

VOLUME 3, No. 23

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THE Talon



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

On target

Artillery units find out who's Top Gun in Bosnia

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Pvt. Craig T. Snyder, Battery A, 1st Battalion 6th Field Artillery sets an aiming reference during a dry-fire mission.

Photo by Pfc. Wendy R. Tokach



Did you know

In Los Angeles, there are fewer people than there are automobiles.

An average person laughs about 15 times a day.

The average person is about a quarter of an inch taller at night.

A sneeze zooms out of your mouth at over 600 m.p.h.

Donald Duck comics were banned from Finland because he doesn't wear pants.

The average bank teller loses about \$250 every year.

Every person has a unique tongue print.

Your right lung takes in more air than your left one does.

Women's hearts beat faster than men's.

Bubble gum contains rubber.

Even if you cut off a cockroach's head, it can live for several weeks.

Most American car horns honk in the key of F.

In 75 percent of American households, women manage the money and pay the bills.

Millie the late White House dog-earned more than four times as much as President Bush in 1991.

Most cows give more milk when they listen to music.

UP FRONT-- ATTITUDE CHECK

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, education, money, circumstances, time off, failures, appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break you, your team, platoon, company, etc. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitudes we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one strength we have, and

that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent of what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to any given situation. So it is with you... We are in charge of our attitude!! Let's all get into the right mood and make a difference. And by all means, please make all the winning choices. See you Up Front!!



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

SAFETY--BUDDY SYSTEM

A tip of the Kevlar to the folks at Bedrock. They reminded me of a basic concept that I learned years ago at Resica Falls Scout Camp: the Buddy System. When the lifeguard blew the whistle, you had about five seconds to grasp hands with your buddy and hold your hands up so that the lifeguard could count the buddy teams. The basic idea was to watch out for your buddy's welfare, and he watched out for yours. We call it the "Combat Buddy."

This applies directly to Task Force Eagle soldiers and their safety. Looking out for each other's welfare will increase the safety of our task force. Your combat buddy may recognize symptoms of heat injuries in you before you do. By working together you can ensure each of you are drinking the appropriate amount of water. We see buddy teams at the Club 21 weight room all the time. They are providing each other with that extra margin of safety by spotting the weight. As the weather gets hotter we should always run with a buddy in the event of a twisted ankle or other injury. If I feel faint from the heat, or the onset of a heat injury, my buddy can go get help.

Our military duties can benefit from the buddy system as well. Whenever the good Staff Sgt. Debruler and I return from a base camp inspection, we verify each others clearing procedures. When you are under a vehicle for maintenance reasons, your buddy should ensure that you did not forget chock blocks. Buddies should make sure that seat belts are being worn.

My personal challenge to myself and to each one of you is to make sure you return home safely from Operation Joint Guard. I challenge you to make sure your buddy returns home safely as well.

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

THE TALON

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

Bradley up in smoke

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK—The otherwise calm morning was accented by occasional bursts that sounded suspiciously like gunfire. The air smelled of something strangely familiar, but was not totally placeable. It was an acrid, smoky smell with a gunpowdery tint. Off to the east lay the source of the smell, as a black plume of smoke rolled into the sky. Somebody confused Memorial Day with the Fourth of July.

As Company B, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry prepared for a training exercise with the Russian Brigade, a M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicle caught fire, May 26.

"During the movement they began to notice smoke. That can be caused by any number of things. The Bradley commander told the driver to check all his gauges," said Capt. Ben Higginbotham, Co. B commander.

When the driver, Pvt. Bryan Millmine, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, had finished checking his gauges, he noticed flames coming around the sides of the access panel.

"The driver called fire to the crew and turned the vehicle off," Higginbotham said.

Millmine then initiated the Haylon fire suppression system, but it only extinguished the fire for a short time.

"The fire reignited and at the same time the vehicle started up again, which is very unusual," Higginbotham said.

Everyone had safely exited the vehicle, but now something concerned the Bradley commander, Staff Sgt. Todd Blatchford and the platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt.

Jeffery Schaaf. The ammunition.

"They made a great decision. Because the flames had not spread, they went back in and removed the TOW missiles to remove the threat to the soldiers and to the surrounding villages," Higginbotham said. "What they did was heroic. No one would have blamed them had they not done so."

