

THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

Task Force 1-26 ready to rumble

Capt. TAWANNA R. BROWN
350th MPAD

It's 8 p.m. A fuel truck has overturned and exploded on Tuzla Air field, leaving 80 soldiers aboard a C-130 stranded, circling above

the runway. The aircraft has serious mechanical problems and is dangerously low on fuel.

Route Skoda is the only available landing area, but first it must be cleared of traffic.

The Task Force 1-26 battle captain activates Camp Dobol's quick reaction force.

Team Delta's 2nd Platoon receives the alert, and within three minutes tank platoon leader 2nd Lt.

Kelly E. Schneider reports to the task force battle desk. Within five minutes, Schneider has the mission and leaves to brief his platoon.

It's just an exercise, but it tests the task force's ability to mass and move a force quickly in response to a crisis. In an operation where actions and reactions are often unpredictable, the QRF is critical.

"In the back of your head, you're always thinking 'it's an exercise,'" said Pvt. Conan J. Currigan, 21. "But you never know, so you basically just do your job."

As the platoon leader and tank commander,

See **DOBOL**,
page 12



Task Force 1-26 Quick Reaction Force prepares for another mission.

Combat Camera
55th Signal Company

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Infantrymen save life

By Sgt. TIM PINKHAM
350th MPAD

OMERBEGOVACA — It was a day Pfc. Michael D. Buchanan and Pfc. Isidro A. Martinez will never forget.

It started when an explosion rippled the ground Dec. 20 near Observation Post 9, located in the town of Omerbegovaca outside Brcko.

A few minutes later, two civilian men ran up to the OP's south gate and told Pfc. Justin D. Miller and Pvt. David A. Thrailkill that two women had just been shot and wounded. With the aid of translator Admir Smajlovic, the soldiers learned one of the men was the son of one of the women and

See **MEDAL**, page 12

Talon survey says

A recent issue of The Talon included a survey asking Task Force Eagle soldiers to tell us what they think. Here are some examples of what they had to say:

“To my pleasant surprise, I found an article about two of my soldiers in The Talon. Thanks for writing such a wonderful article for the rest of Task Force Eagle to read.”

“Air Force is here too. You should focus more on us sometimes. It’s almost like we aren’t even here. Everyone knows about the Army, but what about us?”

“Please publish MWR schedule and special events.”

“Great publication — just try and give it a little more feeling that we’re a ‘TEAM’ here in Bosnia.”

“The fold-out poster/center is great.”

“The ‘What they’re saying’ portion is useless political rhetoric; you should use the space for better purposes.”

Send us your opinions; we’re still listening.

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

In the two months that have gone by since the transfer of authority, we have performed our role as guardians of peace admirably and with honor.

However, an enemy lurks in our midst. This foe is not an external threat, it is a state of mind that we must continually rededicate ourselves to combatting — complacency.

Fighting complacency within ourselves and our troops is a challenge that I want every leader to take seriously. Complacency can creep into all aspects of our operation.

Ensure that proper procedures are followed with regard to vehicle convoys. Drivers should get adequate rest and use ground guides when required.

Cold weather also provides opportunities for inattention to detail. Adequately prepare yourself for the cold, and be especially careful when operating tent or vehicle heaters. Be safe to prevent carbon monoxide poi-



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

soning or the possibility of an accidental fire.

Force protection is the final area I would like to emphasize.

Each soldier is responsible for his sector of operation.

Don’t let your fellow soldiers down. Make sure that your area of responsibility is up to speed. This includes a full accountability of your weapon, ammunition, and personal equipment. These items should be cleaned and properly maintained to guarantee their efficient operation.

There is always a threat here. Keep up with continued improvements to our fighting positions and with personal vigilance, the Task Force will continue to excel and set the standard for others to follow.

IN MY OPINION

By Staff Sgt. PATRICK SUMMERS 100th MPAD

Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed three weeks before I was born.

Even though I never lived at the same time as he, his message of inclusion and acceptance is one that has deeply affected the society and times in which I’ve lived.

Jan. 20 will mark our country’s celebration of his birth. But rather than focusing on the man, hopefully this holiday people will focus on his message of hope for a colorblind society that judges people not by the “color of their skin” but by the “content of their character.”

One need to only look around Bosnia-Herzegovina to see the devastation that can be caused when ethnic and racial hatred dic-

tate people’s actions.

America is far from perfect, but that should not stop us from trying to understand and respect each other as individuals who share the same sense of community and citizenship.

The Army has demonstrated that racial differences can be transcended and virtually ignored when people work toward a common goal.

We should challenge ourselves to rise above racial prejudice and refuse to give credence to the bigotry of those who want to divide us through racist words and deeds.

If people expand their minds, work together, and give their fellow citizens a fair shot to prove themselves as individuals, Reverend King’s dream has a chance to become a reality.

THE TALON

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Spc. Cheryl A. Kraning

Overloaded circuits is one of the violations on the fire inspection checklist.

Tent city one fails inspection

By Spc. CHERYL A. KRANING
100th MPAD

EAGLE BASE — They're always on the prowl. They storm living quarters. They search and make notations as startled troops attempt to conceal incriminating evidence.

