

THE TALON

OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



Partners for peace



A soldier from 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery sits atop his howitzer and watches during a drill at Camp Caisson.

Photo by Spc. Terri K. Cook

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By Spc. Terri K. Cook
1st Infantry Division PAO

CAMP CAISSON — Another day comes to an end at Camp Caisson. Time for PT and relaxation. Suddenly a whistle blows. 'Battlehunder Red' echoes throughout the camp. Soldiers rapidly emerge from tents and buildings. Some in PT gear, others in BDUs. Kevlar on. Flak vest on. Weapon in hand. Engines roar as howitzers start

up and ammunition carriers roll out. The entrance to the camp is blocked by a vehicle.

Every corner of the camp is covered by an ammunition carrier and every tower manned by U.S. and Swedish soldiers.

Like wolves stalking their prey, gunners sit atop their howitzers watching. The big guns slowly scan the area. They watch and wait.

See PARTNERS page 12

Generation X

YOU MIGHT BE A GEN X'ER If...

You wore anything Izod, especially those windbreakers that folded up into a pouch you could wear around your waist.

You owned a Jordache pocket book (or several of them), or you remember when Jordache jeans were cool.

In your fifth grade class picture, you're wearing an Izod or Ralph Lauren Polo shirt with the collar up.

You were afraid of the Sleestaks on "Land of the Lost."

You know, by heart, the words to any "Weird" Al Yankovic song.

The Brady Bunch movie brought back cool memories.

You remember the first time "Space: Above and Beyond" aired - it was called "Battlestar Galactica."

You ever rang someone's doorbell and said "Landshark".

Three words: "Atari" "IntelliVision" and "Coleco". Sound familiar?

You remember the days that hooking your computer into your television wasn't an expensive option that required gadgets - it was the ONLY WAY to use your computer!

You remember the days when "safe sex" meant "my parents are gone for the weekend".

You remember "Friday Night Videos" before the days of MTV.

You ever owned a pair of "Pop-Wheels" - that handy little combination of shoe and roller skate that lasted about a year on the open market.

A predominant color in your childhood photos is "plaid".

You remember when music that was labeled "alternative" really was.

UP FRONT -- GETTING IN STEP, STANDARDS REVIEW IV

Next, our individual weapons. Serious business! Someone's life or more importantly your own, will depend on the way you handle, secure and maintain the weapon. This is a very important and critical task. A "zero defect" task.

This task is one that some of us may not be accustomed to. Current force protection policy requires everyone outdoors to carry their individual weapon and two magazines.

The 9mm pistol will be holstered, meaning secured in a holster with a lanyard at all times except when clearing and cleaning the weapon. The holster will be securely fastened to a shoulder strap/harness or pistol belt when carried. The M-16/M-203 will be carried at sling arms or slung diagonally across the body, muzzle pointed down.

All personnel armed with an M-16 and 9 mm pistol, will carry two magazines at all times. These two magazines will be placed in an ammunition pouch.



Using tape to secure the rounds from falling out of the magazine or securing the magazines to the stock of the weapon is totally unacceptable. When the weapon is fired, the expended cartridge will not eject. The tape adhesive on the cartridge will cause the weapon to malfunction and will prevent a quick and smooth rapid magazine change. I certainly hope I've made it obvious that this method is wrong. Magazines will be in pouches attached to the sling of M-16/M-203s and on the strap/harness/pistol belt for the 9 mm pistols.

And the maintenance, well, everyone should know how to perform this task. Clean then lubricate with a light coat of oil/LSA. Don't hold back on the lubricant because of the amount of dust in this environment; remember, your weapon has moving parts and will not fire without being properly lubricated. See you Up Front!!

Command Sgt. Maj. S. L. Kaminski
1st Infantry Division (Forward)

More discharges

Having just returned from a brief visit to Guardian Base, I was made aware of yet *another* attempt to slaughter a clearing barrel.

A young soldier, just back from a patrol or convoy, very tired, practically dead on his feet approaches a clearing barrel on Eagle Base. It doesn't matter which barrel, but it was *not* one at a checkpoint coming onto Eagle Base. Fortunately the rifle was pointed at the barrel. Consider the effective range of the M-16 ammunition and the catastrophic results if the weapon had not been pointed at the barrel.

The only way to get on a base camp is by air or ground convoy, or foot patrol. At no time should an individual soldier walk in and out of a base camp. In air or ground convoys and on foot patrols, there is someone in charge. No less than three people should be intimately concerned with magazine status. You, the senior vehicle occupant, and the convoy commander. But what if you are the convoy commander or the senior occupant of the vehicle? Use your buddy.

We have been told repeatedly that we are all safety officers. Safety begins with you. We are all responsible to correct and report unsafe acts. Not properly clearing a weapon is an unsafe act. Think about it.

Maj. Gary R. Spegal, 1st Infantry Division Safety Office

THE TALON

THE TALON is produced in the interest of the servicemembers of Task Force Eagle, headquartered at Eagle Base. **THE TALON** is an Army-funded newspaper authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas, under the provision of AR 360-81. Contents of **THE TALON** are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle. **THE TALON** is published weekly by the 1st Infantry Division (Task Force Eagle) Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina APO AE 09789, Telephone MSE 551-5230. E-mail: talon@pop1-email.5sigcmd.army.mil. Acquire the Talon and other Bosnia-Herzegovina related items from the 1st ID Homepage: www.1id.army.mil. Printed by PrintCom. Circulation: 6,500.

