

THE TALON

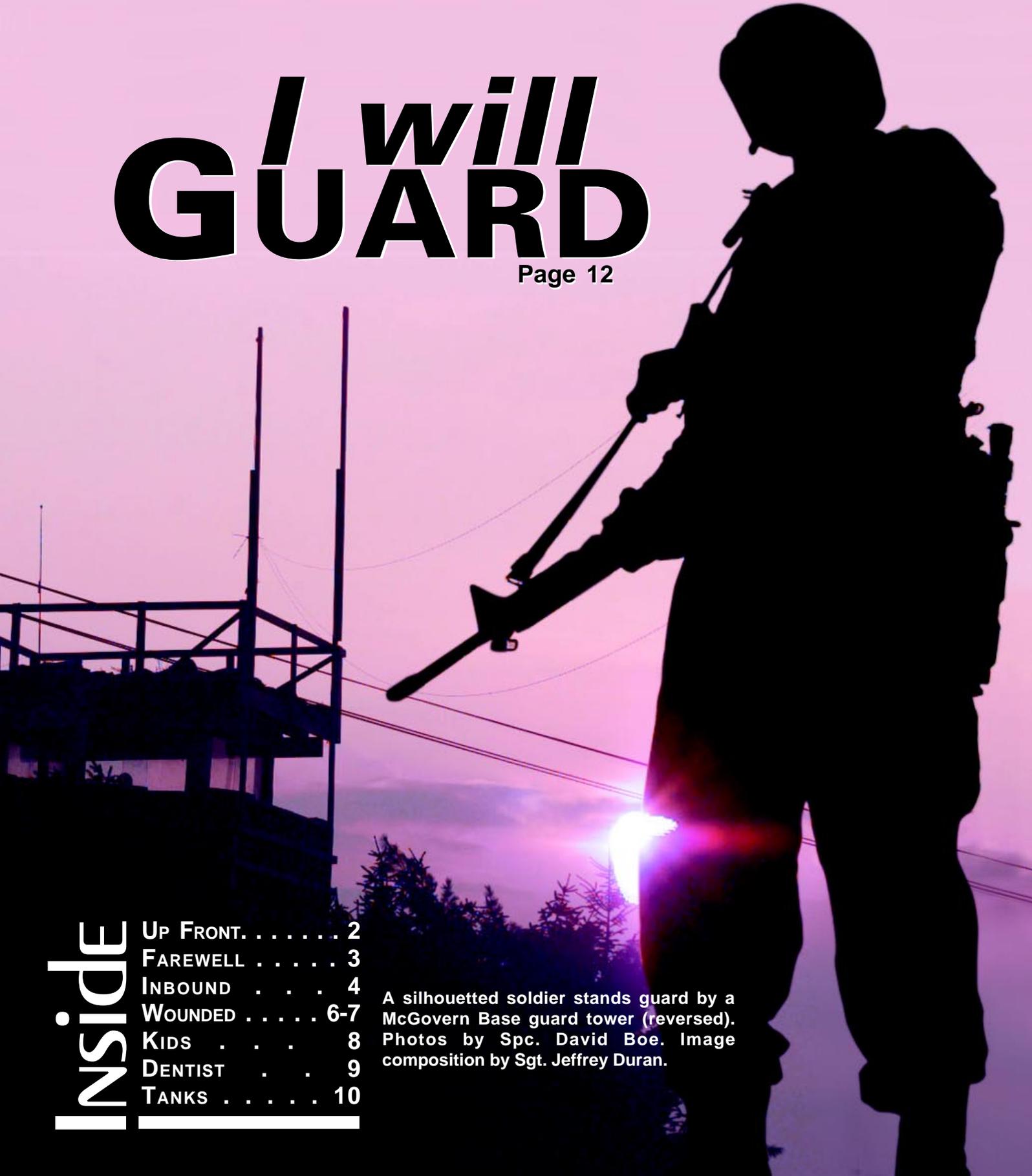
OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

I will GUARD

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A silhouetted soldier stands guard by a McGovern Base guard tower (reversed). Photos by Spc. David Boe. Image composition by Sgt. Jeffrey Duran.

How to be annoying 101

Sing the Batman theme incessantly.

Learn Morse code, and have conversations with friends in public consisting entirely of "Beeep Bip Bip Beeep Bip..."

Speak only in a "robot" voice.

Start each meal by conspicuously licking all your food, and announce that this is so no one will "wipe your grub."

Leave the copy machine set to reduce 200%, extra dark, 17 inch paper, 99 copies.

Stomp on little plastic ketchup packets.

Insist on keeping your car windshield wipers running in all weather conditions "to keep them tuned up."

Reply to everything someone says with "that's what YOU think."

Declare your tent or hooch an independent nation, and sue your neighbors for "violating your airspace."

Forget the punchline to a long joke, but assure the listener it was a "real hoot".

Follow a few paces behind someone, spraying everything they touch with a can of Lysol.

Practice making fax and modem noises.

Highlight irrelevant information in scientific papers and copy them to your boss.

Make beeping noises when a person backs up.

Invent nonsense computer jargon in conversations, and see if people play along to avoid the appearance of ignorance.

Erect an elaborate network of ropes in your tent, and tell everyone you are a "spider person."

Do not add any inflection to the end of your sentences, producing awkward silences with the impression that you'll be saying more any moment.

Signal that a conversation is over by clamping your hands over your ears.

Disassemble your pen and "accidentally" flip the ink cartridge across the room.

UP FRONT -- FAREWELL & THANKS

Farewell to all members of the 300th, 364th, and 129th MPADs, the 11th PSYOPS, the 64th Support Detachment, and individual replacements departing. On your departure from Task Force Eagle, I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you my sincerest thanks and deepest appreciation for your contribution to the efforts of SFOR.

Your selfless dedication to mission accomplishment, your diligence, resourcefulness and desire for excellence has been exemplary. Your performance and the success that it has generated has brought praise from all who have benefited from your efforts.

Of those who would praise your professionalism, few would realize the totality of your commitment and its mission. It is hard to describe to those who have not physically participated in the incredible sacrifice you have been called upon to make,

to which you have so willingly submitted. From the cold, wet and muddy days, to those that were hot, sticky and dusty, you achieved all objectives with courage and tenacity. You have stepped to the front and led in many ways. You have always enthusiastically given your support, whatever the mission. As you all depart, I wish to make special recognition for your unwavering support and superb performance. May God bless you and your families. Good luck in your future endeavors. See you up front!

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

Risk Management

Historically, the U.S. Army has suffered more losses to accidents (including fratricide) than to enemy action while deployed in combat theaters. Combat theater, remember the tax break you're getting. We're here, and we're taking the losses. Force protection is essential to our success in Bosnia. Risk management is the risk-reduction process to protect the force. By the way that's us. You do basic risk management everyday. You identify the hazard, the exposure to chance of injury or loss, and you avoid it or reduce it. Like your buddy who snores like a freight train. You could avoid being bunked in the same tent, but he is a good friend. So how about ear plugs to reduce the noise, Staff Sgt. DeBruler says they work. Now, some of us do it better than others, snore that is. Hey, that's the hazard probability and severity risk level.

