

# THE TALON

OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



# Top Gun rivalry

## Tankers prepare for Top Gun competition

See RIVALRY page 12



Company B, 1-77 Armor, moves their M1A1 Abrams Tanks to Tank Table Five for training for the Top Gun competition.

*Photo by Spc. David Boe*

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Music education cont'd

Children's answers to music tests as seen in the Missouri School Music Newsletter, collected by Harold Dunn.

I know what a sextet is but I had rather not say.

Instruments come in many sizes, shapes and orchestras.

Morris dancing is a country survival from times when people were happy.

Most authorities agree that music of antiquity was written long ago.

Probably the most marvelous fugue was the one between the Hatfields and McCoys.

My very best liked piece of music is the Bronze Lullaby.

My favorite composer is Opus.

A harp is a nude piano.

A good orchestra is always ready to play if the conductor steps on the odium.

I can't reach the brakes on this piano!

You should always say celli when you mean there are two or more cellos.

Another name for kettle drums is timpani. But I think I will just stick with the first name and learn it good.

A trumpet is an instrument when it is not an elephant sound.

For some reason, they always put a treble clef in front of every line of flute music. You just watch.

While trombones have tubes, trumpets prefer to wear valves.

The double bass is also called the bass viol, string bass, and bass fiddle. It has so many names because it is so huge.

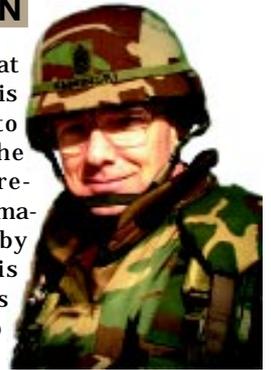
When electric currents go through them, guitars start making sounds. So would anybody.

UP FRONT -- FORCE PROTECTION

A young soldier once said to me that he thought there was someone in the Army whose only job was to think up new buzzwords, acronyms and phrases. He may be right. When these new expressions are introduced into the Army's vocabulary, they are supposed to represent something new or improved: a concept, an innovation or a better way of doing things. Such is the case with "force protection."

Force protection isn't really a new concept. It has been in the Army's arsenal of warfighting enhancements for sometime. Any well-informed leader knows that force protection enhances a unit's warfighting capabilities. The first way is through concealment and deception.

It is here that the leader is able to counter the enemy's firepower and maneuver by making his own soldiers difficult to locate, strike and destroy. This stratagem allows the leader to deceive the enemy through the use of good camouflage discipline or other appropriate measures to prevent unnecessary combat losses. (continued in the next issue) See you all up front!!  
Command Sgt. Major S. L. Kaminski  
First Infantry Division (Forward)



Belt your passengers

I am seeing far too many soldiers operating military vehicles without their seat belts and shoulder harnesses fastened. USAREUR Regulation 385-55, Appendix B clearly states that the senior occupant will be responsible for the vehicle and its passengers. If the vehicle moves without the seat belts and shoulder harnesses fastened, the senior occupant and each passenger are wrong.

The major threats facing Task Force Eagle soldiers in the routine conduct of their missions are the road and traffic conditions throughout the area of responsibility (AOR). The probability of a traffic accident is greater than that of facing an opposing force. We have many assets geared to predicting the threat facing our soldiers. The main supply routes of the AOR are not predictable.

Four weeks ago a 20-ton dump truck rolled over enroute to Ugljevic. A sharp left turn was followed by a right turn. The load shifted and the vehicle ended up rolling over on the driver's side. He and the passenger were both wearing their seat belts and kevlar. The driver is convinced that these two measures probably saved his life, or at least kept his injuries to a minimum. The vehicle roof, over the driver's position was crushed down to the point where it impacted his head. The front of his head hit the steering wheel. The force was great enough to break the steering wheel mounting brackets under the dash panel. Do you think he was glad he properly wore his kevlar with the chin strap fastened?

If you are convinced that none of these things can happen to you, you do not belong behind the wheel of any vehicle, military or civilian. If you do not want to wear your seat belt and shoulder harness for your own protection, think about someone at home who would like to see you come home in one piece.

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

THE TALON

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

# Tanks for the help



A Serb soldier guides a T34 tank onto the HETS during Company C's tank-moving mission.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

By Spc. Susanne Aspley  
364th MPAD

**Camp Demi** - Ten Russian-built T-34 tanks were successfully moved from a Serb weapons storage site near Han Pijesak to the Sokolac area under the supervision of Company C, Task Force 1-41. Members of the Heavy Equipment Transport System (HETS) Platoon, 701st Bravo Transport Battalion, provided the HETS to move the old war machines to continue the compliance of the Dayton Peace Accord.

The assignment provided a challenging opportunity for the soldiers of 1st Platoon, Co. C, TF 1-41, who spent several rainy days at the base of Mount Zeb during the movement. The mechanized infantrymen from Fort Riley, Kan., maintained security, provided convoy escorts and ensured mission accomplishment.

"The VRS (Republic of Serbia army) were directed by the OSCE (Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe) to

move the tanks, but did not have the assets, so they asked us for help. We cordoned off the area, provided force protection for our soldiers to load up the tanks, and made three trips to Sokolac." said Sgt. 1st Class

Malcolm Junior. "Our biggest concern in the mission was safety."

Moving the massive guns was no easy task. Each tank, weighing approximately 32 tons, was uploaded on a HETS, hauled by convoy to Sokolac, then downloaded to await demilitarization. Pvt. Francisco Hurtado, a driver with 1st Plt., had a chance to meet some of the Serb soldiers that were present during the mission. "The Serbs helped out in the downloading process because they were the ones who knew how to release the brakes," he said. "They cooperated with us and it was interesting to see how they worked."

