



GUARDIAN

EAST

The official publication of Multinational Battle Group-East

FEBRUARY 2014

VOLUME XVII ISSUE VIII



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Guardian East welcomes commentaries, articles and photos from readers. Submissions should be sent to the editor at mnbgeast@gmail.com by the 21st of each month and include details such as the who, what, when, where and why of the photos. Please include the person's name, rank and contingent of who took the photos for photo credit. MNBG-E reserves the right to edit any submissions.

COVER PHOTO: An Armenian soldier conducts the proper technique when reacting to a molotov cocktail during training at Camp Slim Lines Jan. 4. The training covered reacting as an individual, in a squad and in a platoon size element. This was the Armenian coy's first time conducting fire phobia since arriving in Kosovo. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Samantha Parks, 4th Public Affairs Detachment)

BACK COVER PHOTO: Task Force Warhorse, Kosovo Force 18, command team, U.S. Army Lt. Col. G. Leonard Barton and U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Fowden, uncasing their task force colors at a transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Bondsteel Jan. 20. The uncasing of their colors signifies the official authority change from the outgoing unit. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Samantha Parks, 4th Public Affairs Detachment)

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JRD-E, JRD-S CONDUCT MERGER CEREMONY PG 11



JOINT EMERGENCY TRAINING PG 18



MNBG-E CMDR

When I reflect back on this deployment, I am in awe. The accomplishment of the battle group since our TOA has been remarkable.

For me the best thing about this deployment has been watching the men and women of multiple organizations come together to create this team. A team comprising of active duty, National Guard from six states, nine nations, merging together, moving forward in one common direction; collectively working together as a NATO force supporting Operation Joint Guardian. I have especially enjoyed learning about different cultures from our partner nations and the interpreters.

I can see visible progress in the work we have done. I know we have made a difference for the future of Kosovo. We may not have been the ones in the trenches, but we are the ones who sustained the conditions on the ground to ensure the people of Kosovo make the decisions to what happens for their future.

This mission is like no other mission I have been a part of and has taught me a great deal. I have learned a lot about myself and peace support operations. I feel the Battle Group, as a whole, has taken MNBG-E to another level. I have grown and I hope everyone else has too.

I will treasure this time and reflect back at this time as one of my greatest challenges and greatest missions, for I can see the future looks bright for the people of Kosovo.

We have trained hard and you were always prepared for all possible contingencies. I thank you for your dedication and hard work throughout your tour.

I would also like to thank private citizens and organizations that have provided us with so much



support and many wonderful resources throughout the year. I would especially like to recognize our families, loved ones and friends that have enabled us throughout this deployment. Their commitment and sacrifice make up the cornerstone that has allowed us to complete our mission.

Again, thank you for all of your hard work and commitment to our mission. Please be safe on your way back home, take the extra care to look for the hazards and challenges associated with redeployment. Please remember that the Army and other agencies have many resources to help you with the challenges of redeployment and reintegration. Please use them.

We have had a great run, finish safe and strong...Army Strong!!! I will see you on the high ground.

-Lightning 6



To all of Multinational Battle Group – East, I would like to personally thank you for a successful deployment. We came here with a mission, unfamiliar to some of us, of providing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement to the region. You have truly excelled and made a difference here that will carry on for the future generations of the people of Kosovo.



What we were provided in return is probably much more rewarding: the opportunity to work with our multinational partners, to build new relationships with the Kosovo Forces and also the friendship of the people of Kosovo. We were made to feel welcome by the people and the respect that we were treated with at every turn should be appreciated by all. The knowledge and experience that we take home with us is immeasurable, but the friendships and bonds forged are what we will always remember.

There were celebrations and ceremonies, liaison meetings and social events, NCODPs and training, NCOs of the month and Soldiers of the Month. The list is too long to mention them all, yet I can't imagine there is anyone with KFOR 17 that came here that will not take away something learned.

A special thanks goes out to our families, friends and loved ones back home who have made this all possible with their continued support while conducting this mission. To our Rear Detachments, our unsung heroes, who have carried the load back home, our thanks to you is immense. Without any of them, our success here would not have been as great.

My best to you all in your future endeavors and if our paths should cross again, then I look forward to our meeting. Thanks again for a job well done and carry yourself with pride as you think back to this deployment.

-Lightning 7 Out



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

UKRAINE



Ukraine borders the Russian Federation to the east and northeast, Belarus to the northwest, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the west, Romania and Moldova to the southwest, and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south and southeast.