"We perform inspections to prevent the troops from getting hurt," said Staff Sgt. Steven W. Moomey of the 323rd Firefighters, Engineer Platoon and fire inspector for Task Force Eagle.

"I know they're disappointed they can't have everything they want, but I want them to go home unharmed and alive," Moomey said.

Tent city one failed a safety check recently carried out by the base camp assessment team.

Master Sgt. Don L. Ervin, mayor of Eagle Base, said that when a life support area is red, the entire base camp is red until the deficiencies are corrected.

When setting up a living area in a tent soldiers need to keep a few key things in mind: avoid privacy screens, overloading electrical circuits, hanging objects from the rafters, and overcrowding.

"Almost everything soldiers have is extremely flammable. If a poncho liner catches on fire and falls on someone, it will melt into their skin," said Moomey, 40, from El Dorado, Kan.

A clear view of the entire living area is essential for fire rescue teams.

"Overloading a tent with too many occupants is a big fire hazard. If someone is going to end up being closer than 3 feet from

a kerosene heater they're wrong," Moomey said.

"It takes two minutes for a GP Medium to burn to the ground after igniting. Considering how close the tents are, if one tent bursts into flames, more than likely they all will. If this happens over 600 lives are at risk."

Fire Prevention Inspection Checklist

1. Is there a fire SOP posted near each fire extinguisher?
2. Are occupants trained in evacuation and emergency procedures?
3. Are exits and entrances unlocked and unobstructed?
4. Have fire extinguishers been visually inspected frequently?
5. Are smoking restrictions being enforced within 50 ft?
6. Are electric appliances properly positioned and used (circuits not overloaded)?
7. Are there audible fire alarm devices in place?
8. Is the area well maintained inside and out (free of debris)?
9. Are heaters being fueled outside, away from the tents?
10. Are the heaters clean and being used with metal drip pans?
11. Are fuel cans properly stored away from structures?
12. Are fuel cans properly marked with contents?
13. Is there any cooking being done?
14. Are there flammables stored in living areas (i.e. Coleman fuel, kerosene, etc.)?
15. Are heaters a minimum of 3 ft from combustible objects?

NEWS BRIEFS

We hear you

Thanks to Pfc. Daniel S. Gallagher for telling us about A-Team Maintenance Platoon, 1st Infantry, 77th Armor. We appreciate hearing from soldiers who have pride in their units and the job they are doing in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Sleeping bag exchange

The following are the designated days when sleeping bag exchange will take place each month.

Camp Colt: 2nd and 3rd
Camp McGovern: 4th
Slavonski Brod: 8th and 9th
Eagle Base: 12th - 14th
Ugljevik: 13th
Camp Demi: 15th
Commanche Base: 16th and 17th
Valhalla: 21st
Caisson: 22nd
Guardian Base: 23rd
Camp Bedrock: 24th
Blue Factory: 25th
Camp Dobol: 26th
Steel Castle: 28th and 29th

Big Red One website

Access the new Big Red One website at:

<http://www.1id.army.mil>

Point of contact for the page is Maj. William L. DuPont 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Officer at MSE 551-3351.

Viewpoints wanted

The Talon welcomes viewpoint articles from soldiers in the field. Please drop off a hard copy at our office on the 2nd floor of Bldg. 17, Eagle Base, or send us your viewpoint to:

The Talon
100th MPAD-JIB
APO AE 09789

Mental Health

Help from Division Mental Health is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Meetings are confidential, and easy to access. Soldiers can contact DMH through their chaplain, the world wide web or by MSE.

Bosnia-Herzegovina:
559-2177

Slavonski Brod: 558-5607

<http://freud.readadp.com/1idmentalhealth/index.htm>



Sgt. 1st Class Brian Kappmeyer

Sgt. Bruce MacWhorter, a team leader for the 720th Military Police Battalion, stays in contact with other team members as they provide security for battalion commander Lt. Col. Chris Frels in Bratunac, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Security detail sees big picture

By Sgt. 1st Class BRIAN KAPPMAYER
350th MPAD

CAMP DEMI — Soldiers awaiting the convoy's departure readied equipment, ribbed one another, and composed lyrics in the chill of the mid-morning sun.

Their mission requires these soldiers to bond as a cohesive team — to rely on and trust every member to perform his job if threatening situations arise.

These military policemen serve as the personal security detail for 720th Military Police Battalion commander Lt. Col. Chris Frels.

"This group is much tighter than my last platoon," said Spc. Jason Farrell, from Santa Rosa, Calif. Farrell joined the team in early December, serving as a HMMWV gunner. "We take our jobs seriously."

"You have to get along so you can work together better. After all, we are providing security for the battalion commander," Frels' driver Spc. Gerald Adcock, from Nolanville, Texas, said, acknowledging the importance of the detail's mission.

"We travel almost every day except Sundays, which we try and use as a maintenance and soldier sustainment day," said

B team leader Sgt. Bruce MacWhorter. "She (Frels) likes to visit the troops at other locations and she also meets regularly with city mayors and council members.

Several MPs said they enjoy the assignment because it gives them the opportunity to leave the base camp more often and meet local people.

