

TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

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McGOVERN FIRE... After helping fight the flames that engulfed McGovern Base's Brown and Root living quarters, soldiers move out of the way to make way for fire-fighting vehicles that eventually put out the fire before it could spread.



Photo by Capt. James Billings

McGovern fire unites forces

By Spc. David S. Boe
364th MPAD

McGOVERN BASE—Firefighters from the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation joined forces with Stabilization Force soldiers late in the evening on Jan. 22 to help extinguish a fire raging out of control at McGovern Base's Brown and Root living quarters.

McGovern Base came face to face with the realities of fire hazards when flames

destroyed three tents and damaged several offices in an adjacent building.

Three soldiers were treated for mild smoke inhalation at the base aid station and released. No Brown and Root employees were injured.

It could have been much worse.

Spreading quickly through the wood and canvas, the fire might have claimed more damage had it not been for the quick reaction of U.S. soldiers and

civilian firefighters, said Capt. Wade Foote, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, and McGovern Base Mayor.

"The alarm and reaction were excellent," said Foote. "The civilian firefighters from Brcko and Gornj Rahic should be applauded for a fast reaction to the fire with their vehicles. They helped us keep the building

See McGOVERN page 12

Cohen said it...

Quotes from the new Secretary of Defense William Cohen, confirmed by Congress January 22.

"While we are not and cannot be the world's policeman, neither can we become a prisoner of world events, isolated and tucked safely away in a continental cocoon."

"The courage, loyalty and willingness of our men and women in uniform to put their lives at stake is a national treasure that should never be taken for granted," he said.

"When our forces are sent to fight, clear objectives must be set to which we are firmly committed and which we have the means to achieve decisively."

"When our ships patrol strategic waters, our aircraft fly distant skies and our soldiers deploy on exercises, they are not merely on call in the event something happens. By those very actions, something is happening; they are influencing the views and decisions of foreign countries, be they friends in need of assurance or foes in need of deterrence. Our forces in their daily operations are shaping the world, not merely waiting to respond to the crisis of the moment."

(To President Bill Clinton) "We share a conviction that America can best defend her national security interests abroad by uniting behind a bipartisan security policy at home. And your decision to reach across party lines for this appointment respects the desires of the American people for an approach to public policy that is free of political rancor."

"I expect the SFOR mission will be terminated at the end of 18 months, and I plan for our forces to be out by the end of that period."

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

As our soldiers in Bosnia are moving from NATO's peace implementation phase into the stabilization phase. I would like to thank the soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines for their contributions which have brought us to this point.

I also extend thanks to the multinational soldiers whose expertise has contributed to the success of the endeavor. Through their joint efforts and hard work, we reached this point.

The United States has the most successful military in the world and the reason for this success is leadership. It is the strong leadership of the officers and noncommissioned officers that has brought about the success of the IFOR mission.

As the operation continues, so must the leadership roles. Senior NCOs are tasked to continue the normal coun-

selling of soldiers and never lose focus on NCO evaluation reports. They must give their soldiers that pat on the back when earned and deserved. The officers as well, must continue to focus on officer evaluation reports.



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

The success of the SFOR mission is not luck. It is due to the sustained efforts and professionalism throughout the ranks from the highest ranking general to lowest ranking private. Their dedication to duty is working to ensure the peace.

I commend the troops for continuing the tradition of excellence.

CARC HAZARDS

As vehicle markings change from Implementation Force to Stabilization Force (completion deadline is Feb. 3), soldiers need to remember safety and be aware of the risks associated with the task. Chemical agent resistant coating is the standard paint for Army tactical equipment. It lasts four times longer than ordinary paints and doesn't soak up chemical agents.

CARC and other paints have certain hazards. They are flammable, can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin, can irritate eyes and skin, and cause headaches, dizziness and intoxication. Large doses can lead to unconsciousness and death. Continual overexposure can permanently damage vital organs.

Here are some safety tips for painting:

Flammability — Don't paint near flame, heat or spark producers.

Ventilation — Handle paint only in well-ventilated areas or outdoors. Use spray booths and ventilation systems designed for paints, but painting operations must be kept away from other ventilation systems and air intakes. Vehicles should be parked away from painting structures to ensure vapors aren't trapped.

Personal protective equipment — Wear eye splash protection, clothing that fully covers the skin and appropriate gloves. Shower after painting.

Outdoor painting — Spot painting is highly encouraged and may not require respiratory protection when natural ventilation is adequate and confined space conditions do not exist.

Indoor painting — Highly discouraged given our tactical environment setup.

CARC users will need a respirator. If a respirator is required for a particular chemical, that information is on the material safety data sheet which provides guidelines on respirator type and ventilation requirements. Respirators must fit properly and be in good condition, must be inspected monthly and never be altered or modified. Finally, respirators should be used in well ventilated areas, properly fitted with no leaks, and cleaned after each day's use.-- R.A. Mente, Safety Director

THE TALON

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Big shoes to fill

Stepping into a mission previously filled by an entire division left 1st Bn. 7th Field Artillery with...

Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner
100th MPAD

EAGLE BASE — Since arriving three months ago, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, has filled some mighty large shoes. Although just one battalion, these soldiers have assumed the previous mission of an entire division and two battalions. This has presented unique challenges for all soldiers—from the Tactical Operations Center to the firing points out in the field.

