates brief troops.

Specialists lead teams and everyone benefits.

For instance,

See **ARTILLERY**, page 12

Sgt. Charles Bennett, a Stinger team chief with Battery B, 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery, stands ready to block access to Eagle Base in his M2 Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicle.

INSIDE

COMMENTARY	2
IMPRESSIONS	3
MOUNT VIS	4
AVENGER	5
FEAR NOT	6-7
RUSSIANS	9
SWEDES	11

SFOR mission stays the course

By LINDA D. KOZARYN
American Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS—Arresting war criminals is not a job for the NATO stabilization force, but for civilian police, U.S. Army Gen. John M. Shalikashvili said recently.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaking in Bosnia-Herzegovina

before arriving here for NATO meetings, said officials should form an international police force to go after indicted war criminals who have not been turned in as required by the Dayton peace agreement.

SFOR will follow the same rules as IFOR regarding war criminal said U.S. Army Gen. George S. Joulwan, supreme allied commander, Europe.

What they're saying

"SFOR is not a police force, and therefore it is not going to be chasing war criminals; that is very clear."

— Javier Solana
NATO Secretary-General

"SFOR will help Bosnians assume full responsibility for their future — a future without an outside military presence."

— President William J. Clinton

"They served a noble cause, they did make a difference. Their sacrifices were not in vain. They will not be forgotten."

— Gen. George A. Joulwan
NATO Commander in Chief
(on the 55 soldiers who were killed during the just completed year-long IFOR mission)

"At 18 months, the mission will be completed, and in June 1998 we will withdraw all of the stabilization force."

— Gen. George A. Joulwan
NATO Commander in Chief

"In the past year alone, countless lives have been saved and countless others have been improved because of your dedicated efforts and devotion to duty."

— President William J. Clinton

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

I would like to wish a Happy New Year to the soldiers and augmentees of the Big Red One.

As per tradition, New Year's is a time when individuals make resolutions for their personal lives.

In this upcoming year, I would like to ask Task Force Eagle members to resolve to better themselves both as individuals and as soldiers. One way one can do this is to take advantage of the various educational opportunities available while on deployment.

Each base camp in theater has an education center where soldiers can take courses for college credit. Military correspondence courses can also be worked on in theater.

Continuing both your civilian and military education carries with it tremendous benefits.

Besides bettering yourself, education completion provides points for



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

promotion that could lead to military career advancement.

Soldiers must take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them if we are going to continue to be a strong, competent and

viable fighting force.

The First Infantry Division has a long, proud tradition of excellence. With each individual soldier working to improve himself through education, that tradition will continue.

Use your chain of command and consult the education centers and counselors at your base camp to find a schedule that can fit yours.

SAFETY TIPS

By ROBERT MENTE
TFE Safety Office

Cold weather injury is 100 percent preventable. All too often, we focus on recognizing and treating cold injuries; however, the more important issue is prevention.

Well-trained and disciplined soldiers can be protected in even the most adverse conditions if they and their leaders are knowledgeable concerning the hazards of cold exposure, and informed regarding the importance of personal hygiene — especially care of the feet, exercise and use of protective clothing.

A soldier is more likely to suffer a cold weather injury if he is immobile for long periods (such as riding in a vehicle convoy without a working heater) if kept out in the cold for long period of time without warming or if he is not

given the opportunity to carry out personal hygiene. Vulnerability to cold weather injury tends to go up with fear, fatigue, dehydration, and lack of nutrition.

Most soldiers who suffer injury are improperly dressed. Leaders must require troops to dress as lightly as possible consistent with the weather to reduce the danger of excessive perspiration and subsequent chilling. It is better for the body to be slightly cold and generating heat than excessively warm and sweltering toward dehydration.

Tight garments lessen the volume of trapped air layers, and thereby reduce the insulation and ventilation available to the body. Headgear is especially important as heat loss is often greatest from the head.

Many soldiers suffer cold injury without knowing what is happening to them.

Take the time to review the cause, symptoms and first aid for cold weather injuries.

THE TALON

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Running and learning

By CHRISTINE WENK-HARRISON
Eagle Base Education Center

The seconds start ticking as I set the timer on my watch and start a morning run from the education center at Tent City Two on Eagle Base. It's a very fall-like Sunday morning with light fog, the kind that promises to burn off to produce a clear day.

As I pass conex city, a newly installed collection of prefab buildings, only a few soldiers are venturing out to the showers since it's the only day many can sleep in. *(Later, when I finish running, will there be hot water, any pressure? Since it's Sunday, I'm optimistic.)*

At about the two-minute mark, I hit the boardwalk and head in the direction of the headquarters building. Not everyone's sleeping; many soldiers carry white paper plates filled with breakfast-to-go and are heading somewhere. *(They must be going to work; where else could they be going, especially in all that gear? I still can't quite get used to being surrounded by soldiers in Kevlars, flak vests, LBE's and M-16s over their shoulders.)*

At the intersection by the "White House," I veer to the right and check out a camouflaged area occupied by Company D, 440th Signal; they're from Darms-tadt, my home duty station.