President: Viktor Yanukovich

Independence: 1991

Capital: Kiev

Currency: Ukrainian hryvnia

Official languages: Ukranian

The Ukranian military consists of the Ground Forces, Naval Forces and Air Forces. Ukrainian troops are deployed in Kosovo as part of the Ukrainian-Polish Battalion. Ukraine continues to maintain the second-largest military in Europe, after that of Russia.

Information taken from CIA Factbook.





They ain't gonna eat themselves!

K F O R 1 7

W A F F L E

H O U S E

Sundays (0700-1100) at the Lift
Hangar.





Task Force Phalanx and Task Force Warhorse stand at attention during the transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Bondsteel Jan. 20. TF Phalanx, Kosovo Force 17, was comprised of more than 400 coalition partners and four National Guard units.

KFOR 17 TF Aviation prepares to head home

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Samantha Parks
4th Public Affairs Detachment

After more than nine months deployed, soldiers with Task Force Phalanx, Kosovo Force 17, prepare to head home.

In their final farewell, TF Phalanx transferred authority to TF Warhorse, KFOR 18's aviation task force, during a ceremony at Camp Bondsteel Jan. 20.

"Today's transfer of authority ceremony marks the end of a very successful tour for KFOR 17 TF Aviation soldiers and the beginning of what I am confident will also be a successful tour for the newest rotation of our task force aviation," said U.S. Army Col. David Woods, Multinational Battle Group-East commander and a native of Denbo, Pa.

TF Phalanx had more than 2,000 accident-free flying hours, 567 aviation support missions, 23 medical emergency evacuations that included 27, MNBG-E's first mountain hoist rescue, and 699 ground missions.

"You came together like pieces of a puzzle, fitting together perfectly and performing an exemplary job and providing us such great service," Woods said.

KFOR 17's aviation task force was comprised of 400 coalition partners and four National Guard units from Florida, Indiana, Maryland and Oregon.

"It's a unique organization by the mere fact that it's the first time the members of the organization have ever worked together before they met in Texas," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Kerry Dull, the outgoing TF Aviation commander and a native

of Johnstown, Pa. "But by National Guard standards, that is business as usual."

During his speech, Dull took a moment to highlight the soldiers that make up his task force. He said in the midst of his formation, there is a doctor with his own practice, a law student from George Washington University, an engineer that works at Rolls Royce, an IRS investigator, an electrician, a construction worker, a mechanic, a member of the security service, full time soldiers that serve their states and other professions he did not list.

"The oldest soldier is 57, the youngest 21 and the average age is right around 35," Dull said. "I highlight this because it's what's unique about the National Guard. For most of them serving in uniform is not their full time job. For some of you this is your first deployment, for others it is more than you can count. At the end of the day, you are all part of our great nation's great history."

Dull did not take command of the task force until several months into the deployment, but said the soldiers met every challenge that was thrown at them head on.

"To our KFOR teammates: Germany, Poland, Ukraine, France, Morocco, Armenia, Denmark, Italy and Turkey: thank you," Dull said. "We couldn't have done it without you. We learned as much from you as we did ourselves."

To the soldiers of TF Warhorse, Dull offered a warm welcome and one final piece of advice.

"Welcome and good luck," Dull said. "As I stated to your task force last week: every soldier will be challenged professionally and personally here in Kosovo. Meet them all head on.



KFOR soldier performs life-saving actions, receives NATO MSM

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Samantha Parks
4th Public Affairs Detachment

A Kosovo Forces soldier received the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for life-saving actions performed July 7, 2013 in Kosovo.

U.S. Army Sgt. Paul Flores, a soldier with 1st Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Bragg, N.C., and a native of Los Angeles, received the NATO MSM from Naples Commander Admiral Bruce W. Clingan, Allied Forces commander, in a presentation at KFOR Headquarters in Pristina on Jan. 13.

“I was just doing my job,” Flores said. “That is what I told them, I don’t deserve this. You wouldn’t thank a chef or a cook for doing their job. I just don’t think that I deserved it, and I still feel that way.”

At the time, Flores was a member of the personal security detail for the Multinational Battle Group-East commander. The command and escort vehicle were on mission to Prizren.

Flores said the convoy was heading westbound when they encountered the accident.

“We saw that there was a car and a bus that collided [head-on],” Flores said. “The car was destroyed. It was a miracle that no one was seriously injured and everyone walked off the bus.”