The Bradley commander, and the platoon sergeant unloaded the missiles first and then started hauling out the 25mm ammunition cases while the flames continued to engulf the vehicle.

"Lieutenant (Paul) Callahan (platoon leader) called us out of the vehicle because he felt that the fire was getting too severe," Blatchford said.

As they were leaving, Schaaf remembered one more thing he had to get before the fire completely consumed the Bradley. He went back to get the Coax M-240C machinegun and Blatchford went with him.

"If he was in there, I was in there," Blatchford said.

A fire truck came up from Commanche Base in record-breaking time, 12 minutes.

"Our response time was great. We had a little trouble with traffic, but we got there in excellent time," said Sgt. Rickie Sabb, a fireman with the 264th Engineer Detachment.

"Given the state of the fire, which consumed the Bradley very quickly, we decided there was no reason to rush to failure. We cannot afford to lose a Bradley, although it's a costly thing. We cannot afford to lose a soldier, a Brown and Root employee or a Bosnian," Higginbotham said.



Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

A Bradley fighting vehicle caught on fire and burned at Camp Bedrock on May 26. Nobody was injured. The cause of the fire is unknown.

Respiratory illness

Hantaviral illnesses, which include Hantavirus Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) as well as Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HRFS) are normally diseases of rodents, which can be spread to humans by breathing dust contaminated with rodent feces or urine. They became known in the United States in 1993 when a number of respiratory disease deaths occurred on Indian reservations in the American Southwest. The diseases are not passed from person to person.

Early signs of these illnesses include high fever with muscle and backache, overwhelming tiredness, abdominal distress, decreased appetite, and low blood pressure. Last year, there was one confirmed and one suspected case of Hantaviral illness among U.S. soldiers in the Balkans, both of which were recognized and treated early, resulting in good recoveries.

Prevention of Hantavirus illness is tied to the avoidance of rodent living areas:

*Maintain a high state of sanitation throughout your unit area.

*Avoid areas where rodents are present.

*Exclude rodents from entering unit areas. Seal openings ¼ inch or greater in exterior walls.

*Avoid inhaling dust when cleaning previously unoccupied areas. Mist these areas with water prior to sweeping or mopping.

*Remove promptly any dead rodents from the area. Use disposable gloves or plastic bags over the hands when handling dead rodents. Place all dead rodents into a plastic bag prior to disposal.

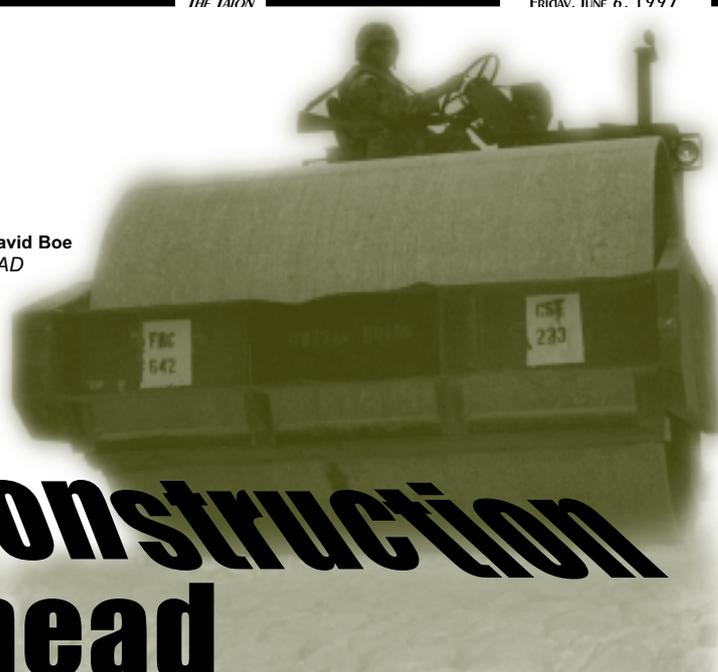
*Notify your base camp mayor of any suspected rodent living areas.

About the Cover

Pvt. Craig T. Snyder, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery sets an aiming reference during a dry-fire exercise. Snyder and other field artillery soldiers took part in a recent Top Gun competition.

Photo by Pfc. Wendy R. Tokach
129th MPAD

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD



Construction ahead

MCGOVERN BASE — Killing two birds with one stone is the idea behind the construction of a kilometer-long bypass around McGovern Base by the 642nd Engineer Company from Camp Bedrock.