Risk assessment, controls, residual risk, the decision to accept or not accept the risk, really the same process you use in your own personal activities. It is so automatic that you don't recognize the steps. To avoid overlooking a hazard we use a frameworks. Like METT-T factors for hazards. We brainstorm, a shared experience. Now watch it there! No two individuals see things the same way. Ask my wife. Let's manage the risks that Bosnia and Peacekeeping present us and "Protect the Force."

You have done a great job. Now, don't let you guard down. There are many tools and techniques that we can use. Just ask DeBruler. Lt. Col. A. Wm. Ramer, 1st Infantry Division (Forward) Safety Office

THE TALON

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

Reacting ^{WITH} FORCE

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — Outside the wire at Camp Bedrock, a squad of soldiers takes off on patrol. The patrol may be mounted or dismounted; day or night; internal or external.

No matter what the method, the result is the same.

The soldiers observe the perimeter for any attempted breaches, gather information from the locals, or react to any situation on a moments notice.

Soldiers from the Quick Reactionary Force (QRF) of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, are responsible for these patrols here.

"It is almost like being a MP instead of a mortarman," said Spc. Gill S. Smith, a QRF squad leader. "We're going out and enforcing peace in accordance with the Dayton Peace Accord."

In addition to enforcing the peace, soldiers are gathering information on voter registration, building and development, and public opinion.

Although the patrols involve a 15 to 18-kilometer walk, the soldiers say they enjoy the patrols because it gives them the opportunity to interact with the locals.

"It gives us a chance to see why we are actually here," said Smith.

"We want to see how the people react to SFOR presence," said Spc. Kent E. Lester, a gunner.

The QRF presence is easily seen by the locals. "They have seen us respond," said Smith. "They know how quickly we can roll through the quarry."

"Any time you are on QRF, you have to sign out so your squad leader knows where you are at all times," said Lester.

"No matter how small the problem is, the QRF is called out," said Rush.

QRF is a rewarding, but never-ending job. "As soon as you take off your boots, it is time to go out again," said Smith.

Srpska Specialist Police restricted

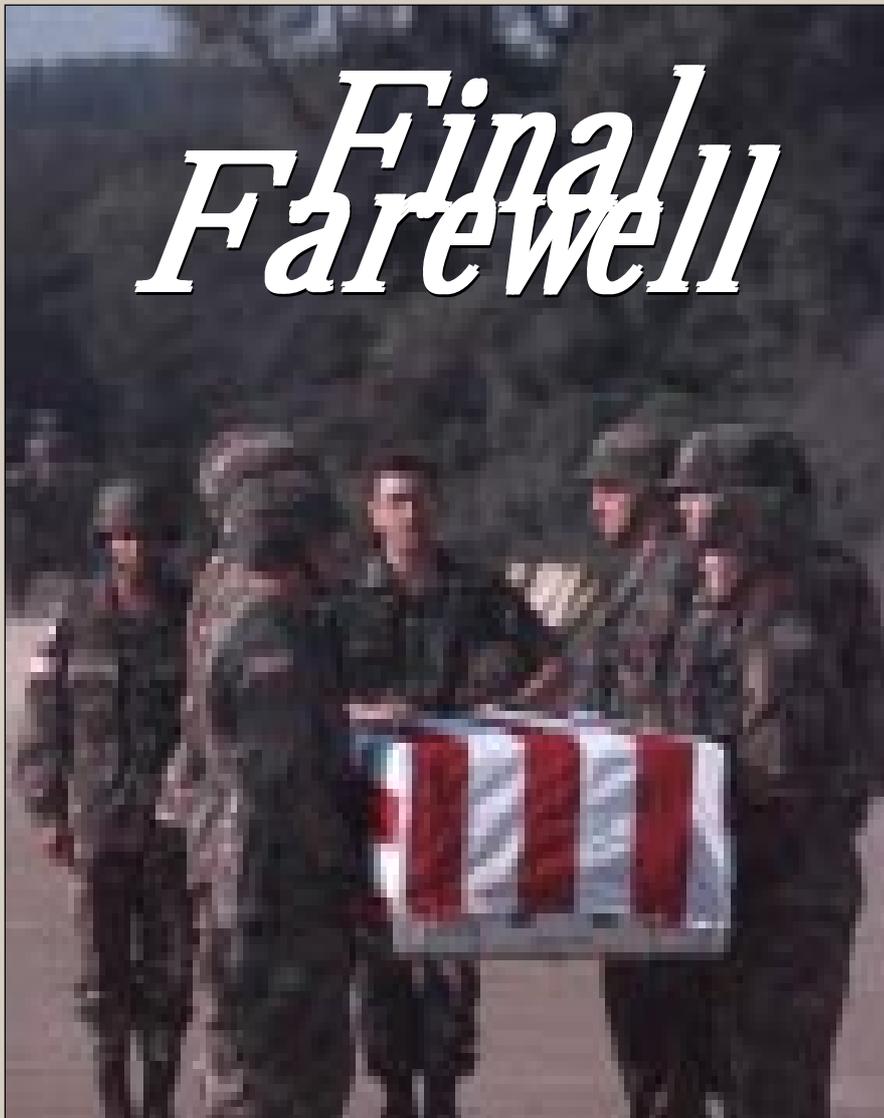
EAGLE BASE - Maj. Gen. David L. Grange, commander of MND-N, met with Maj. Gen. Goran Saric, commander of Republika Srpska Specialist Police Brigade (SPB), August 8 at SPB Headquarters in Janja to inform him of the new SFOR policy for the control and restructuring of the Specialist Police.

The policy, which categorizes the SPB as "forces" subject to the provisions of Annex 1A of the General Framework for Peace, was established to assist, accelerate and ensure restructuring and reform of the SPB to conform to the standard of police forces recognized by most democratic nations.

Specialist Police will be restricted to ordinary civil police duties, including VIP protection, building security, crowd control, counterterrorism, and emergency assistance when requested by civil police authority. VIP protection will not be afforded to anyone indicted by the International Crime Tribunal for Yugoslavia.

Specialist Police will be allowed to carry only weapons typical of civilian police organizations. Each officer may carry a sidearm; one long-barreled weapon will be authorized for every 10 police officers; and weapons not required in performance of police duties will be stored in a barracks.

Coalition forces in MND-N will continue with its primary mandate to monitor and ensure compliance with Annex 1A of the GFAP. The application of 1A to the Entities' Armed Forces has been a major success. This has been due to the positive and effective cooperation of the Entities. Given a similar spirit of cooperation, Maj. Gen. Grange anticipates the same success in developing democratic, legitimate police forces.