"We don't do the same daily routine," said squad leader Staff. Sgt. Mitchell Smith, from Milwaukee, Wis. "Working the PSD helps break up the days and makes them go by faster. Some may say the job is dull, but I get to see the big picture involving the factions — which I wouldn't get if I were doing something else."

Frels selected the soldiers just prior to the battalion's arrival in Bosnia-Herzegovina, following their training at Hohenfels, Germany. Several squads rotated as her PSD during the 10-day training period before she selected the squad from the 411th Military Police Company

"She (Frels) is a down-to-earth person," said Adcock who has logged more than 7,000 miles while in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "She is the only lieutenant colonel I know that would get out of the vehicle to help

take off tire chains. But she also lets us know when we are out of line. She is strict but fair."

Threats to the commander's security from outside the detail's influence are always a major concern for the group. MacWhorter said the squad hasn't experienced any real threatening situations. The closest they came to a tense moment was when they confiscated 12 illegally-held rifles from municipal police. However, as security for the battalion commander, the group could — at any time — find themselves in a hostile environment. They also face internal challenges trying to keep up with an independent commander such as Frels, who occasionally ventures away from the security detail.

"We get bent out of shape when she goes out on her own," Schoolcraft said.

"It's hard to tell somebody of higher rank what to do, but she allows us to do that," said Rodgers, explaining the efforts squad members must take in protecting Frels.

If a threatening situation occurs, security personnel have a clear vision of their responsibility. Adcock said, "It's our job to get her out of the direction of fire — her safety comes first."

Communication

Pershing operators work it out

By Staff Sgt. ANNA M. PRUSAITIS
100th MPAD

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia – Technology enables instant communication via satellite. But if you encounter problems, the operator is just a button away.

Unless, you happen to be at Camp Sava North, in which case chances are the operator is sitting just around the corner in a small extension node, S250 expanded shelter carrier.

There are two such shelters set up at Camp Sava North, and run by soldiers from Company C, 17th Signal Battalion. Twenty-five soldiers from the unit based in Kitzingen, Germany, provide tactical telephone communication services to Task Force Pershing headquarters and two other locations in the theater of operation. Company C, is attached to 121st Signal

Battalion in support of Operation JOINT GUARD.

Eleven of the unit members are assigned to TF Pershing while the remainder operate two other SENs, one at Camp Bedrock, and the other at Camp Dobil.

These services include mobile subscriber equipment, defense switching network, and commercial lines for TF Pershing.

Staff Sgt. Kennedy S. Hall, SEN section sergeant, said the link is shot through the Line of Site radio van to the hub node center in Tuzla. "The MSE/V2's are what we have here, they can handle more subscriber customers," the Daytona Beach, Fla., resident said.

In order to provide the best service possible, the SENs are operated by Co. C, troops in 12-hour shifts, every day of the week. Occasionally a wire gets cut, causing the subscriber to lose service. Al-

though the MSE concept is that each subscriber is responsible for running their own wire, Co. C is more than willing to assist. "Our guys are willing and capable of going out and giving them a hand," Hall said.

Pfc. Samson N. Lytle, network switching systems operator said he doesn't mind the 12-hour shift, he's just not used to the snow. "I'm not used to snow at all, I ski but that's about it," the resident of Boulder Creek, Calif., said. The space inside the shelter is limited, which creates a challenge for Lytle being 6'5". "About the only way I can stand up in the shelter is if I bend at the waist," he said.

Soldiers of Co. C, do what they must in order to accomplish their mission and enable the troops of TF Pershing and others to stay in the constant loop of communication.

Gunners find new way to stay warm

By Sgt. JACK SIEMIENIEC
350th MPAD

It's that old "necessity is the mother of invention" story. Long patrols in the turret of a HMMWV — October winds and rain whipping across his face — set Spc. Christopher L. Richard thinking of ways to improve his lot.

The Lafayette, Ind. native, a member of the 258th Military Police Company, 519th MP Battalion, at Camp Colt found a way.

"In about October it started getting chilly, and then the rain started," Richard said. "I knew it wouldn't be good when winter came. I started experimenting with cardboard, behind the gun. It stopped the wind and helped push heat up from the truck."

Military Police gunners spend hours in the open turret of their vehicles as they patrol, provide convoy escorts and maintain checkpoints. As fall turned into winter, sitting behind a MK19, M60 or M2 .50 caliber machine gun in the open has become increasingly uncomfortable.

"My gunner was tired of getting wet, so I got a piece of plexiglas to try and build a rain roof for him," Sgt. John A. Hammons said. "But it didn't



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Sgt. John A. Hammons (left), Spc. Christopher L. Richard and Staff Sgt. David C. Johnson showoff the wind shield they designed.

work because there's no way to fasten it. So I brought it over for Richard and said 'try this.'"

Next, their squad leader, Staff Sgt. David C. Johnson, suggested moving the shield to the front of the gun, attaching it through the predrilled holes already present on up-armored HMMWVs.

The trio's shield is permanently attached at the vehicle's

roof. There are two rectangles, set diagonally, forming a "V." With a narrow space between the two pieces, there is no interference for a weapon mount.