Read and pass along -- a Talon is a terrible thing to waste

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Mapmaker, mapmaker make me a map



Staff Sgt. Michael Lypsch, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor, plots SFOR routes on a wall map for the election cell.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Vonny Rohloff

**By Staff Sgt. Vonny Rohloff
364th MPAD**

EAGLE BASE — What is a tank commander doing on an office floor, in stocking feet? Assembling pages of a map, taping the pieces together and marking various routes with a colored pen; all tasks which help the peace-keeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"This map is more of a general overview to get the big picture," said Staff Sgt. Michael Lypsch, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor. With the local elections scheduled for September, the map will show polling places and be used to help track any potential trouble spots, or help plot any sort of unusual patterns.

For Lypsch, the map-making task is only one of his missions on his third deployment to the Balkan region. Trained as a tank commander, Lypsch is currently working with the operations staff at Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade.

The map, approximately 8 feet by 15 feet in size, will hang in the election cell conference room at Eagle Base. It will be used by the people in the election cell as well as military leaders from the various brigades and staff sections during meetings.

The map shows Multinational Division-North, the sector area of most concern to the U.S. military, as well as the MND-Southwest and Southeast sectors.

"The map helps us to have a better overview, not only of our sector but also of the sectors that are our immediate neighbors so we can see patterns developing and can take appropriate actions rather than reactions for the election-related issues," Lypsch said.

"We'll get reports in from the field -- those reports go through people in the BUB (Battle Update Brief) and then get forwarded to us when they relate to election type

issues," Lypsch said.

Color-coded pins will be used to plot the information on the map. For example, green could mean good to go, and an amber or yellow pin could mean there is some trouble and red could mean there is rioting in the street, he explained.

"We'll be able to pinpoint exactly what type of things are going on, and in what general region," Lypsch said. "We anticipate, and will not be surprised if we see trouble in certain areas that are highly contested already, where troubles have been the norm for the last several months. We will be able to monitor those areas very closely. At the same time, we will not ignore those areas that up until now have been very peaceful."

Maps come in sections because it would be impractical to store, ship, or manufacture huge wall maps. So Lypsch pieced 32 sections together making a big map with a scale of 1 to 100,000. He cut off the white margin around each piece then numbered the back. Using scotch tape he pieced together and taped the front then turned it over and taped the back. "Hundred-mile-an-hour tape seems to be the best to use; it is flexible and won't crack," he said.

When put together, the map sheets are not in perfect line. "Unless you have a large paper cutter with razor edge sharp cuts, you're going to come up with little bits of error. If you have an eighth of an inch difference and don't compensate, by the time you put eight map pieces together, you will be an inch off.

"What I've done here is cheat. I put in a little wrinkle now and then, as necessary, to adjust one with the other. It is not a picture perfect map, but for the most part is very accurate."

Info briefs

Getting warmed up

Warming weather has already resulted in heat injuries for SFOR soldiers. Hot weather increases the risk that soldiers will become heat casualties. To help prevent this, soldiers should drink twice as much water as they normally do on warmer days. If it becomes too hot outside units should use a work/rest schedule. Soldiers should also wear loose clothing to help avoid heat injury.

Keeping in good physical condition helps to climatize and keep heat sickness away. As the temperature soars the heat categories will be implemented. Soldiers should be aware what category the temperature is in and act accordingly.

The use of ample amounts of sunblock will also help prevent heat injury.

Report UXO to proper authorities

With the snow all melted now, more and more unexploded ordnance is appearing. Soldiers at Eagle and Comanche Bases should contact the Military Police desk at 559-5151 to report unexploded ordnance. The MPs will contact the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Air Force Explosive Ordnance Detachment will dispose of the item. Soldiers at other base camps should contact their Tactical Operations Center to report unexploded ordnance.

Serbo-Croatian classes offered

Serbo-Croatian language classes are offered at Eagle Base on Sunday at 5 p.m. at the base chapel (Building 14).

Watch the mail

Check the packages you receive for unfamiliar return addresses. Explosives can be concealed in packages as small as a letter.

In addition, make sure the packaging from mail received is properly disposed of. Loved ones at home may also be in danger of receiving anything from explosives to threatening letters, to prank phone calls if the return address falls into the wrong hands.

Protecting the force



Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery set up a Forward Operating Base near Demi.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

CAMP DEMI -- The thick mud is part of the daily uniform at Papa Alpha Ten, which served as the Forward Operating Base (FOB) of Task Force 1-41 recently near Camp Demi. For three days, the wet and rugged location afforded movement security for elements of TF 1-41 as they patrolled and escorted the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The ICTY teams were in the area near Camp Demi conducting inspections.

"We provide artillery coverage around the Zone of Separation in support of the maneuver elements that operate out of Camp Demi," said 2nd Lt. Cyrus Cady, fire direction officer, 2nd Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery. "However, there are times when they move out of our range. When that occurs, we send some of our howitzers forward to a position where they can cover whatever is going on. We show that we can support Task Force 1-41 with artillery fire wherever they may be."