Then it's slightly uphill, past the chapel and towards the dining facility. More soldiers carrying plates, fruit and large plastic bottles of water pass by and say good morning or encourage me. *(The friendliness of strangers is still a pleasant experience. Is it a characteristic of deployments?)*

After about six minutes, I arrive at the laundry and chow hall. I pop into the laundry where Turkish-style music fills the air and show the woman my slip, but she advises me to return in two hours.

From there I head down to the staging area in the direction of the pedestrian gate where Bosnian workers, many wearing Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR windbreakers, carry plastic bags on their walk to work. *(I wonder what's in those bags — other than big chunks of bread, that is?)*

I usually like to run up to the last barriers and look out to the "outside" or, in the evenings, listen for the call to

prayer from a nearby mosque. This morning it's quiet and foggy, so I change directions and pass the White House.

After about eight minutes, I am at the next intersection and head up a scenic road with woods on both sides. *(Could there be mines in there somewhere? After all these months, they're still finding them.)*

"I still can't quite get used to being surrounded by soldiers in Kevlars, flak vests, LBE's and M-16s over their shoulders.."

— Christine Wenk-Harrison

I follow the road which leads to the flight line, passing a so-called parking lot on the right. *(I can't believe all those assorted vehicles in there will really drive out of that mud they are parked in.)* I can't stop to find out.

I speed up my pace to the airfield where the C-130s, UH-60 Blackhawks, AH-64 Apaches and anything flying never cease to fascinate me. *(Maybe I should have taken the AFAST exam we give Sunday evenings at the Education Center.)*

For now, I have to watch. But running along the flight line with the helicopters taking off against the Bosnian mountains gives me a real high. *(That's OK, since it's not the kind prohibited by General Order Number One!)*

As I return on the main road, the shuttle bus from Tuzla West overtakes me with ease, and to my delight Mehmed and Samir are on board and wave with gusto. On my daily trips to Tuzla West, they have become my primary contact with the Bosnian people and I like riding their bus best.

By now I'm over the 25-minute mark, but as I circle back by the education center, not quite ready to quit, I take a sight-seeing jog through the tent city to check out the newest additions.

I pass the French quarters, complete with French flag, the "Tool Time Tuzla" tent, "Dirk Mueller Strasse," and "Air Force Country" to my favorite: a couple of marigolds growing in a sandbag protection wall and bearing a small sign proclaiming "Tuzla Air Base Yard of the Month." *(The humor and ingenuity of the soldiers rarely fail to surprise and amuse me.)*

Christine Wenk-Harrison, a civilian employee attached to the 104th Area Support Group, is deployed as a guidance counselor in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She says she came to Bosnia-Herzegovina to provide educational services to the soldiers and has ended up learning a lot: about a tragic, war-torn country, military operations, soldiers and above all, herself.

NEWS BRIEFS

Clinton calls Bosnia

It's not every day you get a phone call from the president of the United States. Then again, every day isn't Christmas.

As tradition holds, the commander in chief makes a point each year to call up a few remotely located U.S. service members and personally wish them the best of the Yuletide season.

One of this year's lucky service members was Tech. Sgt. Paul Rutzinski, 33, chief of information management and administrative support for the commander of the 4100th Air Support Group, Provisional, at the Eagle Air Base control tower.

"I consider this a great Christmas present," Rutzinski said.

The conversation lasted a few minutes. Rutzinski said President Clinton was very personable.

"He talks to you like you're a real person and makes you feel good when you're talking with him," Rutzinski said.

"He seemed really concerned about the morale of the troops here. He wanted to know how we were doing, and mentioned how important our role here is in keeping the peace."

Halle Berry visits

"And what do you want for Christmas?" Santa asked the soldier. The reply was swift and sure, "I want Halle Berry's autograph!"

Well, that wish came true for many soldiers this Christmas Eve as the actress visited Eagle Base in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

As Berry was escorted into 1st Infantry Division Headquarters, soldiers greeted her like an old friend. Almost lost in the sea of camouflage, the diminutive actress slowly made her way to the Battle Star tent where she signed autographs and made an impromptu speech to the crowd.

"People ask me why I came here at Christmas," Berry said. "I know it sounds like a cliché, but I really feel that it's important, especially this time of year, to give something back. The reception I've had and seeing all the smiling faces has been a wonderful present for me, and I hope my being here can bring a little bit of Christmas to you all."



Cpl. Len Butler

Staff Sgt. James S. Moudy of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry's mortar platoon, keeps a watchful eye on activity and the base of Mount Vis. Moudy and soldiers from his mortar platoon provide security for the basecamp.

Life: from bad to better at Mount Vis

By Cpl. LEN BUTLER
100th MPAD

The quality of life on Mount Vis has drastically improved over the last few months. Soldiers can now walk on a boardwalk, eat in a real dining facility, and enjoy the comforts that soldiers in larger camps so often take for granted.