Hampered by the occasional rain and dense mud, the roadways provided the biggest hazard during the mission. Each con-

vooy lasted one hour and consisted of two support vehicles and four HETS, along with a spare cab for the HETSs in case one broke down. "It was a challenge maneuvering around hills, with all the cliffs and curves," said Sgt. Gerald Mc-Crea. "I was just

hoping that the brakes would hold with all that weight. But my platoon did an excellent job and were very careful. The 701st Support from Guardian Base did a great job and we worked well together."

**"The Serbs helped out in the downloading process because they were the ones who knew how to release the brakes. They cooperated with us and it was interesting to see how they worked."**

--- Pvt. Francisco Hurtado

## Info briefs

### Soft caps, not soft heads

By Staff Sgt. Duane T. DeBruler  
Task Force Eagle Safety NCO

I was up in my office last night trying in vain to catch up on some paperwork when all of a sudden I heard people shouting and hollering, "Hooah!" I thought to myself, "What the... Have they decided to all get along and now we get to go home?" No, it wasn't that good, but it will definitely do for now. As you are no doubt aware, soft caps are now authorized to wear on the base camps and morale has just taken a 500% jump.

Soldiers need to remember that there are certain duties that require the wearing of the Kevlar helmet. One of them is operating motor vehicles. First Infantry Division Commander's Policy Letter number CG-17, Operator Safety, reads, "The Kevlar helmet will be worn by all 1st ID soldiers whenever tactical vehicles are operated, including CUCV's in a field environment. This applies to all drivers and passengers of tactical vehicles." All U.S. Forces are reminded that current force protection levels require the wearing of the Kevlar helmet, along with the rest of your battle-rattle, while operating or riding in a vehicle off-post, so don't get caught short.

While I am on the subject of the Kevlar helmet, I will share with you one of my pet-peeves. Some of you out there don't seem to know what that funny-looking thing that dangles from the helmet is called, or what it is used for. It is called a *chin strap*. It has a neat little web made to fit around your chin, and there's even a snap that attaches to the other little thingy that dangles off the helmet. The chin strap won't stay on your chin? Well, there's a fix for that too. The flappy things sticking out of the buckles are to tighten the chin strap so it will stay put.

Seriously though, the Kevlar helmet, when worn properly, will prevent head injury if you are involved in an accident. A loose Kevlar not only offers you zero protection, but becomes a projectile in the event of an accident involving any force at all. Do the right thing when you are in a military vehicle, buckle up, turn your headlights on, and tighten that chin strap! Do it for the loved ones waiting for your safe return.

# Getting it done

By Spc. Susanne Aspley  
364th MPAD

**B**RATANUC, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- Not all roads in Bosnia-Herzegovina are lined with smiling and waving children, as a foot patrol from Company A, 1st Battalion, 13th Armor (Team Tank), Task Force 1-41 patrolling the town of Bratanuc found out. According to the translator, one shopkeeper yelled "hey, where are your body bags?"

"Not everyone is friendly. If they were, we (SFOR) wouldn't be here," said Sgt. Tony Miller, 1st Platoon, Team Tank.

The platoon conducts various missions in the Bratanuc area. During the war, the town was roughly half Muslim and half Serb. Today, it is all Serb, and the Republica Srpska cross with the four Cs in each corner can be seen painted on the sides of many buildings. The cross stands for Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava, Only Unity Saves the Serb.

1st Lt. Brian McDonald, 1st Platoon leader for 1st Plt., Co. C, TF 1-41, which is attached to Team Tank, said his soldiers concentrate on presence patrols, mostly on the Serbian side. "We are constantly moving and interacting with people in the towns. It's a good way to find out their atti-

tudes and how they feel about issues like future resettlements or the elections."

Miller said that because his platoon is attached to a tank company, "we pick up a lot more mounted and dismounted patrols in our area of responsibility, because they are usually tasked with QRF (quick reaction force). But the patrols gives us a chance to see what is going on in the Serbian side."

The patrols often take the soldiers to places dark with memories of war. Pass-

ing by the 'Dutch factory,' Miller explained it was the place where the Serbs tied Dutch soldiers to posts as human shields to ward off U.N. intervention.

The platoon also patrols around the town of Zvornik, where the gray, stone ruins of the Kula Grad Castle remain. Built in the mid 1300s, it overlooks the deep green Drina river that divides Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. Today, the bluff serves as a good reference point for Task Force 1-41 as missions move about the area. According to Pirich Nedzad, translator at Camp Dobol, 50 Muslims held back Serbian attacks on the fortress in the spring of 1992. They were surrounded and eventually overrun by the Serbs after running out of ammunition and supplies.

Nedzad explained that the Muslims held the fort in order to keep a corridor open for civilians to escape from the city. The battle created 42,000 Muslim refugees from Zvornik, half of them fleeing to the Tuzla area, half going to western Europe. Those who remained or were caught in battle were among the 4,000-5,000 killed.

With the memories of the war often just around the corner, 1st Platoon may sometimes find themselves in ambiguous and discomfiting locations, but nothing that can't be handled. "We have the best platoon because we have great NCOs. They all know how to do get the job done," said McDonald.



Pfc. Eric Favant, Company A, Task Force 1-41, prepares his weapon before moving out on a presence patrol.