The demands of the daily operation have increased, keeping the TOC staff busy collecting and positioning pieces of the overall field artillery puzzle.

Capt. Brent M. Parker, 30, of Gardner, Kan., a battle captain and the assistant operations officer, is confident of his battalion's abilities under this expanded role.

"We have an interesting challenge here," Parker said. "This is a battalion sized TOC, but we are providing fire support to the same coverage area as previously covered by those before us. We've assumed all their sectors of responsibilities and have the same mission as the artillery units under the 1st Armored Division. Our TOC is now acting as the division artillery headquarters for the entire Task Force."

The main function of the TOC is to be the center of all incoming information. Data is collected from the fire support element, then plans for allocation of assets to support contingency missions are developed. A constant influx of information also comes

from the soldiers out in the field.

"Basically, we can be thought of as an information hub," Parker said.

"We collect information regarding resettlements, protests, weapons storage sites, and celebratory fire," said intelligence NCOIC, Staff Sgt. Ray W. Trent, 34, of Lynchburg, Va. "We must keep our units informed of activities in their areas. Situational awareness is critical. Our soldiers collect information while they're at fire positions, on convoys; constantly keeping their eyes open.

We don't actively go out with the sole intent of searching for intelligence information. Our mission is to provide indirect fire support."

Through all collected intelligence information, the TOC controls all the guns and their movements.

"We place them around the theater to support specific missions while still covering the base camps," Parker said.

Due to the expanded mission, all portions of daily operations are magnified. Commonplace tasks such as resupply, and mail runs have a new twist.

"We must stay very focused on everything that happens in the entire theater. Everyone has risen to the challenges," Parker said. "There's something new happening all the time, so we continue to learn. We've been successful in coming in and performing much bigger than we really are. All of our soldiers are doing a great job."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner

Staff Sgt. Ray W. Trent, intelligence NCOIC for 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, updates the mission map at the battalion's tactical operations center.

NEWS BRIEFS

State Tax Benefits

While troops assigned in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia received federal tax benefits for their time in those countries, service members from six states must still file state income tax returns.

Unless state legislatures adopt changes retroactive to the beginning of Operation Joint Endeavor, deployed residents of Alabama, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oregon and Pennsylvania are subject to state tax.

Service members should contact their unit tax or legal assistance officers if they have questions about state tax requirements.

SFOR Nears Ceiling

About 8,900 U.S. troops are now in Bosnia, including two engineer battalions dismantling IFOR base camps.

Operation Joint Endeavor gave way to Operation Joint Guard Dec. 20. NATO's 60,000-member implementation force completed its mission, and a 31,000-strong stabilization force is deployed for the next phase of the alliance peace effort.

The United States committed 8,500 troops to the 18-month stabilization mission. "Our forces in Bosnia are part of a 32-nation coalition continuing to provide security and stability in Bosnia as work on civil reconstruction and other rebuilding continues," said Ken Bacon, Pentagon spokesman.

The SFOR mission is to prevent resumption of hostilities, maintain a secure environment and provide selective support to civilian organizations. SFOR troops are patrolling zones of separation, inspecting weapon storage sites, manning checkpoints and conducting liaison meetings with local government officials and other civil affairs missions, officials said. SFOR troops have conducted 120 inspections since Dec. 20, Bacon said.

During the year-long IFOR mission, NATO forces seized 758 tons of weapons and ammunition, Pentagon officials said. To date, SFOR seizures have been minimal, averaging less than three small arms per day and limited ammunition.

Compiled from Armed Forces Information Service

Reup goals met

Soldiers reap rewards

Re-enlisting on the Brcko Bridge, Spc. Justin A. Bishop, at right with arm raised, repeats the oath of enlistment spoken by his platoon leader, 2nd Lt. Greg J. Battles, at left with arm raised. Holding the American flag is Sgt. Corey M. McFadden, while Capt. John W. Reynolds, commander of C Company, Task Force 1-18, stands next to Bishop.



Photo by Sgt. Tim Pinkham

By Sgt. TIM PINKHAM
350th MPAD

McGOVERN BASE – Being an infantry soldier in Bosnia-Herzegovina means lots of guard duty and patrols, even in cold and rainy weather. For many, the living conditions are cramped and the hours are long.

Given the hardships of deployment, it might be reasonable to think a re-enlistment noncommissioned officer would have a hard time meeting his goals. However, the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry led the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in re-enlistments for the first fiscal quarter of 1997.

According to Staff Sgt. Klaus A. Lowry, 1st Battalion re-enlistment NCO, he met 133 percent of his goal for the quarter for first-term re-enlistments and 153 percent of his goal for mid-career re-enlistments.

The battalion made 100 percent of its goal for 1996, said Lowry, with the high quarters balancing out the low quarters.

"I have to attribute it to the leadership involved," said Lowry. "There are good people out there who care about their troops. Commanders are always following up on the status of re-enlistment."

Lowry, 32, who was born in Rosenheim, Germany, and is a naturalized U.S. citizen, also re-enlists soldiers from units in the task force attached to the 1st Bn., which do not count toward meeting his goal.