The conditions here were once referred to as "Vietnam like". Tents leaned to the side from sinking in the mud. Soldiers performed the old latrine ritual of "burning the barrel". Showers were virtually nonexistent, and the meal of the day was an MRE, with an occasional T-ration for good measure.

With assistance from Brown and Root and the hard work performed by soldiers on the "hill", the basecamp was brought out of the dark ages, and into the 90's.

"Everything here was literally built from the ground up," Master Sgt. Dave W. Wright, 40, of Belen, N.M. said. Wright, the mayor of the Mount Vis basecamp, said improvements to the basecamp began in early November.

"This is our own little piece of Bosnia-Herzegovina," said Staff Sgt. James S. Moudy, 28, of Newark, Del. "We've done a lot of work up here, and we're pretty proud of what we've done."

"However long we Americans stay here, this hill will always be something that everyone pitched in for and accomplished," Moudy said. "We've left our signature on this hill."

MRE's and T-rats are gone, replaced by a shiny new dining facility. "Actually it's not new," Sgt. Charles T. Mangus, 38, of Slidell, La. said. "It just looks that way."

Mangus, of Headquarters and Head-

quarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, and his assistant, Pvt. Billy Armstrong have transformed a dingy, dirty conex into a place that soldiers can come to enjoy a meal, prepared by Mangus and Armstrong three times a day, seven days a week.

"Armstrong and I did all of this ourselves," Mangus said. "We added cooking equipment, and got the place cleaned up."

According to the soldiers here, the rage of the basecamp is the food that Mangus and Armstrong prepare. "I'm just having a good time with this," Mangus said. "I like to cook in the first place. I make almost everything from scratch, and Armstrong and I like to mix our menus up a little."

Mangus said he follows the recipes for the most part. But sometimes he may add a few extra ingredients to make it spicier. "The guys around here like it," Mangus said. "One thing's for sure, they never go away hungry."

The back door of the dining facility opens to a wooden porch overlooking the Tuzla Valley, offering one of the most scenic views around.

"The sunrises and sunsets are gorgeous," Spc. Lisa M. Horning, 22, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho said. "When the clouds hang low in the valley, I imagine being a god on Mount Olympus looking down on all the mortals."

"I used to have to take a bottle of water

outside just to wash my hair," Horning, who is one of only three females on the hill, said.

Horning said when she first arrived in September, there was no running water, let alone a shower facility.

For a long time soldiers, here didn't have access to a telephone to contact loved ones.

That changed when a DSN line was installed in November. Soldiers are now able to make 10 minute calls.

Thanks to Brown and Root, the once muddy, leaning tents gave way to hard-backed tents. Now tents are stabilized on pedestals with walls, and flooring throughout.

One of the tents is a recreational tent, complete with weights, stair-steps and stationary

bikes. In the corner sits a television, video cassette recorder and movies.

Spc. Brian S. Taylor, 26, of Enterprise, Ala. has been here longer than any soldier on the hill. Arriving in April, Taylor said soldiers in the larger base camps should not complain too loudly about their conditions.

Taylor said he and some other soldiers here had a good laugh when they read a complaint from a soldier at Slavonski Brod to the "Letters" section of the Stars and Stripes.

"Someone wrote that they were unhappy, because Popeye's Chicken didn't have barbecue sauce," Taylor said.

"This is our own little piece of Bosnia-Herzegovina. We've done a lot of work up here, and we're pretty proud of what we've done."

— Staff Sgt. James S. Moudy

Avengers light up the night

By Sgt. JACK SIEMIENIEC
350th MPAD

"It's hard to hide from us," Pvt. Leland J. Johnson said.

Johnson, 19, is an Avenger gunner, and his voice comes over the combat vehicle communications as he speaks from the specially adapted HMMWV's turret.

It's pitch black on a cool night in Brod, a town which lies within the zone of separation near McGovern Base in northeast Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Carson City, Nev. native sits in his heated turret, stinger missiles in pods on either side of him.

He's scanning the houses, roads and countryside. The two Avenger weapon systems on this evening's patrol are operating temporary observation points, while other soldiers in M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles roll down side roads.

The Avengers that comprise the 3rd Platoon, D Battery, 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, run missions similar to this almost daily — and nightly.

From the screen which sits beside him in the cab, team chief Sgt. Robert M. Brown, sees everything Johnson sees.

"Tonight we're on a mounted patrol, conducting a temporary observation point to monitor and survey any movement within the ZOS, including our own dismounted patrols," Brown said.

All the troops — whether in Avengers or Bradleys — are there to monitor movement within the ZOS. Civilian travel is not allowed between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., and even those scant few who live among the war-ruined structures are told to stay in their homes.

The demilitarized zone is truly a no-man's land after dark. Soldiers sit in their vehicles or walk deserted streets to watch

and listen for anything that shouldn't be there.

