

Guardian

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Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

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Photo of the Month



Photo by Spc. Eugene Dubielak, HHC, TF Houston

Staff Sgt. Antiago Munoz Jr., information operations, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Houston, shares a laugh with kids while looking at digital photos during a visit to a TF Houston adopted Serbian school in the town of Livoc i Eperm/Gornji Livoc Kosovo in March.

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Photos by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



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Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Photos by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY SGT. MATTHEW CHLOSTA-Cpt. Sean Ibarguen, commander, Company B, Task Force Alamo, prepares to enter a house on March 5 during a Cordon & Search of two compounds in the village of Dince/Dimce.

BACK COVER PHOTO BY SGT. MATTHEW CHLOSTA-Sgt. 1st Class Samuel Tamondong, noncommissioned officer in charge, Company A, Task Force Alamo, sprints up the final hill of the 5K+ course in front of center, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, during a TF Alamo noncommissioned officer run on March 19 around Camp Bondsteel.



GG's

Column



Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Brigade (East)

On April 6th, the official designation of Multi-National Brigade (East) will change to “Multi-National Task Force (East).” This change in our designation does not have any immediate practical effect, but is an indicator that we continue to become a more responsive and flexible force. This change in our name does not mean a change in our mission. We are still here to help the people of Kosovo by providing a safe and secure place where rule of law, stable government, and liberty for all citizens can grow and prosper.

Soldiers from free societies have always been dedicated to these ideals. The world's largest memorial column, 570 feet tall with a lone star at the top, stands in Texas at the battlefield of San Jacinto. The column marks the ground where 900 citizen soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Texas won their struggle with tyranny and oppression on April 21st, 1836. One of the inscriptions at the base of the monument describes the background and nationalities of the soldiers. With just a few changes, it could describe our own Multi-National Task Force (East) here today in Kosovo:

“Citizens of Texas and immigrant Soldiers in the Army of Texas at San Jacinto were natives of Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Austria, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal and Scotland.”

Texas soldiers, along with soldiers from across the United States and the world, marched and fought together as one Army at San Jacinto. Multi-National Task Force East is the proud inheritor of that tradition.

LONE STAR!

CSM'S CORNER



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E)



Photos by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Above, left, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E), listens to Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston on March 19 during the SMA's visit to Camp Bondsteel. Above, right, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E), sprints up radar hill on March 19 during the TF Alamo run with Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston.

Soldiers of MNB (E), April is upon us, spring is in the air, and we are more than one-quarter through our deployment. This month, I would like to focus on the topic of education, both military and civilian. While deployed here in Kosovo, the Soldiers of this Task Force have an unprecedented opportunity for education and training. The first Warrior Leader Course is underway with several more to follow. We will also conduct BNCOC Phase I and Battle Staff here at Bondsteel along with a myriad of other courses available in Germany. All of us have a unique opportunity to enhance our careers with military education. Also, many soldiers are taking advantage of the civilian educational opportunities offered here. The bottom line is that each and every soldier has the opportunity for self-improvement. What you accomplish here can have a positive impact on the rest of your life. Don't let this opportunity pass you by!!

Now that the weather is improving more soldiers are getting outside for PT. Let's use this opportunity to increase our level of physical fitness. When you are feeling especially brave you are welcome to PT with me at 0600 on Saturday mornings. I call it the "CSM Challenge" and it will usually consist of a run or a ruck march around the perimeter, or whatever sadistic idea I come up with. The only promise I will make is that we will have fun!!

I want to also take this opportunity to give a big Bondsteel welcome to Task Force Houston. With the restructuring plan, they are now with us here on Bondsteel. We look forward to working once again with this outstanding group of soldiers.

Soldier On!

CSM Boyer

New
C
O



Left, Sgt. Margarita Rodriguez, Task Force Houston, gets promoted to sergeant on March 11 on Camp Monteith, as Sgt. 1st Class Patricia Alberter, TF Houston, assists in the time honored tradition of wetting down the stripes.

Photo by Spc. Eugene Dubielak, HHC, TF Houston



Photo by Sgt. David Hickman, HHC, TF Alamo

Father promotes son

Left, Spc. Albert Reyes, clerk, Company A, Task Force Alamo, 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division is promoted from Pfc. to Spc. by his stepfather, Master Sgt. Edward Hansen, Task Force Falcon, in a promotion ceremony on March 21 at Camp Bondsteel. "Me and my father do not share the same name but it is very much the reason why I am the Soldier I am today," Reyes said. "I call him son because he is. He is my stepson. I have been in his life since he was eight-years-old He was very proud of what I was doing in the guard and he decided to try ROTC in high school. He wanted to go active-duty but I talked him into trying the guard first to get a taste of it. I talked him into the 36th so he could deploy with me. So here we are," Hansen said.

5

STAND ALONE PHOTOS



Far left: A young woman dances during a concert in Strpce's Cultural Center March 8. The event was held to celebrate International Women's Day. The concert was a collaboration of ethnic dancing, where the dancers wore costumes made in the old-world Balkan style of dress. Below: A young child stole the spotlight when she took the stage for a few brief moments.