According to U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Derreck Fischer, the command team’s personal security detachment noncommissioned officer-in-charge and a native of Houston, Texas, he and others in their two vehicle convoy stopped to assist.

“[We] contained the engine fire from the sedan that hit the bus head on, after the fire was out [another soldier] controlled traffic, while I cleared the bus to make sure there were no more injured personnel on the bus,” said Fischer describing the scene.

Fischer said during that time, Flores was providing first aid to the fee collector from the bus. According to the accident report, the individual had sustained a deep laceration to the head, approximately five cm. long, which was bleeding heavily.

“It was a team effort for the most part,” Flores said. “I couldn’t have done this without everybody. Col. Woods was the one who decided to stop and help, and Sgt. 1st Class Fisher was the one directing traffic. I was just doing what I was supposed to be doing.”



U.S. Army Sgt. Paul Flores, a Senior Scout Observer with 1st Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Bragg, N.C., and a native of Los Angeles, received the NATO Meritorious Service Medal from Naples Commander Admiral Bruce W. Clingan, Allied Forces commander, in a presentation at KFOR Headquarters in Pristina on Jan. 13. (Photo courtesy of Kosovo Forces Public Affairs)



Mail Guidelines

As redeployment approaches, people are mailing personal items home. Keep these guidelines in mind to help expedite the process. Please call DSN 3114 or 3115 with any questions, concerns or to schedule a unit appointment (10 or more patrons required). *You will need: address label (do not tape or attach to package), large customs form – red and white form filled out to the best of your ability, package free of non-mailable items ready to send.*

Mailable Items with Stipulations

- Military Uniforms must be clean and free of dirt and sand
- Knives must have proper protective cases or sheaths
- Over-the-Counter Drugs in it's original seal.
- Cologne or perfume that is sealed/wrapped preventing involuntarily exposure
- Hookahs and tobacco pipes are mailable as long as they are cleaned and clear of all residue.

Non-Mailable Articles

- Flammable and combustible liquids (10.13)
- Cigarette lighters (10.13.4)
- Flammable Solids (10.14)
- Toxic substances (10.16)
- Infectious substances (10.17)
- Corrosive and Radioactive materials (10.19.2)
- Magnetized materials
- Dry ice (10.20.4)
- Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco (11.2)
- Lithium Cell batteries (10.20.5)
- Pistols, Revolvers, and Other Concealable Firearms 12.1
- Ammunition
- Cartridge Casings
- Sharp pointed instruments and knives with a blade that opens automatically by hand pressure applied to a button or other device in the handle; or, by operations of inertia, gravity, or both, or with a detachable blade propelled by a spring-operated mechanism
- **Kinder Eggs**
- **NO AEROSOL CANS OF ANY KIND**
- Intoxicating liquors (12.8)
- Matter emitting a foul odor (12.9)
- Prescription Drugs (12.12.1)
- Controlled substances (12.12.3)
- Drug paraphernalia (12.13)
- Lewd or Filthy Matter (13.5.4)
- Matter inciting violence (13.5.5)
- Pandering advertisements (508.9.0)
- Politically, socially, or racially offensive items
- **U.S. Military issued equipment like, chemical defense and sensitive items (Items listed on DA Form 3645) except by command approved, official mail**
- Candy cigarettes, cakes with alcohol
- Fireworks
- Sand and/or soil is strictly prohibited from entering the United States
- Pork or pork products
- MREs



JRD-E, JRD-S conduct merger ceremony

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Samantha Parks
4th Public Affairs Detachment

Joint Regional Detachment-East and Joint Regional Detachment-South held a merger and restructure ceremony near Camp Prizren Jan. 13.

“Today is a significant day in the history of JRD-South,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert Summerlin, a platoon sergeant with JRD-E from Richland, Miss. “From today the [detachments] will become one, merging their area of responsibility and all their liaison monitoring teams.”

With the merger, JRD-E will cease to exist and the combined area will be known as JRD-S.

Joint Regional Detachment-East was created in April 2004 with an operational area covering 12 municipalities and five liaison monitoring teams.

U.S. Army Maj. Johnathan Hartsock, commander of JRD-E and a native of Vinton, Va., thanked Italian Maj. Gen. Salvatore Farina, Kosovo Forces Commander, for his leadership and guidance throughout his command.

“I gratefully appreciate your mentorship and guidance that you provided over the last eight months as you have helped guide me through challenging waters that I would have easily drowned in had it not been for you,” Hartsock said.

