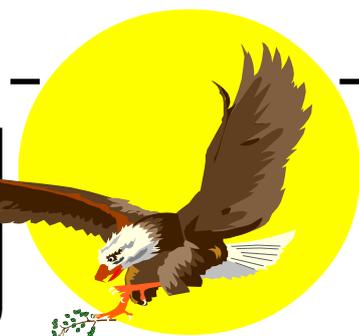


THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

Different countries, common ties



Sgt. Jay Mosley, Company A, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, shows Pvt. John Holm, Company A, Danish Battalion, Nordic-Polish Brigade how to operate an M-60 machine gun at the Brcko bridge guard point.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

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By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

BRCKO, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- The "Wolfpack" is on the prowl.

It's considered to be a once in a lifetime experience, but for the soldiers from 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, McGovern Base, the chance to conduct a multinational operation appeared again when soldiers from NORDPOL Brigade's Dan-

ish Battalion arrived at Brcko to participate in joint patrols through the city.

"Today is the second time we've worked with the Danish on patrols," said 2nd Lt. John D. Colwell, platoon leader, 1st platoon. "It's been great. They're real professional soldiers. A lot of their tactics and equipment are common to ours and they all speak good English."

Colwell, a 24-year-old West Point graduate from Bay Village, Ohio, said he was

See COMMON TIES page 12

Talon Top Ten List

Top ten things to do while on a convoy:

10. Play the alphabet game. "My name is Albert, I live in Antwerp, and I have an apple ... My name is Bob, I live in Botswana ..."
9. When riding over bumps and potholes, exaggerate your reaction and fling yourself all over the vehicle, yelling, "Spock! We're hit!"
8. Start convulsing and scream, "I must find another host body!"
7. Start drumming the kevlar of the soldier in front of you like bongos.
6. If driving, see how many times you can get away with yelling, "Aahh, no brakes!"
5. When driving over a really bumpy road, start talking. You'll have a vibrating voice! It's really funny.
4. When the driver swirves several times to avoid potholes, pretend you're throwing up in a paper bag.
3. When coming up to a bridge, say, "Boy, that bridge doesn't look too safe. I wouldn't drive over it if I were you."
2. If in a noisy vehicle (HMMWV, 2 1/2 ton, etc), pretend to talk to somebody, but just mumble a bunch of incoherent words. See how many times the person will lean over and ask, "What did you say?" In response, repeat the procedure.
1. Remember the convoy briefing, and drive carefully!

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

Many new soldiers will be arriving during the next few weeks to serve with Task Force Eagle.

As we say our goodbyes to those leaving, it is equally important to welcome new personnel and orient them to the current mission.

Whether soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines, remember, we are one team, one family.

The next few weeks are an important time period for the new troops settling in.

Ensure they have all the tools and knowledge required to succeed.

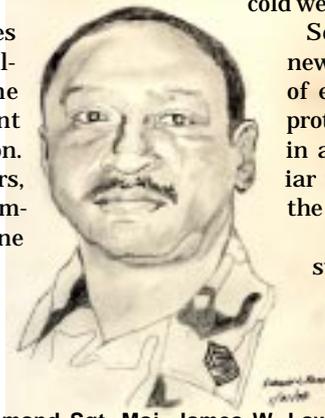
I can't say enough about complacency when it comes to high standards. Follow all the prescribed safety measures in re-

gard to vehicle convoys and follow all necessary guidelines for living in a cold weather environment.

Soldiers, both old and new, must review the rules of engagement and force protection measures. Train in areas you are unfamiliar with. Be prepared for the unexpected.

Last but not least, take steps to avoid unnecessary accidents or incidents. We've had close calls recently -- fortunately no one has been seriously hurt. Stay focused.

As new soldiers adjust to the environment and become familiar with their jobs, with their hard work, the high standards will be maintained.



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

Fire Safety

The recent tent fire on Jan. 22 at Camp McGovern serves as a stark warning of a critical safety concern; fire is a very real and a very serious threat. It gives all of us an opportunity to review tent fire safety. Here are a few reminders.

Heater Rules

- * Use only approved fuel
- * Refuel only outside of tents at refueling points
- * Let heaters cool down for 30 minutes before refueling
- * Do not leave heaters unattended
- * Turn heaters off before going to bed or post a fire guard
- * Use only approved Brown & Root heaters
- * Conduct routine PMCS on heaters
- * Turn in heaters requiring maintenance to Brown & Root

Remember how to configure living areas in the tents. Do not hang ponchos, poncho liners, or blankets as permanent dividers. These are "fire fuel" and become visibility barriers if escape is necessary. Emergency exits at the end of each tent must be kept clear, and the center aisle leading to the exits kept open. Fire extinguishers must be functional and everyone must know where they are.

Finally, electrical devices such as electric heaters, hotplates, and microwaves are not authorized in tents. The wiring cannot support these devices, and the risk of overload is increased. We have done a great job being fire safe, don't let up now.

By Lt. Col. J. D. Dillon, Safety Officer

THE TALON

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Comanche to Explore Black History Month

By Spc Todd Surdez
129th MPAD

For the better part of American History, African Americans have played a vital role in the U.S. Military.

