

THE TALON

OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE



Pvt. Benjamin L. Rider, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, scans the nearby ruins of the town of Omerbegovaca from atop the watch tower at Observation Post Nine.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

On patrol in Omerbegovaca

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By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

OBSERVATION POST NINE – The soldiers walk slowly along both sides of the muddy street, their weapons at the ready. Around them are the all-too-familiar ravages of war -- crumbling vestiges of once pretty Balkan homes, bent and bullet-ridden street signs, garbage, bricks and rusty carcasses of automobiles pushed into piles along the street. Men, women and children, seemingly numb to the destruc-

tion that surrounds them, go about their daily routines of work and play -- and rebuilding.

To these residents the sights of war are common, but for the soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, Task Force 1-77, it is a whole new world.

"It's two different worlds definitely," said Pvt. Theodore S. Cerwin, 20, the patrol's radio, telephone operator. "There's a bunch of mud here -- really

See PATROL page 12

The answer is... cont'd

The following are quotes from 11-year-old students' science exams.

"The tides are a fight between the Earth and moon. All water tends towards the moon, because there is no water in the moon, and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight."

"A fossil is an extinct animal. The older it is, the more extinct it is."

"A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, eight cuspids, two molars, and eight cuspidors."

"Germinate: To become a naturalized German."

"Momentum: What you give a person when they are going away."

"Rhubarb: A kind of celery gone bloodshot."

"To prevent contraception: wear a condominium."

"The skeleton is what is left after the insides have been taken out and the outsides have been taken off. The purpose of the skeleton is something to hitch meat to."

"For head cold: use an agonizer to spray the nose until it drops in your throat."

"Before giving a blood transfusion, find out if the blood is affirmative or negative."

"To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose."

"For a nosebleed: Put the nose much lower than the body until the heart stops."

"For dog bite: put the dog away for several days. If he has not recovered, then kill it."

"For asphyxiation: Apply artificial respiration until the patient is dead."

To keep milk from turning sour: Keep it in the cow."

UP FRONT -- THE TOTAL FORCE

Greetings. Congratulations on a great deployment. As we begin this mission, we must come together and keep safety first in everything we do. You exemplify the division motto; No Mission too Difficult, no Sacrifice too Great, Duty First; Victory!



working with this particular rotation. We have an impressive team assembled from a wide variety of places — US-AREUR, OCONUS and CONUS. The final piece of this task force are the Reserve and National Guard units serving with this force — it is truly the definition of the term "the total force." We will take this mission to the next higher level together.

We need to reflect upon what we have accomplished up to this point. It started with initial deployment preparations and certifying unit collective tasks relative to peace enforcement operations. We learned how to perform our jobs in a different environment, under stressful conditions. Continue to do the right thing -- one good thing leads to another.

Finally, the mission rotation. Many are in a hurry to pack up and leave, others to unpack, setup and assume the mission. I assure you there is plenty of time to do what needs to be done. Deliberate and meticulous execution is the key to success. It guarantees the end. Please ensure all moving vehicles have ground guides and all of you on foot stay clear of loading and vehicle-congested areas. See you up front!
Command Sgt. Maj. S. L. Kaminski, 1st Infantry Division (Forward)

Welcome to all individual and unit replacements rotating in with the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. I began to track units arriving but lost track the third day. Wherever you come from, welcome.

I am sincerely excited about

Convoys

The Task Force Eagle spring safety campaign is beginning, and it focuses on three hazards: military vehicle and civilian traffic accidents, mission operations tempo and sports and physical training activities. This week, traffic accidents.

Leaders and soldiers alike must take special precautions to avoid accidents or injuries. Before any convoy movement is started, ensure you conduct a detailed safety briefing. During the briefing, discuss at a minimum:

- Proper distance between vehicles so civilians can pass.
- Radio communication so all trail vehicles have prior warning of potential hazards.
- Roles of drivers and vehicle commanders.
- The importance of wearing safety belts.

During convoy movement always expect the unexpected. Pedestrians on the shoulder of the road are a common sight -- children are normally released from school between noon and 2 p.m. Turn on to be seen -- which means vehicles should have their headlights on. When entering a tunnel, move as far to the right as possible, keep proper distance between vehicles and reduce convoy speed. The safety issues are endless -- it is the convoy commander's responsibility to ensure that all areas are covered.

By Sgt. 1st Class D. L. Matthews -- Safety Through Knowledge

THE TALON

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Finding glitches

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE, Tuzla – Not too long ago, the Army did not use computers. Soldiers came to the field and did not need to worry about power surges or dusty keyboards or crashing hard drives. Now, however, the Army is so dependent on computer technology, a minor glitch in a major system can shut down an entire operation.

Keeping computer systems running, especially in an environment like Bosnia, is a full-time task for the three-man crew of the Division Support Command Combat Service Support Automation Management Office (CSSAMO), the computer hardware “gurus” of Operation Joint Guard.