U.S. Army Photo

A flag-draped casket carrying the body of Staff Sgt. Ezzard C. Fuller is taken to a waiting aircraft to be transported to his hometown of Shreveport, La. Fuller, 42, a truck driver with the 603rd Transportation Company, stationed at Guardian Base, died Aug. 4 of a gunshot wound. His death is being treated as an isolated incident not involving the Entities and is still under investigation.

Keeping peace on track

A new kind of training

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

LUKAVAC, Bosnia-Herzegovina - It's a lonely rail line that stretches out from Brcko, a single strand meandering southward into the Bosnian heartland. Once an important artery that pumped merchandise, produce and people into and out of the eastern Bosnian city, it is now bent and broken, a grim relic of a conflict that swirled around it over four years ago. Since then, it's been silent.

Until now.

If the railroad's neglect is a reminder of the war that engulfed the area, its recent revitalization may be an indication of a renewed Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"Its repair will help revitalize this country," said Capt. Kevin Kearn, commander of Company B, 82nd Engineer Battalion, whose unit participated in the rebuilding of the line. "It will rebuild the infrastructure, which will stimulate the economy and allow them to do trade with the rest of Europe."

Work on the damaged rail line is currently underway by Italian engineers from the 1st Battaglione Genio Ferrovieri (Rail Engineer Battalion), who began the project on July 16.

Before work could be started, the area around it had to be mine-proofed. That mission fell to the engineers of Company B, stationed at nearby McGovern Base. The portion of the rail line to be repaired cuts through what once was a battlefield south of Brcko, heavily mined, gouged with trenchlines, and pockmarked by fighting positions.

"Task Force 1-77 was tasked to provide support to the Italian engineer battalion that was rebuilding the line," said Kearn. "That implied ensuring that the rail line was proofed and free of mines and UXO (unexploded ordnance). We also had to proof the Lukavac railroad station where the Italians were going to stage."

With their work area cleared out by U.S. soldiers, the Italian engineers arrived at Lukavac by train — the first to travel the rail line up to that point in more than four years. The train, which traveled from Italy, through Slovenia and Croatia to reach Lukavac, is an integral part of the Italian unit.

"The train is our base," said Lt. Mauro Santinelli, a platoon leader in the 1st Battaglione. "We have ev-

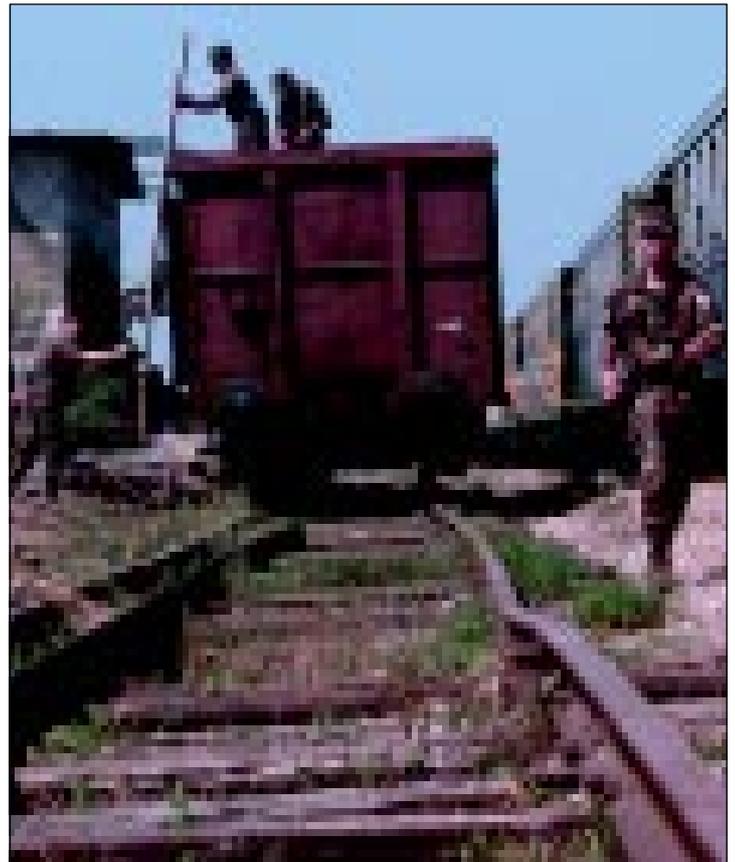


Photo by Spc. David Boe

Italian rail engineers off-load building material from a rail car at the Bukovac train station.

everything inside. We have the dining room, the kitchen, the mess, sleeping quarters — everything we need."

Santinelli said that from their base at the Lukavac railroad station, the engineers will inch toward Brcko, 12 kilometers east, cutting rails, replacing ties, repairing bridges and putting in fill. Throughout the operation, U.S. engineers will continue mine-proofing where needed.

"We have to actually proof around the rails where it's been damaged — off to the sides — so the workers can get out and do the repair work," said Kearn.

McGovern Base will also provide logistical support.

The goal, said Santinelli, is not to bring the rail line back to its pre-war condition, but to get it operable again for diesel engines. "All we have to do is repair the line and put it at the minimum military requirement," he said.

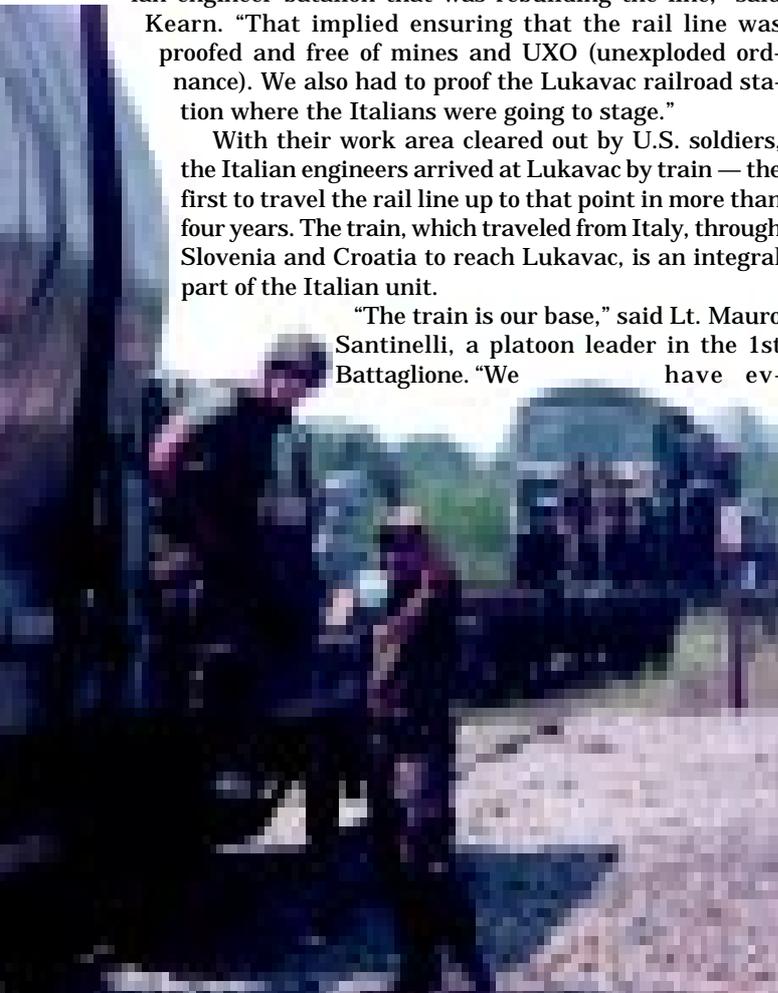
The project will take about three months, said Santinelli.