The War of 1812 saw black soldiers fortify Philadelphia against British troops and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers became one of the first black units to see action in the Civil War.

The Spanish American War brought Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders and the 9th and 10th Cavalry, made up of primarily black soldiers, together for the Battle of Las Guasimas.

The 99th Pursuit Squadron, an all-black fighter unit, is credited with bringing down more than three hundred German aircraft during W.W.II.

In recent history, blacks have been a vital part of the U.S. Military, from ground troops, to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

February is Black History Month which today has a two-pronged goal. "This is a time for blacks to learn more of the history

and culture of African Americans," said Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Sturrup, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 11th Aviation Regiment, and native of Miami Florida. "It is also a time for other races to learn about what blacks have lived through in the past. If I can reach one person and teach them something from our history it is all worth it."

"We will be holding a luncheon on Monday, February 17, at the Camp Comanche Dining Facility. It is open to anyone that would like to join us," said Master Sgt. George Shuler, of Tallahassee Florida, also a member of HHC, 11th Aviation Regiment. "We will have guest speakers and some fine food."

Prizes for an essay contest in observation of Black History Month will also be awarded at the luncheon. Those interested in entering the contest can contact Staff Sgt. Riggins at MSE 559-2151.

This is a time when we can all open our minds and learn about the different races that make up our military and country," added Shuler.

CORRECTIONS

In the Jan. 31, 1997 *Talon* a story about the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) misstated a key fact about the rescue of a Danish Battalion crew member. The statement should have read "Norwegian ground ambulance crews used heating blankets and the heating packets from the MREs to keep the soldier's core temperature as close to normal as possible. During the six hours prior to the flight medics arrival, the Norwegians covered him from the water level up and their field expedient method worked. Doctors said it was amazing they kept his core temperature as warm as they did -- the treatment given prior to admission to the emergency room saved the patient's life," said Staff Sgt. Ian D. Gosling, 45th Medical Co. (Air Ambulance).

NEWS BRIEFS

New soldiers coming

WASHINGTON — About 800 Army reserve component soldiers will begin training for Operation Joint Guard in Bosnia, DoD officials announced Jan. 21.

Since the start of NATO's peace mission in Dec. 1995, more than 10,000 Guard and Reserve personnel have supported operations from bases in the United States, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary and elsewhere in Europe.

18 months and out

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces will leave Bosnia at the end of the 18-month stabilization force mission, William S. Cohen told the Senate Armed Services Committee during his Jan. 22 confirmation hearing.

Setting a deadline is not advisable in most cases, the new defense secretary said, but in this case, it tells European friends the United States is not going to make an unlimited commitment. This is not an exit strategy, but a strong message America is not going to have forces deployed in that region indefinitely, he said.

NATO officials will review SFOR's mission every six months to determine the level of forces required, Cohen said.

News Briefs compiled from American Forces Press Service

Joint patrol calms Jusici gathering



Photo by 55th Combat Camera

Lt. Col. Robin Swan, commander of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, calms a group of 30 Bosnian Muslim women at Checkpoint 34A Sunday. The group of women, many of whom were carrying sticks, gathered and blocked the east and west routes into the village of Jusici, forcing soldiers from the 1/26 and the Russian Brigade to delay their patrol of the area and notify local officials. The incident was settled peacefully.

Bridging the gap

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

Thirty-one women and children can sleep warmer at night thanks to the 9th Engineer Civil Affairs team located at Camp Bedrock. "World Vision International donated 31 blankets to a home for mothers and children in Visca, Bosnia," said Capt. Keith B. Nunemaker, a member of the five man team. He is from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, Fort Dix, NJ.

Part of the Civil Affairs mission is to seek the needs of the community and then try to fill those needs.

"We contact PVOs-NGOs, (private volunteer organizations and non-governmental organizations) and they verify the need and respond. We're the first step, the eyes and ears of humanitarian efforts," Nunemaker said. The team deals with organizations such as Feed the Children, Mercy International, International Rescue Company, UNICEF and the World Food Organization.

"Civil Affairs is the US Army liaison between the military community and the civilian population," Nunemaker said. "We're here to support the mission of the commander -- in doing that we support the community and the civilians in the community."

Trying to serve both the community and the military leaves Civil Affairs with a challenging situation. Though they are an important part of the relief effort, the Army cannot give military supplies or equipment, said Maj. Michael H. O'Neal, 9th Engineer Civil Affairs Team, 486th Civil Affairs Battalion, Broken Arrow, Okla.

For example, if a community leader wants kerosene, the team is not allowed to give them Army kerosene. "We coordinate the efforts from aid companies to get the communities what they need," Nunemaker said. "We can't personally give it to them."

Civil Affairs deals with more than just aid companies. Nunemaker convinced some private companies to donate money and supplies for the relief effort.

"The ups of this job are when you can help people, getting blankets and winter clothes to people who need them..."

----- Maj. Michael H. O'Neal

"I e-mailed a software company and they raised \$800 for the effort," Nunemaker said.