Once the howitzers roll into position, they need to be able to fire within minutes, according to 1st Lt. Joey Smith, Btry. B, 1st Bn., 6th FA. Tapes and stakes are laid to lead the big guns exactly along the azi-

moth of fire. Commo is immediately set up with higher headquarters. Position improvements are made after the initial set up is made.

The soldiers received the order the night before they were to be in position. By early the next morning, they were in position and ready to fire, after mineproofing the area and conducting a preliminary recon of the site. Capt. Troy McKeown, Btry. B commander, said that although the operating conditions are difficult, the "setup allows us to operate deeper into our area of responsibility." In the meantime, there is platoon training, constant maintenance and upgrades to the position.

A platoon consists of howitzers, ammunition carriers providing rounds and a Fire Direction Center which is a mobile headquarters for the artillery unit. At the FOB,



2nd Lt. Jesse Wightman, 1st Platoon leader, Company C, Task Force 1-41, studies a map before going out on a reconnaissance mission.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

there are howitzers for the increased range while the other guns remain in place at Camp Demi.

For this deployment, Btry. B began training at section level and tailored their skills for the peacekeeping environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "This is the best battery in the battalion and they know what they are doing," said Sgt. Jack Cunningham, field artillery surveyor, Btry. B. "You can't ask for much more than that."

On the prowl

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE - This week's episode: The Panther and its habitat. The Panther isn't indigenous to any one area, but is frequently found in open, dry fields where it can hunt its prey much easier. It hunts by pushing its two large arms along the ground in front of it, while its own thick hide protects it from most predators. The Panther is heavier than an elephant, slower than a lion, but is far deadlier than either of them.

A scene from national Geographic? Not quite. This panther isn't a warm-blooded animal with black fur -- it's a warm-oiled machine with OD-green metal.

However, like its namesake, the Panther is a methodical hunter, albeit a little louder. Its prey is anti-personnel mines. Its habitat is Bosnia-Herzegovina.

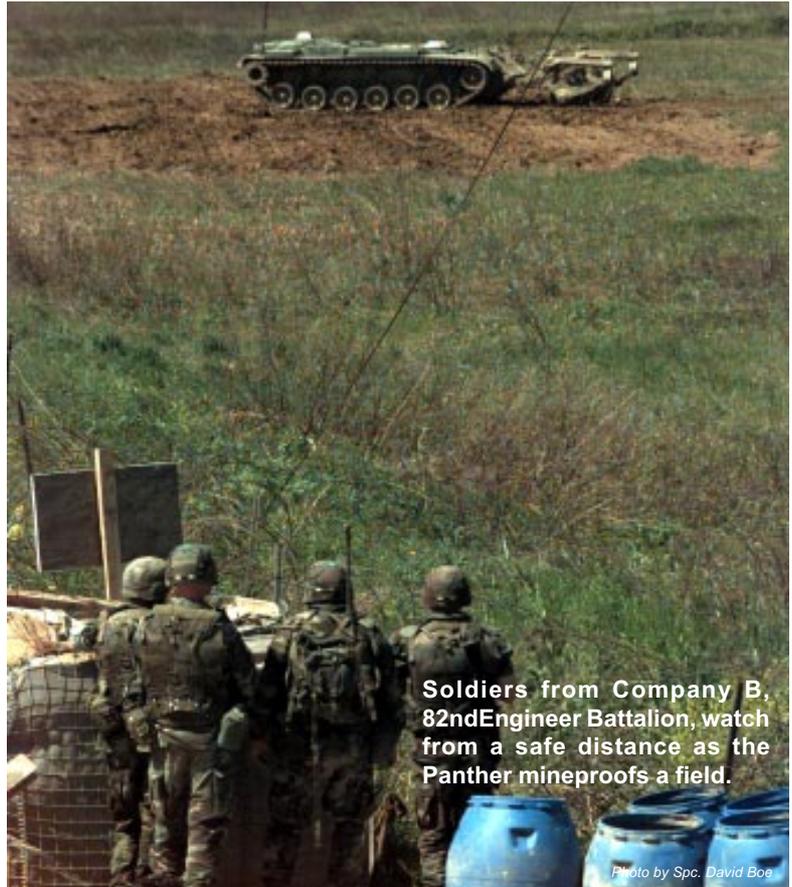
"There are several Panthers in the theater of operations right now," said Capt. Kevin Kearns, commander, Company B, 82nd Engineer Battalion. "There are some up here in the northern sector and some in the southern sector."

Kearns's unit is using a Panther to proof a Serbian minefield near McGovern Base. Kearns, a 28-year-old native of Arlington, Mass., said that while his men usually are not in the business of proofing minefields -- a task reserved for the former warring factions -- McGovern is a different situation.

"This is a matter of force protection," said Kearns. "The overall objective is to clear a path so we can construct a bypass road around McGovern. We're trying to divert traffic - even though we have security measures in place, there's still an issue of safety involved."

Once the route is cleared of mines, said Kearns, the 642nd Combat Support Equipment Company will begin construction on the bypass. Branching off the route leading into McGovern, just outside the south gate, the bypass will swing around the west side of the base, cutting directly through Serbian minefield 1019B.