Another gunner, Pfc. Paul D. Skinner, agreed the shield is an improvement. "With the shields, the cold air goes off to the side and up over you. The center heater vent (from inside) is pointed straight at me and

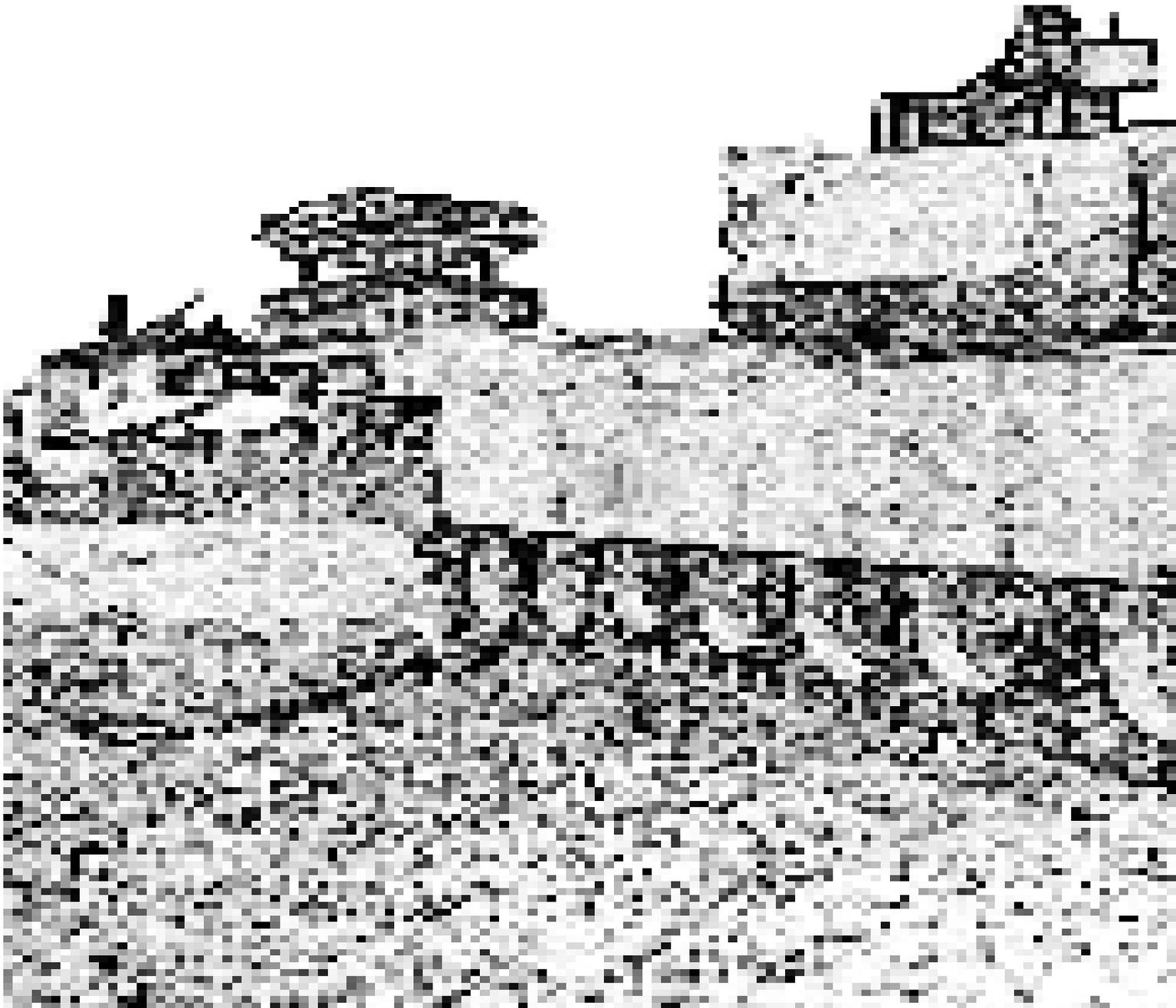
with the shield, it keeps me pretty warm."

Only the 519th's up-armored HMMWVs currently have the shields.

Richard, Hammons and Johnson plan to submit their idea to the Army's Suggestion Award Program and possibly make the shields a standard item for MP vehicles Army-wide.

Operation Joint Guard

December 20, 1996
June 20, 1998



Операция Совместная Охрана



SFOR

MP story

Patrols keep peace

By Sgt. JACK SIEMIENIEC
350th MPAD

"You all right, Wick?"

The thumbs up in response means the HMMWV's gunner, Spc. John M. Surowiecki, is keeping warm.

Surowiecki, 21, is originally from Blaine, Wash., but right now he's a member of the 65th Military Police Company, blasting down a snow and ice-covered road in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Staff Sgt. Scott Beck is his squad leader and the man in charge of this three-vehicle patrol.

The 65th is part of the 519th Military Police Battalion.