The team is now working on another project in Gornja Visca.

"We're trying to get heating and plumbing repairs to a school," said Nunemaker. "To coordinate and make things happen takes a lot of administrative work."

Civil Affairs also deals with civilian complaints against the military.

"EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) was blowing up some munitions from the former warring factions," said Nunemaker. "There was a low ceiling that day and there was some damage in the city,



Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

Maj. Edmund F. Johnson, 9th Engineer Civil Affairs Team, checks the walls of a school in Gornja Visca

some glass was broken by the blast. The civilians make their claims to us, we survey the damage, take pictures, fill out paperwork and send it all to the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and they decide what action needs to be taken."

To complete their mission the team uses an important asset; civilian interpreters. We depend on them to inform us of what's offensive and what's all right," O'Neal said.

"We have a good relationship with them. They are part of the team," said Nunemaker.

O'Neal said that he finds the job rewarding, and that it's a little different from other military occupations.

"The ups of this job are when you can help people, getting blankets and winter clothes to people who need them, but it's frustrating when you know what they need and you are unable to do anything," O'Neal said. "We get to meet the people more than most soldiers in the Army do. We're not pulling guard, or running machinery, we're not mechanics. Our normal job is to meet with mayors, directors, mothers, fathers and children, and learn about them. We learn more about the country than the normal soldier."

A unique fact about Civil Affairs is that over 90 percent of the branch are reserve component soldiers, O'Neal said.

"In fact, there's only one regular Army battalion," he said. "We all have civilian jobs, we deal with civilians, we live a civilian life and bring civilian thinking to this job. That's what's needed when you are dealing with civilians."

Russian/American

soldier's spirit of cooperation aids resettlement



Photo by 55th Combat Camera

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, left, in an American M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, patrol Gajevi with Russian soldiers from Company 6, 2nd Airborne Battalion, Russian Brigade, seen in a Russian BTR 80.

By Spc Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

GAJEVI, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- The thick blanket of fog lifts to reveal a Russian BTR 80 and an American M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle staged side by side. A sight unthinkable a few years ago, they are now aligned together for a joint cause in the mountainous area of Gajevi in the Russian sector of Bosnia.

Working Together

A Task Force from the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, is working with the Russians to facilitate and provide assistance for the first resettlement of approximately 36 Muslim families. They will conduct joint patrols and assist with security in the area.

Staff Sgt. George Brooks, Company B, 1-26 Infantry, acting first sergeant for the team in Gajevi, is positive about the mutual efforts of the U.S. and Russian teams. "We will stay until the end of the resettlement, depending on how long that will take,"

he said. "This is an excellent opportunity to train with foreign troops and is beneficial to everyone. The world can see that we are doing good here. The children can have some hope for a future if both factions meet their obligations."

Resettlement

For the resettlement, the Muslims are constructing prefabricated houses. This process was attempted several months ago, but problems arose between the separate factions. A meeting was held with officials from both sides and the applications for resettlement were finally legally approved.

Capt. Jose A Gabilondo, brigade Russian liaison officer, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division, has no doubt over the role of the joint forces. "This has been a long process for these families and they have finally received approval to resettle. Our presence here with the Russians will ease the process."

Austere Conditions

Despite the thick sloppy mud, cold and

austere field conditions, Gabilondo said the operation is going smoothly. "The Russians have been very good hosts for us and our soldiers have been very good guests. I'm pleasantly amazed at the cooperation."

Good Relations

Pfc. James Kightlanger, 1st platoon, Company B, 1-26 Infantry, mechanized infantryman has been out at the checkpoint for nearly a week. His mission entails patrol maneuvers and observation point duty.

"The Russian soldiers were quiet at first but then became very talkative and friendly once they got to know us. We have translators with us but most of them speak some English. It is a very interesting experience," he said.

Pvt. Ricky McCollum, a Bradley mechanic also with the 1-26, agrees. "Not many people get a chance to meet and work with Russian soldiers. Both sides respect each other and we get the job done."



Military Police dogs serve as an integral part of the overall security mission for Task Force Eagle. *From top left, clockwise* Jodi checks out a HMMWV for explosives...Staff Sgt. John C. Kingkade, a San Diego, Calif. resident who serves as a military police officer with the 26th Area Support Group, fends off Jodi with a training cuff...Jodi searches a bathroom for explosives and other contraband.



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It's a dog's eye view

by Steven S. Collins
MPAD

Jody doesn't have many friends. In fact, he scares almost everyone. Jody is a German Shepherd, one of a group of dogs in Bosnia being used by military police units to find explosives and other contraband. The dogs are a deterrent to those who think they get away with it," said Staff Sgt. Cary L. LeVitre, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 100th Area Support Group. "They will find stuff people think they've hidden beyond finding. You can't fool these dogs." LeVitre, of Hattenfield, Mass., has been a dog handler for eight years. He has been partners with Jody since July.