“This is a very hectic job, with a lot of long days,” said Master Sgt. Hermann A. Schroeder, noncommissioned officer in charge of CSSAMO at Eagle Base. “We’re on call 24 hours a day.”

Schroeder was trained by the Army to be a wheeled-vehicle mechanic. But in the past few years, Schroeder has become a self-taught authority on computer hardware. By reading manuals and attending a few classes, Schroeder has learned what it takes to run major computer systems and can fix, or at least diagnose, problems afflicting most computers in the Army.

“Most of what I know I learned from on-the-job training,” he said. “If we don’t know what the problem is, we’ll work until we have an idea of what’s wrong and go from there.”

The problems affecting computers in Bosnia are varied and unusual compared to computer problems back in Germany or in the United States. Problems range from non-functional hard drives to faulty monitors to sticky keyboards. After a few months in theater, there are few things the CSSAMO has not seen.

“We once found a dead mouse in the computer. It shorted out the board inside the computer,” said Schroeder.

Dust is perhaps the biggest enemy of computers in the field. Dust gets into the computer and affects the circuitry, drives, monitors and keyboards. It shorts the electronics. Unfortunately, dust is everywhere and threatens every major computer system in use by the Army.

“People need to be careful in their offices and make sure their computers don’t get too dusty,” said Schroeder. “All it takes is some care. If people cared about their computers, they would not have many problems.”

When possible, Schroeder preaches com-



Master Sgt. Hermann Schroeder, Division Support Command Combat Service Support Automation Management Office, inspects a piece of computer hardware.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

puter common sense to soldiers, from the commanding general on down. Since the CSSAMO cannot monitor all the computers, it is crucial that soldiers take responsibility for the equipment.

“Most of the problems we see are because people just don’t care about the equipment,” said Schroeder. “Computers get dropped. People spill drinks on keyboards. People can’t simply plug a computer in and expect it to work all the time without doing some preventative maintenance.”

One of the biggest problems Schroeder sees in his office is printers ruined by inattentive soldiers. Ninety-nine percent of the printers used by the Army in Bosnia run on 110-volt current, not the 220-volt current found in Europe. Printers must then be plugged into transformers.

“Check the current before plugging any piece of computer hardware in,” said Schroeder. “If you are plugging a computer into a 220-volt outlet, make sure the switch on the computer is set at 220. If not, you will have a problem.”

If the CSSAMO cannot fix the problem, the computer is sent to Kitzingen, Germany, for repair. But this is a last resort, since it takes at least 90 days for the computer to be fixed and sent back to Bosnia.

NEWS BRIEFS

Clearing it right

Remember to clear your weapon properly. Soldiers must take the time to look into the chamber to ensure no round is present. Be safe and point the weapon at the clearing barrel. When you are done, close the dust cover to keep dust out of the weapon.

To drink, or not to drink...

The faucet water at Camps Colt, Demi, Bedrock and McGovern, the Blue Factory (not Guardian Base, just the Blue Factory,) and all the dining facilities has been certified as potable water, which means you can drink it. The faucet water in the rest of the camps is non-potable, which means you can brush your teeth with it but should not drink it. It is recommended that soldiers drink bottled water at the other sites. “We are studying the situation to improve, in the near future, the drinking water at all camps,” said Lt. Col. Sven Ljamo, division preventative medicine officer. “We use stateside standards for water. Before it is certified as potable it undergoes a comprehensive analysis by our laboratory.”

Insects/Ticks

Many of the stray cats and dogs running around on the base camp may be carrying ticks or lice.

Soldiers should use insect repellents and conduct buddy checks to prevent infestation.

Keeping pant legs bloused into boots will also help in prevention. Spraying clothing with insect repellents will also help.

Check nightly for ticks and be aware of grassy areas and wooded areas -- these areas are likely to contain ticks. Although the risk is small, some ticks do carry Lyme disease.

Bug netting can be used inside the tents to help control insects.

1st ID Reunion

The Society of the First Infantry Division 1997 reunion is scheduled to be held August 6-10 in Alexandria, Va. For more info on the society, check out the 1st ID home page at www.1id.army.mil.

Just like home



Chief Warrant Officer Douglas H. Nutter, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment, washes an OH-58 scout helicopter.

Photo by Spc. Janel R. George

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE-- When the active Army needs additional resources, they often call on the Army National Guard.

Since the OH-58 Scout helicopter is an older aircraft that is no longer widely used in the Army, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment, a National Guard Detachment from West Virginia, was called on by the Army to operate and repair four OH-58. The detachment still uses the OH-58 at home station.

The team consists of enlisted mechanics, warrant officers, pilots, a standardization instructor pilot, and a maintenance officer/test pilot.

After 300-flight hours, each aircraft has to undergo a major inspection process known as a phase. "The phase inspection involves a major disassembly of the aircraft," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael R. Scully, platoon sergeant. The detachment is conducting the first OH-58 phase maintenance inspections in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The phase is a very, very time-consuming and detailed examination of the complete aircraft," said Sgt. Finbarr Donovan, an aircraft mechanic from Parkersburg, W.Va.