The main reason for the bypass is to increase freedom of movement for local civilians driving through the Zone of Separation, said 1st Lt. Michael J. Moore, 24, platoon leader of 3rd Platoon, 642nd Eng. Co., which was recently deployed from the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y.

"Every time a civilian needs to go through McGovern Base, they need to be stopped and searched and all that," said Moore, a native of Allentown, Penn. "This way, by putting in the bypass, they'll no longer have to do that. So, it's just one less hassle in their day ... and the less tensions there are the more at ease people are, and that adds to a more longer lasting peace."

The bypass will also serve the dual purpose of adding to the force protection of the base, said Moore. Currently, civilian vehicles use the same road that military vehicles use when entering and leaving the base. Once through either of the base's two main gates, civilian vehicles drive down an approximately one-half mile length of road close to living quarters and the Tactical Operations Center (TOC).

"By putting this bypass road we also get civilian traffic away from the TOC and other areas, and basically make the base more secure," said Moore.

Bypassing around the western side of McGovern, the seven-meter wide road cuts through an old Serb minefield. This obstacle was cleared earlier in May by engineers from Company B, 82nd Engineers from McGovern using a remote-controlled Panther mine clearing vehicle. Once this was accomplished, the 642nd Eng. Co., came in and started work on the road.

"This is basically the first time we've built a road from scratch with this company," said Moore. "It's been going real well."

More than just a simple dirt road carved out of the field, the bypass will be built to last, said Moore. Con-

structed in several layers from over 7,000 cubic meters of rock of varying sizes, as well as with sheets of geo fabric (used as buffer between the rock and soil), the road will last long after SFOR troops are gone from the area.

"We like to do things right and we want to make this road last so we don't have to do maintenance on it," said Moore. So, there's a lot of planning and preparation that's involved."

Once it's finished, the bypass will actually be an improvement over the local roads around McGovern, said Pfc. Theopliuos L. Howell, 24, a general construction equipment operator, who said many of the local roads he has seen are pretty messed up. "They lack a lot of drainage," said the Richmond, Va. native. "The roads are not as high as they should be in order to promote drainage."

Moore said that Howell and the rest of his platoon have put in long hours working on the road, and are now about three to four days ahead of schedule.

"My soldiers are enjoying it immensely," said Moore. "Basically these soldiers joined the Army to operate heavy equipment and now they're getting the opportunity to do that."

"It's been pretty fun," said Howell. "I've been doing pretty much everything; operating different equipment, such as the five-tons, 20-tons, dozers."

Howell said that in addition to the increase in freedom of movement and force protection, the bypass has had a third benefit for the engineers themselves. "I feel I will leave with more skills because I have more confidence about building a road through a minefield," he said. "So, I'm more relaxed with the equipment, and I know I can do the job."

Howell said he was initially a little worried about working in an area that used to be infested with land mines. Along with doing his job, Howell also had to watch where he stepped or drove his vehicles. It was, he said, a little nerve-wracking at first. "But then I kind of relaxed," said Howell. "When I saw my lieutenant walk out there I figured that it would be O.K."

Brigade with a big heart

Turkish unit receives international peace prize

By Capt. Tony Keene
Canadian Forces Public Affairs

TURKISH BRIGADE—Helping people is a big part of the job for the Turkish Brigade in Multinational Division North. So much so that it was recently awarded Turkey's highest national award for its humanitarian efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I soon came to realize that the people were not only grateful for the help we were giving them, but that they felt safe because we were around," said Pvt. Mustafa Baldirici, who has helped deliver food and other materials to refugee camps in the Brigade area. "I am proud to have taken part in this. After all, we have received the most prestigious award in Turkey."

The Ataturk International Peace Prize was awarded to the brigade on May 19. It was first awarded in 1986 to the then-general-secretary of NATO, Joseph Luns.

"When I first learned I would be coming to Bosnia I thought it would be bad because of the war," said Pvt. Hakan Onal. "But then I saw this area, which was not fought over, and it is very beautiful. And I am helping to keep it that way, by keeping the peace."

The Turkish Brigade has raised tens of thousands of Deutsch Marks through voluntary contributions by soldiers and officers. Each allots a small portion of his pay every month, and the money is

used for various projects, such as a specially-outfitted van for handicapped war veterans. In one week alone, the brigade recently delivered 30 tons of dried food to refugees and needy families.