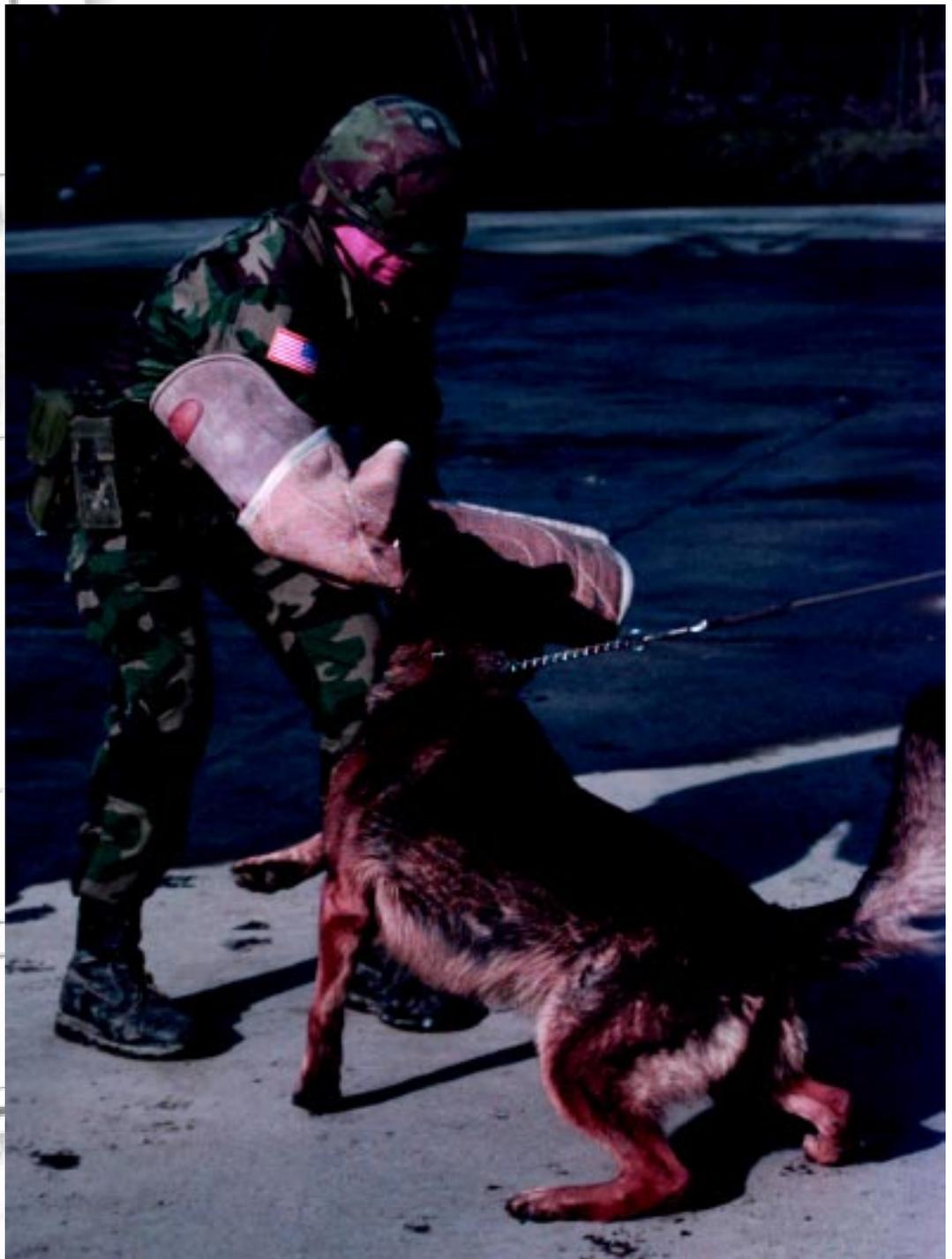
"I trust Jody with my life. I rely on him, he on me," said LeVitre.

"He knows me. He knows my smell. He can recognize my footsteps. All other handlers he ignores," said LeVitre.

The dogs, in addition to possessing keen sight, sound and smell talents, are the perfect "weapon" in apprehending less-than-cooperative subjects. The dogs are powerful enough to bring a strong man to his knees.

Jody is not trained to be a friendly dog. Don't try to pet him — he's not a family dog. Jody is loyal to LeVitre and LeVitre alone.

"He is trained to protect me. He will not hesitate to bite if he senses even the smallest amount of danger," said LeVitre. "He wears the badge 24-hours a day. He is never off duty."



On Stage brightens troop's tours

By Sgt. Steven S. Collins
129th MPAD

Sonja Switzer stepped off the air plane in Tuzla, Bosnia, and suffered "total culture shock," she said. In the space of a few days, the U.S. Army warned her about killer land mines and flu bugs, outfitted her with a kevlar helmet and flak jacket and stuck her in a crowded room with a cot.

"I couldn't describe what I felt," said Switzer, a member of 'On Stage', a song-and-dance troupe who performed for the troops throughout the U.S. area of responsibility. "Seeing this country and the conditions here made my heart hurt."

Switzer, a resident of Chicago, is one of the seven performers who comprise On Stage, and is touring Bosnia as part of a Department of Defense program to bring live entertainment to soldiers. Switzer is a singer, who moved the crowd at Tuzla with a rousing rendition of the Mariah Carey song "Hero."