The battalion, which calls Fort Polk, La., home, is actually an amalgamation of MP companies put together for this deploy-

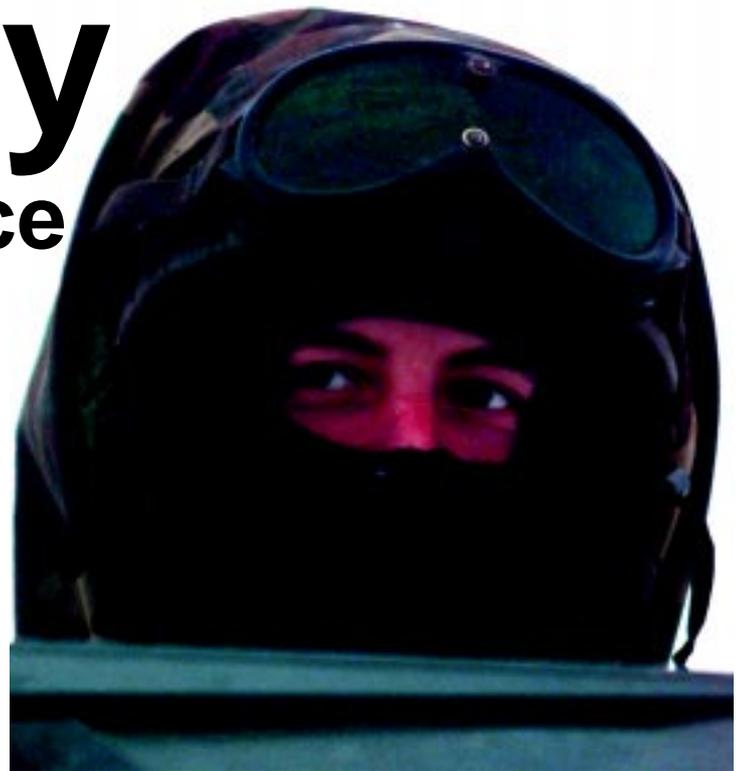
ment: the 65th, from Fort Bragg, the 293rd, from Fort Stewart, Ga., and the 258th, from Fort Polk.

They came to Camp Colt last August to take the place of some of 1st Armored Division's M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank units during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR.

Now it's January and Surowiecki is sitting behind an M60 machine gun in a HMMWV turret. There's no snow falling today, but the temperature is cold and as the afternoon wanes, it's getting colder.

Beck keeps a practiced eye on his gunner, looking out for signs of hypothermia, at the same time watching for illegal checkpoints. During this five-hour patrol, the squad will cross the inter-entity border line and its surrounding zone of separation several times.

Beck's squad is



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Spc. John M. Surowiecki takes a break from his turret gunner duties while on patrol.

made up entirely of soldiers who volunteered to join the 65th when it was notified it would be deployed. As is not uncommon for MPs, all the soldiers have been deployed before.

The third MP in the HMMWV is the

driver, Sgt. Arvin K. Fant, from Charlotte, N.C. Referring to the IEBL and how former warring parties live so close to each other, he said, "It's an amazing place — the ZOS."

Time and miles disappear as the patrol moves through towns and countryside. On this day, not many civilian vehicles brave the weather. Pedestrians make their way along the edge of the road.

The MP vehicles pull over many times to readjust and tighten the chains their tires wear for traction.

The 519th is responsible for an area roughly 480 square miles across the northern portion of the U.S. sector of Multinational division north.

It all adds up to about 150 missions and 30,000 miles a week; the battalion's vehicles have racked up over 550,000 miles since deploying five months ago.

The squad has been out about three hours now and they pull off to the side of the road. It's almost dark in the late afternoon of winter.

Beck's soldiers switch off, giving the man in the turret a break from the cold. Fant pulls on another layer of clothes, climbs up behind the M60 machine gun and the patrol hits the road again.



Sgt. Jack Siemieniec

Sgt. Arvin Fant visits with children along the patrol route during a stop as Sgt. Panfilo De Los Reyes looks on.

Caisson gets better with age

By Cpl. LEN BUTLER
100th MPAD

Soldiers in outlying camps can find life both demanding and lonely. Adequate living conditions are crucial to maintaining morale, leading to the success of the peace-keeping mission.

American troops of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, based in the NORDPOL Brigade area of Camp Caisson have seen many changes.

Capt. Tim Daugherty, the commander of the battery, said the conditions of the Caisson base camp when his battery arrived were horrendous. Located next to the Swedish base camp of Tor, Caisson was a virtual mud pit. Tents had dirt floors. The soldiers would go days without being able to take a shower, and morale facilities were nonexistent.

Sgt. Eric D. Stevenson, of Tuskegee, Ala. agreed. "When we first got here, the camp looked terrible," he said. "But with the help of our chain of command and all of our guys pitching in and working together, the camp was brought up to the standards that we needed to maintain high morale."

In addition to the soldiers' hard work, Brown and Root was brought in to upgrade the camp. The mud problem was solved when the sagging tents were reinforced and raised. Massive loads of rock were spread about the camp, and wooden walkways were created.

"The ability to come into a base camp and drastically raise the quality of living for the soldiers is a real boost

to the soldiers' morale," Daugherty said. "But we wanted to do more than just improve their living conditions."

Inside an old maintenance building that is used to service and repair Btry. B's 155mm Howitzers, spare rooms served as a perfect place to further enhance the transformation taking place. The space is now filled with morale, welfare and recreation equipment.