This is not the first time the Italian engineers have worked with U.S. troops. Last year, the Italians repaired a rail line near Zvornik, in the U.S. sector. The Lukavac rail line operation, though, is a first-time experience for Kearn.

"We've enjoyed working with the Italians," said Kearn. "It's a great experience to work with other countries here in Bosnia, particularly the Italians. There are very few railroad engineer regiments in the world, and it's a great opportunity to work with such a unit."

(Left) An Italian officer gives instructions to a soldier on guard duty at the Lukovac train station. In the background a load of Italian engineer equipment is being off loaded.

Photo by Spc. David Boe



Tracking an inbound

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

MOUNT VIS, Bosnia-Herzegovina — An umbrella of security covers the sky from the prominent heights of Mount Vis overlooking the Tuzla Valley. Its silent and invisible protection can pick out even small arms fire from thousands of meters away. Wherever a weapon is fired of nearly any size, the AN/TPQ-36 radar will track incoming rounds from the originating point.

"We will know where it came from before it hits the ground," said Chief Warrant Officer Jay Vincent, Battery E, (Target Acquisition), 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts National Guard.

"If you know where the shells are coming from, you can find out who shot the rounds. Then you can go in there and get 'em. That shows how important radar is during wartime," he said. "Where human eyes can't see, we can with the radar. In the dark or through fog, we will know."

Known as the "box," the radar shelter contains a cylinder covered with a map of their area of responsibility. Blips on the computer screen signify movement in the air noticed by the radar. The radar finds the angle the projectile flies, speed of round and altitude. If the system picks up evidence of a projectile in the air that matches the attributes of a projectile, the alarm sounds and a little red lights flashes on map. Within seconds, the precise grid coordinate is sent and entered on a plotting board at the Target Processing Center in Tuzla.

Sgt. Daniel Hankins, of Fall River, Mass., the senior radar operator for the installation, explained what happens next: "From there, the higher chain of command decides what to do, like send in Apache helicopters or a QRF (quick reaction force).

They would also check to see if we have troops on patrol in the area where it landed."

The team on Mount Vis is made up of qualified mechanics as well as radar operators. Spc. Jay Moniz, a radar operator from Somerset, Mass., said "We monitor and run the equipment 24 hours a day, so maintenance is a high priority. We can't let anything break down."

The "Rainbow Warriors," known by the half-rainbow patch on their sleeve, have radar teams placed around Bosnia-Herzegovina at various base camps. Each team supports the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Polyard, of Wabasha, Minn., Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the battalion, which is based in Bamberg, Germany, is also mayor of Mount Vis. "The field artillery is the premiere asset in theater. We provide 360-degree security around Mount Vis and the Infantry provides security for us."

Samuel Colt once said, "You should never send a man if you can send a bullet." All elements of the Field Artillery, during a wartime as well as a peacekeeping mission, provide the Army this valuable option.

(Top Photo) Spc. Jay Moniz, Radar Operator with Battery E, (Target Acquisition) 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts National Guard, uses the scope on the AN/TPQ-36 to set the direction of the radar on Mount Vis, near Camp Dobol. **(Above)** Chief Warrant Officer Jay Vincent, radar supervisor, Battery E, (Target Acquisition) 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts National Guard, checks the gauges on the AN/TPQ-36 radar system on Mount Vis, near Camp Dobol, Bosnia. **(Bottom)** The view from Mount Vis.

Photos by Spc. Susanne Aspley, 364th MPAD



INCOMING WOUNDED

By Spc. Paul Hougdaahl
129th MPAD

CAMP COLT — Twelve dismounted soldiers on routine patrol in Bosnia-Herzegovina strike a land mine. There are casualties, ranging from minor cuts to mortal wounds from shrapnel. Dazed and bloody soldiers are strewn like dominoes, screaming in pain and fear. Quick to the scene, medics furiously tend to the wounded and cover the dead.

Real? No. Realistic? Yes.

It's only for training.

Fortunately, mine strikes are rare, despite the large number of undocumented land mines laid throughout the Bosnian countryside. That fact alone makes the scenario possible, especially given the amount of active troop movement in the box.

That's why medical teams practice mock drills regularly. By actually going through the steps of getting to an injury site, evaluating and treating wounded soldiers and evacuating the casualties to more advanced care, medical personnel can work on the things that can't be learned in a classroom.

"It measures the effectiveness of our combat quick reaction force as well as our treatment and evacuation sections at Camp Colt's aid station," said Sgt. Victor Brownfield, assistant treatment NCO for Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, the unit involved in the aforementioned exercise. "It's important because it gives a timeline for us to work in. We learn how fast we can get to patients and how effectively we can treat the patients."