"The old music was interesting and I liked the variety of music," said Pfc. Chad E. Smith, a Louisville, Ky. resident with the 64th Military Police Company.

On Stage is led by Michael LaTour, who produces, directs, sings and dances during the group's 90-minute performance. La-

Tour, a resident of Chicago, founded the group in the early 1980s and has performed for troops worldwide since 1988.

"This is really a privilege and I'm always excited to travel and do these shows," he said. "We all love the satisfaction that comes with performing for the soldiers and bringing some entertainment to them."

Working in austere environments, the group uses pre-recorded music with live singing and dancing to enliven crowds of soldiers who often have not seen a live show or movie for many months.

"(It was) enjoyable to get out and see something different," said Michael R. Merson, a military police officer with the 984th M.P. Co. "Better than sitting around the tent and reading a book."

Glamour is in short supply for those who dare tour Bosnia. LaTour said On Stage has performed in nearly every kind of military building, small and large. At Tuzla, the group's stage was set in a chilly warehouse devoid of theater lighting or sound. Members live together in a tent barely large enough to hold them and their cases of equipment and costumes. Each trip is a new adventure.

"On a trip like this one, we live in conditions much like the soldiers. We obviously have it a little better, but it gives us a good taste of what the soldiers are living through

during their long time here," LaTour said.

"Roughing it" is not an issue for Jenifer Sforza, a dancer from Los Angeles. This was her second trip to Bosnia; On Stage toured the country last June. Although the weather has changed from hot to cold, Sforza did not mind.

"It makes me feel so good to be able to perform here," she said.

Wearing the "gear" was fun for Lukas Walrath, a student at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. This was his first DoD tour.

"This is the last place I'd ever thought I'd find myself," said Walrath. "But everyone here is working so hard and this is the only way we can serve them. We have a tremendous amount of pride doing this."

The group is rounded out by singer Heidi O'Toole, a native of Green Bay, Wis. and dancers Devin McRae of Los Angeles, Calif., and Mary Thuermer of Mishicot, Wis.

The Tuzla concert was one in a series of concerts which will be spread over seven weeks in Bosnia and Hungary. On Stage has performed in nearly every European country where American soldiers are based. LaTour said he hopes to continue for many years to come.

"We spend a long time on the road, but we enjoy it. I'm proud of the group and happy to be here in Bosnia," he said.

Sonja Switzer and Michael LaTour sing a song for the soldiers. The seven member group On Stage performed at camps across the U.S. area of responsibility.



Photo by Sgt. Steven S. Collins

Farewell to friends



"Right here in the middle of Brod there are over 500 homes blown up." While taking a final tour of the ruins of Brod, on the outskirts of Brcko, members of the 346th Psyops Co. watch as a column of Bradleys rumble by.

Photo by Spc. David Boe.

By Spc David Boe
364th MPAD

Driving the lead vehicle in a four-HM MWV convoy, Sgt. Jason N. Sherer pulls to the side of road and halts. The three other HMMWV's obediently follow him and park. The 24-year-old Columbus, Ohio, resident climbs out onto the mud-packed road and looks around.

It's a typical winter day in Bosnia. There's a slight nip in the air and an opaque sky hides the sun. The ruins of Brod lay spread out on both sides of the road. Once an active suburb of Brcko, Brod is now a veritable ghost town, with blasted houses, ripped up fences, and bent and broken trees. What little remains standing is pocked-marked with scars from past battles. The houses lay empty, and the only person in sight is an old woman limping slowly past the soldiers.

This is the scene Sherer wanted to show.

For Sherer and his unit, the 346th Psychological Operations Company, Airborne, this is the last mission. Tomorrow they will all begin the trip back to their home station in Columbus, Ohio, after spending more than seven months in Bosnia.

Today the mission is to familiarize their replacements, soldiers from the 11th Psyop Battalion, from Washington, D.C., with their area of operations and what to expect. Sherer believes such a mission must start in Brod.

"Right here in the middle of Brod there are over 500 buildings that have been blown up," he says to the soldiers around him. "All of these people have put their blood and sweat into building these homes and now they have nothing.

"It let's you know your job is not nine-to-five. Even though you might only get to

spend four or five hours out of the day with them, what you're doing is affecting these people's lives, so you better do a damn good job at it."

Sherer has the speech and mannerisms of a professional noncommissioned officer, but behind his professionalism lies a personal commitment to the Bosnians he has met during his tour of duty.

"I knew someone personally who had her house blown up," he said. "I knew her about two months; we were talking to her

"Right here in the middle of Brod there are over 500 buildings that have been blown up. All of these people have put their blood and sweat into building these homes and now they have nothing.

----- Sgt. Jason N. Sherer

and had a great rapport and knew her family on both sides of the zone of separation. I saw her two days after her house was blown up, and she was in tears. That was the first time I took it personally."

Such experiences have helped Sherer define his unit's mission in Bosnia.

"We are here to help," he said.