Lowry said if re-enlistment objectives

are not met, it could eventually result in a unit being short-handed or a Bradley being without a crew.

Soldiers have different reasons why they choose to stay in or get out of the Army. Lowry is not only a re-enlistment NCO, but also a career counselor. He talks to each soldier and tries to find out what they want to do and what is best for them. Some soldiers are eligible for bonuses upon re-enlistment, while others can change their military occupational specialty if they desire. He discusses options with soldiers to help them determine if their best path is to stay in the Army or return to civilian life.

Despite the difficulties and dangers of this Bosnian deployment, many eligible soldiers are choosing to remain Vanguards.

Spc. Darren K. Helm, 26, is a HMMWV driver in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-18 Inf. He re-enlisted Jan. 6 at the McGovern Base chapel. A leading factor in his decision to re-up was the medical benefits provided for his family. He and his wife, Jennifer, have been married eight

years and have two children: Cassandra, 7, and Cody, 4. Jennifer is pregnant with their third child, which is due Feb. 24.

"Now with the new baby coming along and my wife in a difficult pregnancy, if any medical care is needed I have the government behind me," said Helm.

Spc. Justin A. Bishop, 20, is an automatic rifleman in Company C, 1-18 Inf. The Lackawanna, N.Y. soldier re-enlisted Jan. 4 at the Brcko Bridge, which crosses the Sava River between Croatia and the Bosnian Serb-held city of Brcko. He re-enlisted for four years with the stipulation he be sent to Fort Lewis, Wash. He is engaged to be married to Manuela Schull when he returns to Schweinfurt, Germany.

Spc. Christopher L. Sharp, 21, is a Bradley driver in Company A, 1-18 Inf. He re-enlisted for four years on Oct. 7, 1996, in Schweinfurt for present duty assignment, so he will be able to spend an extra year in Germany. He has been married for two years to his wife, Tanja, and they have a daughter, Celina, 1.

"I joined the Army to make a career of it," Sharp said. "You can't do things like this in the civilian world. You can't drive a Bradley down the street."

"You can't do things like this in the civilian world. You can't drive a Bradley down the street."

----- Spc. Christopher L. Sharp

Canarios' readiness, R.O.E., changes tide

By 1st Lt. Robert M. Inouye
364th MPAD

An attack on Muslim construction workers by Serbian protestors forced Staff Sgt. Rob S. Canarios, a Bradley Fighting vehicle section leader with Company B, 1st Battalion 26 Infantry, to react within the rules of engagement on Sunday afternoon.

Canarios used the threat of deadly force to change the tide in an increasingly dangerous situation.

The workers were attacked by nearly 200 Serbs while building prefabricated homes near Gajevi. Canarios was monitoring the situation from his Bradley when Serbs began to beat a Muslim with 2 x 4's until he was knocked down.

Canarios dismounted and went to assist soldiers trying to separate the two groups when he saw that Serbs were still hitting the man laying on the ground.

"There was one guy on the ground being beat up and I was yelling 'Stop! Stop! Stani!', but they kept hitting the guy. I pulled my pistol and fired a warning shot. The Serbs

stopped and all eyes were on me. They backed up and said OK," said Canarios.

Knowing the rules of engagement helped Canarios deal with the violent situation. "R.O.E. works. It works in all situations," Canarios said.

Firing the warning shot helped the soldiers of the 1-26 Inf. and the Russian brigade regain control of the mob. Walking through the situation with his soldiers immediately after the incident, Canarios reaffirmed that R.O.E. works.

"After the situation I reviewed with my soldiers what had happened," Canarios said. "They were concerned that I was going to get in trouble. But I said no, because no one had gotten hurt. I had all of them pull out their cards and look at the guidelines we follow. By the same token knowing and using the R.O.E. gave me a lot more confidence."

Advice Canarios would share with others is know R.O.E., rehearse battle drills and stay calm.

"Be calm, follow the steps of R.O.E. and

rehearse," said Canarios. "That morning we kept receiving updates on the developing situation and we kept rehearsing scenarios. Know your battle drills."



PROTECT THE FORCE

- *Keep your troops informed
- *Identify risks and apply countermeasures
- *Make sure you and your people get crew rest
- *Plan and tailor operations to avoid the risk of Cold Weather Operation
- *Execute like we trained you
- *Make sure the troops have a buddy.....who's yours?
- *Don't let a trooper operate gear w/o proper training and a license
- *Do fire prevention rehearsals
- *Ensure weapons safety, security of weapons and sensitive items
- *Ensure proper planning and execution of Rail Operations
- *Do convoys the right way - by the book



Photo by 55th Combat Camera

A Serbian protestor wielding a 2x4 chases a Muslim construction worker. The disturbance continued until Staff Sgt. Rob S. Canarios fired a warning shot into the air and dispersed the mob.

Shelf unit plan

Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, commanding general of the US sector, approved a plan to upgrade base camp standards by providing shelf units to all personnel. The units are designed to be used in pairs so they form a partition between living areas.

The plan calls for troops to exchange 1 ½ sheets of on-hand plywood for a finished shelf unit.

Soldiers should dismantle non-standard partitions or other structures and use the salvaged plywood for the exchange program. The plywood must be serviceable, clean, free of nails and excessive wear, and not warped, cracked, or discolored by petroleum products. Sheets with paint or with holes no larger than two inches are acceptable.