Phase inspections usually take six weeks to perform, but with the experience that this detachment has, "we are hoping to have this one done in two to three weeks," said Scully.

As often as these aircraft are being used, a phase inspection is needed every month. "One hundred hours a month would be easy to accumulate over here. That is if we were only using one aircraft," said Scully.

"We use two to three helicopters a day, so on average we put in 60 to 80 flight hours each month," said Scully.

"It is something that needs to be done. I wouldn't want to be

the one out there flying around if the maintenance wasn't done," said Staff Sgt. Donald L. Miller, a civilian water department worker from Vienna, W.Va.

The OH-58 is used mainly for reconnaissance and observation missions. While in Bosnia, the detachment also performs escorts for chaplains and VIPs.

"They (OH-58s) are a more economical form of transportation for the missions we are required to do," said Sgt. Robert L. Braden, a full-time National Guard aircraft mechanic.

An OH-58 costs \$400 to operate for one hour, whereas, it costs \$1,600 to operate a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for an hour. "They are a very economical way to carry one or two people," said Donovan.

"We can take on the smaller mission of the UH-60, like recons and one to two passenger loads that don't require a big aircraft," said Chief Warrant Officer Douglas H. Nutter, a maintenance officer and maintenance test pilot.

This detachment came to Bosnia well prepared, said Scully. "It is not that different from what we have trained on at home, and that has brought us here well trained," said Scully.

The area and terrain is very similar to that of West Virginia. "Walking out of West Virginia and into Bosnia — it is just like home," said Scully.

There are three full-time National Guard members, two mechanics and one maintenance officer. "The full-timers add a lot more experience. We work with them (OH-58) for a living. The other guys only see them once a month," said Nutter.

Because the OH-58 helicopters operated and maintained at Eagle Base are the last four in all of Europe, this unit's mission is a unique one for the Army.

"Our job is real important because the active Army does not have people to support the aircraft," said Braden.

Putting a human face to it

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

MEMICI, Bosnia-Herzegovina - American soldiers are a familiar sight to most children in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are the peculiar people that speak a funny language, carry guns and dress like Ninja turtles. And if you bother them long enough, they'll eventually break down and pass a piece of gum out the truck window.

The hearts of Americans in the United States have gone out to Bosnian youngsters. Many family members of deployed soldiers at Camp Dobol who have seen pictures of the kids send donations. "We don't request charity but church groups, individuals and other organizations still send the donations. Eventually we had a stockpile and decided to split it up between two schools," said 2nd Lt Keith Jensen, fire support officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, Task Force 1-26.

One half of the clothes, books and candy went to a school in the Muslim village town of Memici, and the other half went to a small school in Osmasi on the Republic of Srbska side. "Before we left for the schools, we brought all the boxes to the chapel, laid it out and split it up equally, then reboxed it up," Jensen said.

Capt. Clifton Pratt, battle captain for TF 1-26, has received abundant contributions over the past months from Edgewood Ele-



Children at the elementary school in the village of Memici.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

mentary School in Yardley, Pa. His mother-in-law, 2nd grade teacher Kay Buffaloe, began the idea for her class.

"It started at Christmas time," said Pratt. "Her class sent me tons of letters and candy and decorations. We put the decorations up on our Christmas tree in the dining facility and I passed the letters on to Co D." After the holidays, the letters and cards and cookies kept coming. "The kids were very excited about supporting us. Finally the class sent three huge boxes of pens, pencils, notebooks, stickers and oth-

er supplies for us to give to schools," he said. Both the students at Edgewood Elementary and in Bosnia intend to stay in touch with one another through letters.

Both the soldiers and kids equally benefited from this mission of merriment. "We brought along soldiers that didn't have much of a chance to leave base camp. Most of the field artillery soldiers were behind their guns the whole time, ready in case something would happen," said Jensen. "They had a chance to see exactly what we are supporting here. It was for the hundreds of smiling faces that we saw at the schools."

In the classrooms, the students and soldiers asked each other questions, ate cookies and played some games. Reassuringly, the kids also pointed out that they were staying away from minefields.

Jensen recalls "at the Muslim school, I asked who was the toughest guy in the class. All the fingers pointed to a little boy in the back of the room, so I challenged him to an arm wrestling contest. I've had some rough days in the field and wasn't in top form, and the little kid beat me hands down." The boy was officially awarded three extra Oreos.

"The bottom line is that the kids put human faces on us as soldiers. They could see us in a relaxed atmosphere, rather than in full "battle rattle" at a distance concentrating on our peace-keeping missions," said Jensen. "All the soldiers were happy to see the kids. It made us realize that everything we have done here in the last six months was worth it."



2nd Lt. Keith Jensen fire support officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, Task Force 1-26, loses an arm wrestling contest.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

Wall



From top left, clockwise, Staff Sgt. Frank Lomonaco, squad leader, stands guard at the west gate of Eagle Base... Spc. James Allbritton mans the squad weapon at the west gate of Eagle Base... Staff Sgt. David Gilbreth, squad leader, leads his squad on patrol around the perimeter at Eagle Base... *Background*, a Bradley fighting vehicle stands guard at the west gate to Eagle Base. All soldiers pictured are members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division.