More specifically, the 346th's mission was varied. More than just handing out leaflets, much of the work entails going out and meeting the Bosnians, disseminating and receiving information, arranging interviews between U.S. Army commanders and local leaders, and setting up meetings between the former warring factions.

"What I've done is meet key communicators and explain to them IFOR's— now SFOR's — stance and position, and I've done everything I can within my powers as a young NCO to do my best," says Sherer. "I think I've helped arrange enough interviews and explain our policy to the people that at least if they haven't made a fix on their peace problem, I've at least helped explain why IFOR and SFOR are here."

For Sherer it's been an interesting and life-changing experience. "Unlike most units here we got to meet the populace on a daily basis," he said. "Find out their attitudes, learn their customs, go to their homes and know their families on a first-name basis. It's been enjoyable in that respect."

Sherer said he has noticed a change in the country since he has been here. "I think the mind set between the people is starting to merge together slowly as far as attitudes, which is good," he said. "I think the progress we have made here is better than I had expected."

Sherer gives a signal and all of the soldiers pile back into their vehicles. Next stop: Brcko marketplace.

Parking their HMMWV at the Brcko bridge checkpoint, the two psyop teams walk across the street to the market. While not as large as the Arizona marketplace, a marketplace on Route Arizona several acres in size, Brcko's offers the same noisy atmosphere and haphazard merchandise. It was a common stopping point for the 346th.

"We came down sometimes two or

See FAREWELL page 10

FAREWELL

from page 9

three times a week," said Spc. Christine Harvey, a native of Canton, Ohio, who is planning on returning to school when she returns stateside. "We stop and talk to the people, we do a little shopping around. People who want information open up a conversation with us. We have a better feel for what's going on here."

This is the first time in her four-year Army career that Harvey has been deployed overseas.

Since they have been here they have made their presence felt amongst the people who frequent the market, Harvey said. Sometimes, when one of the team is not on that day's mission people in the market ask where he or she is.

"They know us on a personal level, which is good," said Harvey. "They trust us more than, I believe, they trust their own news. If they want the real skinny on something they ask us and we try to fill them in."

Leaving their vehicles at the bridge, the psyop teams walk through the heart of Brcko, arriving some time later at the main radio station, Radio Brcko. Later that night, Task Force 1-18 Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Layfield is scheduled for an interview. Sherer wants to verify the time and show the facilities to his replacements. While he and the replacement psyop team head upstairs, Harvey and Spc. James B. Khavari step into a small

café next door to say good-by to friends. Though not much larger than the tents they have lived in since they arrived in country, Café 10, as it is called, has been an important contact spot for the 346th, said Khavari.

"It's right next to the radio station, so if you needed to meet the director of the station, you ask him to join us down here and have some coffee and talk," said Khavari, who arrived in Bosnia with the 346th two months after completing his advanced individual training for psychological operations specialist. "It's also a good place to meet some of the local people and businessmen, and talk to them and kind of figure what their moods and concerns are."

After awhile people got used to seeing the team at "regular" places such as Café 10, said Khavari, and this lessens the fear of seeing soldiers with weapons.

"It's a great platform from which to put out your messages, because they are already comfortable with your presence," said Khavari. "They're going to listen to you here, in a relaxed atmosphere, as opposed to out in the middle of the street."

In the seven months he has spent in Bosnia, Khavari has developed not only a good grasp of the language – he says he tries to speak the Serbo-Croatian language every chance he can get – but also many friendships — friendships, he said, he will not drop.