Shelves may be obtained in one of two ways:

The camp mayor can contact base camp coordination agency at mobile subscriber system 557-4608 and arrange for a drop-off and pick-up point indicating the number of units requested.

The camp mayor can turn in the plywood to their Brown & Root camp manager who will then arrange for pick-up and delivery of shelf units and exchanged plywood.

The exchange will continue until all soldiers have new shelf units. Point of contact at the BCCA is Capt. Clyborne at 577-4608.

Clean up time

Bosnia style

Soldiers from the 1st ID, 2nd Bde., and 258th MP Company got up early Tuesday morning to get their convoy vehicles clean and ready to go at Task Force Eagle Base. *From top left clockwise:* A soldier opens his HMMWV door... Pfc. Justin D. Fordice, 20, 2nd Bde, 1st ID, from Enterprise, Ore. cleans the wheel on a vehicle... Pfc. David L. Nowlin, 23, 258th MP Co., from Frankfort, Ky. hoses off the mud... Spc. Quincy M. Brown, 20, 258th MP Co., from Summerville, S.C. gets the windshield clean.





Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark L. Geiger, 300th MPAD

Minor surgery

no major event for 299th

By **Spc. J. CRAIG PICKETT**
350th MPAD

CAMP DOBOL — The young medic picked up the scalpel and made her first incision. She was nervous. It was her first time handling the sharp knife and slicing human skin.

"The skin isn't that hard to cut, it's real easy actually," said Plymouth, Mass. native Spc. Amy M. Liddell, who performed her first minor surgery at Camp Dobil.

"We performed two tasks today," said Liddell, a 20-year-old medic serving with the 299th Forward Area Support Team. "We did a molectomy, which is the removal of a mole, and a cystectomy, which is the removal of a cyst."

From the cleaning of the area, to suturing the incision, Capt. Phillip L. Ramsey, from Tucson, Ariz., was on hand to assist and offer advice if needed.

"She (Liddell) was actually able to do all the steps with me standing right there," said Ramsey, the physician's assistant with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry. "That increases her

confidence in herself and her skills."

Normally, medics do not perform this type of operation, but on this deployment the opportunity has presented itself and the medics are gaining a lot of experience and first-hand knowledge. Classes on surgical techniques are conducted twice a week, along with hip-pocket training.

Along with training, sick call is a daily activity. Due to missions and varying schedules there are no specific hours for sick call. The majority of complaints are sore throats, coughs and colds. There is also the frequently pulled muscles from overexertion in the weight room.

Their doors are open 24 hours a day to handle any misfortune. Two medical officers sleep in the back of the tent, while the medics are only two tents away. This easy accessibility ensures that the team can handle an emergency anytime, day or night.

Troops from the 299th FAST and the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry run the aid station. "All the medics have integrated well," Ramsey said.

Spc. Hunter Y. Carwile, said, "I'm enjoying the deploy-



Photo by Sgt. Ken Robinson

Spc. Amy M. Liddell, 20, from Plymouth, Mass., administers numbing agent to a patient undergoing a molectomy while Capt. Phillip L. Ramsey, 40, from Tucson, Ariz., stands by to give advice to the young medic.

ment and am learning a lot." Carwile, from Lynchburg, Va., plans on attending physicians assistant school soon and feels the training and practical exercises here are beneficial. "The most interesting thing I've done is the minor surgery," he said.

Patients requiring more medical attention than the Camp Dobil facilities can provide are sent to the 212th Combat Support Hospital at the Blue Factory. When that

occurs, Spc. Claudia J. Simkins might be the one to take them there.

The 20-year-old from Huntsville, Mo., is an evacuation medic who drives an ambulance. "I like it better here than in the rear. Here we get to do our job. I feel more vital," she said.

Whether it's cutting skin for the first time or treating the common cold, the medics at Camp Dobil are keeping the troops in good repair.



Uuhnnuuhh...

Spc. Jaime Kinell, 38, Personal Support Battalion, of San Diego, attempts a clean lift in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation sponsored Bench Press Competition held at the Fest Tent Sunday. Kinell and teammates Pfc. Elijah Holliday, Torrington, Conn., Jalacy Hawkins, Fayetteville, N.C., Spc. Kris Pabotoy, Fairfax, Va., and Air Force Staff Sgt. Marshall Richardson of Henderson Ky., made up the combined team that captured a slim victory over two other Air Force teams. The days best lift was pumped out by 1st Lt. Bull Ternus, USAF, of College Station, Texas, with a lift of 370 pounds.

Photo by Spc. Todd L. Surdez 129th MPAD

Flight medics meet challenge of higher training

Staff Sgt. Brenda Benner
100th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — Flight medics of the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) en route to a trauma site have training to fall back on. And with a mission vital to all soldiers, they need every bit of it.

They provide life saving medical help at the scene of an emergency and are constantly challenged with knowing, memorizing, and performing an endless multitude of medical and aviation crew member tasks.

Staff Sgt. Ian D. Gosling, approaching his sixth year as a flight medic, has passed the mental rigors of these constant training demands.