The addition of the Avengers to night patrols in the ZOS is in response to recent house bombings in the area. Homes under reconstruction by former refugees have been targeted; soldiers have stepped up their surveillance in an attempt to catch those responsible for the bombings.

The Avenger platoon is part of Task Force 1-18, augmenting the capabilities of the infantry companies of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment.

As the gunner pivots his turret, raising and lowering the infrared system, watching near and far, he gives a commentary of what he sees on the screen.

"Someone's home out there, see the chimney smoke."

"That little bit of white on those trees, that's light reflected from McGovern."

"There, see that white spot, that's a field mouse. He's moving."

Seconds later, he rotates the turret, zooms in, refocuses and, it's suddenly clear the white blob on the screen is actually another soldier from the patrol standing on the roof of his HMMWV, hundreds of meters across an open field.

The soldier is using his night vision goggles.

Here in the McGovern area, the platoon has run over 30 night surveillance missions since they arrived in late October.

Blaney said that while normal night patrols are effective, they are definitely enhanced with the addition of Avengers.

"The platoon has also been incorporated into perimeter defense here at McGovern to keep our 'eyes' on at night. We call ourselves 'Watchdog,'" he said.

With their night eyes, the Avengers head out the gate in the evening to sit in the dark to watch and wait.

They keep watch while you sleep

By RENATE BOHLEN
98th Area Support Group

Soldiers of Company C, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, at Camp Colt, spend their nights watching over the safety of troops.

Ground surveillance radar teams start their workday when the sun goes down by climbing the guard towers overlooking the camp.

"We sit up here until the sun comes up," Pfc. Aaron Dunn said.

Any movement they detect on the radar screen is reported to the tactical operations center.

The TOC has an overview of all activities in the area and can determine whether it is necessary to send out a team to investigate.

"The real ground support radar mission is to provide early warning about the enemy to the support unit. We provide security for the camp," Staff Sgt. Edwin Caraballo said.

The MI soldiers trained hard for two and a half months prior to deployment and are well-prepared to do this or any other mission, Caraballo said.

"The living conditions here at Camp Colt aren't bad," he said. "We live in a tent with plenty of space and we have all the facilities we need. I really don't think it's bad to be here."

"I was amazed at the amount of weight lifting equipment they have for us," Dunn said.

When asked what they think about being part of the peace-keeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, answers varied.

"I'm really proud to be here as a peacekeeper for NATO. It gives me an opportunity to do something for people," Caraballo said.

Dunn agreed. "I like it out here. It's a great money-saving opportunity," he said.

Sgt. David B. Coulson wasn't enthusiastic about being at Camp Colt. "But right now that's my job, and I put everything into it," he said.



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Pvt. Kingston McCaden, left, and Sgt. Daniel Gonzales mount a .50-caliber machine gun on their Avenger.



Combat hospital banishes

By Spc. AARON REED
100th MPAD

BLUE FACTORY — During World War II, the 21st Medical Battalion earned campaign streamers in Sicily, the Rhineland, Naples Foggia and Ardennes-Alsace. The unit adopted the motto "Fear not."

The old 21st Med. Bn. is now the 21st Combat Support Hospital. Sick or injured troops of Multinational Division — North, like their predecessors more than half a century ago, can "fear not."

"The 21st is the best, most powerful combat support hospital in the universe," Col. (Dr.) Harold P. Ducloux said. Ducloux, a family practitioner from Mobile, Ala., commands the 21st CSH.

The 21st CSH boasts a helical computerized tomography (CT) scanner, ultrasound scanner, and radiograph (x-ray) machine. All three are connected to computer workstations. The hospital can send the images to Landstuhl Regional Army Medical Center in Germany or Walter Reed Army Medical Cen-

ter in Washington, D.C., for real-time consultation.

"That puts us at a great advantage over anything in the country," Ducloux said. "There's nothing in Bosnia that can touch us."

Staff Sgt. Ronald K. Nash, radiology non-commissioned officer in charge, agreed with the commander's assessment. "We're at the level of technology where every hospital in the States wants to be."

But good medicine is more than good technology. Fixing broken soldiers requires a human touch, and among the specialists on his staff Ducloux counts a radiologist, an internist, an orthopedist, an additional family practitioner and two general surgeons.

"Given that mix, I can do pretty much anything you'd find in a community hospital you'd find in Lawton, Okla., or Killeen, Texas," Ducloux said.

Ducloux said because the 21st CSH serves soldiers from all over the world, the unit must be prepared for almost anything.

"Just recently we've had two cases of ma-

laria, some tuberculosis, chicken pox," he said. "What we do is community medicine prepared for the high-speed casualty scenario. That's our forte."

Normally, the hospital is a combination of expanded combat tents and internationalization units, or ISOs. But in Bosnia, the bulk of the 21st is housed in an old truck stop building.

Patients are transported by bus, ambulance and helicopter.

Ducloux said the preferred mode of transportation is a medical evacuation agency transportation is a medical evacuation agency. The 45th Medical Company (A) flying conditions are marginal. The unit simultaneously launches a medical evacuation personnel carrier ambulance. The 45th Medical Company's APC is used for medical evacuation.