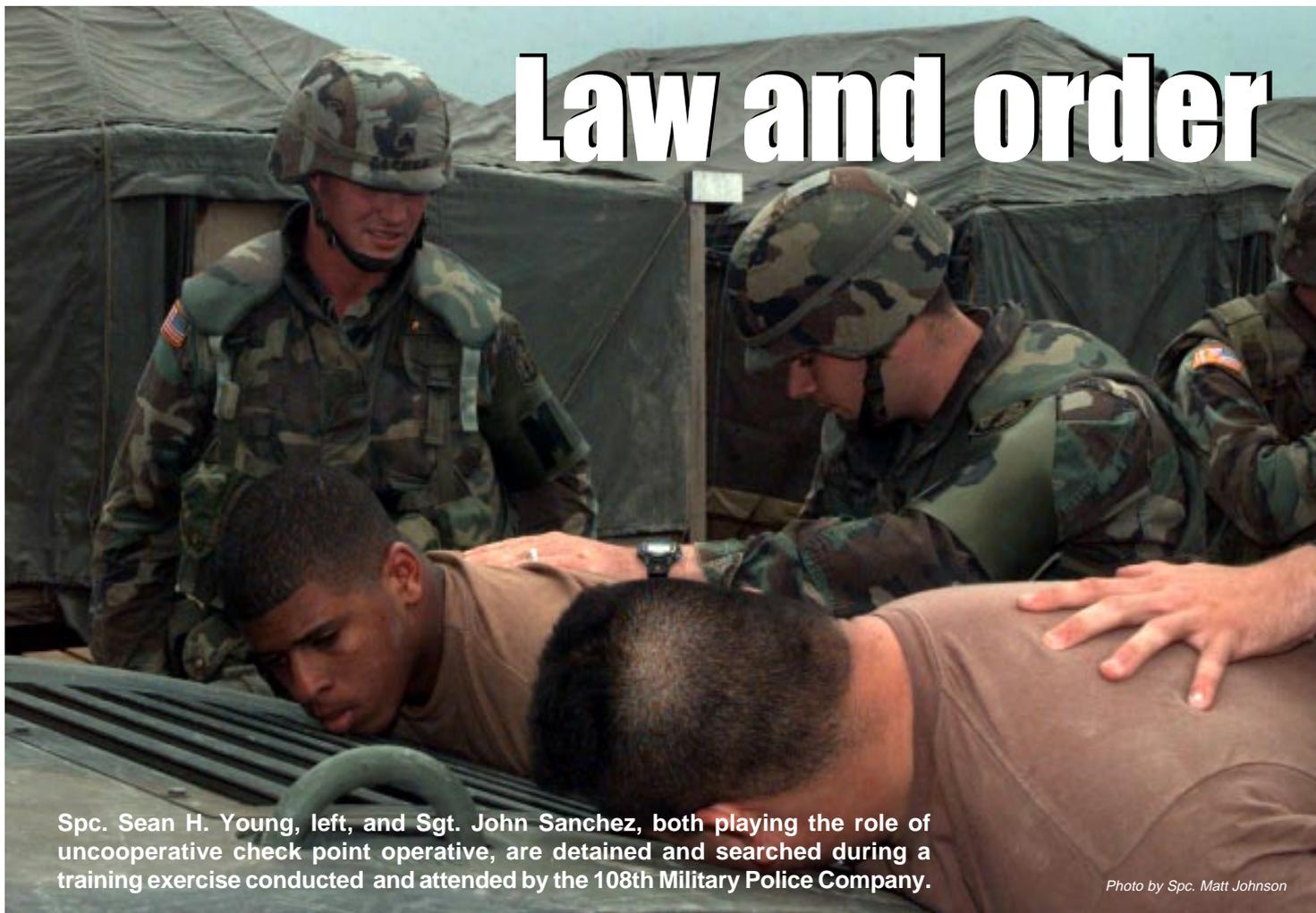
Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley



Sgt. 1st Class. Bradley Hartman, Company A, Task Force 1-41, takes a reading off the GLID system during a presence patrol near Zvornik

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

# Law and order



Spc. Sean H. Young, left, and Sgt. John Sanchez, both playing the role of uncooperative check point operative, are detained and searched during a training exercise conducted and attended by the 108th Military Police Company.

Photo by Spc. Matt Johnson

By Spc. Matt J. Johnson  
129th MPAD

**CAMP BEDROCK** — Driving along a commonly used route, a police officer signals for the driver to pull over to the side of the road. The driver is questioned and at times the vehicle is searched. If all goes well, the vehicle is back on the road in a matter of minutes.

Scenes like this are common across Bosnia-Herzegovina as police try to restore law and order to a country recovering from a devastating war. Peace and the road to recovery are hard traveled paths, at times bringing out the worst in people. Illegal checkpoints resulting in ethnic beatings, unwarranted fines and other atrocities still haunt people as they strive towards democracy.

"We're coming up with a lot of illegal checkpoints at this stage of the SFOR (Stabilization Forces) mission," said Sgt. 1st Class Gedemynas Jakubauskas, rear battle noncommissioned officer.

Working hand and hand with the International Police Task Force, soldiers from the 108th Military Police Company out of Fort Bragg, N.C. are hoping to help stop these illegal checkpoints.

"The main thing we do on the mission is provide security for the IPTF during the joint patrols," said Capt. George Rodriguez, 108th MP Co. commander. "In the event IPTF finds themselves in a situation in which the checkpoint is illegal and the police don't want to disband, then IPTF will call us in and we'll go ahead and try to disperse and disband the checkpoint.

"The higher command felt there was a need to go out and check to see if these checkpoints were legitimate to ensure the freedom of movement of all people in the country," Rodriguez said.

To prepare the soldiers to deal with illegal checkpoints, the soldiers underwent extensive training and certification.