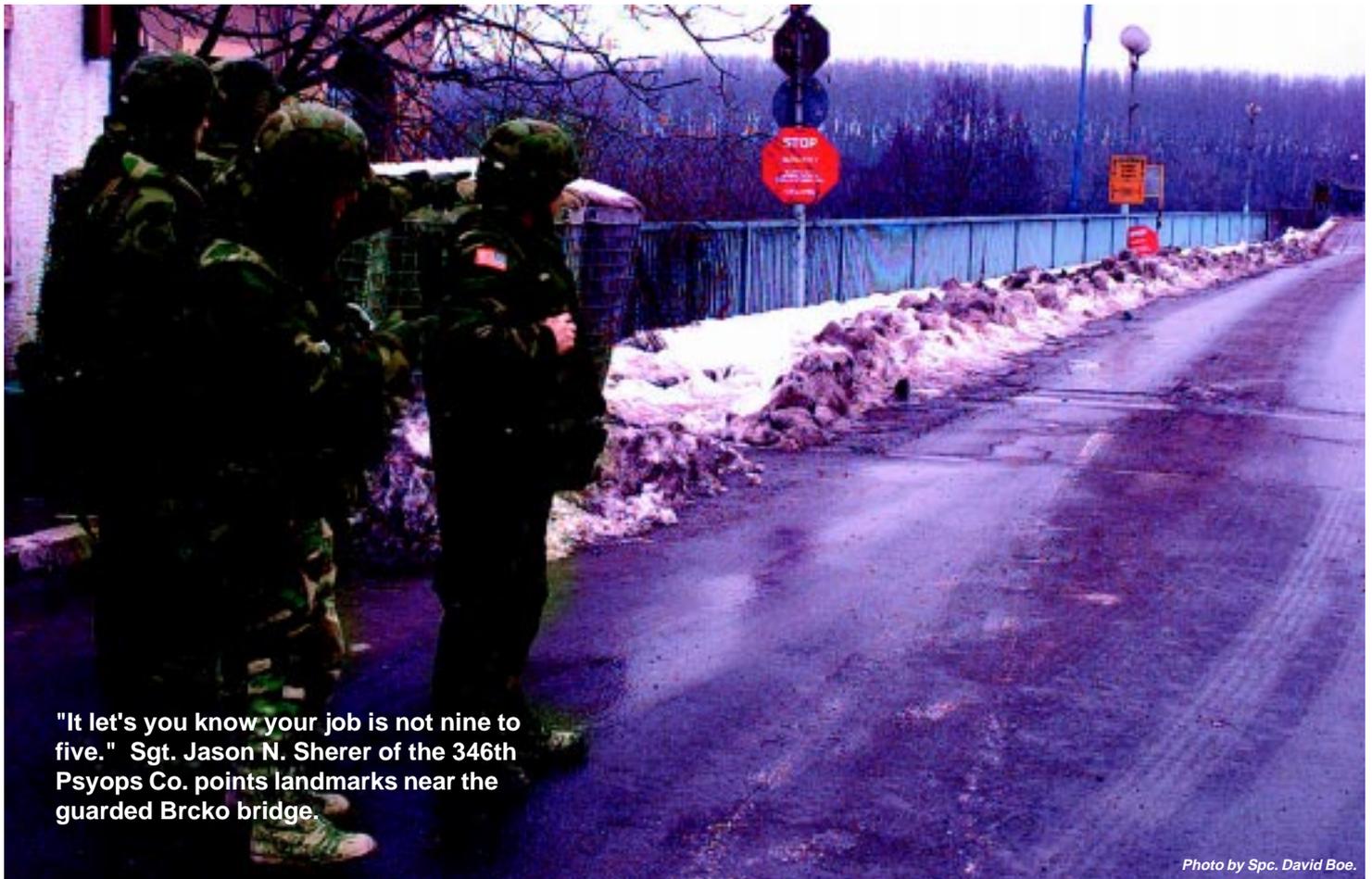
"I'm going to go ahead and maintain

correspondence with the people here," said Khavari. "They've become a part of my life and I've become a part of their lives and you just can't drop it. That leaves a bad taste in their mouths as far as soldiers are concerned.

"To me this was something serious; we're affecting peoples lives here," he said. "We came out here to do something and I'm going to maintain that, because I've got friends here now, and I don't let my friends go."

After returning to their vehicles, the two psyop teams head back through Brcko and make stops at Gornji Rahic and the Arizona market. At Brcko, the 346th introduce their contacts to their replacements and at the same time say good-by. By nightfall they've finished their last mission and are back at McGovern to finish packing.

For Sherer, Harvey, Khavari and the rest of the 346th Psyop Co. it's time to "pass the baton" and go home to Columbus and pick up where they left off seven months ago. All will bring home more than just memories. Harvey will bring back with her a sense of satisfaction at having made a difference. For Khavari, it's the many friendships he has developed. And Sherer? He's bringing back something he will finish at his school, Ohio State University, where he has majored in clinical psychology. "I've been working on an honors thesis," he said. "It focuses on enemy images in the former Yugoslavia – imagine that."



"It let's you know your job is not nine to five." Sgt. Jason N. Sherer of the 346th Psyops Co. points landmarks near the guarded Brcko bridge.

Tis the season to pay taxes...

Tax Deadline Extension

By Capt. Rob Broughton

The start of the new year also signals the beginning of the tax season, a stressful time for many Americans. Fortunately for U.S. service members serving in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a significant tax deadline extension helps to make tax season a worry free time of year.

The deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes owed, and contributing to an IRA for the 1996 tax year is automatically extended for at least 180 days after the date the service member departs Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to the 180 days, the deadline is also extended by the number of days the service member had left to file before the normal April 15, 1997 deadline when they arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For those who arrived before the start of the tax filing season on Jan. 1, 1997, a maximum of 105 extra days is added to the 180 day extension.

For example, the 1996 tax return deadline for someone who arrived in October of 1996 and will depart on March 31, 1997 would be Jan. 10, 1998, a total of 285 days after the date of departure. During the extension period, no penalties or interest will be charged for failure to pay any taxes owed. The IRS will even pay interest from April 15, 1997 on any refund issued so long as the return is filed before the extension deadline. The period of time affected by the extension is simply disregarded for tax purposes, resulting in essentially no tax season at all for those serving in the area.

Those who wish to file their return before the extension deadline, particularly those entitled to a refund, should seek assistance from their unit tax advisor or legal assistance office. Due to the unavailability of electronic tax filing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, those who intend to file joint returns are best advised to mail or fax their income information to their spouse for preparation and filing. Although it is preferable to send your spouse a power of attorney, you can authorize your spouse to sign for you without one. Your spouse can simply attach a signed statement to the

return stating the absent person is in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The thought of tax season should be less stressful for those serving in the area when you consider the tremendous tax advantages of the deadline extension together with the benefit of the military tax assistance program.