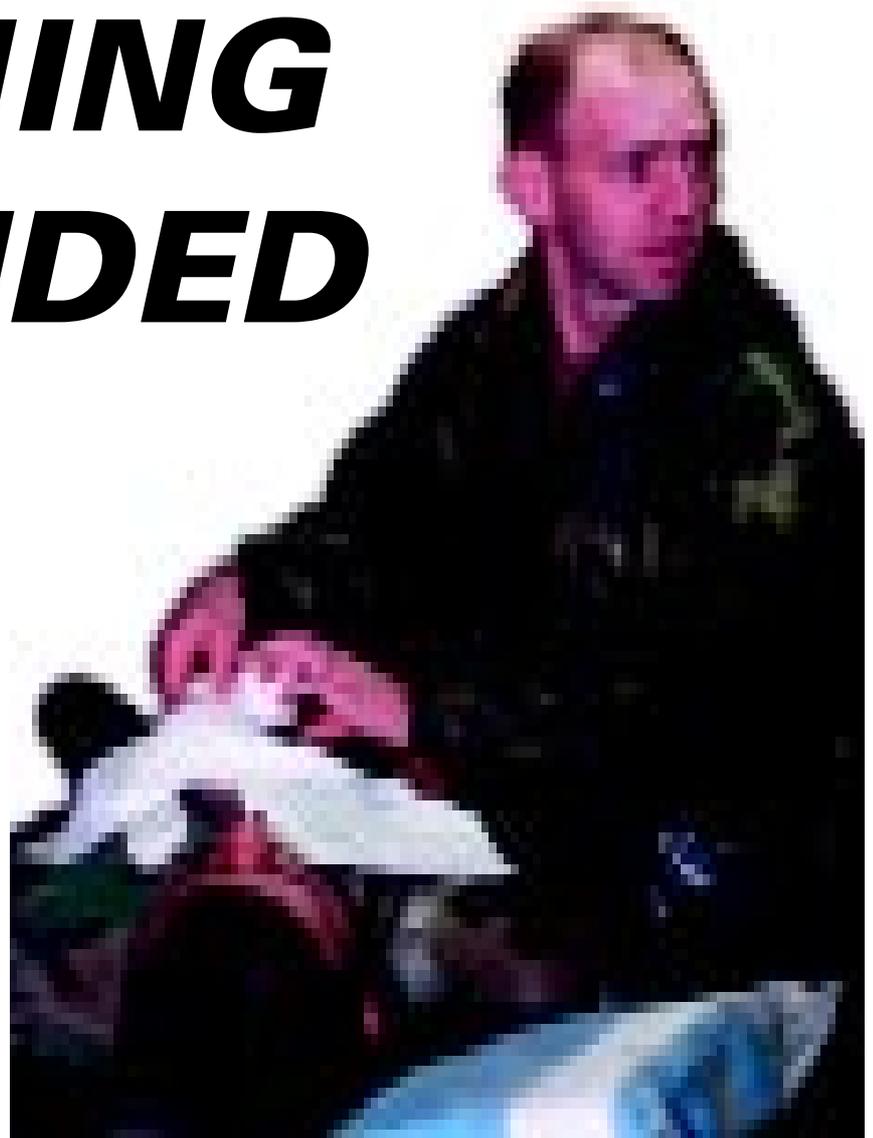
Brownfield said the unit's medics train almost daily, and conduct extensive mass casualty drills monthly. "Usually we see how fast we can coordinate with the quick-reaction force (QRF) and get out the gate and back on time," said Brownfield.

Extensive medical exercises are logistical challenges, but are good training.

Medics must coordinate with the QRF, which rushes to the scene to provide security. The medical team trains on using a map to locate the casualties, the best route to follow, the quickest, safest way to get there.

Teams learn to evaluate a scene quickly, as well as how to recognize the most badly wounded soldiers, who must be treated first.

Brownfield, who designed and set up the mass casualty drill, said his intent was for the scenario to be chaotic, just like a real mine strike. To add realism, he routinely includes a variety of injuries and screaming casualties. The mock casualties get into the act, feigning pain and confusion. They aren't



Photos by Spc. Paul Hougdaahl

Capt. Edward Kruse, 201st FAST, gets a soldier ready for transport during a mass casualty exercise held at Camp Colt. Kruse is the Camp Colt surgeon.

allowed to help the medics or other medical personnel in any way.

Once back at Colt, the casualties in this exercise are taken to a triage area for injury evaluation and laid out in the Morale Welfare and Recreation facility. The injured are taken to the surgeon and physicians assistant to be stabilized before being loaded onto a helicopter to be flown to a higher level of medical care.

"These exercises in Bosnia are completely different, because it is a different environment than what we're used to. We have to determine the correct route, deal with local civilians and coordinate with the QRF to provide security," said Capt. Jim Kruse, Camp Colt's surgeon.

"At first we had to sit down and work out all the ways we were going to do things," said Mack. "Working with so many different people does have its advantages, in that you get to work with a lot of different people and you learn different ways of doing things."



Sgt. Roy Prather pours fake blood on the head of Pfc. Brian Addison prior to playing casualties in a mass casualty exercise at Camp Colt.



(Above) Spc. Kimberly Watkins-Finch, an ambulance driver for the 201st FAST, gets an IV ready for a patient.



(Above) Sgt. Gerry Candelario, an HHC, 1-77 Evacuation NCO, carries one end of a litter.
(Left) Pfc. Eugene Griffin, an ambulance driver for HHC, 1-77 AR BN, puts a leg splint on a victim.

Making lives better, one kid at a time

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — A child sits under the Bosnian sun. Her dirty face and shabby clothing mark her as one of the unfortunate products of war. She hasn't seen her father since the day he left to fight. She now lives with her mother in a widows and orphans home. She passes time playing with the other kids and drawing pictures in the dirt. She has no paper, no crayons, no dolls, no balls to spur her creativity; just her own imagination.

This scene is not specific. It can be seen many places in the war-torn Former Yugoslavia. One American soldier was so moved by the sight of these children that he's changing it, with a little help from his friends.

An entire city of friends.

Sgt. Kelly S. Yarde, a member of the Fire Support Element, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment here, wanted in some small way to help the people of Bosnia during his deployment here.

"I went on patrol one day and saw kids playing with what should have been a ball. Instead it was a bunch of paper rolled and taped up," Yarde said.

This gave Yarde the initiative to get some toys and school supplies for these kids.

"I started doing some research and getting e-mail addresses for businesses from home. I sent e-mail messages to them and got replies," he said.

The replies were good ones. The folks from his hometown, Evansville, Ind., wanted to help. A columnist at the *Evansville Courier*, Jim Derk, wrote an article asking for donations. A local radio station, WSTO 96.1 FM, joined the *Courier* in the effort, and co-sponsored a three-day drive to gather donations.

"During the drive Kuesters Hardware (a local hardware store) put boxes out at seven of their stores in the tri-state area (Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky)," Yarde said. The drive was more than successful.

"I got a call from Jim Derk, and he said they were sending 100 boxes," Yarde said.

Needless to say, all this keeps Yarde pretty busy. He receives the boxes and sorts the gifts into different groups; athletic, school supplies, and toys. He ensures that the gifts are spread evenly throughout the area, and sends thank you notes to people who have written him. All this is in addition to his Army duties.

"I average four to five hours of sleep a night," he said. But to Yarde, it's all worth it.

"Just seeing the smiles on their faces. It means so much to me," Yarde said. "People have nothing here. You see 30 people living in a house. There's just not enough



Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

Sgt. Kelly S Yarde, 2-2 Inf. Regt. hands a ball to a Bosnian child at a refugee home. The ball came in one of the 100 boxes sent here from Yarde's hometown of Evansville, Ind.

to go around. I wish people of America could see how it is over here. There just aren't words to describe it."

The people here appreciate the kindness of the American people.

"By what I've seen, they're overwhelmed. It's just like Christmas in July. The kids are ecstatic. It gives them hope and a sense of security," Yarde said.

It's hard to tell whose smile is bigger; the kids' or Yarde's as he hands out the gifts.