"To become a flight medic, one needs to be a regular medic, or emergency medical technician qualified," Gosling, 30, of Irvine, Calif. said. "There's the additional aircraft training to become a crew member. You're not guaranteed to make it as a flight medic just because you're assigned as one. There are numerous tests to pass, and the training takes an extra six months."

Company commander Maj. John P. Cook, has an appreciation for the high level of expertise demonstrated by all the soldiers of his company.

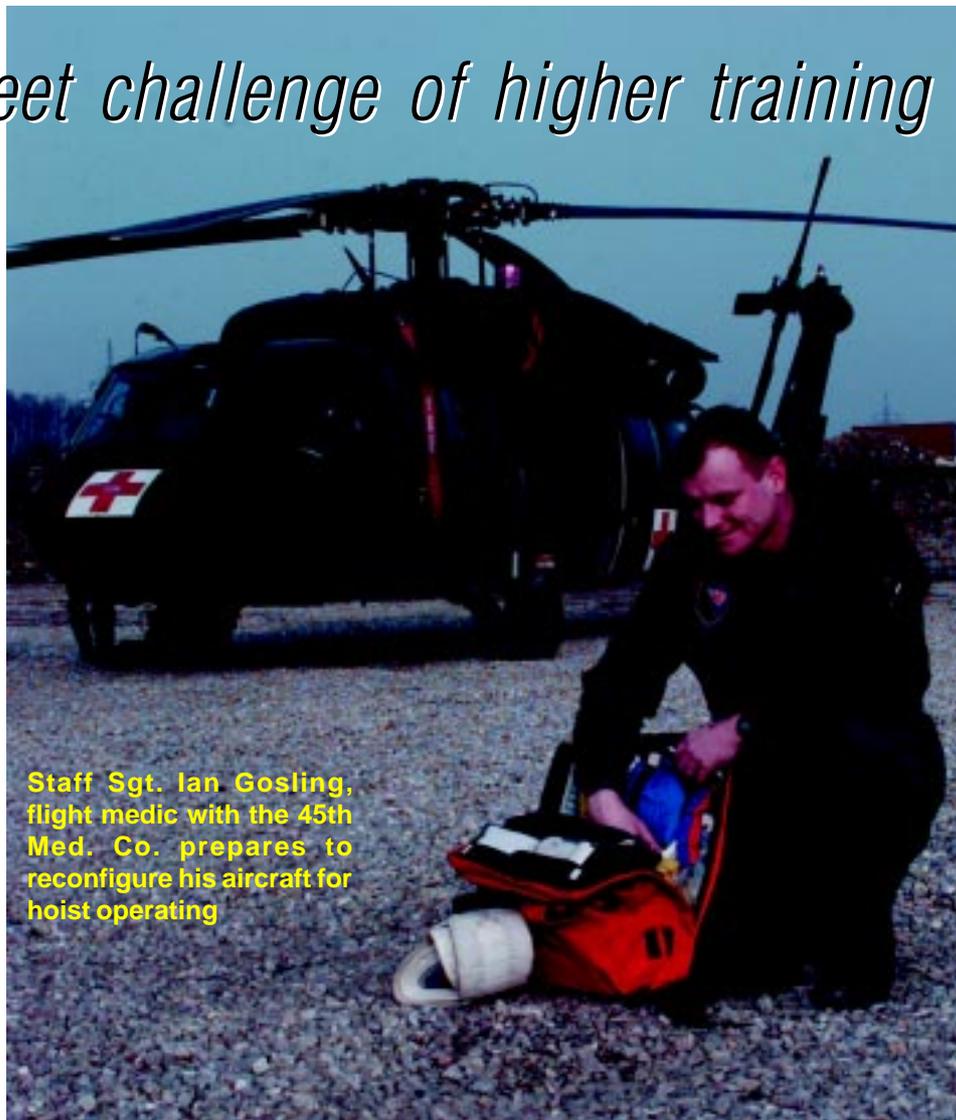
"Flight medics require a lot of training," Cook said. "It's much more extensive than being a regular medic. Flight medics are going directly to the trauma scene. We don't carry doctors with us, so a flight medic really has to be prepared for anything. They must be familiar with flight operations and work in tandem with the crew chief and pilots. Flight medics use some of the latest, advanced medical equipment that many regular medics will never see."

Pfc. Todd Foxworth, 26, of Foxworth, Miss., is a qualified flight medic. Immediately after training as a regular medic, he was offered a waiver into a sergeants slot.

"It was the luck of the draw," Foxworth said. "There's a lot of extra training requirements for me. I'm expected to know what the higher enlisted flight medics know. I earned my certification two months ago, while here on deployment. It took me a few months to train on the aircraft, learn hoist techniques, surveillance, and operations with night vision goggles."

Teaching classes helps Foxworth stay on top of all the information regarding medical treatments and medical equipment PMCS.

"It helps reinforce my learning," Foxworth said. "I also spend all of my spare time read-



Staff Sgt. Ian Gosling, flight medic with the 45th Med. Co. prepares to reconfigure his aircraft for hoist operating

Photo by Spc. Todd L. Surdez

ing medical training manuals and equipment procedures. I've got to know my stuff."

"As a Pfc., Foxworth has a lot of responsibility riding on his shoulders," Cook said. "Getting flight medics to the scene to stabilize patients is the focus of everything we're doing. The pilots' and crew's mission revolves around the flight

medics, regardless of rank," Cook said.