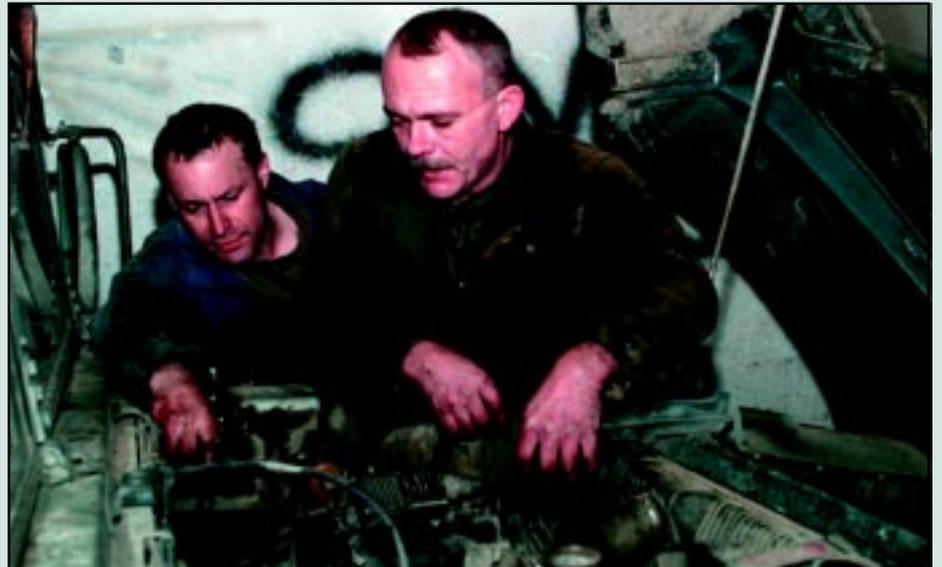
Until recently, soldiers could not make phone calls to loved ones back in Germany and the United States. However, all of that changed with the installation of AT&T telephones in a designated calling room inside the maintenance building.

In another room, a new television and videocassette recorder were in-

stalled to keep the soldiers abreast of what is going on outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina. A popcorn machine was brought in to complete the viewing experience.

"I've seen how it was before 1/7 FA arrived and the changes that can be seen now," said Sgt. Charles W. Brigham of 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts Army National Guard. A native of Falmouth, Mass., Brigham maintains Btry. B's vehicles and keeps the soldiers' morale high by making supply, PX and mail runs for the battery.

"We arrived here in August," Brigham said. "There is no comparison between what we had to deal with before 1/7 got here, and what it's like now."



Cpl. Len Butler

Sgt. Richard A. Washburn (left) and Sgt. Charles W. Brigham work on a HMMWV at Camp Caisson.



Cpl. Len Butler

Section 2, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, based at Camp Vahala, set up for a dry fire exercise.

NORDPOL welcomes U.S. artillery

By Cpl. LEN BUTLER
100th MPAD

Esprit de corps is a well-exercised concept in the NORDPOL Brigade sector of Bosnia-Herzegovina where U.S. Army units, Nordic and Polish battalions work together to ensure SFOR's success.

Battery B, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, and soldiers from the Texas, Indiana and Massachusetts Army National Guard augment the NORDPOL Brigade with artillery support. Joint training missions including NORDPOL elements and American units are common. The result has been a truly multinational force within SFOR's larger multinational operation.

Staff Sgt. Brad D. Posey, 35, of Tarboro, N.C. said the NORDPOL Brigade has no artillery assets of its own participating in Operation JOINT GUARD. "The units of the NORDPOL Brigade are comprised of maneuver battalions, such as infantry," Posey said.

Battery B is assigned to Camp Caisson, next to the Swedish Battalion at Camp Tor, and Camp Vahala, home of the Danish Battalion. Fire support teams from the Massachusetts National Guard are spread across a 280 square kilometer area, lending forward

observer support to all NORDPOL camps.

"They are the eyes of artillery," Posey said. "Every patrol that goes out, a FST element accompanies it, whether it be tanks or infantry."

Battery B commander Tim Daugherty said there has been a great deal of partnership with the Scandinavian, Danish and Polish battalions. "It has been interesting to observe how other countries do business," Daugherty said.

Daugherty said joint operations with the NORDPOL Brigade include patrols, small-arms range exercises and physical training.

Interaction between Btry. B and NORDPOL units doesn't stop at the end of the day. "All of the guys from the Scandinavian countries speak English," Daugherty said. "That's what language they use when they can't understand someone's native language."

"What is interesting to me is that Americans are just as curious about our culture

as we are of theirs," said Pvt. Thony Kankare, 26, of Jaonkopimg, Sweden. "It's been a great experience for everyone."

Warrant Officer M.J. Wade, 38, of Leander, Texas is with the Texas National Guard's 139th Field Artillery (target acquisition) Battery. He remembered how he became friends with Danish soldiers at Camp Vahala.

"When we arrived here, we had salsa and pico de gallo, which we brought with us from Texas," Wade said. "We had no place to store it, so

we 'hid' the sauces in the refrigerator for safe keeping, unaware that anything stored in the refrigerator was fair game for everyone. The next time we went back for it, the stuff was almost gone, and there were Danes running around the mess hall, drinking enormous amounts of water, fanning their tongues, their eyes watering from the heat of the sauce. It was one of the funniest sights I've seen," Wade said.