While the 200 grams of explosives in the mines are enough to blow a person's foot off, said Kearns, the mines are relatively ineffective against the two five-ton rollers attached to the front of the Panther. This, plus the fact that the vehicle is remote controlled,



Soldiers from Company B, 82nd Engineer Battalion, watch from a safe distance as the Panther mineproofs a field.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

said Kearns, makes the Panther an ideal mine-clearing system.

"The Panther is a robotic vehicle, and although it's extremely large, there is no one inside it during the mine clearing, so there is no danger to U.S. personnel," said Kearns. "I think it's the best piece of equipment I've worked with yet, as far as engineer equipment for proofing and clearing."

The movement of the 60-ton Panther is controlled via radio from Co. B's Combat Engineer Vehicle. It's as simple as moving a remote-controlled toy car, said Sgt. John J. Anderson, a squad leader in the assault and obstacle platoon who handled the Panther during the mission.

"You have a little joy stick to give it acceleration, to turn right or left, and you have a little toggle switch to give it reverse," said Anderson, 31, of Union Springs, N.Y.. "There is also a TV monitor, and the Panther has front and rear cameras on it. I have a switch to move back and forth to each one, but it's actually better if you can see the vehicle and see where you're going with it."

This is the first time Anderson has operated the experimental mine clearer, but he said he got the hang of it quickly.

"I could guess where the next one (mine) would be, so when I'd hit it, I was like, 'Hooah,' like a basketball game or something," said Anderson.

"We have to roll over each piece of ground three times," said Sgt.

1st Class Franklin D. McFarland, 33, platoon sergeant, who hails from Madisonville, Tenn. "We overlap so we make sure we don't miss anything." With 44-inch-wide rollers, it's a slow process, but McFarland doesn't seem to mind.

"We're taking our time on this because we are going to have American soldiers on the ground out there," he said.

The careful work paid off for the engineers. After two days the Panther had detonated 75 mines, clearing the way for work to begin on the bypass. It also helped make the land mine an endangered species around McGovern.

The Panther strikes a mine while proofing the construction area for a bypass road around McGovern Base.



Photo by Spc. David Boe

Rocking t



From top left clockwise, Soldiers with 502nd Eng. Co. work to connect two bays (bridge sections) together... A soldier catches a rope... a bridge erection boat crew pushes a bay against the strong current of the Sava river... A soldier ground guides a vehicle over the completed bridge... Background, a bay hits the Sava with a mighty splash.

g the boat

Story by Spc. Todd Surdez
Photos by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

CAMP SAVA NORTH — “Rock the boat!” was the resounding cheer of the soldiers gathered on the raft. They leapt into the air and exchanged high fives with each other, excited because they had just beaten the clock.

The soldiers of the 2nd Platoon, 502nd Engineer Company (AFB) had assembled a six-section ramp in record time, pushing themselves to better their own standards.

“We’ve been improving every day,” said Staff Sgt. Lewis Trivett, bridge section sergeant.

The 502nd Eng. Co., Hanau, Germany, conducted rafting and bridging operations on the Sava River near Slavonski Brod during the first week of May. “This was the best drop I’ve seen in my 20 years in the Army,” said Lt. Col. Mario Carrillo, 565th Engineer Battalion commander.

The rafting operation consisted of off-loading three bridge erection boats into the Sava River followed by sliding four interior bays and two ramps into the water. While the boats maneuvered the pontoon-like bays into position, soldiers quickly attached them together. They then eased the 128-foot long raft to the Croatian side of the Sava, drove two HMMWVs onto it, and ferried them to the Bosnian side without a hitch.

“We’re motivated because we have a mission to do,” said Trivett. “We know the importance of what we are doing. This is training, but here we may have to build a bridge for the real thing anytime.”

On May 8, the 74th Engineer Company (AFB) turned over bridging operations to the 502nd Eng. Co. Their mission is to provide a means of crossing the Sava River should the need arise.

“This is a validation exercise for the 502nd (Eng. Co.) to demonstrate they are ready to take over this mission,” said 2nd Lt. Kimeisha McCullum, 2nd Platoon leader for the 74th Eng. Co. “The 502nd (Eng. Co.) soldiers have shown they are fully capable.”

The final step for validation was to construct an assault float bridge across the more than 700-foot wide Sava River. Soldiers of the 502nd Eng. Co. accomplished this feat by launching 32 bays and two ramps onto the water and spanning the river from each side. Bridge erection boat crews maneuver the bays into position, and bridge crew members work furiously to “make them fast” one after another until they meet in the middle of the river, a “full closure” operation. The 502nd Eng. Co. again excelled by completing the full closure and driving two vehicles across their bridge in less than three hours, well under the allotted time.

In April the 502nd Eng. Co. was notified the unit had won the Itschner Award for 1996. This award is given to the best engineer unit in the U.S. Army, said 1st Sgt. Wade Kerr, 502nd Eng. Co.

Capt. Christian Kubik, 502nd Eng. Co. commander, emphasized that teamwork is the key to his unit’s success.

“Our guys have shown why they were selected as the best in the Army,” said Kubik. “The teamwork among platoons and in the company is outstanding. We’re working real well together. We’re at our peak.”



Innocent victims

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — “Freddy,” a young boy at an orphanage in Tuzla, did not respond to the American soldiers like the other children. During a recent visit, the soldiers — members of Task Force 201 — played and chatted with the children, but Freddy stood away from the group, watching anxiously.