Either way, injured troops are evacuated as quickly as possible. "From here, we average about 15 minutes," he said.



A 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) aircrew practices snow landings in their UH-60 Blackhawk at the 21st Combat Support Hospital airfield. (Left) Col. (Dr.) Harold P. Ducloux, commander of the 21st CSH, takes a call. (Below) A 21st CSH surgical team performs surgery on a soldier suffering from a hernia. (Photos by Spc. Aaron Reed)

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Blue Factory faces towering changes

By Staff Sgt. **BRENDA BENNER**
100th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — The 299th Forward Support Battalion is bringing many changes to Guardian Base. As the camp expands, the hospital at the Blue Factory will be incorporated into Guardian's main perimeter as both camps prepare to accommodate over 900 SFOR personnel.

All the changes are requiring a new outlook on force protection requirements. New evaluations regarding physical security are currently underway to compensate for the expanding perimeter.

Staff Sgt. Joel J. Fenske, 32, of Grafton, Wis., the force protection sergeant for Guardian Base, is welcoming the changes.

"With the combined camps, all the guards are now rotating on the same guard force," Fenske said. "Previously, the military police provided guards, but they've redeployed, so now it's done internally by Guardian and Blue Factory personnel."

Modifications to the perimeter have necessitated changes to public access onto the base. Having one controlled access point will make it easier to monitor traffic.

"We closed off the main road going through here," Fenske said. "The local nationals can no longer use the road as a thoroughfare. This keeps people farther away from our entrances. Our main concern is to keep the children away, keep them safe ... outside of the perimeter, because they cluster around our vehicles."

Carpenters from Company B, 62nd Engineers are doing their part for force pro-

tection by building new elevated guard towers to cover the expanded perimeter.

Spc. Christopher P. Lattin, 23, of Carrollton, Ohio, is one of a dozen carpenters tasked with this important mission.

"We're using materials from the old guard towers that were taken down," Lattin said. "Most of us will be working in shifts to complete them. We don't need everyone working at the same time because different people have certain abilities and specialties, so we trade off. We'll complete these towers as soon as we can, keeping all safety considerations in mind. If it gets too icy to work up on top, we will wait until conditions improve."

The fields of thick mud created by recent snows add an element of uncertainty.

"We have to make sure the ground site is level; we don't want the base to shift as the mud dries," said interior electrician Sgt. Corey R. Phillips. "Tower construction is not complicated, but if we start off wrong, it can cause problems the whole way through. There's certainly a lot of wood, nails, spikes, and bolts involved."

"The toughest part of it all is getting

the 8x8 beams exactly straight and upright," Lattin said. "We use huge bolts to stabilize them."

Completion of the raised towers will give the Guardian Base guard force new and improved vantage points while protecting the ever-growing community of peacekeepers.



Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner

Spc. Christopher P. Lattin, a carpenter with Company B, 62nd Engineer Battalion, prepares the platform for an elevated guard tower.

Security force protects Task Force Pershing

By Staff Sgt.
ANNA M. PRUSAITIS
100th MPAD

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia — From the onset of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR to the current Operation JOINT GUARD, ensuring that troops are protected is usually an additional duty performed by soldiers on a security force detail.

Task Force Pershing at Sava North is no exception. It is protected by an assigned security force provided by soldiers from Battery C, 5th Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, 69th Brigade, V Corps, based in Bamberg, Germany.

Arriving in mid November and augmented with soldiers from other batteries to create the 75-member Task Force Blackjack, Battery C immediately took over the mission of providing a fixed security force at the tank factory. Their tasks include providing a roving vehicle patrol, a roving foot patrol and manning the checkpoints around the base camp's perimeter.

A demanding schedule is adhered to by the four squads of Task Force Blackjack's guard force. Second Lt. Patrick B. White, guard task force officer in charge, said the two squad teams alternate, having one full

day working and then the next day off. One squad pulls guard duty, while the other squad works the quick reaction force. Then they switch. "The reason for the change is to avoid complacency, and boredom," said the resident of Shaker Heights, Ohio. "When the squads are on QRF, it also allows time to conduct training," White said.

The guards are constantly rotating between all of their assigned tasks which make for some long days.

Having long days on guard duty is turning out to be a good experience according to Pfc. Jayson K. Hauer, an Avenger crew member. "I like working with

people that I don't usually work with," said the resident of Smyrna, Tenn.

Another task for of the security force, is to operate a redeployment staging onward movement tactical operating center. Essentially the TOC handles all convoys going in and out of Sava North. It is a central point for coordinating the refueling of vehicles. They also determine the designated staging area for vehicles based on the number and type. The TOC also ensures the mayor's cell is aware of the number of convoys with troops requiring billeting. In addition, the TOC provides information on the current force protection level White said.