"Danes were running around the mess hall, drinking enormous amounts of water, fanning their tongues..."

—Warrant Officer M.J.Wade



Cpl. Len Butler

Pvt. Thony Kankare (left) of Company C, Swedish Battalion and Cpl. Joseph Holmes of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery allow a Swedish armored personnel carrier to pass through the gate at Camp Tor/Caisson.



Combat engineers show off new gear

Spc. Aaron Reed

Spc. Darick Majka, a ground sapper with Company B, 9th Engineer Battalion, demonstrates the "French claw" mine removal device using an inert anti-tank mine at Camp Bedrock.

By Spc. AARON R. REED
100th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard, chief of engineers and commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, got a chance to view some of the newest equipment being fielded by his combat engineers during a two-day visit here last week.

Soldiers of Company B, 9th Engineer Battalion demonstrated the "mini-flail" and a device the soldiers called a "French claw."

The mini-flail, a remote-controlled John Deere chassis powered by a 3-cylinder diesel engine, is designed to clear a foot path 42 inches wide; either by detonating anti-

personnel mines with flailing chains, or by reversing the direction of the chains and sweeping the mines out of the way.

"It can take hit after hit from anti-personnel mines," said 2nd Lt. Glen R. Drysdale, a Co. B platoon leader from Allen Park, Mich. "In a video filmed in Kuwait, the mini-flail detonated 50 'toe-poppers.'

Cpl. Robert L. Frye, a team leader who operated the mini-flail from the safety of his armored personnel carrier, called the mine-clearing machine a nice piece of equipment. "It needs a little bit of work," Frye said. "But it sure beats me going out there on foot and probing."

The French claw, a collapsible aluminum grappling hook, was adopted by the

engineers after an officer observed French combat engineers using it during a training course. Unlike the mini-flail, the claw is used to remove mines from a route. After moving the mines to the side of the route with the claw, engineers would mark them for later disposal or detonation.

Ballard praised the ingenuity and motivation of the engineers, and said that the mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina has pointed to the need for certain skills and tools.

"We have a deficit in dealing with mines, and we're continuing to work some solutions," Ballard said. "But in the meantime, I think we're dealing with it very effectively under some very difficult conditions."

Muslims begin Ramadan, month-long fasting

By Sgt. ANDREW AQUINO
350th MPAD

Now that Thanksgiving leftover meals are but a memory, Christmas decorations have come down and the chow hall has stopped serving egg nog, many soldiers believe that the holidays have come to an end.

For a number of soldiers and many people outside the concertina wire, the holidays are not over quite so soon.

In fact, for some, this month is a time for one of the most

meaningful periods of the year.

Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, began Dec 10. Starting on the ninth month of the lunar calendar it will continue for 30 days, or until the beginning of the next phase of the new moon.

According to Staff Sgt. Morae Rezaei, technical inspector for the 7th Battalion, 159th Aviation regiment at Eagle Base, this is a time of physical, mental and spiritual cleansing.

"Ramadan is a time to get closer to God and forget the bad things you are doing," Rezaei

said. "You are to leave all the things of the body; anything that you might enjoy."

From before sunrise until sunset, adherents to the faith abstain from any form of eating, drinking, smoking or sex.

"That is not to torture yourself," he said. "Almost anybody who is healthy can go without food for a time."

According to the Iranian-born U.S. soldier, spiritual lessons are learned through fasting. It teaches patience and the importance of rising above physical needs.

"This is especially a time for remembering God and all the good things he has done for you," he said.

The meaning behind Ramadan is to celebrate God's delivery of the Koran, the holy book of Islam, to the prophet Mohammed almost 1,400 years ago. Mohammed, who lived from 570 - 622 A.D., practiced the month-long fast for the last nine years of his life.

Followers of the faith emulate his experiences as daily living examples of the Muslim faith.

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the husband of the other. The other man had been working on a house in the area.

"I had talked to the older lady a couple days earlier," Smajlovic said. "I knew she was weak and skinny. I knew every second was important."

When the news arrived at the gate, Buchanan was sleeping following guard duty, while Martinez was in PT clothes after returning from the gym. But within minutes they were dressed and joining their squad in two M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles headed for the explosion site.

The Bradleys halted at checkpoint 30, and the soldiers went the rest of the way on foot. The explosion site was near a route patrolled each day by soldiers from OP9.

Platoon leader 2nd Lt. Chase A. Freeman stopped his soldiers about 40 feet short of where the injured women lay at the fork of two paths. By this time the

**Martinez**

squad had been informed the casualties were the result of land mines. Although the Bosnian men at the scene indicated they wanted the soldiers to move straight down the path and pull the women to safety, Freeman said he did not want to put his soldiers at risk.

Using hand signals, Freeman communicated to the Bosnians to pull the women to his soldiers. They did so using a circuitous route, rather than straight down the path.

First aid was administered immediately. Buchanan worked on the older woman, Ana Brkic, while Martinez treated the younger woman, Ana's daughter-in-law, Verka Brkic. Ana's left leg was blown off below the knee; Verka's right foot was badly injured.