Walking the wire

Story and photos by Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE -- When Staff Sgt. David Gilbreth and his squad come off duty, they elicit many stares from the other soldiers at Eagle Base. At the end of a normal day, Gilbreth and his squad are covered in mud, a result of walking the wire for eight hours.

"It's pretty slippery along the wire," said Gilbreth, a squad leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division. "We do a lot of sliding out there. By the end of our patrol, we are all pretty muddy."

Gilbreth and his squad are part of the major effort to secure the 13-kilometer perimeter surrounding Eagle Base, headquarters for Task Force Eagle, Multinational Division-North. The effort is spearheaded by the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery and is supported by units from 1st Infantry Division and the 10th Mtn. Div.

Security for the base is maintained by soldiers in four crucial areas. First, only certain gates allow access to Eagle Base and the gates must be manned and observed constantly to control the flow of traffic into and out of the base. Second, patrols walk the 13-kilometer "wire," the outermost boundary of the base. Third, crews in Bradley fighting vehicles sit at important points to restrict access to the base in case of an emergency. Finally, soldiers man a number of observation posts along the perimeter.

On patrol or at the gates or posts, soldiers focus on security, but also train concurrently on other common tasks training. Gilbreth said his squad is especially vigilant to the threat of mines.

"There are some confirmed minefields around the perimeter, but they are clearly marked. We've actually seen some mines. But I'm confident that the trail we walk is clear of mines," said Gilbreth.

At the gates, soldiers need to check and record all vehicles, as well as be aware of all the civilians who need to get in and out of Eagle Base. Staff Sgt. Frank Lomonaco, a squad leader with Co. C, 2-14 Infantry, 10th Mtn. Div., supervises a squad at the west gate.

"We are well-trained and are prepared for all the things we need to do and the things we might have to do," said Lomonaco. Company C is trained for quick response to an enemy threat.

One of the real "hazards" of the job is the mud. Rain has made duty along the perimeter a dirty job. Every day soldiers come back to their tents with boots covered and uniforms splattered with mud and personal equipment in serious need of cleaning. Even though an annoying part of the job, the mud was not unexpected.

"I figured it was going to be muddy here. We were told to prepare for the mud, but I don't really mind," said Pfc. Joey Williams, a gunner with Co. C.

Gilbreth agrees. "People kind of shy away from us when you get off patrol because we are so dirty. But you expect this. I've been in the infantry for 15 years and am used to mud."



Different soldiers, same mission

By Spc. Terri Cook
1st Infantry Division PAO

EAGLE BASE -- In a ceremony here, April 4, Col. Michael R. Thompson, commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, handed-off control of his area of Task Force Eagle to Col. Que Winfield, commander, 3rd BCT. This ceremony typified change of command ceremonies which have been occurring throughout Task Force Eagle as much of the task force rotates out.

In his farewell address, Thompson praised the troops of the Multinational Division-North.

"You look at these soldiers and their boots are a little muddy, flak jackets are a little dusty, a little sweat around the collar, worn out kevlar covers, but you look in their eyes and there's an eye of confidence there," Thompson said. "They know what they're doing. They are well-trained soldiers. They do what they do because they know there's no greater commitment than being a U.S. soldier with your boots on the ground."

"It's been a tough, rewarding deployment for the soldiers of the 2nd BCT" said Maj. Gen. Montgomery G. Meigs, commander, 1st Infantry Division.

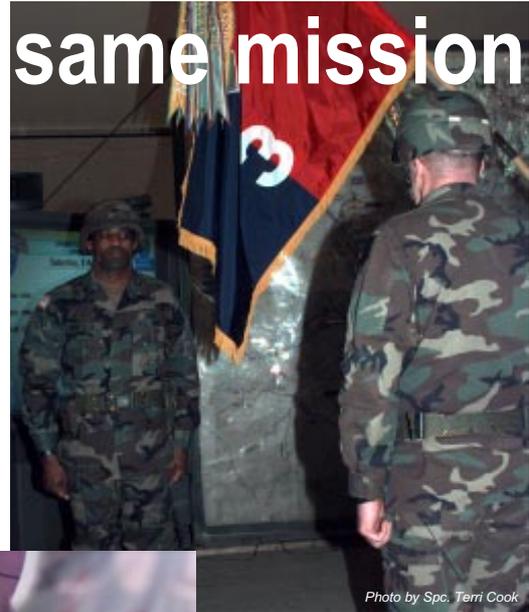


Photo by Spc. Terri Cook



Photo by Spc. David Boe

From top, down, Col. Que Winfield, facing forward, stands at attention along with Command Sgt. Maj. S. L. Kaminski after unfurling the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's colors... Lt. Col. James K. Greer(right) and Command Sgt. Major Jessie Legette unfurl the colors of 1st Battalion, 77th Armor during the task force transfer of authority at McGovern Base, April 2... Lt. Col. Robin Swan, TF 1-26 commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Moore, during the task force transfer of authority at Camp Dobol, April 4.