"We're preparing our soldiers to take down illegal checkpoints if we come across them on our missions in accordance with the Dayton Peace Accord and the GFAP (General Framework Agreement for Peace)" Jakubauskas said. "We're certifying all the squads in the unit on the different processes and running them through a variety of scenarios."

"We started out by certifying all our MPs on how to take down a checkpoint and determine a legal checkpoint from an illegal checkpoint," Rodriguez said. "Once we certified them, we coordinated with the IPTF for days and times we'd like to conduct the patrols with them. We vary the days and times so we don't set a pattern."

During the training and certification, the teams covered handling scenarios, such as being informed of an illegal checkpoint only to roll into the area and discover the checkpoint is legitimate. The MPs must ensure checkpoints outside the Zone of Separation are being run according to regulations, which includes the absence of long-barreled weapons. The squads also worked on a third scenario involving apprehending or detaining uncooperative officers running a checkpoint.

"If it would ever escalate to the point of them being uncooperative and not wanting to relinquish their police identification cards or produce their IPTF police permits, they would be running an illegal checkpoint and they'd need to be closed down and moved on their way," Jakubauskas said. "If they didn't comply with this, we'd have to apprehend them, confiscate their weapons and turn them over to the IPTF headquarters."

And the soldiers seem confident, well-trained and ready to do their mission.

"Usually the first thing we do is a roll by to visualize the scene. Then we receive a brief before we go in to take it down," said Pfc. Christopher Hunt. "We then have to determine if the check is illegal or not. If it is, we tell them they need to take it down and leave. If they don't want to, we have to secure them and turn them over to the IPTF."

Although the military police company believes in being prepared and trains for the worst, cooperation between local authorities and SFOR has been very positive.

"In our area we've never had any problems with the local police and I don't think we will," Rodriguez said. "This is just another added measure to ensure that everybody in this country knows that IPTF and SFOR are working jointly together to make their country a little safer."

Story by Sgt. Steven Collins, photos by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt  
129th MPAD

**CAMP COMANCHE** – Apache attack helicopters are impressive weapons. Designed to move swiftly on the battlefield, Apaches serve a special purpose in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As symbols of the might of the American military, the Apaches are a warning to malcontents in the Bosnian population: don't start anything you can't finish.

However, the Apache is only as good as the team that keeps it flying. And without a team of hardworking refuelers, the Apache is not an impressive weapon, but a handsome static display.

"Without the 3-5 Platoon, the Apache looks nice but it's not going anywhere," said 1st Lt. William T. Golden IV, platoon leader.

The 3-5 Platoon is part of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, based in Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed to Camp Comanche for Operation Joint Guard. The platoon is responsible for the Class 3 and Class 5 products – fuel and ammunition, respectively – used by 1st Bn. 229th Avn. Reg. and its more than 45 attack helicopters in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) is located at the runway at Comanche. It is not a pleasant place – stuck at the end of the hot tarmac, surrounded by marshy areas and guard towers. There is no shade at the FARP, except for a conex used by the entire platoon during the day.

"It gets really hot down here. But we don't mind being this far away from the rest of the flight line. We have a lot of autonomy down here," said Golden.

Refueling platoons are traditionally independent groups, said Golden. Independence, however, comes as a reward for hard work, because the 3-5 platoon needs to keep helicopters refueled and mission ready.

"The only time we get trouble is if we aren't getting the aircraft refueled. We haven't had that problem here," he said.

The platoon, nicknamed the "War Dawgs," maintain an effective operation. Each soldier is trained in the specifics of refueling all types of military helicopters. They maintain different types of vehicles, including several large fuel trucks, which carry large loads of jet petroleum 8 (JP8). Each soldier knows the proper mixture of jet fuel and how to ensure it is ready for use.

"The main thing is safety," said Staff Sgt. Rick F. Logan. "Anything can happen out here. We need to stress safety in everything we do."

Fueling helicopters is not like fueling a car at the local gas station. The fuel trucks pump up to 300 gallons of JP8 per minute in pressurized fuel lines. And since most helicopters refuel while still "hot" – that is, while running – refuelers need to take precautions to ensure the static electricity generated by the powerful rotors and blades does not ignite fuel vapors.

"If the nozzle on the hose is not properly seated and fuel leaks out, it becomes vapor in the blades. A spark will set it off and you might as well say goodbye to that aircraft," said Golden.

One soldier does the actual refueling when the helicopter lands. Another soldier stands by with a fire extinguisher in hand, ready to respond to any emergency. The soldier with the extinguisher is responsible for saving the refueler in an emergency. He or she does not worry about the aircraft.

"In a situation where vapor ignites, there's not much we can do for the helicopter. We want to get our soldier out of there as soon as possible," said Golden.

It is dangerous work, but the soldiers of the 3-5 Platoon do not seem to let the idea of igniting vapors and exploding helicopters bother them. Safety is stressed every minute, every hour, every day, said Logan. Soldiers wear proper safety gear – gloves, helmets and goggles – during every refueling or when working with the fuel or other equipment.

"It's been really easy training the soldiers of this platoon. They understand their jobs and understand the importance of safety," said Logan.

The platoon is also flexible, able to set up refueling points just about anywhere, anytime. The platoon is trained to move to a location away from the established runway and set up a FARP in the wild. It can fly in a Chinook or a C-130, unload quickly and get ready in a moment for thirsty helicopters.

"We can jump in and boom, set up something quick," said Golden. "That's one of the great things about this operation. We're pretty high speed. We can do whatever the mission requires."