Through years of responding to emergencies, Gosling has learned not to channel all of his mental pre-

paredness during medevac flights towards one anticipated medical procedure.

"While in transit to a trauma scene, I wonder about the safety of the scene and if I'll have access to the patients," Gosling said. "We never know what we'll encounter. The medical situation at the scene is usually different from the ini-

tial information we receive from the medevac request. I'd mentally go through procedures for a certain type of injury and encounter something completely different. Instead, we have to be prepared for all possibilities."

Besides knowing what to do in pre-rehearsed scenarios, many medics possess an instinct of resourcefulness during a challenging and stressful crisis.

One of Gosling's most recent rescues involved an overturned Danish Battalion tank in which a crew member was trapped in frigid water up to his chest for six hours.

"The Norwegian ground ambulance crews used heating blankets and the heating packets from the MREs to keep his core temperature as close to normal as possible," Gosling said. "They covered him from the water level up and their field expedient method worked. He suffered hypothermia, but recovered OK. Doctors said it was amazing they kept his core temperature as warm as they did."

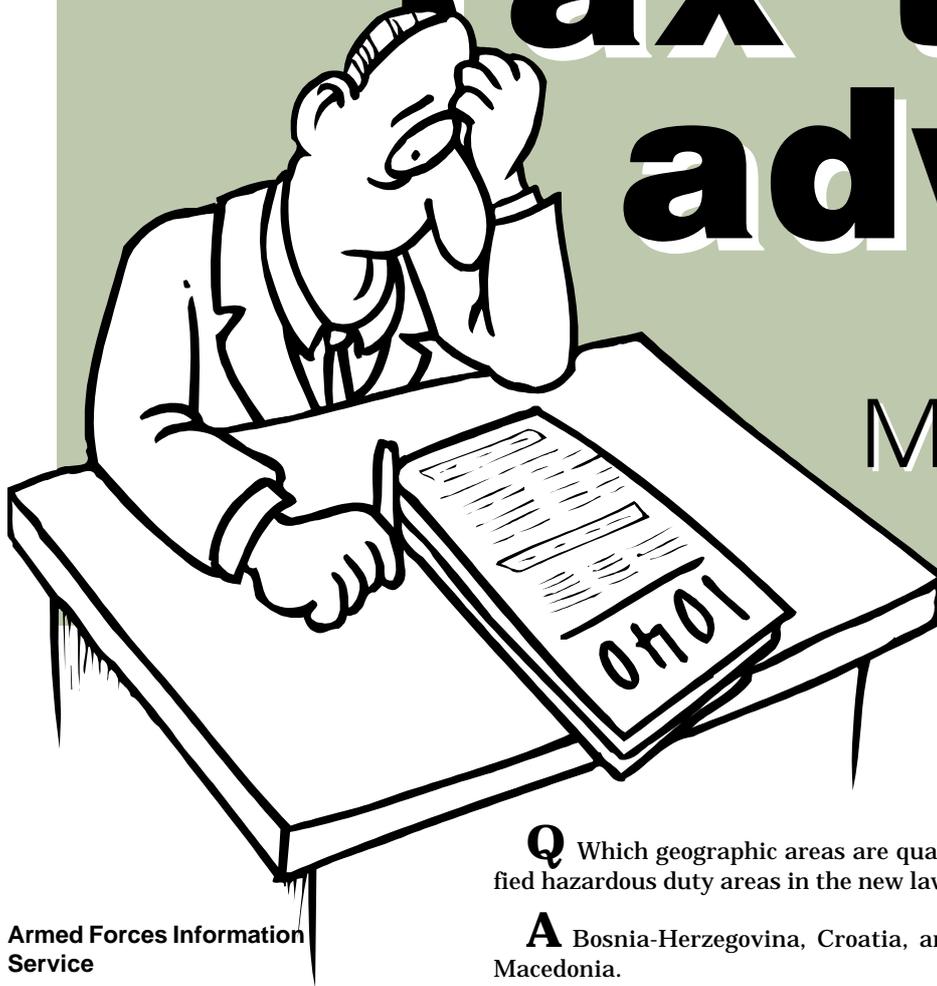
Life as a flight medic is highly demanding, Gosling can't imagine doing anything else.

"I get an adrenaline rush when we bring in a patient and the doctors say that they will make it," Gosling said. "I get satisfaction knowing that I've helped someone. That's what it's all about."

"I get an adrenaline rush when we bring in a patient and the doctors say that they will make it."

----- Staff Sgt. Ian Gosling

Tax time advice



Armed Forces Information Service

Just knowing the answers to basic questions will help troops deployed to Operation Joint Endeavor prepare for their income taxes.

DoD's Office of Compensation and Internal Revenue Service have compiled questions and answers about the Military Tax Relief Act.

The act provides tax benefits to service members deployed to Operations Joint Endeavor and Able Sentry. Some aspects apply to military and civilian personnel supporting the peacekeeping mission from Italy, Hungary and aboard ships in the Adriatic Sea.

Defense officials said these questions and answers should provide those deployed most of the information they need when filing their 1995 and 1996 federal income taxes.