"One of the groups that had a hard time here was that of families of mixed

"Although all ethnic groups continue to live side by side in peace in this region, these people were discriminated against, and so they formed a self-help organization. We recently took six tons of food to them to help out."

marriages," said Lt. Onur Dirik, the brigade's civil affairs officer. "Although all ethnic groups continue to live side by side in peace in this region, these people were discriminated against, and so they formed a self-help organization. We recently took six tons of food to them to help out."

The brigade headquarters is located in the city of Zenica, southwest of Tuzla.

Before the war, its main industry was a huge metal foundry which employed 20,000 people. The factory now employs only a fraction of that number, and the brigade has its headquarters and other facilities within the factory compound.

"Most recently our mechanized infantry battalion delivered food in three Serb villages in the Zone of Separation (ZOS)," Lt. Dirik said. "This was an important step, because it shows the people that we are impartial. There was a fear, we realize, that we were favoring the other side, but now when we drive through these village the people come out and wave to us...they are glad to see us."

The villages in the ZOS include Tomici, Vidovici, Jabucica and Blatnica. As well as food, the Turkish troops have also provided shoes for children, school bags and other educational materials. They have also rebuilt many small bridges linking villages, and provided fuel for construction equipment so the people could repair their own roads.

"We are of course mainly doing this repair for the enhanced mobility of our own and other Stabilization Force troops, but the local people get great benefit from it," said Dirik.

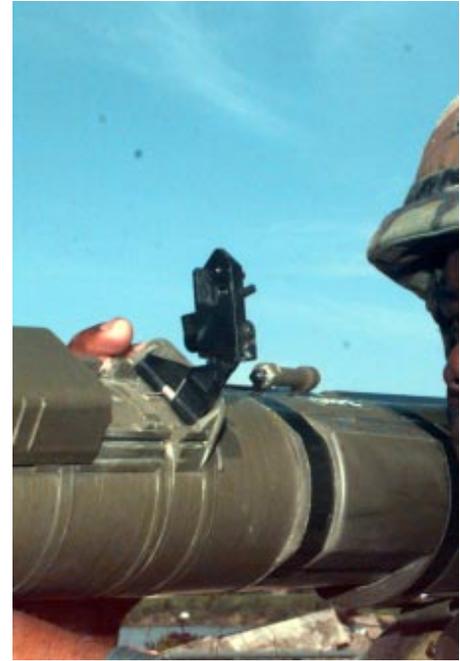
Besides its humanitarian activities, the Turkish Brigade also provides informational programs on Bosnian radio. These are Voice of Turkey and Breeze of Istanbul.



Local residents receive canned and dried food from Turkish troops as part of the ongoing humanitarian effort.

Turkish Brigade photo

Quick Reaction Force



By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD



SLAVONSKI-BROD, Croatia— As the siren screeches through the air, soldiers began pouring out of their tents and into waiting HMMWVs. One could almost hear their hearts pounding as soldiers rush by. Their weapon, LCE and rucksack clink together as if they are fighting their own war. Cries of “we’re the last two, last two” and “let’s go” dance through the air and within minutes fade as the vehicles move out.

This was the scene as 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry increased threat level and security posture of the Slavonki Brod fixed bridge to 100-percent during a quick reactionary force drill.

“Usually the soldiers don’t know that it is a drill,” said Sgt. Joe D. Martinez, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Dallas. “The adrenaline gets going just as if it was real.”

Everyone reacts to situations in their own way, and this situation was no different.

“You don’t have time to be nervous. You just have to react,” said Pvt. Miguel A. Aquino, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Monroe, N.Y.

“I heard the warning, and started moving as fast as I could,” said Spc. Joseph I. Shamos, a light infantryman from Colombia, Md.

Because the bridge is the military link between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the main supply route, extensive measures are taken to make these drills as real as possible.

“The only thing that would be different if this was real, would be the firing of rounds,” said Sgt. Brian A. Field, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Inf., from Middletown, Calif. “Other than that, we do everything else the same.”



Clockwise from top: Sgt. Bobby R. Daniels, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry takes aim... A soldier double times to his position... Pfc. Joseph W. Burt holds down the fort... Two soldier play dead during the exercise... SFOR troop covers the main gate... (Middle) Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry soldiers set up their position... Pfc. Michael D. Hendershot works on the shoulder of a fellow soldier.