Americans, Russians patrol together

By Capt. TAWANNA R. BROWN
350th MPAD

CAMP DOBOL—Curious villagers who stopped to watch the convoy of U.S. HMMWVs and Russian BTR-80s were accustomed to seeing the SFOR vehicles. But they were unaccustomed to seeing these vehicles together.

What villagers witnessed was the first joint patrol between the scout "reconnaissance" platoon of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry and soldiers of the 1st Platoon, 1st Company, 1st Battalion, Russian Airborne Brigade.

"There's a perception in the eyes of some locals that there's some tension between U.S. and Russian forces," said reconnaissance platoon leader 1st Lt. Nathan J. Wasser, from Castle Rock, Colo. "Operations like this show that SFOR is a multinational force, accomplishing the same goals—planning and working together."

Prior to the patrol U.S. scouts and their Russian partners discussed joint actions in the event of hostile contact. They shared intelligence information about the areas into which they would be traveling, and they exchanged troops so a scout could ride in a BTR-80 and a Russian soldier could travel in a HMMWV.

"In this HMMWV I have a Swedish soldier on one side of me and a Russian soldier on the other," said gunner Spc. Eric Templeton, 20, from Philadelphia.



Capt. Tawanna R. Brown

Leaders from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry scouts and a Russian Airborne Company confirm their route in preparation for a joint patrol.

Templeton said he did not notice significant differences between the groups' operations. "It's clear they know what they're doing. I guess, in some ways, a soldier is a soldier."

Aside from working with other SFOR soldiers, inspecting Russian vehicles proved to be one of the highlights for the scouts. "As scouts, we study vehicles," said Sgt. 1st Class Fernando Lopez, 41,

from Livermore, Calif. "Our job is to learn and know everything about military equipment from other armies. This is the first time I've actually seen the BTR-80, other than in pictures."

Sgt. John H. Silber, 30, from Beeville, Texas, was the fortunate soldier selected to ride in the BTR-80.

When the Russian commander asked what Wasser thought of the Russian soldiers, Wasser said, "They're very professional. They know how to conduct themselves. They handle their weapons correctly. They take orders and they move out. I'm very impressed."

Capt. Vadim Slusakenko, the Russian commander, was equally impressed with the scouts. "Professionals! We understand each other." He said, pointing to himself and Wasser.

The scouts hope to continue the joint patrols. Staff Sgt. Gerald E. Resmond, 25, from Palm Beach, Fla., and Spc. Edward A. Hodgson, 23, from Bridgewater, Mass., both agreed that the operation was a great morale builder.

"It's good getting to know these guys," said Spc. Harry Schroeder, 22, of Reno, Nev. "I grew up learning about the big, mean Russians; now I'm seeing that they're just people too."

"They're soldiers doing their jobs. They're a lot like us."



Capt. Tawanna R. Brown

First Battalion 26th Infantry scouts talk with Russian soldiers upon completing a dismounted patrol.

Medical unit specializes in emergencies

By Staff Sgt. BRENDA BENNER
100th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — The unmistakable sound of whirling rotor blades passes overhead. You notice the bright red cross on the side of the helicopter. Perhaps it is a training mission, or worse, a dire medical emergency. Either way, you can rest assured that you will hear those rotors when you need help the most.

The 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), flying out of the Blue Factory, provides peace of mind for military personnel stationed at base camps or remote observation posts. Their purpose is to do whatever it takes to reach a patient, and to keep them alive.

These medical experts have responded to 22 medevac missions since arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina Oct. 28. Their mission also involves movement of medical supplies and whole blood throughout the theater, including Hungary and Croatia.

"We can take off at a moment's notice," said company commander Maj. John P. Cook, 42, of Sedalia, Miss. "Our aircraft are in hangars, safe from ice, so we are ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can reach any base camp within 30 minutes flight time. Our pilots don't have the option of waiting out bad weather, they have to fly. We have to go if someone is out there dying. I feel totally confident that my pilots will find a way to get to that patient. This theater of operation has the best medevac company watching over it."

There are two possible methods of evac-



Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner

Medical flight instructor Staff Sgt. Michael A. Bowie (left), of the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), teaches medevac hoist operations to Danish engineers with the help of his demonstrator, Pvt. Jan Louborg.

uation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Besides air ambulance support, the NORMEDCOY automatically launches a SISU, an amphibious, six-wheeled, armored personnel carrier with a medevac configuration.

"SISUs are totally equipped for medical emergencies," Cook said. "They can bring a doctor or a nurse along inside them. While in transit, we're in constant communication with the Norwegian medical personnel from our aircraft. We both arrive at the same point. If the helicopter can't get to the scene, the SISU will continue on and get the patient. We then undergo a patient exchange at a place where we both have access. We then take the patient to the hospital by air from that time on. We work in tandem with each other."

When not on medevac missions, the flight medics spend their spare time reading medical manuals and practicing techniques with life saving equipment.