Hartsock also thanked the representatives from the institutions in Kosovo, religious leaders and numerous colleagues that aided him during his command.

“All of the municipalities in the JRD-E area of operations from Kamenicia to Strpce, and from Hani Elezit to Stimje, are all expertly lead by tireless public servants in the Kosovo Police, KBP (Kosovo Border Police), and local government that provide a bright and shining example to the rest of Kosovo of what right looks like,” Hartsock said. “Your daily efforts here made your communities prosper and in turn have contributed to our mission success as we have helped enabled KFOR maintain the safe and secure environment enjoyed here. For that I sincerely say ‘thank you.’”

Hartsock also extended gratitude to the backbone of JRD-E: the officers, NCOs and soldiers.



U.S. Army Maj. Jonathan Hartsock, commander of Joint Regional Detachment-East and a native of Vinton, Va., cases the JRD-E colors during the realignment ceremony at Camp Prizren Jan. 13. Hartsock was JRD-E’s fourteenth and final commander. JRD-S and JRD-E merged operational areas and realigned command under the Turkish contingent.

“You have come together from three different nations: the US, Poland and Turkey; and all of you have been genuine professionals, dedicated to our mission here, and true ambassadors of your home country,” Hartsock said. “Your hard work and support over the last eight months has been simply amazing.”

JRD-E spent more than 7,000 hours behind the wheel, driving throughout their area of operation and contributed to more than 1,200 situation reports.

“In addition to your daily missions, your flexibility and competence enabled us to conduct an internal re-alignment of forces,” Hartsock said. “Which allowed us to become more effective and efficient as our Polish and Turkish LMTs each took on more responsibility in our area of operations.”

With the casing of JRD-E colors, Turkey took command of the newly restructured joint regional detachment area of operations.





Take 5

Beat the Cold

- More than 550 armed forces members suffered cold weather injuries in 2010
- Prevention is a command and individual responsibility

- Keep cold weather clothing clean and dry
- Watch for skin color changes, blurred vision or slurred speech
- Stay hydrated



ARMY STRONG.



<https://safety.army.mil>

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Moroccans end mission in Kosovo

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cody Harding
4th Public Affairs Detachment

Since the start of the Kosovo Force mission in 1999, the Moroccan Army has worked alongside NATO, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and other multinational units to provide a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for the citizens of Kosovo.

Now, 14 years and 11,000 troops later, the Moroccan Army says farewell to KFOR as it ends its mission with a withdrawal of forces ceremony on Camp Novo Selo January 18.

The ceremony brought together several members of the multinational community, including Delphine Borione, the French Ambassador to Kosovo, Italian Army Major General Salvatore Farina, the Commander of KFOR, and U.S. Army Col. David Woods, the Multinational Battle Group – East Commander.

At the beginning of his speech, Moroccan Army Lt. Col. Hicham Lamrani, the commander of the Moroccan Contingent, thanked the members of KFOR for their support over the years.

“Today we are here to give thanks to you and the values we associate. Brotherhood, solidarity and commitment to humanity,” Lamrani said. “So let me thank you on behalf of the entire Moroccan contingent for your support throughout our stay.”

After his speech, Farina gave a speech on the history of Morocco’s support for Kosovo and KFOR. Though the day could be seen as a sad one, Farina said, he was personally grateful for the work of the Moroccan Coy.



Italian Army Major General Salvatore Farina, the Commander of Kosovo Forces, pins the NATO medal on a Moroccan contingent soldier during the withdrawal of Moroccan forces ceremony on Camp Novo Selo January 18. The ceremony marks the end of Morocco’s participation in the Kosovo Forces mission after 14 years.

“We are indeed grateful for the commitment they have shared within KFOR,” said Farina. “Morocco has been long committed to Kosovo and has responded positively to calls from the international community since the beginning to prevent conflict and restore peace and security, here and worldwide.”

After the speech and the awarding of the NATO medal to nine Moroccan soldiers for their outstanding work, the Moroccans served a farewell meal to the partners they have served with in

Kosovo.

“My Moroccan friends, you are indeed part of our continued success. You should be proud of this and we are proud of you,” Farina said. “I thank you, everyone, for your devotion to serving your country and us at KFOR NATO and the multinational community. You have truly emphasized the KFOR motto, more together, and we admire your support. You are our KFOR brothers and sisters, and we wish you, the Moroccan armed forces and your country the best for the future.”