Photos by Spc. Janel R. George

Riot Control

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD



Photo by Spc. David Boe

Soldiers form a wall to impede the progress of a role playing protestor.

MCGOVERN BASE – The group of soldiers, their weapons held firmly outward and standing shoulder to shoulder like a Greek phalanx, slowly shuffled in cadence down the road toward the base dining facility. In front of them several men in uniform stood their ground defiantly, throwing unpleasant hand gestures and epithets at the wall of soldiers advancing on them.

Pvt. John E. Bush, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, was one of soldiers in the formation. Gripping his rifle, the Chicago native stomped his foot down as he marched and stared down the instigators in front of him with a stony silence. Suddenly, one of the men lunged at the soldiers and grabbed for a weapon. Men yelled out and dust was kicked up. In the scuffle Bush slammed his hand against the sightpost of another weapon, cutting it. Regaining his balance, he and his fellow soldiers closed ranks further and beat off the man, who fell down and scrambled out of the way. The unruly crowd dispersed and the soldiers continued their advance pass the dining facility.

Fortunately, it wasn't an actual riot, but for Bush it was realistic enough training.

"I'm just giving them the foundations to start with riot control training."

"I think the rougher they were the more we got trained." "You have to think in your mind that this could be the real thing; they (real rioters) are not going to

be friendly and give back your weapon. You have to train hard to do the job right."

And train hard they did. Under the tutelage of Sgt. 1st Class Edwin M. Rossman, Jr., platoon sergeant, 1st Military Police Company, Bush and his fellow infantrymen from Co. C were given a crash course in the basics of riot control.

"We teach them the individual manual arms, the rifle commands for the individuals and then the different platoon formations," said Rossman. "I'm just giving them the foundations to start with riot control training."

According to SFOR guidelines, it's the civilian police's job to deal with demonstrators and rioters, but, said Rossman, there may be times that troops have to be used. Because of the possibility, he said, his platoon was asked by Co. C to conduct the training for its soldiers. "The only time we'll be used is as a last resort and of course to protect U.S. personnel and property," Rossman said. "But hopefully we won't ever have to call anyone out for riot control."

This is the second day of the training. Each day Rossman has a different platoon from Co. C marching up and down the dusty streets of McGovern Base. The 33-year-old native of Douglasville, Ga., who has responded to riots and demonstrations in Germany and the United States, said the training needs to be realistic and rough.

"That's how it will probably be if they have to deal with a riot," said Rossman. "Most riots and demonstrations I've been to most of the people there aren't violent, but you do have some criminals, some instigators in the crowd, and those are the ones you have to worry about."

Under the hot sun, Rossman followed the marching formation of soldiers, listening for the proper commands yelled out by platoon and squad leaders, and observing how the men react. After each training session, Rossman goes over what was done right or wrong, then has the soldiers start all over again. With the unsure and potentially explosive environment of a riot, said Rossman, soldiers need to immediately know their commands and hand signals, and know who's to the left and right of them.

"But hopefully we won't ever have to call anyone out for riot control."

Rossman said that most demonstrators have a belief or cause and just want to get their opinion out. They may scream and yell profanities, he said, but for the most part they only want to be heard. As long as soldiers look sharp, stay together and maintain their bearing, said Rossman, potential rabble-rousers will back off and the demonstration won't escalate.

Rossman said the training he's conducting is a lot to throw at the soldiers in such a short period of time, but that the platoons are doing an outstanding job. It helps, he said, that much of the riot-control training is similar to the dismounted patrol tactics and commands the infantry are already trained in. The attitude of the soldiers have also contributed. "It's been great," he said. "They've been real motivated."

Bedrock soldier Abel to wear two hats

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK—Soldiers call him “sir” instead of “your honor” even though he’s the mayor of the small town of Bedrock, population approximately 750. 1st Lt. Jeffrey M. Abel has been the mayor since May 8. He also is acting commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company for Task Force 2-2.

In his dual roles, Abel’s responsibilities cover a wide range of duties. “I coordinate the living conditions for units in the task force,” said Abel. “This also means supervising base security and includes the force protection mission.”