"This division now has had every battalion and every company, except the chemical company, in the main, in harms way or in an overseas deployment some time during the last year. This is the only division in the Army that has had that kind of exposure and that kind of stress. Farewell to the Dagger Brigade. You have written your record in the history book. To the Iron Brigade, we welcome you."

In his address, Winfield thanked the soldiers of the 2nd BCT calling their deployment "nothing short of spectacular".

"You and your soldiers are leaving behind a terrific legacy," Winfield said. "A legacy that will be a challenge to continue. I applaud the 2nd BCT in its efforts and accomplishments in ensuring the stabilization of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is with great respect and admiration that I say thank you and well done."

"The 3rd BCT is ready," Winfield said. "We are highly-trained. Our morale is at an all-time high and we are fully prepared to support this mission."

Winfield concluded his address saying, "We the soldiers of the 3rd BCT eagerly anticipate the days and missions that stand before us. We will not let you, our fellow comrades in arms or our country down."



Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

Bulk fuel handlers pump up

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE -- Quick, what do M1A1 Abrams tanks, M113A1 armored personnel carriers, HMMWVs, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and generators all have in common? All of them need fuel to operate. Without a continuous supply of fuel, the brigade commander won't be able to visit his troops, the wounded soldier won't get evacuated, and the checkpoint won't get fed. In short, the mission fails to get accomplished.

It is Sgt. Robert A. Winchester's job to ensure this doesn't happen.

Winchester, 26, is the bulk fuel noncommissioned-officer-in-charge at McGovern Base, and, along with his other team members from Company A, 201st Forward Support Battalion, he makes sure the fuel keeps flowing, both at McGovern and Camp Colt.

"Without fuel the unit can't operate," said Winchester, an eight-year veteran from Reno, Nev. "It can't move its vehicles and equipment."

Winchester said on average his team dispenses up to 20,000 gallons of JP-8 each week. To keep up with such a demand, the men have at their disposal three 5,000 gallon tankers, one 50,000 gallon collapsible bag, and a 350 GPM (gallons per minute) pump that can fill a tanker in a matter of minutes. It is more than enough equipment to satisfy McGovern and Colt's petroleum appetites, but, said Winchester, it is still hard work.

"People think pumping fuel is like at a gas station -- it's not," said Winchester. "You have to roll out the hoses, set up the pumps, and make a plan for fuel flow. People see it already set up and say, 'Oh, that's easy,' but what did it take to get it there?"

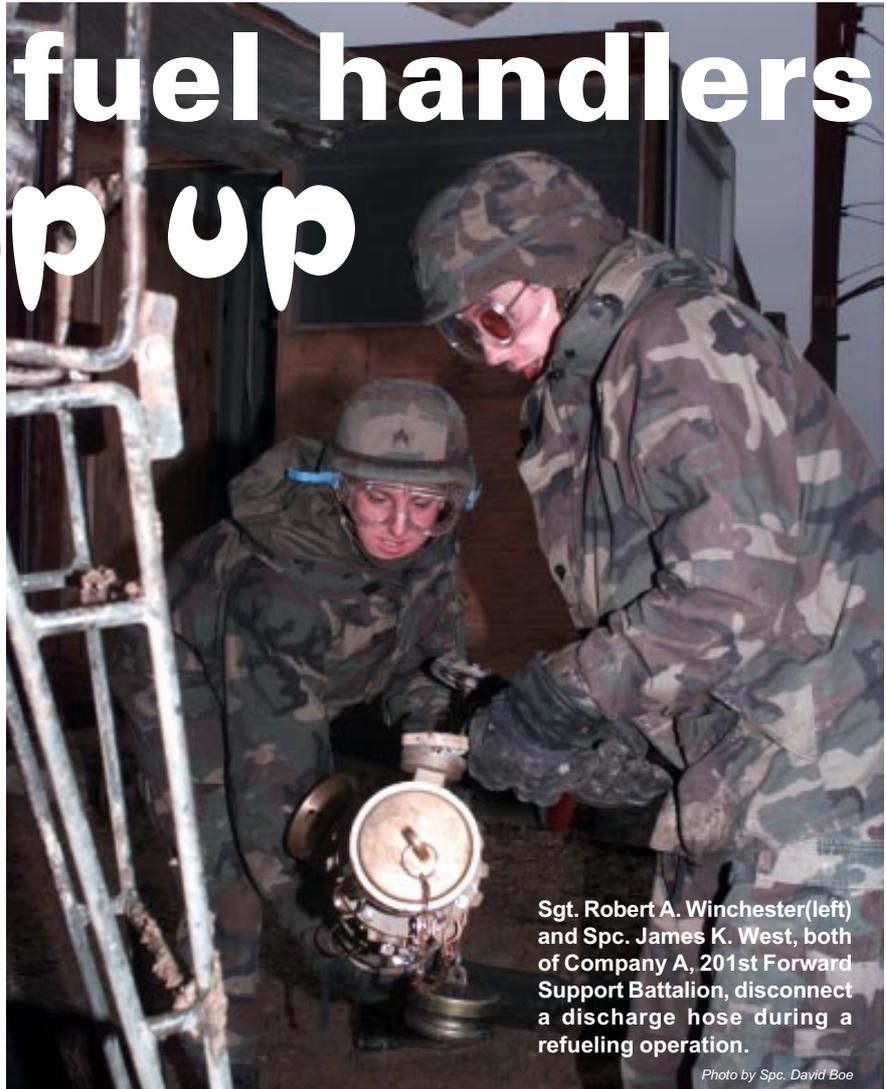
Despite the hard work, Winchester said his team operates a smooth mission. "The soldiers under me do their job and do it great," he said. "I don't have to micro-manage them. They do a lot of the work without even being told."