SHARP

NEW TRAINING: SHARP GAME SHOW

Kosovo Force rotation 17 has had its fair share of SHARP training during the 9-month rotation doing everything from SHARP focused sensing sessions across the junior enlisted ranks to small group discussions to open forum training. While there's no disagreement that this is an important topic, the approach to training is often debated. Many soldiers are asking for a break in the redundant SHARP training methods. However, the message of the implications of sexual harassment and sexual assault must still get across to the ranks. We want to reach every soldier to make them aware of how to keep "good soldiers from making bad decisions."

For the first quarter of fiscal year 2014, MNBG-E was tasked to conduct Bystander Intervention Training. The MNBG-E SHARP team adopted an interactive method to train the course. The training would allow soldiers more opportunities to get involved while allowing them benefit from the learning experience. From this, the SHARP game show was developed.

Formulated according to the Jeopardy format, 36 questions (to include True/False, Definitions, and over a dozen scenarios) were presented to the soldiers of MNBG-E during the months of December and January. The Command Sergeant Major of MNBG-E along with the IG, CJA and select company command teams assisted in validating the training prior to the "shows." In most of the training venues, units competed against each other. Several Soldiers were called up to participate as a contestant for each show.

As soon as the show began, it was an immediate attention grabber. As contestants were called up, the audience would cheer on their team mates. During the questions, it was common for audience members to 'discretely' shout out the answers to the questions. Overall, the plan was to get both the contestants and audience members to get involved in the training. The victim advocates were given opportunities to address the audience to get further feedback from the audience.

After the training was completed, survey forms were passed out to the audience to provide feedback on the new training format. The results were overwhelmingly positive as the chart below shows. Given the choice of Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, or Very Poor, of the 273 feedback forms received, 60% rated the training overall "excellent" and 32% rated it "good." In the comments section, there were comments such as "best SHARP training," "do this again" and "great way to make an uncomfortable topic bearable" along with some requests for the slide deck to be sent to their home unit SHARP Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.

It is our intent to distribute this lesson plan to all unit victim advocates to be utilized at their home unit. Overall, this training will be marked as a best practice. On behalf of the MNBG-E SHARP Team from KFOR 17, we would like to thank all of the Soldiers who participated in the training as well as those who provided feedback. All comments and remarks are being taken into consideration to continue to provide the best training possible to our Soldiers.

Always remember, I.A.M – Intervene, Act, Motivate. When you recognize a threat to your fellow soldiers, have the personal courage to INTERVENE and prevent a sexual assault or sexual harassment from occurring. Take ACTION to prevent these events from occurring. There is no innocent bystander. Finally, MOTIVATE your fellow soldiers to do the same.

MNBG-E Victim Advocate/SHARP Specialist
1st Lt. Danielle E. Carlsen





U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo Tracey Ann Jacobson unveils a memorial plaque at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo at a dedication ceremony held Dec. 24. The plaque recognizes the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo's Office of Defense Cooperation and the U.S. European Command's Humanitarian Assistance Program's \$2 million renovation project aimed at strengthening the capacity and quality of health care for the people of Kosovo. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Embassy Pristina)

EUCOM, U.S. Embassy renovate Kosovo hospitals

Story by U.S. Army Capt. Randy Ready
4th Public Affairs Detachment

The U.S. Embassy in Kosovo's Office of Defense Cooperation and the U.S. European Command's Humanitarian Assistance Program recently completed a \$2 million renovation project at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo in Pristina.

The renovations were part of a two phase project funded by the EUCOM Humanitarian Assistance Program and managed by the Embassy's ODC. It was started in 2011 and aimed at strengthening the capacity and quality of health care for the Kosovo people.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Bruce Murphy, the Chief for the Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo, said they met with Kosovo's Minister of Health to determine his priorities in order to help provide better medical care.

"We try to integrate our projects with the ministers so we are in step with them, so our projects will continue to be supported and maintained once we give them back to the

host nation," said Murphy, a native of Green Bay, Wis.

Murphy said their goal was to create a modernized health facility able to support the long-term health and welfare of the people of Kosovo. Since the UCCK is the largest medical facility in Kosovo and provides services to tens of thousands of patients annually, they determined the best way they could assist through the EUCOM Humanitarian Assistance Program was to renovate the UCCK's Infectious Disease and Surgical Clinics.

Dr. Shemsedin Dreshaj, the Director for the Infectious Disease Clinic, said these renovations were important as the clinic has approximately 3,000 inpatients and 10,000 outpatients each year, with these being some of the most vulnerable people in Kosovo.