Base facilities are also under his watchful eye. These days that especially means overseeing the construction of a new dining facility. Bedrock outgrew its old facility. “It didn’t have enough seating space,” said Abel. “It topped out at 600 people. The new one has a seating capacity of 900.” Abel said that the new facility will allow the serving line to flow more smoothly, and there will be room for salad bars. The hot dog and pizza concessions will be moved to a deck alongside the new dining facility to better accommodate soldiers.

“Now with the temporary seating in tents it’s cramped,” said Spc. Aaron Shearer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. “I’m looking forward to the new space availability and convenience of eating in a building.”

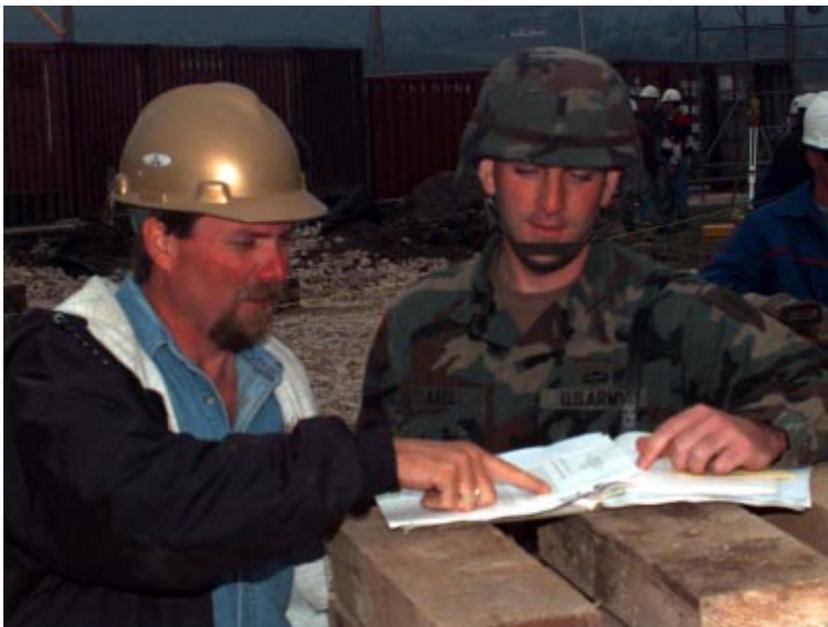
Alan Hansen, Camp Bedrock manager for Brown and Root, worked closely with Abel throughout this project. He said that the facility is 40 by 90 foot modular, solid wall unit with air conditioning. “We’re going to put a TV in there too,” said Hansen. Soldiers are scheduled to be eating in the new dining facility in early June.

More than 50 employees are expected to work at the facility. Spc. Andrew Forman works “hand-in-hand” as the military’s liaison between civilian employees and Abel’s office.

Another improvement Abel has spearheaded is adding a GP medium tent to the MWR facility. This will add 400 square

feet to the present 1,000 square foot exercise area. “We’re going to reinforce the floor and put leg weights in there,” said Abel. Soldiers should be working out in this expanded area sometime in June, according to Abel.

Other projects at Camp Bedrock that have taken shape during Abel’s “term,” are the opening of a cappuccino shop and boot shine/alterations shop and changing the barber shop site to a more convenient location.



TOP PHOTO: Soldiers at Camp Bedrock use the temporary dining facility. **LEFT:** 1st Lt. Jeffrey Abel, Camp Bedrock mayor, discusses plans for the dining facility with Alan Hansen, Brown and Root camp manager.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

A shoulder to lean on

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

EAGLE BASE — As the U.S. military continues its operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, American Red Cross workers also are on the job providing the troops and their families emergency communications, counseling, financial assistance, referrals for emergency travel and a shoulder to lean on.

In a family emergency, only the Red Cross is equipped to relay an urgent message to a deployed service member. That is why Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services staff are accompanying U.S. troops as they deploy from bases in the United States and Europe.

"Just as we have during military operations throughout this century, the Red Cross is the connection to home for the American soldier," said Donald W. Brown, Red Cross team leader. "We want to remind everyone to come to the Red Cross when an emergency arises so we can be there to bridge the lonely distance between the peacekeeping operation in a foreign land and loved ones back home."

In addition to carrying out regular briefings about Red Cross emergency communication services, Red Cross workers also give deploying troops a warm send-off by passing out comfort kits, snack bags and small recreational items as they board buses and trains for their different destinations.