“He saw us and ducked back, always hanging on the fringes of the group,” said Chaplain (Capt.) Gene Slade, TF 201 chaplain. “He kept his distance and had the saddest face. We finally learned why he was so skittish.”

Freddy, not his real name, is one of 153 children at an orphanage in Tuzla. Every one of the children lost parents and other family members during the war which ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina for six years. Freddy’s story is tragic, a brutal reminder of the horrors of war.

“One of the orphanage staff members shared the story,” said Slade. “Freddy was six years old during the war when soldiers blindfolded him along with his family and lined them up for execution. His blindfold slipped down and he saw soldiers firing machine guns at his brothers, sisters and parents.”

Freddy’s father jumped in front of him, saving the boy’s life.

“He spent seven days by himself in the forest before he was found,” said Slade. “He is 10 now and he still believes his father is alive since Freddy last saw him with his eyes open.”

Slade recounted the sadness he felt in hearing the story, but said each child at the orphanage is a victim of tragic circumstances.

“The other kids have similar stories,” said Slade. “Each one of those children are innocent victims of the war.”

Slade and a group of soldiers at Guardian Base spent a day at the orphanage, bringing clothes and school supplies to the children. The trip was part of an effort by the 201st Forward Support Battalion and the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion to provide humanitarian support to groups in the Tuzla area.

“This is a mission multiplier,” said Slade, “because it shows the



Chief Warrant Officer Donald Blackmon, battalion maintenance technician, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, visits with children during a trip to an orphanage in Tuzla.

Photo by Spc. Connie Hylton

soldiers the purpose for being here. They become more focused on the mission and they work harder. They see the reason why the Americans are here and that the work we do does have an impact.”

The trip to the orphanage was a first for the soldiers of TF 201, which has been handling the logistic and supply missions from Guardian Base since early April. Because the orphans had never met American soldiers, Slade said the staff of the orphanage warned to take the visit slow.

“The children were not used to having soldiers visit them,” said Slade. “We had to take off our ‘battle rattle’ and our weapons were watched by a guard. The children stayed in their rooms until the staff decided it was time to bring them out.”

Once allowed to mingle, the children began to interact with the soldiers. The Americans were allowed to visit the children’s rooms, where children share living quarters. The children consider themselves part of a family, even though their real family members are dead or missing. Amazingly, the children are Serb, Muslim and Croatian.

“The differences don’t matter there,” said Slade. “How ironic. Each one of them is a victim of the war which only emphasized the difference between the Serbs, Muslims and Croats. That really impacted me that these children see each other as family despite their differences.”

The ability for these children to unite after such terrible experiences gives Slade and the other soldiers hope that peace may finally come to the Balkans. With the supplies and other gifts, the members of the 201st FSB were able to forge a bond that Slade hopes will be everlasting.

Even Freddy, the frightened child with the terrible memories, seemed happier before the soldiers left. Slade said the young boy came up to him and shook his hand. He eventually spent time with other soldiers and showed his gratitude for the gifts the Americans brought.

See VICTIMS page 11



A small girl at an orphanage in Tuzla, in bed because she is ill, smiles because of a special visit by American soldiers.

Photo by Spc. Connie Hylton

Honeymoon in Brcko

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

BRCKO, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- When Staff Sgt. Jeffery K. Upright drove across the Sava River into the city of Brcko with his unit a couple of months ago on his way to duty at McGovern Base, he saw some familiar sights. Among the structures he recognized were the city hall, which was just left of the bridge, and the library, with its green-tarnished copper dome. Arriving at the south end of the bridge and driving into the heart of the city, Upright felt a sense of completion. He had been here before -- on his honeymoon.

The story begins about nine years ago when Upright, a Manning, S.C. native, met his wife, Alexandra, while he was stationed at Erlangen, Germany. Alexandra was German, but her grandparents had met and raised a family in Brcko, and some of her relatives still lived there.

"I was interested in her (Alexandra's) family and their background, and where they had come from," said Upright, 34, master gunner with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. "So we made a decision to try to come to Brcko and just visit some relatives that were still living there. This was about '89 when this happened."

At that time, Brcko wasn't a bombed and politically volatile city, but a bustling, alive center of activity in the Balkans.

"Brcko was a beautiful city," said Upright. "It was calm. There were no problems."

The newlyweds stayed in Brcko for about a week, visiting relatives. "It was extremely nice getting to know her family, getting to know her background, so I could better understand the family," he said.

Upright saw some of his wife's relatives again in 1992, when they arrived in Germany - not as tourists, but as refugees fleeing in the wake of civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. With them they brought pictures of the destruction that was happening to the once-beautiful city. So, when Upright's unit was deployed from Germany to Bosnia-Herzegovina in March, he said he wasn't surprised at what he saw when he re-crossed the Sava River into Brcko.

"But seeing it in real life was much more impacting than just seeing it in pictures," he said.