Winchester said he tries to keep his soldiers informed as much as possible on what needs to be done. Soldiers, he said don't like surprises. "They don't like getting last-minute missions that they have to jump through hoops to get done," said Winchester. "So what I do is give them a list and tell them, 'Look, this is what has to be accomplished, and then you will be released for the day.' Get the mission done, and that's it, no Mickey Mouse stuff."

It's a command philosophy that works, according to Winchester's team members.

"It's excellent, excellent," said Spc. Carlos D. Williams, 23, of Fayetteville, N.C. "We have good communication, and we work together well. We're not stressing each other out."

Spc. James K. West said a lot of the ease of their mission in Bosnia stems from the team leader. "He (Winchester) takes care



Sgt. Robert A. Winchester(left) and Spc. James K. West, both of Company A, 201st Forward Support Battalion, disconnect a discharge hose during a refueling operation.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

of us out here," said West. "He keeps us off some of the more (burdensome) details."

"Sgt. Winchester is always looking out for us," said Pvt. Shad A. Schendorf, 18, of Rice Lake, Wis. "Sometimes he goes a little overboard, but he does take care of us."

Schendorf, who enlisted eight months ago, knew when he received his orders for Germany that he would end up in Bosnia. He said the first day he arrived at his unit Germany, he was told he was going. This was not a problem, said Schendorf.

"I think it's kind of cool, because when I go home I can say that I've been to all of these countries," said Schendorf. "And I'm happy to finally get to a duty station where I can work and see what my job really is."

"The rest of the team has taught me a lot," he said. "And I've been able to refresh them on some of the things they haven't done because I'm fresh out of AIT (Advanced Individual Training) and I still remember everything."

With their mission of fuel supply, environmental and personal protection are major concerns, said Winchester. "We have to be aware of spills and leaks," he said. "We also have to be aware of the equipment we use, like gloves and goggles, so we don't get fuel on us or in our eyes."

Safety, environment, force protection, and 50,000 gallons of fuel -- it's a lot to juggle, but the team members have a way to make it all work, said Schendorf.

"We work together and get it done," he said.

Top guns



Pfc. Cary Lee Coffman, a cannon crewmember for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, sets up a collimeter used as an aiming reference for an M109 Howitzer.

Photo by Spc. Paul Hougdahl

By Spc. Paul Hougdahl
129 MPAD

CAMP COLT -- To be the best, a team must train harder than other teams and be willing to put in the time it takes to become number one. It also involves taking a lot of pride in the job and not being willing to accept just doing the job, but to do it to the highest standards.

This philosophy is used everyday by the troops of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery. Every task they perform, from doing routine maintenance to laying on a target, they do with the attitude that they want to be first and won't accept anything else.

It was this attitude, this method of training and performing their duties that allowed this four-howitzer platoon to win a recent competition among all field artillery batteries in Bosnia.

"Our platoon is a really squared away, we are expected to win the big dance every time, kind of like the 49ers or the Cowboys. We know that we can't always win, but that is our mindset," said Staff Sgt. Garnet Taylor, a section chief for Btry. A.

Taylor said that being in Bosnia for a peacekeeping mission doesn't allow Btry. A to do the typical training they do to get ready for war. They don't often get a chance to move their guns and when they do it is usually just two howitzers at a time.

"The competition gave us the opportunity to go out and do the traditional things for war. It proved that we haven't missed a beat on keeping our skills up," said Taylor.

"It takes a lot of preparation. We come up with a plan on how we will train using suggestions from all the soldiers and then we train to the point where we can max each task," said Sgt. Alvin Johnson, a section chief for Btry. A. "Overall teamwork is the basic concept, they have to want to win."

A team of evaluators scored the team on many different tasks including a pre-combat inspection where the load plan is checked, a check of maintenance records to ensure each crew did the proper drills and the time taken to emplace a howitzer in the area prepared by the advance party.

"It entails a lot more than just being the fastest, we have to do many things correctly, including maintaining correct convoy intervals and having good maintenance records," said Sgt. Jim Gior-

dan, a gunner for Btry A.