"The infectious diseases patients are the poorest ones that

continued on page 16

belong to our population,” said Dreshaj. “So for them it’s really a good chance to have good care and good treatment.”

The first phase of the project was concluded in 2013 with one floor in both the Infectious Disease and Surgical Clinics being completely renovated. During the second phase they renovated another floor at the Infectious Disease Clinic and a wing at the Surgical Clinic.

Murphy said the renovations included installing new drop ceilings, lighting systems, bathroom and shower fixtures, windows and radiators for the heating systems. Some of the flooring was replaced with self-levelling floors while those that were in good shape were renovated to make them more presentable and safe. New safety equipment like state-of-the-art fire systems and alarms were installed as well as new fireproof doors that meet hospitable standards.

“If you look at what we’ve done here and just the quality facility that we’ve turned over back to the UCCK, not only

is it a better facility for the patients with better equipment and better facilities, but it’s also better for the staff,” said Murphy. “[It] provides better working conditions for them so they are better able to treat the patients and provide that medical care.”

At the hospital dedication ceremony held Dec. 24, U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo Tracey Ann Jacobson made sure to recognize EUCOM’s efforts at improving the health care available to the people of Kosovo.

“I would like to highlight the fact that this project is another example of European Command’s interest in supporting the broad development of Kosovo,” said Jacobson. “EUCOM is committed to supporting both Kosovo’s security sector reform and assisting Kosovo in improving its capacity to deliver essential services to its citizens.”

Murphy said the strategy from ODC Pristina has been to focus on improving both the medical and educational services for the people of Kosovo,

which is directly in line with the EUCOM Humanitarian Aid Program’s strategy.

“What [this project] really shows is that EUCOM is truly a partner and supportive of Kosovo,” said Murphy. “Not just in the security sector, which you would think traditionally the European Command would be interested in, but also through the whole of Kosovo approach where they are trying to assist and provide better social services. We’ve definitely been great partners through EUCOM with the Kosovo Security Forces, but also through other ministries where we can support the wider population of Kosovo.”

Dreshaj said they plan to start moving patients into the new wings as soon as possible, greatly enhancing their ability to treat and provide better care for their patients.

“Thanks to the U.S. Embassy and the [European Command] that they do this good job for the Kosovo people and the patients who will be treated here,” said Dreshaj.



Dr. Shemsedin Dreshaj, the Director for the Infectious Disease Clinic at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo, shows U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo Tracey Ann Jacobson some of the renovations funded by the U.S. European Command’s Humanitarian Assistance Program Dec. 24. (Photos courtesy of U.S. Embassy Pristina)



The U.S. Embassy in Kosovo’s Office of Defense Cooperation and the U.S. European Command’s Humanitarian Assistance Program recently completed a \$2 million renovation project at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo in Pristina. The renovations were part of a two phase project funded by the EUCOM Humanitarian Assistance Program and managed by the Embassy’s ODC aimed at strengthening the capacity and quality of health care for the people of Kosovo. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Randy Ready, 4th Public Affairs Detachment)

OPERATION "FAST PELICAN"

French soldiers took part in exercise "Fast Pelican" at Camp Novo Selo Jan 4 to test the cooperation between different emergency response teams. The exercise simulated a traffic accident with several wounded KFOR soldiers. Medical and fire fighting teams responded to the incident to evacuate the casualties using the "Jaws of Life" and provide medical care. (Photos courtesy of the French Coy public affairs)





JOINT EMERGENCY TRAINING

Task Force Aviation and Camp Bondsteel Fire Department conducted a joint quarterly emergency response exercise involving a simulated crash of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and subsequent rescue of the crew. These exercises help keep TF Aviation and CBS Fire Department personnel familiar with emergency procedures in the event they are needed. (Photos courtesy of U.S. Army Sgt. John Beuth)



KFOR 17 SAFETY- A LOOK BACK

SAFETY

As Multinational Battle Group – East prepares for the arrival of Kosovo Force 18, one cannot help but look back at the deployment. It started with the arrival at Hohenfels, Germany for a Joint Multinational Readiness Center rotation in May 2013. After spending a couple of weeks in “The Box,” the battle group arrived in Kosovo and immediately partnered itself with KFOR 16 as KFOR 17 would soon take the helm. Not long after the Transfer of Authority, the newly formed KFOR 17 battle group was operating alongside with their multinational partners ensuring a “safe and secure environment” and “freedom of movement” continued throughout the area of operations.