"Everyone here is highly trained," Cook said. "The pilots, flight medics, and crew chiefs constantly train to be prepared when someone needs us. We want everyone here to take great comfort in knowing that if something happens, we will be there prepared as quickly as possible. That is our entire mission in life. We are totally dedicated to providing emergency health care."

"If our American soldiers are deployed somewhere, I think we should also be there to provide our support even though other nations have medevac capabilities," Staff Sgt Michael A. Bowie said. "I want

to be here to help them."

If a medical emergency occurs and you have no radio access, there is a dedicated emergency MSE line directly to the medevac company: 558-9999.

Military intelligence soldiers go to school

By Sgt. JANET S. PETERS
350th MPAD

When the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion came to Bosnia-Herzegovina in November, they inherited two missions from the outgoing 205th MI Bde. — provide tactical intelligence for Task Force Eagle and attend school.

On Dec. 9, a dozen members of the 101st traveled to Tuzla to visit Pazar Elementary School. Their purpose was to continue a tradition of service and cultural exchange.

"The 205th established this relationship in early 1996," said Capt. Kent L.

Webber, logistics officer in charge for the 101st. "When we inherited their military mission we also decided to continue their sponsorship of the school. We're not only interested in helping with donations from our family support group, we're also interested in learning from them about the rich Bosnian culture."

During their visit, the soldiers met with Principal Emin Sisic and several teachers at the school to discuss their needs. After a short tour to several classrooms, the soldiers unloaded boxes of clothing donated by their families back home in Germany. Exuberant

school children were more than eager to help.

"It was a very positive experience," said Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Mark Volk. "Being able to interact with people, especially the kids, is one of the most rewarding things we can do here."

Sisic told his guests that 10 percent of their 561 students are without parents and very poor. He is attempting to teach the children to work, have initiative and earn the goodwill donations.

"They have better living now and have cheered up," Sisic said. "Before the Dayton Agreement the situation was much, much worse — dangerous."



Spc. J. Craig Pickett

Swedish exchange soldiers exit an M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle at Camp Dobol after they spent the day with members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry. The soldiers were given a ride to checkpoints in the area.

Scouts work with Swedes

By Spc. J. CRAIG PICKETT
350th MPAD

CAMP DOBOL — Show and tell isn't just for school children. It's for soldiers as well. Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry soldiers, brought out some of their equipment for visiting soldiers from the Swedish Battalion.

"Monthly, we exchange 15 soldiers from the Swedish Battalion and 15 of ours," said 2nd Lt. John M. Grantz, 24. "We review some of the differences and similarities in combat and peacekeeping techniques and tactics.

"The big thing is to show them our vehicles and weapon systems," said Grantz, a native of Spotsylvania, Pa.

The first vehicle they looked at was the M981 FIST V, the fire support element's vehicle that typically fires cop-head missiles.

"We focus on capabilities of the equipment and the vehicle," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Medina, the fire support non-commissioned officer from Lake Guajataca Quebradillas, Puerto Rico.

"The soldiers seem pretty satisfied and happy about it (the exchange)."

Swedish soldiers also had an opportunity to see an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank.

For some, it was a first. "We haven't any tanks in Latvia.

"Now I know what a tank is and what

it can do," said Lance Cpl. Evo Svikis, a Latvian soldier who is serving with the Swedish Battalion.

"Now, when I go home, I'll be able to tell about them," he said

And that's the whole idea behind the exchange program — allowing soldiers to see how other soldiers do their job.

"It's a good way to get involved with other member nations of SFOR and it's been a pretty good morale boost for the troops," Grantz said.

After the tour of Camp Dobol, Grantz and members of Company C took the exchange soldiers for a ride in their M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

They rode out to checkpoint Sierra 10 and Rock Observation Post near Camp Dobol. They toured the mess tent, living quarters and various fighting positions.

Svikis said the Bradleys would be effective in battle and had impressive weaponry, but found the back to be cramped and noisy.

Judging by the smiles on the soldiers' faces though, it was evident that they enjoyed their ride.

At the end of the day, Grantz said, "I've learned that people are pretty much the same everywhere. Their system is very similar to ours."

With this Swedish unit fast becoming the sister unit of Company C, the men are looking forward to more exchanges.

New rotation improves checkpoint conditions

By Spc. J. CRAIG PICKETT
350th MPAD

CHECKPOINT W30 — Checkpoint Whiskey-Three-Zero has risen to new heights with the changing of the guard.

Each rotation of soldiers taking over the checkpoint continues to improve force protection levels and the comforts of life.

"We've restructured the entire force protection to our battalion standards," said Staff Sgt. Rob J. Canarios, of 1st Platoon, Team B, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment. They have also added more concertina wire, replaced old trip flares and increased the lighting to give a better view at night.

"Our main purpose is to allow freedom of movement," said Canarios, 32, from Seattle, Wash. "It's also to make sure contraband, such as small arms and grenades, aren't transported across the zone of separation."

The checkpoint is located in the ZOS on route Mississippi.

Soldiers monitor it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, promoting freedom of movement.