Ten minutes after Martinez started first aid, Verka Brkic was carried to a Bradley and taken to OP9.

Ana Brkic was more seriously injured and difficult to treat. Describing her injury, Buchanan said, "Blood was flowing out of her like Niagara Falls." He gave Ana an intravenous injection, but she pulled out the IV and started going into shock. After being stabilized, she was taken to

the second Bradley.

Minutes earlier, medical personnel from the McGovern Base aid station arrived at OP9 and started treating the younger woman. After the older woman arrived, both casualties were transported to the helipad at McGovern Base.

**Buchanan**

A helicopter flew the women to the 21st Combat Support Hospital at the Blue Factory near Tuzla. Ana Brkic died shortly after arriving; Verka Brkic was admitted for surgery.

"We did our best to save their lives," Freeman said. "We had trained for it in Hohenfels. When it happened in real life, we did what we were trained to do. We executed and did the mission. We brought our guys back without being hurt."

Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs awarded Buchanan and Martinez Army Commendation Medals. The soldiers are with Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment.

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Schneider, 23, a native of Denver, Colo. said he is "constantly balancing speed against safety."

As soon as the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks leave the gate, the balancing act begins as drivers maneuver 70 tons of steel over narrow, icy roads, competing with compact vehicles whose drivers rarely yield.

"You've got to be careful, especially in really bad weather," said Pfc. Ramon Persuad, the driver of the lead tank.

The night of this QRF mission, Persuad, 20, from Richmond, Va., must negotiate through sleet and fog, with less than 10 feet of visibility.

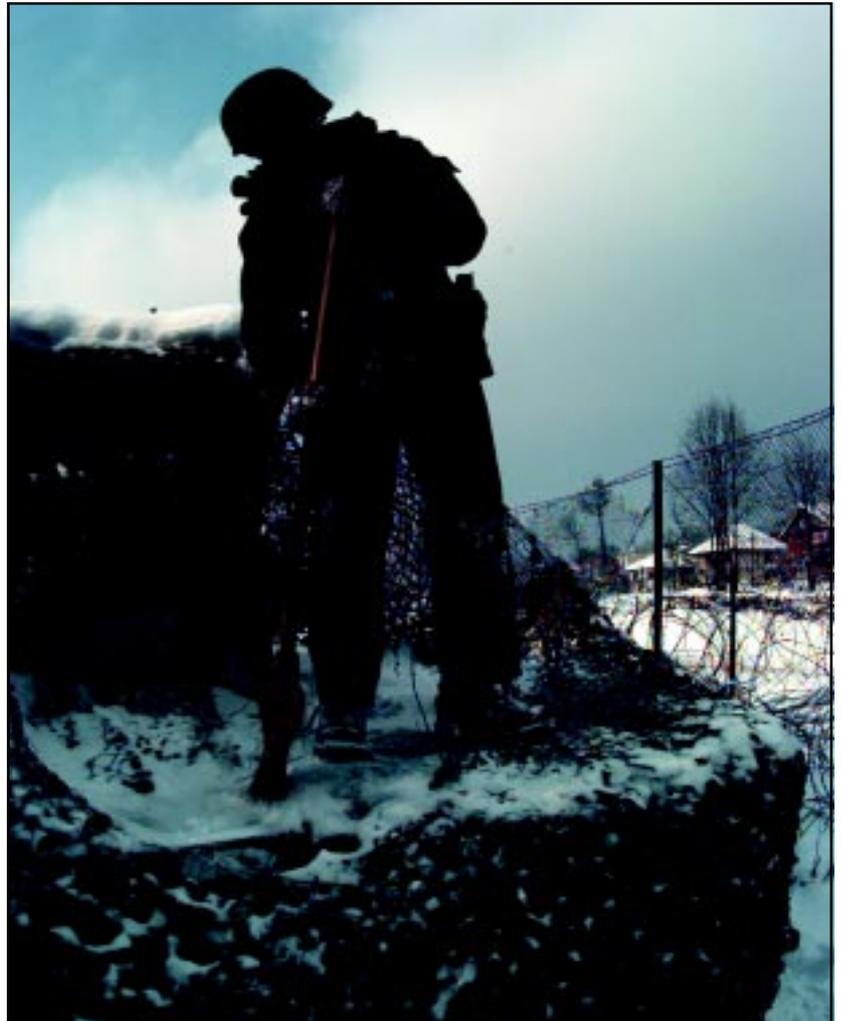
"Everyday is a close call," said Currigan, agreeing with Persuad, describing the reckless driving of some local motorists. "You're always driving defensively. It's not easy."

This night everything is in sync, and the tanks reach their objective within minutes of the alert.

Schneider radios the task force net to report mission completion.

"The mission was a success," said Task Force operations sergeant, Master Sgt. Phillip Rivera from New York, "Everything was clicking."

But as far as Sgt. Tim Rancore, 33, is concerned, the mission isn't over until the after actions reports are completed, the vehicles are serviced and "the horses are dried and put away."

*Spc. J. Craig Pickett*

Spc. John A. Walsh, 21, from Fitzgerald, Ga., sweeps away the night deposit of snow at Observation Post A1. The OP at Eagle Base is manned 24 hours a day and overlooks Route Hawk.