It did not take long to realize that one of the greatest hazards the battle group would face would be the risks associated with ground movement. The safety issues on the road were unpredictable at best. When you combine a unit new to area, that is not entirely familiar with the roads and accustomed to the hazards of the operating environment, the safety risk is high. Within the first 30 days from TOA, the battle group experienced two Class C vehicle accidents and a series of near-miss accidents. Within the first 45 days from TOA, a battle group-wide Safety Stand Down was initiated. Every leader and soldier took the time to reassess the operational risk of ground movement in order to reduce the residual risk to the absolute lowest level possible.

For the remainder of the summer and fall season, approximately 5 ½ months, the battle group did not experience a traffic accident above a Class D. The battle group prepared itself for the winter driving season through another set of training events targeting the hazards of inclement weather. While the battle group had its challenges in the early foul-weather days of December, the leaders and soldiers again rose to the occasion to mitigate the elevated risk. The accident rate quickly tapered off as a result.

So, how effective was the battle group safety record? Using the Occupational Safety & Health Administration’s incident rate calculation, the battle group scored a 2.46 over 8 ½ months. This takes into account both the reportable and non-reportable accidents that were tracked across the battle group. Normally, the accident incident rate only tracks reportable accidents. This means that roughly 2.46 out of every 100 soldiers assigned to MNBG-E was involved in an accident (both reportable and non-reportable). As a point of comparison, the construction industry and general industry average an accident incident rate of 4.4 and 4, respectively, for every 100 workers. The construction industry is regarded as having the highest safety risk in the civilian sector. The MNBG-E incident rate was expanded to involve both reportable and non-reportable accidents to highlight the overall low accident incident rate.

The safety hazards indigenous with Kosovo aren’t something to be underestimated. Looking back, there are ways that the overall risk could have been reduced even further. The leaders and soldiers of the battle group were quick to assess this risk and manage it to a controllable level. Stealing a quote from the MNBG-E Commander, “Leadership fills the holes.” Those ‘holes’ in the safety strategy were quickly filled by both leaders and soldiers. As KFOR 17 draws to a close, it’s only fitting to thank all the men and women of the battle group for making this deployment both a safe and memorable one.

MNBG-E Safety Manger
Edson de Leon



Take 5

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- There is no shame in asking for help
- Giving up is not the Army way



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KFOR 17 makes one last trip to Decani

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cody Harding
4th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers of Kosovo Force 17 took a trip to Decani monastery for an Orthodox Catholic liturgy January 23.

The trip, coordinated by the Forward Command Post Unit Ministry Team, was set to be the last one for the KFOR 17 rotation as their replacements arrive within the following weeks. Over the course of their deployment, the FCP UMT has scheduled three previous trips to orthodox services in Kosovo.

U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Miller, the FCP chaplain, said that the chance to visit Decani during his time in Kosovo was a great experience.

“We have a couple of orthodox soldiers and we wanted to give them a chance to worship since we have no Orthodox chaplains,” Miller said. “After going there, I saw it was a great opportunity for soldiers, even if they are not orthodox, to be culturally enriched.”

The liturgy took place within the monastery, where orthodox priests sang hymns and spread incense around the room and the crowd. Afterwards, the KFOR soldiers were invited for coffee with the priests.

U.S. Army Sgt. Nicholas Garber, a communications sergeant with the FCP, said that he enjoyed the trip.



U.S. Army Sgt. Ilia Shinault, right, and U.S. Army Sgt. Jessica Chavez, soldiers with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, sign in the guest log at the Decani monastery during a Unit Ministry Team visit for an Orthodox Catholic liturgy January 23.

“It is something that a lot of people don’t get to see,” said Garber, a native of Cincinnati, Ohio. “It’s definitely a rare opportunity, and I am appreciative of it.”

Chaplain Miller plans to pass on the tradition to his counterparts in the KFOR 18 mission, hoping to continue the trips to the monasteries within Kosovo.

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Training heats up for Armenian troops

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Samantha Parks
4th Public Affairs Detachment

With their transfer of authority completed, the Armenian coy hit the ground running and turned up the heat with crowd and riot control training.

Armenian soldiers with Multinational Battle Group-East participated in fire phobia training at Camp Slim Lines Jan. 4. For most soldiers, it was the first time they had experienced the training with molotov cocktails.

“It’s [my] first time and it’s very interesting,” said Armenian Jr. Sgt. Seerek Hrhalyutyunyan. “I’ve seen [fire phobia training] before, but never [participated.]”