"Whenever a civilian comes up, a translator is called to the gate and makes it clear they can pass through the ZOS," Canarios said.

When a convoy comes through the checkpoint, the guard notes the number of vehicles and personnel, where the convoy is coming from, and where it is headed.

All of this information is logged and could be useful in case an incident occurs.

Taft said they alternate shifts. "No one gets stuck with the graveyard shift at night, and no one gets the best shift during the day. It rotates everyday. You get a night shift, then a day shift. It works out best for everybody."

The dining facility is the center of most activity. Soldiers congregate to talk, eat and watch movies.

Food is brought to the checkpoint once in the morning and again in the evening.

The logistical support vehicle that brings the meals also ferries troops back and forth to Camp Demi so they can take showers, shop at the PX and use the phones.

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from page 1

in the battalion's daily BUBs, enlisted soldiers put out the same information captains and majors brief twice-a-day at division headquarters. "Why not?" said Hunt. "Say I'm taken out of the loop for some reason. These soldiers are all leaders. That's our philosophy. All I do is make sure the information is straight and correct and the soldiers are comfortable giving a briefing."

"Power-down impresses me," said Sgt. Enrique Cardenas, a Btry. D Avenger team chief from Branson, Mo. "Usually it's the job of the leader to throw out all that thunder; it's hard for him to share it. Power-down keeps everyone informed. I could be killed, and my gunner, a specialist, can step up. It takes away a weakness."

Spc. Ethan M. Weeks, a driver from Lockport, N.Y., also assigned to Btry. D, said power-down is a career-booster for him. "What they used to do, they'd take the Joe out of the loop," he said. "Here, in our convoys, everyone gives a safety briefing. For someone like me, that's real nice. Now I'm more prepared for the next level."

Another benefit, Cardenas said, is that sharing the responsibility makes soldiers think more. "Before, things were just dictated. Soldiers weren't retaining information, because they knew they would be told again."

Sharing information and responsibility is one way the air defenders stay sharp. Another is doing a job — even if it's not a traditional air defense mission — day in and day out and boning up on common task training during long guard shifts.

"As far as ADA skills, we don't get to do much of that," said Capt. Brian M. Brandt, Battery B commander and St. Petersburg, Fla., native. "We're doing a lot of individual soldier training. We're learning infantry skills, and by doing QRF with the Brad-



Spc. Aaron Reed

Pfc. Patrick M. Kelley, a scout with HHB, 4-3 ADA, keeps a close eye on his section of the Eagle Base perimeter from Observation Post Quebec.

leys, it enables the soldiers to keep up their skills with those."

Brandt said that, after recovery and leave time, it would take only 4-6 weeks to retrain his soldiers for their wartime mission. "We're doing about 75 percent of what we normally do," he said. "We do have the Stingers (a man-portable surface-to-air missile system) out here and the soldiers practice

uploading, using the IFF (identification, friend or foe) system, and so on. Any retraining would just be time spent going out and doing some platoon exercises."

But for some members of the battalion, their military occupational specialties are only memories.

Take Sgt. Larney Hoking for instance. A food service supervisor from Marietta, Ga., Hoking now works as a scout in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. "I had no choice," he said, while on guard at Observation Post Quebec last week.

"I had to adapt and overcome quickly. Our mission

right now is to guard this airfield. It's the only one we've got in this part of the country, and we have to make sure no one comes through the perimeter."

Pfc. Patrick M. Kelley, an early warning system operator from Reno, Nev., also is working as a scout. "For me, since I got to Germany, this is all I've

been doing," he said.

Kelley said there is a bright side to not being

able to do the job he signed up for. "All we can have out here at the OP is military literature, so we do a lot of studying. And between the gym and dismounted patrols, you keep in pretty good shape."

Hoking added that not being able to practice his military profession has had a big impact on him. "I'm definitely affected; I think all the cooks are," he said. "When we get back, we might not want to cook anymore."

Sgt. Ian P. Bush, a Btry. B headquarters squad leader manning a M2 Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicle at the Eagle Base West Gate, said the variety of jobs he gets to do keeps

him from getting complacent.

"One week is Bradley week, the next week we'll rove, and the week after that we'll move to a different position," he said. "It's a good way to judge how long you've been here."

Bush, a Mineville, N.Y., native, said superior planning and training before the battalion's deployment helped the soldiers adapt to their unorthodox role in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"It's the commander's intent that this operation is primarily NCO-run," he said. "The officers issue orders and it's up to the NCOs to see that the mission is accomplished."

Bush said he thinks enlisted soldiers can't help taking a greater leadership role. "We've got young specialists doing the jobs of junior NCOs — and they're doing great."

"The 4-3 ADA family support program makes doing a tough job a lot easier. The family support group back in the rear is great — they send us newsletters so we don't lose touch with what's going on back home. Our families have been really understanding. The battalion itself is like a family.

"When we get back, we might not want to cook anymore."

— Sgt. Larney Hoking