At right, Staff Sgt. Jeffery K. Upright, master gunner, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, meets Petar Luckic, on the left, a distant relative of his wife's.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

Upright's unit is part of Task Force 1-77 at McGovern Base, just outside of Brcko. Its main mission is the guarding of the Brcko Bridge, thus Upright has found himself back

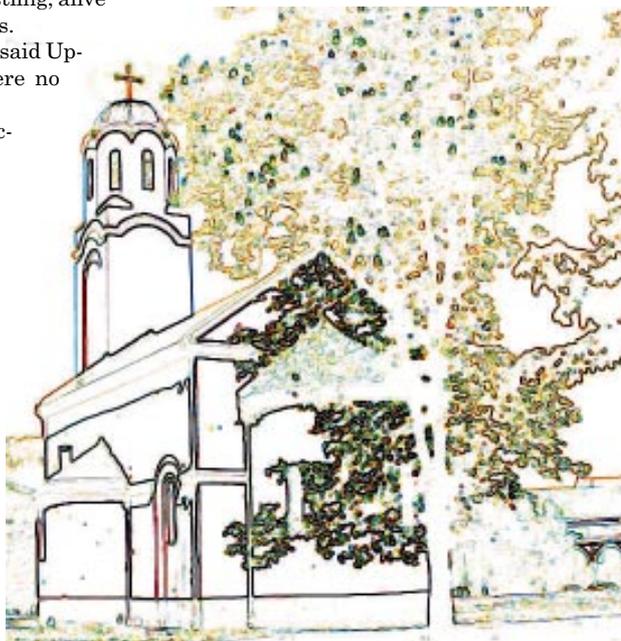
One of them is Petar Luckic, an old man who lives in a small house down the street from the city's Greek Orthodox church. Upright said he was told that Luckic's health was not good.

"He's an elderly man, so those concerns, once I met him again, were kind of erased, because he is doing well," said Upright.

Upright said his current assignment in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been a double blessing. "First of all, I think what we're doing here is a benefit to the people here. We're providing them with an environment with which they can try to re-settle their homes and get back on track," he said. "And also to help the relatives should they need help." Upright said he doesn't view his deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a coincidence, but rather a completion of a circle that started eight years ago when he first arrived in Brcko with his wife.

"Her relatives actually grew up here in Brcko, then ended up in Germany, I came into the family, then the circle became complete when I got back here to Brcko myself," said Upright. "On a personal side, I find

it very, very fulfilling to be able to come back down here and re-meet her (Alexandra's) relatives and make sure they are doing OK."



in a city he last saw eight years ago many times. He has taken advantage of the situation to look up the few remaining distant relatives that still live in the war-torn city.

Jaws of Life

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

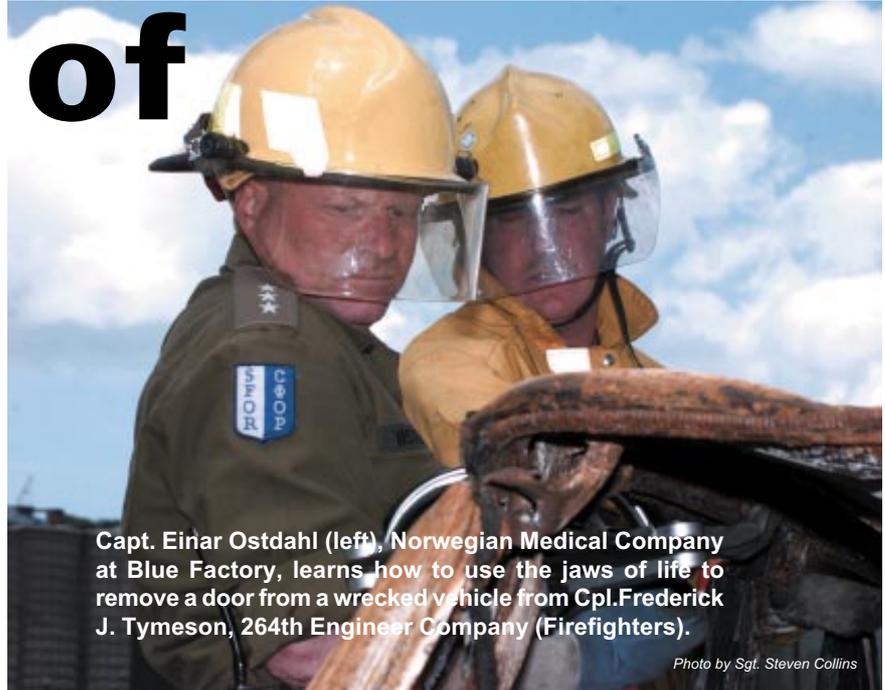
BLUE FACTORY – In an emergency, firefighters need to rely on the best equipment in order to save lives. One of the most dependable pieces of equipment is the Hurst Spreader Tool. Known affectionately as the “jaws of life,” the tool allows firefighters to rip twisted or burning metal, to lift a heavy vehicle, and to free victims from what would most certainly be death.

“There are very few things we can’t tear through with this tool,” said Sgt. Brian O. Reeve, chief firefighter at Guardian Base/Blue Factory and member of the 264th Engineer Detachment (Firefighters), South Carolina Army National Guard. “The shears have 30,000 pounds per square inch of cutting force. As you saw today, it tore right through those cars.”

Reeve and his crew of five firefighters recently spent an afternoon showing how powerful the jaws of life really are to a class of Norwegian and American medics at Blue Factory. Seeing what the jaws of life can do gave the medics a better idea of how firefighters do their jobs, said Reeve.

“This is the equipment we use to save lives,” Reeve told the class. “If you understand how we do our job, you will be better prepared for an emergency situation.”