This Armenian rotation had only been in Kosovo for less than a month.

“This is the second big training [event], the first one was the CRC training with [notional rioters],” said Armenian Capt. Slavik Avtisyian. “This training is very important for the CRC because nobody knows what we are going to face when we see the crowd.”

Fire phobia training consisted of crawl, walk and run phases. Each phase began with a demonstration by Portuguese soldiers and then built on the previous phase’s instruction.

Soldiers began by practicing as individuals with water bottles. The training progressed to using molotov cocktails and responding to them as squad and platoon size elements.

“We should do [the training] as much as we can because we should be ready at all times when we are here,” Avtisyian said. “We don’t know when they will need a quick reaction force and we should be ready.”

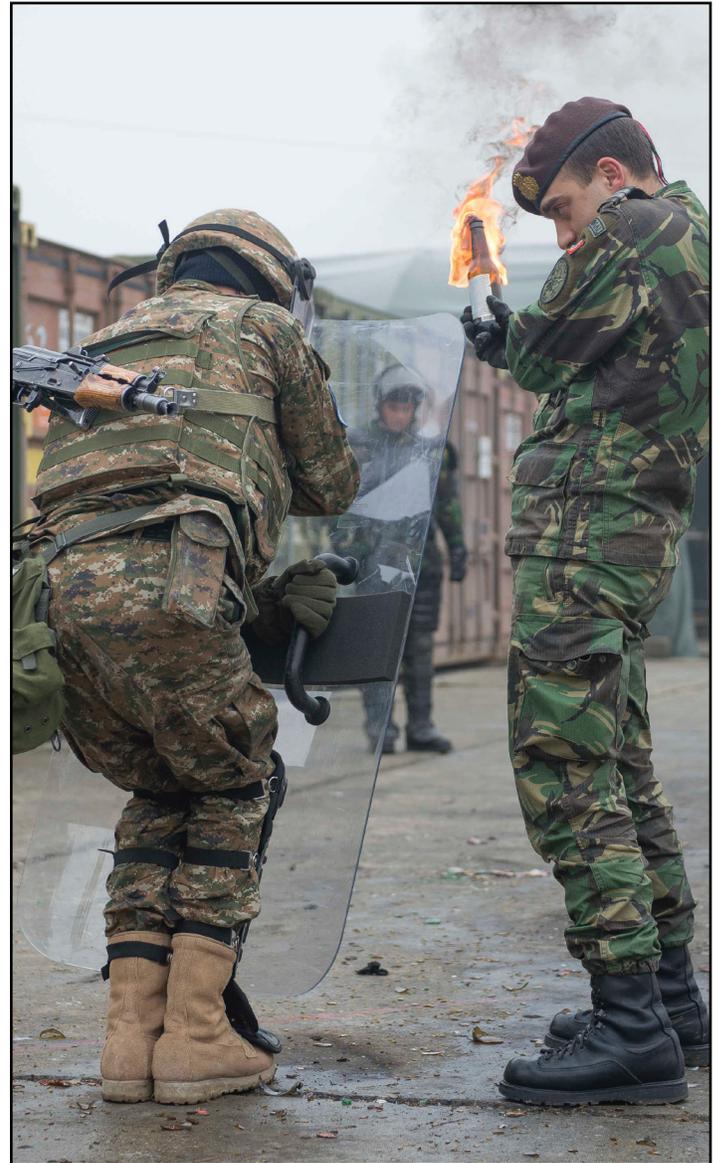
Avtisyian explained it is important to conduct the platoon size element training because that is the size that would respond during a CRC event.

“We should do platoon training to understand each other and to know what we should do in each situation,” Avtisyian said.

Avtisyian said the training was a little difficult for some of his soldiers because of the language barrier.

“It is a little bit difficult for my soldiers because most of them

don’t speak English, but a couple guys understood English so they [translated],” Avtisyian said. “The most important [part] is that my soldiers have fun.”



A Portuguese soldier corrects an Armenian soldier on his form during fire phobia training at Camp Slim Lines Jan. 4. Armenian soldiers spent the day practicing crowd and riot control techniques when facing molotov cocktails.

(left) Portuguese soldiers demonstrate how to react to a molotov cocktail in a platoon size element during fire phobia training at Camp Slim Lines Jan. 4. Portuguese soldiers demonstrated and trained the Armenian coy, who recently arrived in Kosovo.

AWARDS CEREMONIES