The Red Cross team in Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of five team members who are deployed anywhere from 120 to 160 days at a time.

Brown, who has been deployed six times, said this deployment differs from others because the tours for the soldiers are longer, and this is the first time he has seen so many National Guard and Reserve units deployed. He smiles as he says "it's a lot colder here than Somalia but the living conditions here are worse than those in Rwanda."

The members of the Red Cross team endured the same training everyone goes through who goes downrange. "Individual Readiness Training benefited us as far as mine awareness and prepared us for survival in a cold environment," Brown said.

For Red Cross team member, Stacey



Red Cross team member
Stacey E. Hummel

E. Hummel, who has been on four other deployments, this deployment is different because this is the first time

she has seen soldiers confined to base camps. "The Red Cross has to offer extra services they wouldn't normally offer, such as video rentals at no cost to soldiers, because the soldiers are confined to base camps. We also keep the office open so soldiers can come in any time during the day."

In an unfamiliar environment such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Red Cross is a soldier's only link to his or her family.

"The Red Cross is a line of communication for soldiers," Brown said. "There are three basic things you need if you want the Red Cross to contact a deployed soldier. The soldier's name, rank and

social security number. Once we get the information and give it to the command, they let us know if the soldier received the message so we can assure the family member that the message was delivered."

Donations received by the Red Cross are distributed to all the soldiers in the theater. "We usually get two to three boxes a day full of canned goods, personal hygiene items, cards, candy and books. We send thank you letters to everyone who sends donations," Hummel said.

"I lost the case for my glasses and went to the Red Cross office and there was a case on the shelf," said Pfc. Fernando Fernandez, 108th Military Police Company. "Sometimes I come in the office just to see those smiling, friendly faces." Today the Red Cross is a world-wide disaster relief organization with around 200 million volunteers who work in their own local communities.

One important feature of Red Cross work anywhere in the world is that it is able to use local Red Cross networks in addition to other aid agencies to advise on relief needs. "This helps Red Cross to provide the most appropriate supplies in times of disaster," Brown said.

"I can get cards, candy and videos here," said Spc. Robert C. Gibson, 108th Military Police Company, Fort Bragg, N.C. "There is no cost to check out the videos and the Red Cross offers a good selection of movies. Some of the people who donated them took the time to makes tapes with sometimes three movies on them."

"My personal satisfaction comes from working with the world's best — any soldier in uniform," Brown said. "Anytime you can work directly with someone and get to see the reward directly it is fulfilling. When in a family emergency the soldier gets the message and gets home to take care of the emergency and everything is fine, you know that you probably played the major role in that. It gives me a feeling of accomplishment and makes my job worthwhile."

Making something *Ugly* look pretty

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

CAMP UGLJEVIK-Camp Ugly hangs on the outskirts of Ugljevik, a factory town in the Russian sector. A colossal smokestack belches out dismal clouds nearby. Surrounding the small American compound are hesco baskets sprouting thick weeds and mounds of lumpy sandbags. The guidon, part of a gray PT shirt, waves gallantly.

Pride in the camp, however, runs deeper than Bosnian mud. Renovations are underway in an all out effort to make Camp Ugly, uh...pretty. "When you look at the camp, the first thing that pops in your mind is ugly," said Sgt. Mark Booth, senior camp medic with C Company, 61st Area Support Medical Battalion. "Since we have arrived, we have put up a

basketball court, done extensive work on the gates, and beefed up the concertina wire outside the wall. Right now we are fixing up sandbags around the ammo point."

Booth's mission is to provide medical aid to the soldiers at Camp Ugly. "We also conducted preventive measures by filling in the mud puddles with sand to keep the mosquito population down, because that will be an issue very soon." The 27-year-old from Lincoln, R.I., added, "Camp Ugly needs all the help it can get."

Squads from 3rd Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, rotate out of Camp Bedrock to Camp Ugly for 30-day cycles. They staff the guard towers, provide armed escorts and force protection for American soldiers operating in the area.

Sgt. 1st Class Jess Annunciation, senior non commissioned officer with the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion based at Camp Ugly, has big plans for the little camp. His contributions include acquiring flowers for the dining facility. (Actually, it is a small dining room with a refrigerator in the corner stocked with Coca-Cola, ice cream and a wide assortment of picante sauce.) "Wherever I go, I try to make the best of it. As far as the flowers are concerned, I don't care what anyone thinks, I like them." Annunciation said.