"I've been involved in other things here, but I haven't felt really useful or felt a sense of accomplishment until this. I have three daughters, and I haven't felt this good since they were born, and those were very special days," Yarde said. "We came down here on a peacekeeping mission. It's nice when you can actually see the results instead of waiting, waiting, waiting. This is a mission for me."

Yarde started his venture incognito, try-

ing to keep it from his fellow soldiers.

"I was getting away with it for quite awhile. I kept it quiet, but when you get 30 boxes in one day, it's kind of hard to keep it quiet," Yarde said.

Now, his co-workers help him with his project.

"My tent-mates have been put out with all the extra boxes in the tent. People gladly stand in for me when I need to go out. They're working extra hours. They all support me 150 percent," Yarde said.

Yarde is very appreciative of how people back home have responded to the donation drive, but he wasn't surprised that they were willing to help.

"They've shown the international community that Americans still care," Yarde said. "It's just the way they are. This community has always bent over backwards for others. Some call it old-fashioned,"

But some call it American.

Dentist's levity lessens pain of visits

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE — No laughing gas is necessary in Dr. Marrero's dental office. His natural sense of humor, his propensity for cracking jokes and playing music immediately puts his patients at ease, making a trip to the dentist less stressful.

But don't think Marrero doesn't sink his teeth into his work.

Capt. Salvador Marrero is one of four American military dentists serving soldiers and airmen stationed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. His office in the Tuzla Main Aid Station is part of Company C, 61st Area Support Medical Battalion. Three other dentists shuttle between Camp Colt and Slavovski Brod.

"We consult with one another and sometimes refer patients to one of the other dentists. Sometimes I get a patient that requires more care than I can give mostly because of the type of equipment I have here," he said.

At Eagle Base, Marrero has at his disposal an X-ray machine, a compressor for operating dental drills, an autoclave to sterilize instruments, and a limited number of other instruments. Patients needing a higher level of care are sent to a better-equipped clinic at the Blue Factory.

He may keep the atmosphere in the office light-hearted, but Marrero is very serious about the care he delivers to his patients. "We have essentially a field-conditions setup here at Tuzla," said Marrero. He is capable of developing x-rays, install-

ing amalgams (silver fillings), tooth color fillings, tooth extractions, and

performing the initial portion of the pulpectomy procedure, better known as a root canal. He can't put in bridges or affix crowns, however.

"Every day I perform three or four surgeries," said Marrero. "I do as much as I can with the equipment I have."

Marrero has also repaired partial plates. "I can fix them to hold temporarily until the patient can get more permanent repairs back in the States," said Marrero. He will clean teeth only if necessary in conjunction with another procedure.

The affable Marrero turns no one away. "We treat soldiers from all the camps, American and all other SFOR soldiers, Bosnian soldiers, contractors, and civilians," said Marrero. "We average from eight to 10 patients a day, more than 150 a month. I'm glad they feel comfortable coming here for treatment." He has treated as many as 17 patients in a single day.

"I realize that sometimes a soldier has few chances for dental treatment while on deployment," said Marrero. "Soldiers sometimes have to be on a convoy a long time to get here. We're just glad to help them, and we know when they leave our office they appreciate our work."

Going for treatment from Marrero is not a traumatic experience, but if soldiers want to avoid the visit, he has some advice. "Brush and floss as much as possible," said Marrero.

"Another practice that damages the teeth and gums is smokeless tobacco. Keeping the tobacco so close to the gums not only causes greater incidents of tooth decay, but also can result in gum diseases."

Marrero said that if soldiers dip or chew they need to follow good oral hygiene practices even more closely than those who don't.

Originally from Puerto Rico, Marrero and his wife now call Harker Heights, Texas, home. He has a bachelor's degree in biology, a masters degree in microbiology, and a degree in dentistry from the

(Right Photo) Dr. Salvador Marrero (Capt. DE) examines Spc. Michael Ward.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

Spc. Dwight Smith, dental technician, takes an X-ray of Pfc. Ronald McAdam during an examination at the Tuzla Main Aid Station.

University of Missouri. He joined the Army in 1978 and the Army Reserve in 1982. He re-entered the active Army in 1992 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. After officer training, Marrero became a captain and was assigned to the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. He arrived in Bosnia for his first overseas deployment in March 1997.

Working with Marrero is Spc. Dwight Smith, a dental technician with Company C. Smith's job is to take X-rays, sterilize instruments, order supplies, and assist Marrero as he performs procedures. Smith has previous deployment experiences in Haiti and Cuba.

"Spc. Smith is an essential part of this office," said Marrero. "He's willing to work any amount of hours without complaining. He also keeps us supplied and makes sure things go smoothly."

"I really enjoy working with Dr. Marrero," said Smith. "Patients are usually nervous when they come into the office. He tells them exactly what he's going to do and then shows them how he fixed their problem. He puts everybody at ease by just being cheerful."

Marrero and Smith normally man the office from 0800-1700, Monday-Friday, but Marrero emphasized that they are always on call for emergencies.

"My door is always open. If someone has a serious problem, I'm willing to help anytime," said Marrero.

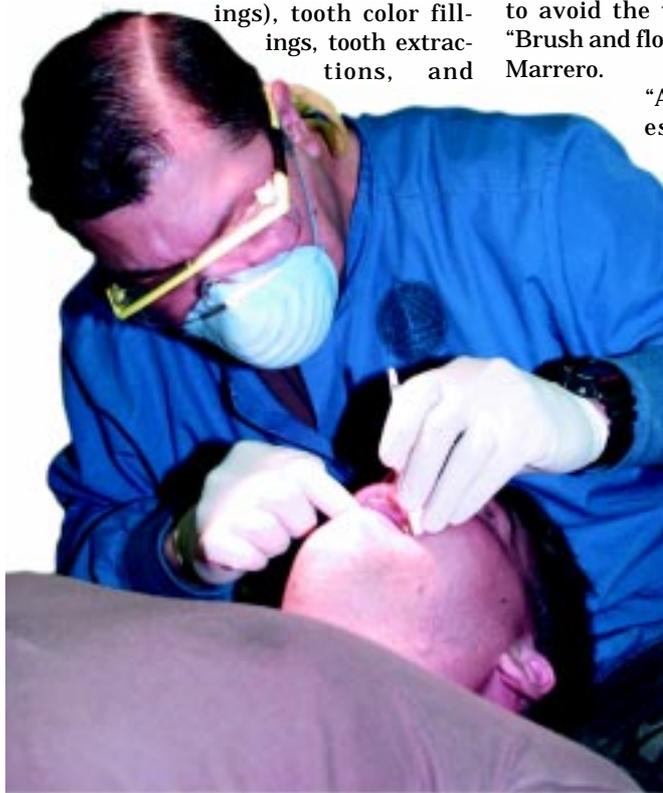


Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

Tanks' destination: 'Bone Yard'

by Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

DRINJACA, Bosnia-Herzegovina — One by one, the weary, old Russian-built T-55 tank tugged nine of its cousins, smaller World War II-era T-34s, across of a rocky field onto a dirt road to waiting HETS (heavy equipment transport system). Their destination? A tank graveyard 20 miles away. When all the T-34s were loaded, the T-55's turn came. A Serb driver inched the track up on the HETS ramp, but it was a bit off-center. Rather than risk a rollover, the driver locked the pivot steering and instead nosedived into the side of the hill.