Btry. A scored 197 out of a possible 200 points during the testing, Giordan said. When the evaluators could not find any shortcomings with procedures, they randomly asked soldiers questions on basic artillery knowledge. They came through with flying colors.

"In our platoon we always shoot for the top — we aren't doing anything we are not used to doing," said Giordan. "The soldiers thrive on competition. They want to be number one and they want to set the standard for the entire battalion."

"We don't get a lot of recognition because we just support whoever needs us. That's why we have competitions, to keep the guys from getting complacent," said Giordan.

It is an impressive sight to see four M109 howitzers along with four M992 ammo carriers rolling down a road. The ground shakes and the rumble can be heard from quite a distance away. Natives who live in the area around Camp Colt have gotten used to the typical HMMWV convoys and rarely come out to look any more, but when they discover this much firepower coming down the road, they have to come out and check out the awesome sight.

The members of Btry. A realize they are in Bosnia as a deterrent, a show of force to let the former warring factions know that further fighting will not be tolerated. The irony is that they hope they never actually get to use the skills they work so hard to hone.

"We all see it as though we are trained to do our job, but we pray that we don't have to. If we have to do our jobs it means that things aren't going to well," said Giordan. "If you hear the words 'lightening bolt' you'll see all kinds of guys running from all directions in PT gear, shorts or whatever. We have three minutes to lay on target and 10 minutes for the platoon. One gun is always up, twentyfour seven, ready to lay steel on target."

Sgt. Alvin Johnson is the section chief for the gun that also won the competition for the best howitzer section, which allows them to place a red muzzle protector on the end of their barrel that reads "Top Gun." Johnson said that winning the individual title was not as important as winning the battery title.

"It's more important to win as a platoon because we go out together, not just one gun," said Johnson. "We watch each others' backs."

Home Page gets word to soldiers

By Spc. Terri Cook
1st Infantry Division PAO

EAGLE BASE -- "Congratulations, it's a girl!" "Dad, I hit my first home run today!" "Good job soldiers, from a Big Red One veteran." "Mom, I got an A on my English paper!" How can a Task Force Eagle soldier receive these messages? Easy. Find a computer which has the Internet browser, then access a new page -- the Task Force Eagle home page at www.IID.army.mil.

"What we have developed here is an interactive service for soldiers and family members which enables them to send messages to the soldiers of Task Force Eagle," said Staff Sgt. Gregory W. Binford, Task Force Eagle public affairs supervisor. "It provides an interactive communication flow between us and the public."

The messages are reviewed, checked for appropriateness and then posted as soon as possible.

"When the tasking came down, we all recognized how powerful the world wide web page could be for soldiers or anyone who would like to know what is taking place here in Bosnia," said Maj. Bill L. DuPont, public affairs officer, 1st Infantry Division.

The intent at the beginning was to provide an outlet that was the most timely available and to provide an information resource tool that was initially experimental in nature, but is now taking on a whole new direction and has become something that is very useful.

"Looking back, having birthed this page with G6 AMO assistance, it has provided us an excellent opportunity to connect family members and curious surfers to our soldiers here supporting the SFOR mission," said DuPont.

"We have established links to other related websites such as Defense and Bos-

nialink. However, the biggest hit on this page seems to be the link for sending and reading messages to soldiers in Bosnia," Binford said. "We do upgrades and changes to the pages on a daily basis to keep the information current and fresh and when a letter comes in to any specific soldier we will do our best to get the message to that soldier."

Since the home page went public on Dec. 3, 1996, it has had over 6,500 visitors.



Welcome to Task Force Eagle

"We have been able to post daily every message of encouragement that has come in so far. That's something that we would like to see continue. We would like to have as many messages come in and we will post them as quickly as possible to let our soldiers know how the people feel about them," said the Overland Park, Kans. native.

Soldiers of all nations in support of Task Force Eagle are receiving messages. The interactive link between SFOR and the public is something that is a whole new

direction the Army is heading.

"We are definitely trying to blaze new trails but to do so in a manner that is both productive, constructive and very useful to both the public and all of Task Force Eagle," Binford said.

The home page contains information on the role of the 1st Infantry Division here in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the history of the separate brigades, battalion-size elements, biographies on key leaders, including the battalion commanders, battalion command sergeants major and the area of responsibility for the separate brigades. "News releases are posted to keep the public information current on the things that are relevant to our area of operations," Binford said.

The home page includes Task Force Eagle maps, graphics, links to download the Talon, which is the official Task Force Eagle newspaper and the ability to read and send messages to the soldiers of Task Force Eagle.

"On the read mail page is a disclaimer," Binford said. "Often times the messages that come in to our soldiers are very warm-hearted and very genuine concerns. However, we haven't done any kind of background check on any messages and so what we've done is cautioned people that if you respond to an e-mail address that you do so using your best judgment when contacting anyone that you might meet on the Internet."