The Norwegian soldiers, members of the Norwegian Medical Company at the Blue Factory, and the American flight medics, from the 498th Medical Company (Air Am-



Capt. Einar Ostdahl (left), Norwegian Medical Company at Blue Factory, learns how to use the jaws of life to remove a door from a wrecked vehicle from Cpl. Frederick J. Tymeson, 264th Engineer Company (Firefighters).

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

bulance), were able to see up close how the jaws of life work. The training was hands-on, giving the medics an opportunity to actually use the jaws on two wrecked vehicles provided for the class by the Norwegians.

“This class just gave them the basics,” said Reeve. “We want to develop a good working relationship between the firefighters and the medics. Our common goal is to save lives and this class gave us a chance to work together.”

Reeve and his crew showed the medics all the features of the jaws of life. Participants learned how to start the engine which provides the tool with its power. They were also shown how to use it to remove doors, dashes and roofs from wrecked vehicles. The purpose of the tool is to facilitate the quick removal of victims from wreckage in order to begin prompt medical treatment.

“We have one ‘golden hour,’ which begins, not with treatment, but the minute someone is injured,” said Reeve. “We only have one hour from when the injury is received to surgery. The jaws of life allow firefighters to get the patient out of the wreckage and into the hands of medical personnel.”

The class was part of a continued effort by the members of the 264th Eng. Det. to work more closely with the medical personnel at the Blue Factory. Since the firefighters are all combat lifesavers, they share a professional interest in the medics and their jobs. The firefighters are also on call 24-hours a day to respond to emergencies with Norwegian SISUs, the specialized ambulances found at Blue Factory which are similar to Armored Personnel Carriers.

“When a SISU leaves here to a car accident or other emergency, one of my trucks goes with it,” said Reeve, whose station has two fire trucks. “We are ready to go at any time, and have gone on several occasions.”

The firefighters must also be available when a helicopter with patients arrives at Blue Factory. A truck is alerted before patients arrive and the firefighters must be ready to respond to any sort of emergency. While being ready for an emergency tasks the skills of the firefighters, duties, such as routine fire drills and inspections, also keep the soldiers busy.

“All my guys are professionals. They take their jobs very seriously,” said Reeve, who is a civilian firefighter when he’s not serving as a soldier.

The class gave the medics a chance to see up close how firefighters work, perhaps giving them an insight to the unique pressures firefighters face while helping others.

“This was great training,” said Sgt. Tyler Cascade, a flight medic with the 57th Med. Co. “I’ve never gotten to do this before. I thought it was exciting to be able to actually use the tool to rip those doors off.”



Working as a team, U.S. and Norwegian soldiers work to extract two “victims” of a car accident.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

Hand in hand

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — Members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor from Schweinfurt, Germany and Company B, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry from Vilseck, Germany, are sharing their resources with each other to make a well-rounded team.

And to make the team even more well rounded, they conduct combined patrols in the Sapna-thumb region in the Russian sector -- with the soldiers from the Russian army.

Major Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, Task Force Eagle commander, wants the U.S. forces to work hand-in-hand with the other nations of Multinational Division-North, said Capt. Kevin Jacobi, Co. C commander, 1st Bn., 77th Armor.

"The patrols strengthen the relationship between Multinational Division-North," said Jacobi. "They show our joint resolve to deter hostilities in the region and enforce the Dayton Peace Accord." Once foes, now teammates, the two different armies must work together to ensure the peace.

"We are working with the Russians because our areas of responsibility overlap," said 1st Lt. Anthony J. Jamora, Co. B, 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf., executive officer. "We coordinate with them just like we would any other adjacent unit."

"We want to know what they are doing and they want to know what we are doing," said Jamora. "If there is any trouble, we can help each other out."

This joint patrol will be the last one conducted by Co. C. Jacobi will be turning the patrols over to Capt. Ben Higginbotham, Co. B commander.

"It makes more tactical sense," said Jacobi. "Company B's contingency plans focus more on the Russian Brigade and Ugljevik."

"Bravo Company will continue to press on with patrols (with Russians) and I will continue to work with Swedes and build a good relationship with them," said Jacobi.

Co. C and the Swedes conduct mounted and dismounted patrols throughout the communities. "We want to project SFOR pres-



After completing the patrol successfully, Pvt. Damien Greenwell, a tank loader for Company C, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor trades his leatherman for a Russian hat.

Photo by Spc. Janel R. George

ence into the communities and surrounding areas," said Jacobi.

The patrols provide a dual outcome. "They are a good deterrent for hostile groups," said Jacobi. "With the patrols, they are less likely to show aggression to their neighbor or SFOR."

"It is a comfort for the Bosnian people to see us," said Jacobi. "They know something could happen without us there and that gives them a good feeling."

Conducting regular patrols allows the residents to feel more confident in the SFOR soldiers. "They know if something happens, we will be there," said Jacobi.

Jacobi credits the reduction of checkpoints throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina with the manpower to conduct the patrols.

"With SFOR dismantling static checkpoints, we have more capabilities to get out to the communities," said Jacobi. Soldiers manning the checkpoints are now freed up to conduct more patrols.

"Hopefully, these patrols develop into more frequent operations with the Swedes as well as the Russians," said Jacobi.