# er' up



*From top right, clockwise, Spc. Alexander Collier checks hose connections for leaks and proper fit... With extinguisher handy, Fire Guard Pvt. Jason Hall watches refueling of Apache... Pvt. Dixie Lee McElfresh fuels up an Apache on the Camp Comanche flight line... Background, Apaches arrive at the Camp Comanche fuel point.*

# Reup? Not crazy!



Spc. Bryon Roberts takes the oath during an aerial re-enlistment ceremony. Staff Sgt. Klaus Lowry holds up a flag while Maj. Chris Reddish administers the oath.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Doyle

By Sgt. Steven Collins  
129th MPAD

**EAGLE BASE** - For those soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina considering re-enlisting in the U.S. Army, no time is better than now. In addition to the many benefits of choosing the Army as a career, there are fringe benefits offered to those who re-enlist during their deployment.

Re-enlistment bonuses, which for some military occupational specialties (MOS) can be as high as \$12,000, are tax-free when a soldier re-ups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, said Sgt. 1st Class Linwood J. Smith, senior career counselor for the 1st Infantry Division (Forward).

"Even if the soldier receives bonus payments later, in the States or in Germany, the money is tax-free," said Smith. "That is a benefit a soldier will not receive anywhere else."

Retention is an important focus of the chain of command in the units deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the deployment can be tough and demoralizing for some soldiers, Smith said he sees many soldiers who are excited to re-enlist because of the Bosnian experience.

"This deployment is finally an opportunity for a soldier to do his job," said Smith. "This is where the rubber hits the road, so to speak. It is not combat, but it is a close substitute. A soldier can do his or her job in a real-world situation."

Because retention is such a high priority, commanders, command sergeants major and other high-ranking leaders realize the importance of retaining good soldiers and give a special effort to help Smith and other career counselors.

"We have a commanding general (Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs) that takes time out of his day to re-enlist a soldier or who flies by a helicopter to a unit to re-enlist soldiers. That says a lot," said Smith.

Commanders and enlisted leaders at the battalion level and the company level also share crucial face time with soldiers trying to decide whether to re-enlist.

Having the full support of the chain of command makes Smith's job easier. He is one of three full-time career counselors. There are also eight battalion-level retention NCOs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as many company-level retention representatives. The career counselors help all soldiers, in every career field.

Smith said he and other counselors will go the extra mile for a soldier who is serious about re-enlisting but has questions. If a soldier wants to change branches, for example, counselors will make the necessary phone calls to make sure a soldier will be able to get a slot in that new field.

"Every branch knows who I am because I'm on the phone all the time," said Smith. "We want to follow-up on all questions. Try to find options for the soldier. We don't mind making that extra call."

Being in Bosnia-Herzegovina is often a plus, because commanders and schools are anxious to accept experienced and motivated soldiers. Making a career field change is not hard, it just takes the time to find a slot for a soldier.

"We also have the soldier call his or her spouse before the final decision. This is a family decision. I had a soldier who told his wife that he was looking at four years, but if he signed for six years, he would get the bonus tax-free. She said 'Go for it. Get the bonus.' We need to include the families on these decisions," said Smith.

Smith and other career counselors are careful not to talk an unsure soldier into re-enlisting. Sometimes, getting out of the Army is a good option for the soldier, especially the ones interested in going on to college or those with family considerations.

"We just lay out the many options for the soldier. The decision is theirs. We just help them see the different options. We are there to answer questions. And we'll do whatever we can to help a soldier who is interested in re-enlistment," said Smith.

If you are a soldier who needs to start thinking about whether to re-enlist or not, contact Staff Sgt. Marvin Chattman at MSE 553-7320, Sprint 764 for Task Force 1-41 soldiers, and Sgt. 1st Class Linwood Smith and Staf Sgt. Allen Sharpe at MSE 558-8343, Sprint 762-8343 for all other Task Force Eagle soldiers.

# Different kind of Jeopardy

By Pfc. Wendy R. Tokach  
129th MPAD

**E**AGLE BASE -- While soldiers rarely associate training with the words fun and exciting, Task Force 38 accomplished that mission, and did it with lots of laughter.

The training was set up much like the popular TV game show Jeopardy, with three teams. A category and point value would be chosen and the answer for that selection would be given. The team that chose the question was given the opportunity to answer it, and if they couldn't, the other teams were given a chance. If the correct question was given for that answer, they would receive the point value. If the incorrect question was given, they would lose that point value. Categories included Physical Training, Drill and Ceremony, Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) and Land Navigation.

"We know these are the areas that people have failed in the past, and we tried to put it into a nice kind of game format so that what happened here today was a game show instead of a boring everyday class of task condition standards — we put some fun into it," said 1st Sgt. Kenneth Nurse, 943rd Replacement Company. "We put together this format last year and it was very successful, so we decided to run it here today."

To play the game, each team chose a team leader who would speak for the group. The team picked the answer together and gave the question through the spokesperson. After the team was given an answer, they were to caucus and agree on the question.

"We introduced a non-traditional type of learning where we eliminated the kind of task conditions and skills. We brought it together in a format that soldiers can learn better with their peers," said Nurse. "It's kind of unique in a way. To prepare for this, we pulled together all the questions that have given PLDC, ANCOC and BNCOC students problems in the past."

After the question was answered, a panel of judges made up of company-grade officers gave judgment on each answer. The panel of judges could be overridden at any time by the ultimate judges, two field-grade officers. It was a situation which created plenty of laughter through the differences of opinion of all the judges. Points were then tallied by the first sergeants.