"Since we are running a split base operation, our connection will continue when we redeploy to home base," DuPont said. "It will be a forward/rear operation. As for the home page, there will always be a 1st Infantry Division home page."

"There is a lot of work and man hours involved in the project but I think overall it is a glowing success," Binford said.

Turtles in the box

Featuring Muddy and Dusty

By Capt. Peter J. Buotte



PATROL

from page 1

no paved roads. You can see all the buildings have bullet and shrapnel holes from direct hits."

Cerwin, fresh out of basic training, has been in country only a few weeks, and is currently stationed at Observation Post number nine, in the heart of the bombed-out town of Omerbegovaca. He said he remembers seeing such destroyed Bosnian towns on the evening news while still a student in San Antonio, Texas. To Cerwin, watching it on TV, it was an unreal and far away place -- nothing to do with his life. "If a year ago I'd been told I'd be in Bosnia today -- I'd have said it was crazy," he said.

Though it might seem crazy at times, the Co. C, 2-2 Inf. "Ramrods" are the new tenants at OP-9, replacing Task Force 1-18, which is rotating back to Germany. In addition to performing checkpoint duty at the OP, the soldiers are required to go out on daily patrols and night patrols into Omerbegovaca and Dizdarausa.

Like Cerwin, many of the soldiers at OP-9 are young and new to the Army. Pvt. Darío J. Troiano, 21, entered the military six months ago. This is the farthest he has ever been from his hometown of Carey, Ohio.

"I've seen a lot of stuff I've never seen before," said Troiano. "But that's why I joined. Where else can you get a chance to go to another country and get paid for it?"

Troiano said when he sees the families in Omerbegovaca struggling to rebuild their lives it touches him personally. "Because I know -- I have my own family at home," he said. "I feel sorry for these people -- it's a real eye opener. You hear about war in school, but you don't really feel it until you actually see it first hand."

One soldier who has seen it first hand before is Sgt. Ryan E. Sullivan, who at 25 is one of the older members of third platoon. The dismount squad leader from Williamsport, Penn. is the only member of third platoon who is on a second deployment to Bosnia. This distinction, he said, has allowed him to provide his younger squad members with valuable information on their mission.

"I have little chats with them, tell them things that I did before when I came down here," said Sullivan. "I want to bring them up, kind of mold them to be good soldiers, the best they can be."

Sullivan said he tries to instill into his men the importance of force protection, anywhere and anytime.



Accompanied by military police and explosive-sniffing dogs, soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, move out from Observation Post nine for a patrol into the Bosnian town of Omerbegovaca.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

"Whether one is going to the bathroom, taking a shower, sleeping at night, eating chow or doing patrols, we practice force protection at all times," said Sullivan.

A three-year veteran, Sullivan is a stickler for detail. Prior to each patrol, he double checks his soldiers, ensuring they have the proper equipment and full canteens of water. He asks individuals questions, like "What do you do if a sniper attacks?" or, "How do we react to demonstrators?" During patrols he keeps a constant eye on the mission, tightening or closing in the squad as need be, and making sure details are adhered to. It's the details, he said, that help the unit do

same, said Sullivan. One day it might be a south patrol looking for UXO's (unexploded ordnance), the next, a north patrol monitoring resettlement efforts. "And, of course, we enforce the provisions of the GFAP (General Framework Agreement for Peace)," said Sullivan. "If we see anything wrong we let it be known to higher headquarters."

Sullivan said his men gain a lot of experience out of performing different missions such as this.

"They're doing an outstanding job," said Sullivan. "After every mission we do a sort of back brief on what happened. We discuss what we can improve, what we did well, what we might do different, and they get a lot of information and experience out of that."

"I've been having fun," said fire support specialist Pfc. Clarence K. Pierre. "The patrols haven't been boring. You get to walk around, and you have the little kids waving at you -- it makes you feel good."

Pierre said the patrols, while serving a military function, have a calming effect on the civilians. "You show them that you can be trusted," he said. "When they see us they can relax because they know we're here to help them."

The cold, overcast morning dissipated away to a warm, dry afternoon. After arriving back at OP-9, the squad split up. Sullivan and some of his men went back to their tent for a couple of hours of sleep before going back out for the afternoon patrol. Others walked to the mess tent to grab a bite to eat. Up on the watch tower, a lone sentry stood silhouetted against the blue sky, looking out toward Omerbegovaca. There, for the men, women and children of the town, life -- and the rebuilding -- goes on.

"If you go out looking like a rag-tag group you might be tested. If you go out looking solid, professional and disciplined, you're a lot less likely to be messed with."

— Sgt. Ryan E. Sullivan

its mission without interference. To that end he makes sure his men perform their mission professionally.

"If you go out looking like a rag-tag group you might be tested," said Sullivan. "If you go out looking solid, professional and disciplined, you're a lot less likely to be messed with."

Sullivan said the main mission of the Ramrods at OP-9 are the patrols through Omerbegovaca. It's a show of force, he said, to let the local civilians know the U.S. soldiers are doing their job. No patrol is the