For more assistance contact your unit tax advisor, or if not available, the 1st Infantry Division (Forward) Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at MSE 553-3568.

Tax center opens

The tax center is now open for use by all ID holders; military, DoD civilian, spouse, retired etc. The Staff Judge Advocate has all tax forms and brochures soldiers and their families need, including all overseas tax related forms.

The center is located in Building 4222, Tompkins Barracks, Schwetzingen. It is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through March 15. For an appointment call MSE 314-379-7651 or commercial 06202-80-7651.

For tax assistance in the Bosnia area, check with your unit tax advisor, or if not available, the 1st Infantry Division (Forward) Office of the Staff Judge Advocate by calling MSE 553-3568.

IRA Changes

Per House Regulation 334 homemakers are now eligible to contribute \$2,000 to an IRA account in addition to the \$2,000 their spouse is eligible to contribute. This money can come from either spouses gross income.

Reserve Mobilization insurance program to pay benefits

The mobilization insurance program has problems, but beneficiaries will be paid, despite misleading news reports to the contrary, said DoD spokesman Air Force Maj. Tom Schultz.

"People who have signed up and are due benefits will eventually be paid in full," Schultz said. "There is a shortfall of funds, so for the time being, they're being paid a temporary prorated 4 percent of their benefits. No matter what happens, DoD and Congress are committed to working together on this problem."

Deborah Lee, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, said DoD is asking Congress to approve a \$72 million special appropriation to cover the insurance fund until the end of fiscal 1997.

"They will get the full payment down the road," Lee emphasized. "We want to get the word out to as many troops as possible. Yes, we've had a tough start, but we're going to make sure they get their benefits — partial benefits on time and the balance as soon as we have it worked through Congress."

The Ready Reserve Mobilization Income Insurance Program went into effect Sept. 30, 1996 and is supposed to be self-sustaining — that is, contributions cover the benefits, Lee noted. She said the start-up has been difficult because of the low enrollment and the timing of the call-up for Bosnia. There has been little time to build a fund.

"As a result, we owe more money each month than we have coming into the fund," Lee noted. "But we're taking quick action to remedy the situation. If the troops will be patient with us, they will get paid. We are going to get it resolved as quickly as possible."



Reed This

Sgt. Corwin Reed



Well, it's definitely a class III leak!!!



Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 18 Infantry and Company A, Danish Battalion, Nordic-Polish Brigade, patrol a side street in Brcko.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

COMMON TIES

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extremely impressed with the Danish soldiers when he first met them.

"At first I thought language was going to be a problem, but I quickly found it wasn't," said Colwell. "As soon as they hit the ground here and I met their squad leader I realized they were highly disciplined and that the patrol was going to be a learning experience for us.

"Just like our soldiers, they take their missions seriously and they're very proud of their missions."

Today's mission entailed the "Wolfpack" soldiers familiarizing the Danish soldiers with the different sites around Brcko, such as the special police headquarters, an alleged former interrogation center, a Serb military compound and the Brcko bridge. After the patrol both sides compared notes.

"We talked to each other and we learned something about them and they learned something about us," said Staff Sgt. Michael Bolmholt, squad leader of the Danish Company's 3rd Group, 3rd Platoon. "I think it is very important to work together, and it is nice to know something about the other nations, how they work."

For soldiers in both contingents this was not the first time they had worked side-by-side with other nationalities. Pvt. John Holm, a native of Sjallan, a small town near Copenhagen, has worked with fellow Scandinavians from Norway, Sweden and Finland, but said he's partial to Americans. "It's fun working with Ameri-

cans," he said. "They're a lot different."

Spc. Charles A. Lipham, a two-year veteran from Tuscaloosa, Ala., first trained with Russian soldiers at Fort Riley, Kan., and has had another chance to train with them in Bosnia. "I think it's nice because you're bridging across other cultures and showing that you can work together," said Lipham, who sees military training

as a means of cutting through language and cultural barriers. "It shows you can work together and communicate with each other. Even if you can't speak the same language you can pretty much let the other person know what you mean."

Colwell said that while they may come from different countries and different backgrounds, military units operating in Bosnia have a common mentality. "There's a sense of pride, a sense of accomplishment no matter which country you may come from, and that's the common tie," he said. "You can see it – every soldier is proud to take part in this."

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Pvt. Gregory Hein, from Odensn, Denmark, said when soldiers in Bosnia get together there is one underlying subject on all of their minds. "We talk about how long we have been here and when we are going home," he said.

Of course, there are some differences, as Bomholt pointed out about American food. "It's better," said Bomholt. "I like the burgers and pizzas – we don't have that."

That night Bomholt and his men dined on steak and shrimp at McGovern Base.

"There's a sense of pride, a sense of accomplishment no matter which country you may come from, and that's the common tie. You can see it – every soldier is proud to take part in this."

----- 2nd Lt. John D. Colwell