Sgt. Jeff Guilmain, resident muscle guy attached to Camp Ugly, stopped curling his biceps for one evening and instead curled ribbons used to decorate the flower vases. "This will be a reason to get up in the morning," he said. And as he tied another ribbon, he explained the rationale for adding water to the vases of plastic flowers. "So if vase tips over, there will be some excitement around here."

Annunciation has also began a tiny garden in the area behind his tent as part of the beautifying operation. So far, he is nurturing a stick that will eventually blossom into a rose bush. "Our work here is gets very fast paced. In the evening, everyone needs time for some peace and quiet; a space to sort out their thoughts," he said.

Guilmain said he loves Camp Ugly and it is his home away from home. "The food is yummy and I never ever want to leave. But don't quote me on that."



Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

Troops rebuilding the guard tower with sand bags at Camp Ugly.

TURTLES IN THE BOX!



-PB MAY 97

Top Gun



Cpl. Kenneth Farley, Battery C, uses the head space and timing gauge to make sure that the barrel of the 50 cal. machine gun was aligned properly with the body of the weapon during reassembly.

Photo by Pfc. Wendy R. Tokach

By Pfc. Wendy R. Tokach
129th MPAD

CAMP COLT-Speed, accuracy and teamwork determined who was the best. But after all the points were scored and the pressure was off, only one team became the Top Gun in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery held a Top Gun competition to keep training in its M109 howitzer sections up to par and to motivate troops. The competition also gives a little experience to the new troops.

"I think it's motivational and it really enhances our training for the individual soldier," said Cpl. Kenneth Farley, Battery C, 1st Bn., 6th FA. "It's exciting because we get to leave the base camp and see the other batteries in our battalion. We have a good time together even if it is a competition."

The winner of the competition not only gets bragging rights, but they proudly display a red muzzle cover on their howitzer. They also receive a certificate and battalion coin. In addition, each member receives a four-day pass to Taszar, Hungary.

The first competition involved all 24 sections of 1st Bn., 6th FA. Only three of those sections made it to the final competition. Fifth section, 2nd Platoon, Battery A from Camp Colt, First Plt., Btry. B from Camp Dobol and 7th Section, 2nd Plt., Btry. C from Camp Valhalla were the final contestants.

"This was a modified competition," said Master Sgt. Robert Allen, Headquarters, Headquarters Battery. "The first one was by the book with all 24 sections. For this one I rewrote the test and made it harder. I adjusted the times and made them even harder. The people who win this competition deserve it. It's not easy."

The first part of the competition is a written test. "Soldiers must answer 100 questions from the maintenance manual of a howitzer and the Field Artillery Manual. The

section's scores were averaged together making it impossible for any one member of the team to carry another. Everyone had to know their stuff. One bad score could bring the whole team down," said Allen.

The next competition was the assembling and disassembling of the 50 cal. machine gun. The event was timed and the weapon checked to make sure that the barrel was aligned properly with the body. If any part of the weapon was dropped during the competition or any procedure performed incorrectly, the team would receive a 'No Go' and no points were scored.

The final competition was a dry-fire mission. An advanced party was sent out to sweep the field and make a security check of the scene. They set the azimuth of fire and guided the howitzer to that azimuth.

The rest of the team then goes to work. Racing against the clock, they set up the collimator as an aiming reference, use a shovel to cover their track, and lay the commo wire to call in coordinates. "All those tasks must be completed before the team can begin the dry fire. All members worked together and the mission was completed," said Allen.

"This was my first section evaluation. It was tough," said Pvt. Steven A. Rise, who was the advanced party for Btry. B. "We were nervous going into the competition. We did a lot of training together and it went smoothly. I don't think this was a matter of who is the best, it's mainly what they are prepared for. I guess we just got lucky—we were prepared for the different situations. We trained every single day for this so we were ready."

When the points were totaled, Btry. B was the new Top Gun. Unfortunately, the coveted red muzzle cover was left in Germany during deployment so instead the winning section was given a can of red spray paint. "They were told to be creative and that their howitzer better be sporting a red muzzle cover soon so that every one could see that they were the Top Guns," said Allen.

"It's good that we have this competition while we are doing a mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it keeps us trained," Farley said. "It's really exciting to find out who really is the Top Gun in our battalion."