Those having further questions can call IRS tax hotlines. In the United States, call IRS at (800) 829-1040. This number is good inside the United States. E-mail questions to oje@ccmail.irs.gov.

IRS also has offices in Rome and Bonn, Germany, to assist overseas taxpayers with federal income tax questions. Contact the Rome office by calling 39 6 4674-2560 or via fax at 39 6 4674-2223. The IRS-Bonn branch is at 49 228 339-2119 or via fax at 49 228 339-2810.

Q&As on Military Tax Relief Act

Q Which geographic areas are qualified hazardous duty areas in the new law?

A Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Macedonia.

Q I am a member of the U.S. armed forces assigned to perform peacekeeping services in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Is any part of my 1996 military pay for serving in this qualified hazardous duty area excluded from gross income?

A Yes. If you serve in a qualified hazardous duty area as an enlisted person for any part of a month, all your military pay received for military service that month is tax-free. A similar exclusion for commissioned officers limits their monthly exemption to the highest enlisted pay rate (currently about \$4,250). Exclusions are not subject to federal income tax.

Q My spouse and I are both enlisted personnel serving with the armed forces in the qualified hazardous duty area. Are we both entitled to the income tax exclusion for military pay?

A Yes.

Q If I become injured and hospitalized while serving in the military in the qualified hazardous duty area, is any of my military pay exempt from gross income?

A Yes. Military pay received by hospitalized enlisted personnel as a result of

injuries sustained while serving in the qualified hazardous duty area is excluded from gross income. Commissioned officers have a similar exclusion.

Q My wife is on active duty in the qualified hazardous duty area. She will be eligible for discharge when she returns home. If she separates upon her return, will the payment for the annual leave she accrued during her service in the qualified hazardous duty area be excluded from gross income?

A Yes. Annual leave payments to enlisted members at separation are not part of the gross income — provided the leave earned was while the member served in the qualified hazardous duty area.

If your wife is a commissioned officer, only a portion of the annual leave payment she receives for time in the qualified hazardous duty area may be exempt. The leave payment cannot be exempt if the amount exceeds the maximum enlisted amount for the month of service.

Q My husband is a service member supporting Operation Joint Endeavor from Germany. He is not receiving hostile fire or imminent danger pay. Is he eligible for the military pay exclusion?

A No. U.S. armed forces personnel serving outside the qualified hazardous duty area are not eligible for the military pay exclusion. The only exception is if they serve in direct support of military operations in the qualified hazardous duty area. For a more detailed discussion of the tax treatment of military personnel, see Publication 3 — Tax Information for Military Personnel (Including Reservists Called to Active Duty).

Last four

Sgt. William Geddes
364th MPAD

Used for everything from signing for your chow to signing for a credit report, from identifying the laundry you turned in for washing to identification for a credit card application, the social security number is a powerful tool.

And like any powerful tool, in the wrong hands, your social security number can break your life into pieces.

Once someone has your social security number it is possible for them to steal your whole identity. They can obtain and run up

“There are many corporations where the only thing used to verify your identity is a social security number.”

----- Capt. Jon Howard

credit card bills in your name, obtain checks in your name, order merchandise in your name, and access personal records about your life.

So what can be done to protect yourself?

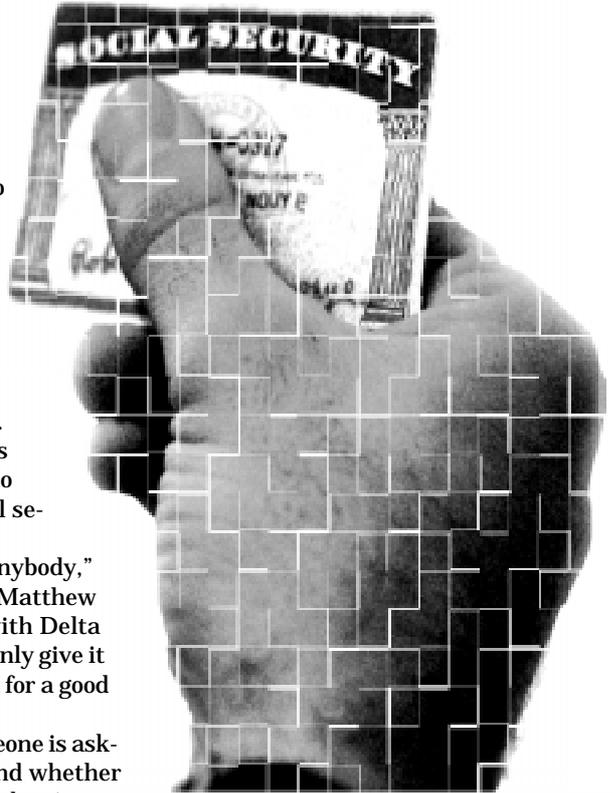
Several things according to Capt. Jon Howard, assistant staff judge advocate for the 1st Infantry Division.

“Use only the last four digits of your social security number unless absolutely necessary,” Howard said. “And keep it off the internet. There are many corporations where the only thing used to verify your identity is a social security number.”

“I don’t give it out to just anybody,” said Jasper, Ala., native Pvt. Matthew E. Abbott, a bradley driver with Delta company, 1/18th Infantry. “I only give it out to someone who asks for it for a good reason.”