"This was great, it was a nice change of pace," said Pvt. Michael J. McDougall, 59th Quartermaster Company. "The competition was nice -- everybody came out a winner. There wasn't so

much stress. When you're stressed out you don't really remember what you learned; plus you could win some prizes."

The soldiers participating were encouraged to be good sports while still being as rowdy and loud as they possibly could. Soldiers complied with their laughter and shouts.

"It is a lot of fun for the group," said Nurse. "There was competi-

tion between each of the groups but there was also camaraderie and cohesiveness in the group, and that was what we were looking for."

"It's not like a regular game here just passing time," said McDougall. "You can play the game and win prizes and learn. It's something that helps move the mission along. If everyone comes and participates and learns, that's what makes the mission succeed."

"It was very successful. I didn't expect such a great turnout," said Nurse. "I look forward to seeing this simplified learning in the future. Not only in Tuzla but in the whole Army. We are not trying to get away from the task, conditions and skills."

We are just trying to learn at different levels and in different ways."

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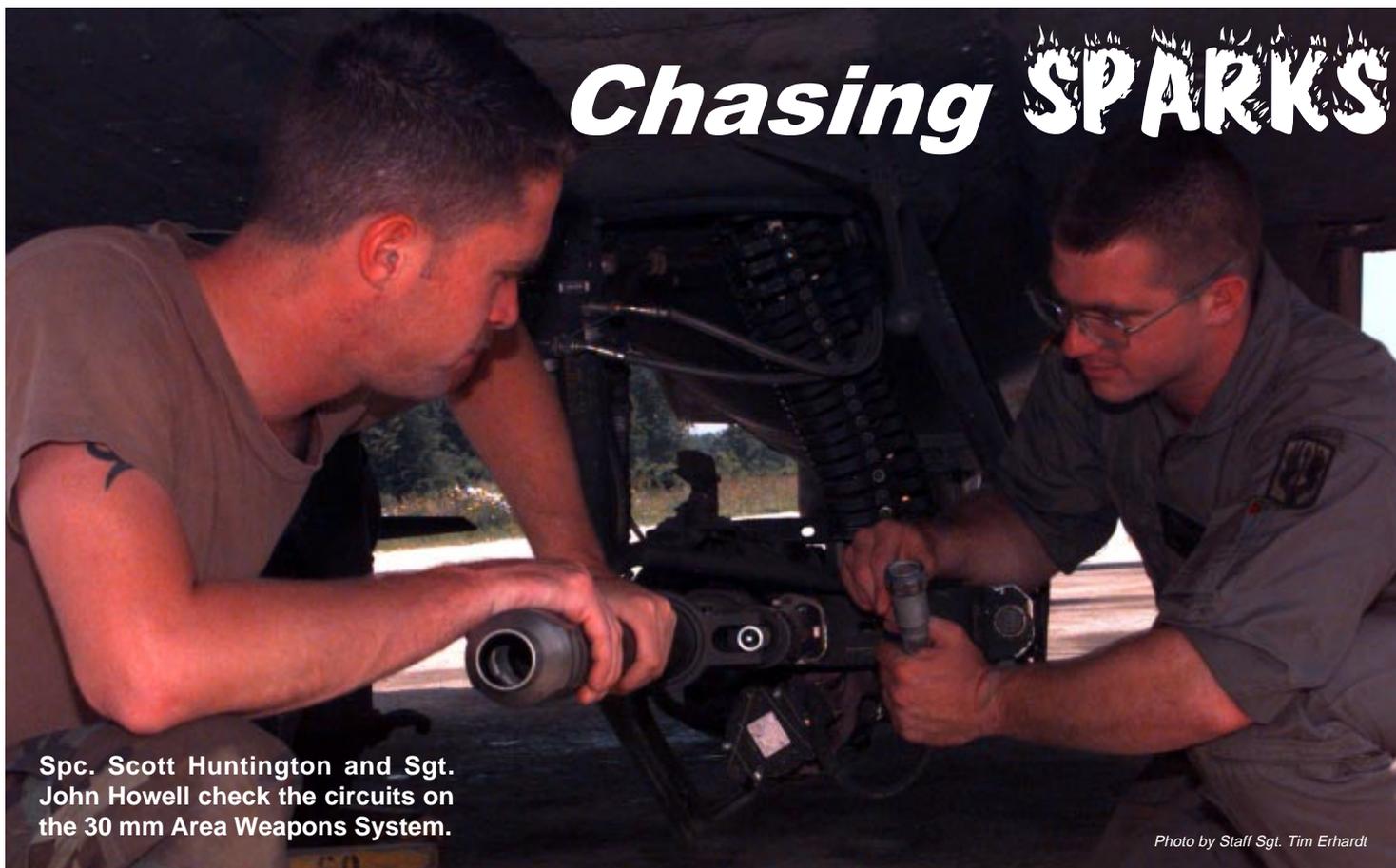
**"We are not trying to get away from the task, conditions and skills. We are just trying to learn at different levels and in different ways."**

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--- 1st Sgt. Kenneth Nurse

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Spc. Scott Huntington and Sgt. John Howell check the circuits on the 30 mm Area Weapons System.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt  
129th MPAD

**CAMP COMANCHE** — Apache pilots see them scooting by on their "golf cart" hurrying down the Camp Comanche flightline with parts and missiles. Crew chiefs perplexed with electrical problems confer with them under the withering Bosnian sun. They climb into an Apache cockpit and study manuals or crawl under its belly to inspect a stretch of its 25 miles of wire. Soldiers of the Armament Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment are definitely busy.