An American M-88 tracked recovery vehicle lifted the rear of the tank off the trailer as the HETS pulled out from underneath it. The M-88 then set the tank back on the ground. One more try, and finally it was on and ready to go.

Step by difficult step, soldiers from D Company, Task Force 1-41, the Turkish Brigade, the Logistics Company of the Danish Battalion, and the Republic of Srpska Army, moved the T-34 tanks recently from a weapons storage site near Drinjaca to another site near Karakaj, fondly known as the 'Bone Yard'.

Staff Sgt. Tony Bennet, fire support NCO with Co. D, said that the multinational crew of soldiers used the T-55 to pull the T-34 out of the field because the small road was not wide enough to accommodate the Danish and Turkish HETS. Once the T-34s were at the main road, the M-88 used its front spade to push the old tanks onto the HETS.

Bennet, of Garden City, Kan., said the movement took the convoy through narrow tunnels, up and down the hills and around sharp curves. "The soldiers were very optimistic and no one complained, even though it took longer than expected."

Capt. Mitch Rambin, Company D. Commander, said the Russian-built WWII tanks needed to be consolidated as part of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation Europe) weapons reductions. "It was quite an international affair." Rambin said there were Danish, the Turkish, RS police, Srpska



Photos by Pfc. Ricardo Forde

A M-88 lifts the back end of a T-55 to readjust it off a HETS transport. The driver of the T-55 was driving up the HETS and fell off the side near the town of Drinjaca in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Army soldiers and civilians on their way to a soccer game. After the T-55 was reloaded back onto the HETS, the crowd of civilians let out a big cheer. So even though they were late for their soccer game, at least they got to cheer for something," Rambin said.

Spc. Matthew McGalliard, Headquarters Platoon, Company D., said it required a great deal of tact and patience to handle the civilian crowd as the tanks were loaded. "Traffic control and security was our main focus during the mission. Each time we uploaded a tank we had to block passage on the road. But the Danes really knew what they were doing and loaded the tanks quickly," he said.

Pfc. William Dibble, fire support specialist, attached to Delta 1-41, explained that his role was to escort the Danish and Turkish HETS to Karakaj. Despite the tedious mission, he enjoyed working with his fellow SFOR soldiers. "I was with some Turkish guys who said they said that they want to go visit the United States, especially New York, so I said, 'Hey, I'm from there. That

evening, they spent the night at Camp Dobol, and played pool with us, and we beat them of course," he said.

This is the third joint SFOR mission for Dibble, of Middletown, N.Y. He has been fortunate, he said, to go out with the Swedish Battalion near Camp Dobol and up to Glamoc in the British sector.

"I was impressed with the teamwork between senior enlisted and junior enlisted Turkish soldiers. Their first sergeant was working right there along with his soldiers. They were real friendly guys, and always wanted to take pictures with us," said Bennet.

1st. Lt. Soren Vesteergaard, from Ramdars, Denmark, is with the Logistics Company, Danish Battalion located near Doboj. He said he has worked with the Turkish and Americans before but this is the first time with Task Force 1-41. "It's always interesting to see the different military systems. Denmark is like a baby brother to the U.S. military system. The mission was a challenge, but a real pleasure."

(Left) An SFOR M-88 pushes a nonoperating T-34 Tank on a HETS near the town of Drinjaca.

Virtual Retirement

Information, preparational material available through internet web sites

By Doug Gillert

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Whether you're preparing to retire from the military or already have, you're going to want a continuous source of current information on retirement benefits. The Internet provides an easy to follow road map to make this next phase of life's journey easier to navigate.

Two service branches, Army and Air Force, and the Department of Veterans Affairs produce on-line resources for military retirees and surviving spouses of deceased retirees. Navy offers some useful medical information. Most information is generic in nature — it applies as well to retirees from other service branches.

Following is a brief description of some of these World Wide Web sites:

Air Force Retiree News (<http://www.afpc.af.mil/afretire/>). This site contains links to the Afterburner retiree newsletter, health care information, Survivor Benefit Plan, financial services, commissary and exchange information, Social Security, travel and leisure, consumer items and VA.

Afterburner (<http://www.afps.af.mil/afretire/#Afterburner>). Distributed to Air Force retirees in January, May and September, Afterburner carries timely information on retiree benefits, particularly those dealing with money, health care and commissaries. Current and past editions of the newsletter can be read on-line, and readers can contact editor Bill Turner directly by Internet e-mail (turnerb@hq.afpc.af.mil).

Estimates On-line (<http://www.afpc.af.mil/DPPRY/EOMAIN.STM>). Here you can estimate your retired pay, separation pay and Survivor Benefit Plan costs, and view pay charts.

Retired and Annuitant Pay (<http://www.dfas.mil/money/retired/index.htm>). The root directory (www.dfas.mil) takes you to the Defense Accounting and Finance Service home page. At this subsection, you can get Internal Revenue Service forms, publications and regulations, and information on current year taxes, cost of living allowances, retirement pay and Office of Personnel Management retirement programs.

Army Echoes (<http://www.odcsper.army.mil/prod/retire/echoes.htm>). Published quarterly and mailed to 700,000 retired soldiers and Survivor Benefit Plan annuitants, Army Echoes publishes information on everything from base closings to a retiree activities day worldwide calendar. The current edition has useful information on Medicare subvention, the DoD plan to take care of retirees over age 65, recently approved by Congress and the president under the balanced budget resolution.

U.S. Army Homepage (<http://www.army.mil>). Using the search engine, type "retiree" in the box under "Search for documents by Keyword," then click on "Go." What follows are three pages of additional listings on retiree programs and services. Two examples: the chief of staff's annual report to the Army Retiree Council (<http://www.odcsper.army.mil/prod/retire/report.htm>) and a benefits checklist for

surviving spouses (<http://www.odcsper.army.mil/prod/retire/list.htm>). The latter not only lists benefits surviving spouses are eligible to receive but tells them how to get those benefits.

Message from the Surgeon General and the Chief of Naval Personnel (<http://support1.med.navy.mil/bumed/beni.htm>). This is a good source for information on TRICARE, the triservice health care plan. It describes in detail DoD pharmacy benefits and contains telephone numbers for mail service pharmacies, retail pharmacy network, DEERS support offices and health benefits advisers at Navy hospitals and clinics nationwide.