Determining whether someone is asking for it for a good reason, and whether the whole social security number is necessary is key. Most know to put just the last four when signing for chow, but many people put their whole social security number down when signing for laundry (only the last four are required.)

Most people wouldn’t give their social security number to just anybody, yet think nothing of writing or having the number printed on their checks. While some stores do require you write the number on the check, remember that the check passes

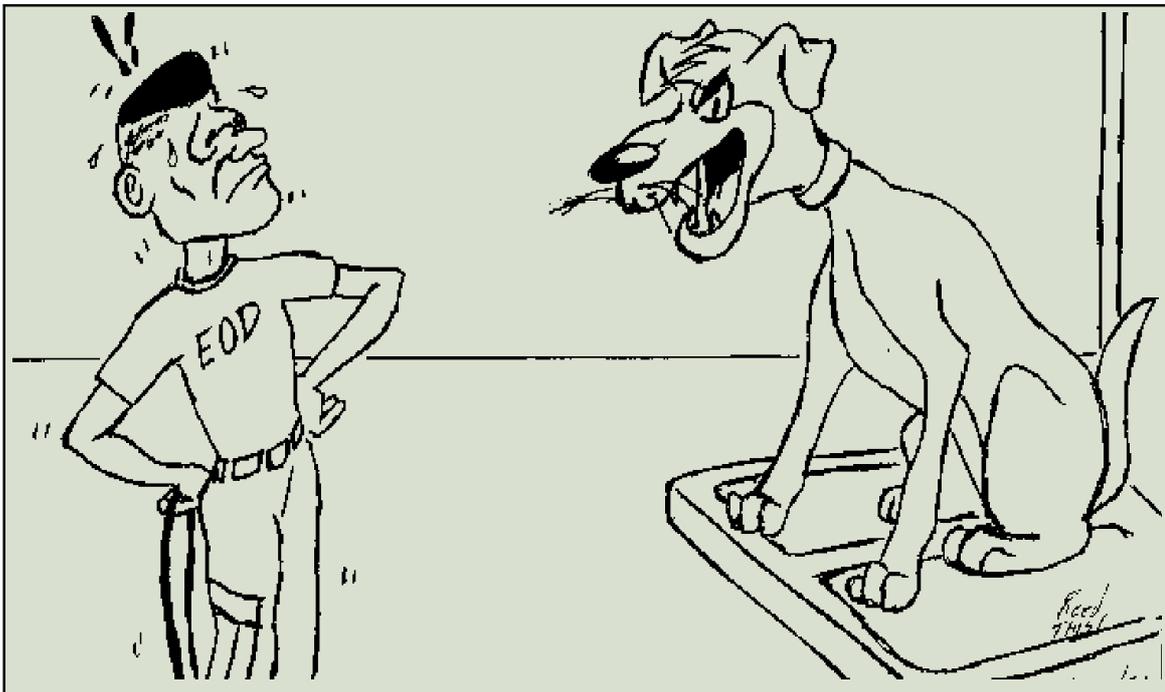


through many hands on the way back to the bank and consider whether the purchase is worth the risk, however remote that may be.

“The best advice I can give is to follow these two rules when using you social security number,” Howard said. “One, only give the last four digits unless absolutely necessary and two, don’t give the number out to friends or people you don’t know well.”

Reed This

Sgt. Corwin Reed



You crazy? Since you get the danger pay, you sniff out the bomb!

FIRE

McGOVERN

from page 1

next to the TOC (Tactical Operations Center) from burning.”

The fire, which Foote said was thought to have started in the center of three tents comprising the Brown and Root compound, was first spotted around 11 p.m. by Observation Post #6, located across the street. The resulting alarm and red glow in the sky were for many the first indications something was wrong.

“I was in my tent sleeping,” said Sgt. Chad C. Cave, Company B, 121st Signal Battalion. “I heard bells ringing and everybody woke up. Someone said, ‘there’s a fire,’ and we evacuated the tent”

“I was in my tent laying down to sleep when I heard the bell,” said Spc. Harold Lanson, Company A, 9th Engineer Battalion. “I jumped up and that’s when an NCO came in and said we had a fire. I then headed to the motor pool – our rendezvous point. There they asked for volunteers to help.”

Sgt. Edward A. Duke, HHC, 1-18 Inf., said he was on his way back to his tent with the hope of turning in early for the evening. Instead, he and another NCO found themselves battling the initial onslaught of the blaze with five-pound fire extinguishers. These, he said, soon proved ineffective against the wall of flame, which sometimes swirled far above the compound walls. “We then started a bucket brigade,” Duke said. “The main thing we were trying to do was keep the AAFES (Army and Air Force Exchange Service) building from going up. We did as much as we could.”

What the soldiers did do, Foote said, was keep the potentially disastrous fire from spreading long enough for equipment to be evacuated and the civilian fire trucks to arrive. The Serb firefighters from Brcko and the Muslim firefighters from Gorni Rahic worked side by side in snuffing out the fire by 2 a.m.

“The civil affairs guys should be specifically noted for their fast reaction to coordinate with the civilian authorities to get help,” Foote said. “The end result was that fast moving people, initiative, aggressiveness and organization probably saved the day.”



Soldiers battle flames at McGovern Base’s Brown and Root employee living quarters.