As an armament platoon, its members are responsible for keeping the 1st Bn., 229th Avn. Reg. AH-64 Apache attack helicopters armed, but since the armament systems depend on the electrical system of the aircraft to operate, these soldiers must insure that system is functioning properly. "If it isn't, the Apache is just a flying platform," said Staff Sgt. Leslie Smith, platoon sergeant. "It would have no purpose."

"We're essentially 'spark chasers' because all the systems on the Apache are related to the electrical system in some way," said Spc. Tracy Perry.

It's up to the platoon's soldiers to ensure the ammunition is maintained and qualified to go onto the aircraft, the platoon's personnel properly load the munitions on the aircraft, and the electrical systems will fire those munitions. These soldiers also run diagnostic tests on the computers that operate the electrical systems and maintain the video sight system.

"Our part in this platoon is to make sure

the Apache can make the observations and, if necessary, perform its attack functions," said Spc. Scott Huntington. "The Apaches are the eyes, ears, and muscle in the sky."

When a problem is detected with an aircraft, the crew chief will try to diagnose and repair the discrepancy. If he feels an electrical specialist is needed, armament personnel are called in to solve the problem. "Sometimes we fix it ourselves, but sometimes we have to go to them because they're the specialists with the electrical and weapons system," said Spc. Luis Mosqueda, an Apache crew chief with the 1st Bn., 229th Avn. Reg.

Once the maintenance NCO finds out exactly what is wrong with the aircraft, he informs the squad leader, who then passes that information to the squad members. They are responsible for each company's aircraft and its repair.

"We're nicknamed 'The Dawgs' because of our determination in hunting down a problem and rectifying it. We like to get the job done, and if we have to get dirty to do that, then that's what we have to do," said Smith. "We're here on a serious mission. We take our jobs seriously."

"We're the best at what we do," said Pfc. Alton Jones. "We get jobs done on an average of two a day. We want the pilots to get back into the air."

After a repair, the armament specialist performs a maintenance operational check (MOC) on the aircraft while it's on the ground. "The procedure is to verify the problem, fix it, implement a solution, and test it out," said Smith. "We can't skip procedures."

According to Sgt. John Howell, the basic Apache armament system, the "Heavy Hog" configuration consists of Hellfire laser-guided missiles, rockets, and rounds of 30 mm ammunition. In addition to ensuring all this ordnance is functional, the armament dawgs make certain the aircraft's counter-measure system is operational. "This device spreads laser-diffusing material into the air," said Howell.

Smith said that the work orders are distributed evenly which helps alleviate stress. "Our platoon functions like a family," said Smith. "Each soldier depends upon the others, not only in accomplishing his job, but also for his morale. We handle live ammo daily and a mistake can be disastrous, so we help one another deal with stress by laughing and playing together besides working hard."

Capt. Brian Cox, a Co.B platoon leader, said that the armament soldiers minimize time on the ground. "We've completed all assigned missions since we got here," said Cox. "That's a testament to this platoon as well as our crew chiefs. We've done in a month what ordinarily takes six months in the States."

"We have to maintain readiness even during a peacekeeping operation," said Capt. John Feutz, Co. B, 1st Bn., 229th Avn. Reg. commander and a co-pilot/gunner. "If the situation ever develops where we need a show of force, we have to be ready, and the armament platoon helps keep us mission ready. When they go by on their golf cart smiling and say it's fixed, we know it's *fixed*."

# Lightning Hazards

By Lt. Col. James A. Geiling, MD, MC, Division Surgeon  
 Division Surgeon's Office

We've entered the thunderstorm season here in Task Force Eagle, and with it, service members are at risk from lightning.

Approximately 1,000 fatalities occur each year worldwide from lightning, with 50-300 occurring in the United States. Here in Bosnia-Herzegovina there has been one documented minor injury from lightning though soldiers remain at high risk. Any one of the 12 thunderstorms that typically come through Tuzla each year can produce lightning that could cause harm. The number of storms this year may actually be significantly higher, and are even more common in the northern plains areas of MND(N) than the mountainous regions.

A variety of myths surround lightning strikes. Although most people struck by lightning are injured (70%), it is not universally fatal (30%). Those who are injured often have long-term consequences, including nerve damage, psychiatric symptoms, memory loss, significant depression, or a host of other problems. Persons struck by lightning do not remain "electrified" and are safe to touch. Few realize that one of the most dangerous times for a fatal strike actually occurs before the storm, as lightning can travel as far as 10 km horizontally out from a thunderstorm head. Finally, being inside a building does not make one immune to injury because of side flashes through plumbing fixtures, telephones, or other appliances attached to the outside.

The danger from lightning occurs from four mechanisms: high voltage, heat, electromagnetic effects, and explosive forces. Although a direct strike to a person out in the open is most danger-

ous, the more common cause of injury is a "splash" of lightning that travels from a nearby tree, building, or other object next to the person.

The best treatment for lightning injuries is to prevent them from occurring. Preventive measures include:

1. Be aware of weather predictions and conditions
2. Seek shelter in a building or metal-enclosed vehicle during a storm. In tents, stay as far away from the poles as possible.
3. In buildings, avoid open doors and windows, metal objects, plug-in appliances, plumbing, and telephones.
4. Outside, avoid metal articles, power lines, metal towers, etc.
5. If you cannot find shelter, avoid isolated trees and hilltops. In the woods, seek shelter in a low area.
6. In the open, seek a low area and get into a position to minimize your height above the ground
7. If on the open water, get to shore.

If a person is injured, first aid measures include:

1. Avoid becoming a casualty yourself; take appropriate precautions to protect yourself or the victim from being injured from lightning, flying debris, etc.
2. CPR for those who have no pulse and have stopped breathing.
3. Protect the airway of those who are unconscious.