Finally, the site offers a concise retiree personal wellness program with recommended frequencies for various health checks to Department of Veterans Affairs (<http://www.va.gov/va/htm>). Anything and everything you're likely to want to know about veteran programs and benefits, you'll find here. Questions or comments? E-mail djgille@hq.afis.osd.mil.

Last Visit



Photo by Mark Geiger

General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, greets Richard Holbrooke, Special Envoy, at the Eagle Base. This was Shalikashvili's last visit before he retires.

I WILL GUARD

*Everything within
the limits of my
post and quit my
post only when
properly relieved*

— Every soldier's first General Order

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE — Pfc. Adam T. Rau remembers the first time he pulled guard duty. It was about three years ago, in basic training. He had fire guard. It was night and he was the only one up.

"It was actually a good time," said Rau, a petroleum supply specialist with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, at McGovern Base. "Because that's when we could write letters home. It was only a couple of hours long, so it wasn't too bad."

The nocturnal duty, as simple as it was, still had its dangers, though. "If you slept, you got in trouble; you got smoked," said Rau. "You certainly didn't want to get smoked, so you didn't sleep."

Guard duty, said Rau, hasn't changed much since those lonely nights in the basic training barracks — it's still the same.

"Guard duty is guard duty," he said.

The 21-year-old Bryon, Mich., native is partially correct. The guard duty may always be the same, but the mission itself changes. Rau's new mission: peacekeeping duties in Bosnia-Herzegovina. His main job is to provide retail fuel to the vehicles of Task Force 1-77 at McGovern, but like many other soldiers on the base, he does his fair share of standing in a guard tower and providing force protection.

Guard duty. It's one of the most basic jobs in the Army. Anyone who's enlisted has pulled it at some point or another. It's a duty that's expected — and accepted.

"It's not the funnest thing, but you still have to do it," said Pfc. Joshua L. Myers, 19, of Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th In-

fantry. "It's not that bad; you don't break a sweat or anything."

Myers, a native of Ovid, N.Y., is pulling gate guard at McGovern's south gate with four others from his unit. Today he has the night shift, which he prefers. "The graveyard shift, yeah," said Myers. "I always have energy at night. During the day I'm always tired."

Myers said there is a big difference between the fire guard during basic training and duty in Bosnia. At McGovern Base, he said, one not only is providing force protection, but has to deal with locals as well. "We have a lot of misunderstandings with the Bosnians," he said. "They'll be trying to talk to you, and you won't be able to understand what they're saying. It gets kind of funny at times."

Direct contact with locals, though, has

no matter if soldiers are wearing soft caps now instead of kevlar helmets, the threat to McGovern is still real.

"It's still the same," said Hill. "Brcko is like a powder keg; it can go at any time. The guard standards will *not* change."

"It's real necessary," said Pfc. Elvis P. Elrod, a soldier in Hill's platoon. "It's just as important as everything else we do."

The 20-year-old native of Rotan, Texas, has been in the Army for about a year, much of it pulling guard at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, and now in Bosnia. "The other times (in Germany), though, we were just stuck in the middle of nowhere guarding a pile of weapons or something," said Elrod. "Duty here deals a lot more with people."

Elrod has conflicting emotions about guard duty. In one breath he curses the duty, but then says it's all right. "It does make the time go by faster," he said. "After you're done pulling it, it seems like you can't believe it's already been two weeks, but while you're actually on guard, it seems to take forever."

Most soldiers agree, however, that the time goes by quicker when one has someone else to talk with.

"Roger, you do a lot of talking," said Pfc. Heath A. Sims, 19, Co. B, 1-18 Inf. "You get to know who you're working with real well. After two weeks of this stuff, you pretty much know them inside and out."

"You can talk the whole night pretty much," said Rau. "Like, Where you are from? Which unit you are in? What's your MOS? How are the people you work with? Things like that. Sometimes we talk about what we did before joining the Army."

Sometimes, though, one pulls the duty alone — whether sitting in Bradley or in a tower. It gives one

a lot of time to think about things, said Myers. "I always think about home and my girlfriend," he said. "Always think about getting back to Germany, being able to go out, stuff like that. Also think about getting out of Bosnia. For me it's been too long; I'm ready to go home."

Getting home is on a lot of soldiers' minds.

For Sims, who hails from Warren, Texas, guard duty — as boring as it might be at times — is an important part of force protection that ensures soldiers will see home again.

"I feel good about what I'm doing," he said. "We're protecting all the other lives in the camp."

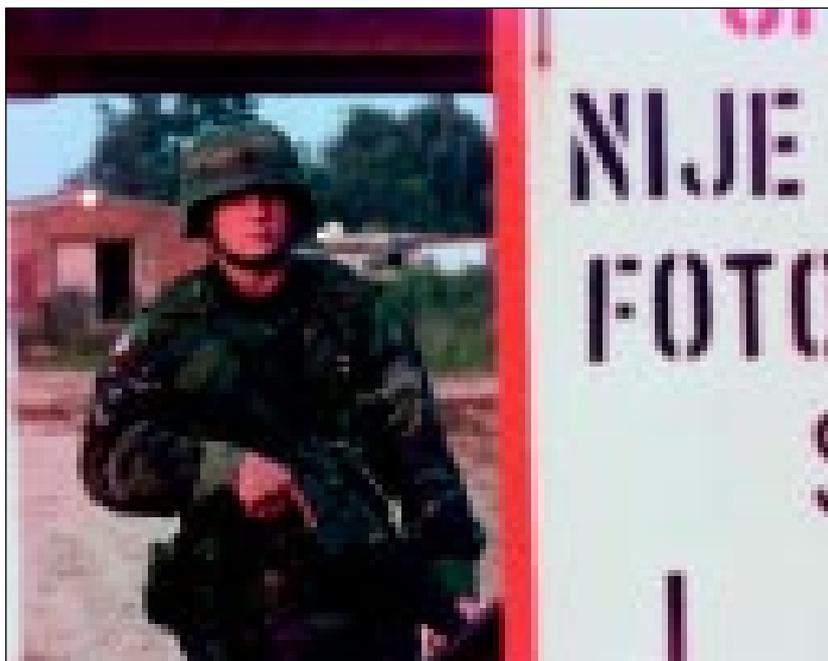


Photo by Spc. David Boe

Pfc. Heath A. Sims stands guard behind the south gate at McGovern Base.

decreased since the McGovern bypass was constructed a couple of months ago. No longer do local residents drive through the base. While this has increased force protection, it hasn't meant a relaxation of guard duty.

"We're the first line of force protection here," said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony R. Hill, a Platoon Sergeant in Company B, 1st Battalion, 18 Infantry, who is pulling duty as noncommissioned officer in charge at Observation Post Six.

A 15-year veteran, Hill knows all about high-intensity guard duty. He used to guard Hawk missile sites in Germany during the Cold War, and is now on his second tour in Bosnia. The South Haven, Mich., native said