Historically we have trained using old Russian doctrine, said Jamora. We trained to fight against the Russian army and now we are working hand-in-hand with them.

"They are just average guys," said Jamora. "They are soldiers just like the rest of us."

VICTIMS

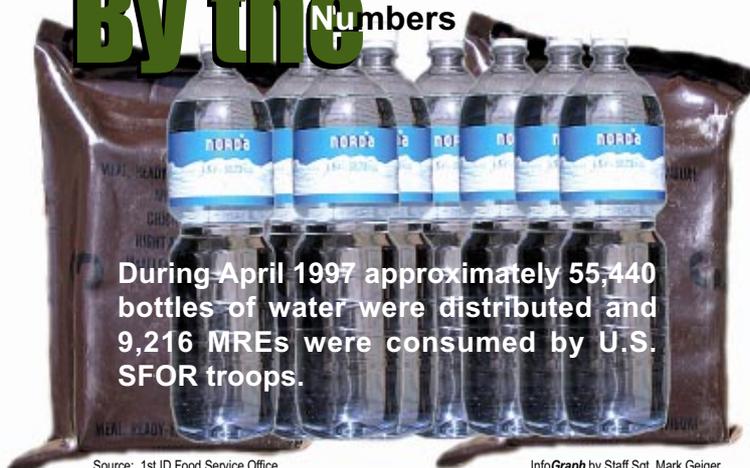
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However, continued peace and happiness is not a certainty. One of the staff members at the orphanage expressed fear before the Americans left to return to Guardian Base.

"The staff was grateful for the supplies, but the future is uncertain. They are wary but grateful. One of the staff members told me 'We don't know what will happen to us when you go. We don't know what we will do,'" said Slade. "The best we can do is hope for the best. And to help when we can."

Slade said donations keep coming from the United States and Europe and that trips to the orphanage and other areas around Guardian Base will continue.

By the Numbers



Source: 1st ID Food Service Office

InfoGraph by Staff Sgt. Mark Geiger

PARTNERS

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The camp is secured.

"We do this drill every day," said 1st Sgt. Kevin B. Robinson, C Battery, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery. "The soldiers never know what time of day or night it will occur. We're trying to keep them alert and ready."

The soldiers of 1st Bn., 6th FA, also known as the "Cobras" are the new tenants of Caisson. The camp, which is occupied by both U.S. and Swedish soldiers, is located in the NORDPOL Brigade area.

"We do combined drills with the Swedish Battalion where they man the rooftops of the buildings," Robinson said. "In a real-world situation the Swedes, who are an infantry battalion, would be outside the camp and we would have to secure the camp itself. It is important that we stay ready."

"Caisson is a small camp, but a big part of the support for Multinational Division North," said Capt. Roy E. Sevalia, Btry. C, 1st Bn., 6th FA commander.

The Swedish and U.S. soldiers have the opportunity to work together in a real-world partnership for peace.

"Working with the Swedes is a unique part of being here," said Sgt. Gary L. Smith, Btry. C, 1st Bn., 6th FA, prescribed load list clerk from Colfax, Wis. "I am lucky to get the opportunity to work jointly with another army. When I came into the Army six years ago, I never even thought about the possibility of working side by side with someone from another nation. Every soldier should be given the opportunity to see how it is to work with another nation."

"I volunteered to come here," said Pvt. Donny Magnusson, 23, a rifleman with the Swedish Battalion. "It's nice here and we get to meet different people from America because they have a great mixture of people of different nationalities."

The Cobras also have a platoon at Camp Valhalla, a Danish camp in the NORDPOL Brigade area.

"I went on a mission with the Danish soldiers. It was good to get out and work with them," said Spc. Lennox D. Howell, 2nd Platoon, Btry. C. "It was awesome to see the expression on the faces of

the Bosnian people when they saw U.S. and Danish soldiers out patrolling together."

At Caisson the Swedes and three U.S. soldiers jointly run the dining facility.

"The food is different," Sevalia said. "They take American ingredients and give it a Swedish flare."

Smith, 25, says he likes the different

Spc. Brad L. Rhoden, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, gunner and Pvt. Milan Rakic, a rifleman medic with the Swedish Battalion, man a tower at Camp Caisson during a drill.



Photo by Spc. Terri K. Cook

"I think that if the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina see soldiers from different countries working together to keep the peace, maybe they will see that it is possible for different nations to get along."

— Swedish Pvt. Andy Kepcija

dishes served at Caisson's dining facility. "It's different every day. They try to prepare both American and Swedish dishes."

Magnusson says he likes Caisson be-

cause it is peaceful. "I feel that we have put a stop to the war," he said. "We go out on patrols and meet the locals, they wave, say hello and try to give us food or coffee. It's great. We sent some soldiers in to clear a field where the kids play football. Doing that kind of work we get respect from the people."

"I'm hoping that after we leave, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina will open their eyes and try to live in peace," said Sgt. Timothy J. Castille, Btry. C, 1st Bn., 6th FA. "It's good that we have come together and I feel good working side-by-side with the Swedes. It's good to know that we are in this together."

"I think that if the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina see soldiers from different countries working together to keep the peace, maybe they will see that it is possible for different nations to get along," said Pvt. Andy Kepcija, 23, a rifleman with the Swedish Battalion. "Maybe they will try to work together towards peace. Then our coming here will make a difference."