4. Consider the possibility of a neck or spinal injury by avoiding the movement of those with back or neck pain, or those who fall or have been thrown.

5. Provide routine first aid measures for other injuries, which often include fractures or lacerations.

6. Seek help from your local treatment facility.

By taking a few simple precautionary measures, we can avoid the potential catastrophic effects of the summer's thunderstorms.



## Turtles in the Box

Starring Muddy and Dusty by Capt. Peter Buotte



# RIVALRY

from page 1



Staff Sgt. David J. Farver (foreground) and Pfc. James L. Leggett, of Company B, 1-77 Armor, prepare to fire their machine guns during Tank Table Five gunnery at Gettysburg Range.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

By Spc. David Boe  
364th MPAD

**G**ETTYSBURG RANGE – Pfc. Bradley E. Stevenson sits in the loader's hatch of his M1A1 Abrams, gripping the handles of the M 240 machine gun. It's hot, he feels sweaty and the idling tank is vibrating under his feet. But looking downrange at the targets he will soon engage, he has only one thought on his mind.

He wants to see his platoon sergeant knocking out pushups in front of the platoon.

"I'd made a wager with my platoon sergeant before the engagement for some pushups," said the 20-year-old tank loader from Salem, Ore. "And I wanted to hit my target so he'd do them in front of the platoon for me.

"It was a little extra motivation."

It worked. After his Abrams lurched forward and halted at the firing line, Stevenson zeroed in on a simulated sniper 50 meters in front of him and let go with a 25-round burst that appeared to hit the target. Upon closer examination, it was discovered that Stevenson had indeed cut the "sniper" down – but not before he got some ribbing from fellow tankers who said he hadn't hit anything.

"They were wrong. My loader cut the troop down – he was on it," said Stevenson's tank commander, Staff Sgt. Danny W. Browning, a Detroit, Mich., native. "They're just mad because they lost the bet. Actually, all those guys who were telling us we were wrong, they're all Philadelphia Flyers fans and they can't deal with this (the Red Wings defeating the Flyers in the Stanley Cup), so they're trying to blame us for

all their problems. My loader is a Red Wings fan and I'm a Red Wings fan – it was all good."

Browning, 23, said rivalry – whether sports or military related – is a major part of a tanker's life in his unit, Company B, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor. To them it's more than just making bets – it's a matter of prestige.

"I think the big thing is just going around the company and saying, 'Ya, I'm Top Gun!'" Browning said. "Everyone is always trying to outdo each other, but everyone is still close, and it doesn't get to anyone. But the big thing is being Top Gun and bragging rights. It makes you try harder."

For Browning, Stevenson, and the rest of tank B-38, the machine-gun training at Gettysburg Range, a few miles south of Brcko, Bosnia-Herzegovina, validated the hard work they themselves have done recently since coming together as a crew.

"I'm very pleased with my tank," said Browning. "This is my first time as a tank commander and I have a brand-new crew – it's the first time we've worked together on a range, and everything clicked. Everything went well."

Browning said he hopes to duplicate his crew's good performance at Gettysburg Range when the company goes up to Hungary in July for its first major gunnery exercise since leaving Germany in March for peacekeeping duty in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He said the unit is looking forward to the chance to get back to basics and fire the "big guns."

"I think it's a tanker's dream, to actually go out and use that weapon system for

what it's made for," said Browning. "It's a rush. It's kind of hard to explain, but once you get inside and squeeze those triggers, it's a good feeling."

It's a feeling the tankers of Co. B haven't felt in months. Peace-keeping duties in and around Brcko have kept the unit busy, with patrols, weapon storage site inspections and guard duty making range training difficult – but not impossible. Sustainment of war-fighting skills is critical, said Capt. Sasha A. G. Dombrovskis, Co. B commander, and worth the time and effort to train.

"During wartime, during peace you *still* have to train, you still have to rehearse," said the six-year veteran tanker. "Granted we do a lot of missions here, but you just have to find the time and place to train."

Dombrovskis, a self-styled "military brat," said the machine gun training his unit did at Gettysburg Range was a valuable first step in preparation for the gunnery in Hungary. It accomplished the three objectives he had laid out; it allowed his tankers to zero and test fire their M1A1 machine-guns, train in war-fighting skills, and prepare for gunnery, which is, he said, the ultimate tanker experience.

"The nature of the tanker is, if he has the opportunity to fire his tank, he will," said Dombrovskis. "That is what we love to do. We love to move around in our tanks. We love to shoot our tanks."

"It was something that took some doing to put together," said Staff Sgt. James J. Lampe. "It's not the best range for tanks to be using, but we did the best we could with what we have here."

Tucked into a small meadow just south of Brcko, Gettysburg Range is a former Yugoslavian small arms range. Its curved, concrete rifle pits are still visible through the weeds. Short and narrow, Gettysburg allows only one tank to fire its machine guns at a time.

"Nevertheless, we are out here firing our weapon systems, learning a little bit more about our gunnery techniques and refining them a little bit more," said Lampe.

Of course, along with the gunnery exercises comes the normal rivalry among the crews as they compete for Top Gun. "But it's a healthy rivalry," said Lampe, who admits being ribbed quite a bit about his hometown's hockey team losing the Stanley Cup finals. "However, when Tank Table Eight comes up the ribbing stops, and is replaced by handshaking and crew members saying, 'Good luck' to each other."

Notwithstanding the goodwill among the crews, all bets are still on, and winners, like Stevenson, will collect.

"Oh, he's definitely going to do the pushups," he said.