Photos by Pfc. Christina Vanyo



International Womens' Day



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Above: Staff Sgt. Dean Decanter, Task Force Talon, throws a dart during a Morale, Welfare and Recreation dart tournament in the South Town MWR center at 7:15 p.m. on March 20.

For more photos, visit
the photo galleries of the
Guardian Online at
<http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil>

Layout and design by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer



Photo by Spc. Michael O'N

Vocalist Jevon "J-Diggy" belts out a tune during the Bondsteel's South Town I



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Above: Spc. Loretta Yeverino, Task Force Falcon, dressed as a rabbit entertains, left, Maja Mulici, 9, and Julijana Krstic, 10, during a medical civil assistance program held in Brezovica/Brezovice March 17. **Left:** A young Noveberde/Novo Brdo girl smiles for the camera March 20 while trying to get her younger brother to do the same.



Teal

McGlory, of the group Solacz,
the band's performance at Camp
Fitness Center on March 9.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Soldiers from Task Forces Dragoon and TF Falcon enjoy a game of dominoes after a barbecue March 26. Sunday afternoons are a popular time of the week for Soldiers to cook out and enjoy the nice weather Kosovo has been experiencing lately.

Editors note: Do you have photos of KFOR 7 Soldiers or events that you think are worthy of publication? If so, contact the Guardian Editor, Sgt. Matthew Chlosta, by e-mail at guardian@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil. We welcome submissions of JPEG photos with cutlines, photo credit and full identification for consideration. Photos could possibly be published in the magazine and/or on our Website, the Guardian online - www.tffalcon.hqs-aur.army.mil. 4th PAD Soldiers can only be in so many places at once. So we really appreciate your help in telling the KFOR 7 story, your story.



Stage 2 - Phases of Fitness

Welcome back! I'm glad you took an interest in your physical fitness and hopefully you have set a few goals for yourself.

Let's recap Stage 1 – Education: Strength, Endurance and Mobility are the 3-interactive components of fitness training. These 3-interactive components are important not only in your daily activities, but are also equally important when moving through the different Phases of Fitness.

How do you know what phase you are in? Well, any physical fitness-training program has three phases: preparatory, conditioning, and maintenance. Many variables determine what phase is considered your beginning phase. Such variables include: your age, your fitness level and your previous physical activity. If you have not been active for a long period of time and your 'getting back into it,' start with the preparatory phase.

PREPARATORY PHASE-'Shock 'n Ouch'

The preparatory phase reduces the 'Shock 'n Ouch' factor that your body feels when starting a new program. This phase works both the muscle and cardio respiratory systems so that they can get used to exercise, while preparing the body to handle the conditioning phase. Progression is moderate. Low to high levels of fitness should be achieved by gradual, planned increases in frequency, intensity, and time (a.k.a. Crawl, Walk, Run).

If you are just starting a work out plan and/or you're just plain out-of-shape, you should run, or walk if need be, 3x a week at a pace that elevates your heart rate to about 60 percent for 10 to 15 minutes.

Once you no longer feel fatigued or muscle soreness the day after the exercise, lengthen your exercise session approximately 5 minutes (70 percent heart rate). If you're exercising beyond your training heart rate, walk until the heart rate returns to the correct training level. If you can handle 20-25 minutes at your THR, you are ready for the conditioning phase.

If you are a weight trainer you should choose 8 - 12 various exercises that work the body's major muscle groups. When you first start a new workout plan, you should use only light weights the first week. Proper form during the exercises is most important.

Once you are comfortable, usually after 2 - 3 weeks of this type of training, you should know how much weight you are able to do that will allow you to reach muscle failure with 8 - 12 repetitions. If you have achieved this, great job! You have reached the conditioning phase.

CONDITIONING PHASE- The conditioning phase is tough.

Usually at this phase, you've been going at a continuous workout plan for close to a month. I think the conditioning phase is crucial. If you have come this far, why stop?

To improve cardio-endurance (aerobic and anaerobic), you must increase the length of time you run or walk. Increase your time by one or two minutes each week until you are able to run continuously for 20 to 30 minutes. Weight trainers should do one set of 8 to 12 repetitions for each selected resistance exercises. If you are able to do more than 12 repetitions of a given exercise, you should increase the weight until you can only do 8 to 12 repetitions. This process continues throughout the conditioning phase.

MAINTENANCE PHASE-You've made it!

This phase is pretty self-explanatory. This phase maintains the previous level of fitness. A clean, well-defined, 45 to 60 minute workout (stretching included) 3x a week is appropriate for maintaining what you have earned. Get creative in this phase so that you don't get bored.

Keep your muscles challenged through variety in your exercise routines. The body is very good at adapting to repetition. Also, don't let your flexibility slip in this phase. Keep your mobility stabilized and remember, more frequent training may be needed to reach and maintain peak fitness levels.

With a little hard work and discipline, you can make it to this phase within 8 weeks; just in time for the Fighter Management Pass Program and Rest and Recuperation leave. Nothing is wrong with turning heads at the beach.

However, getting to the maintenance phase will vary from person to person. Your nutritional intake and metabolism both play a role in how quickly you get to this phase. Both of which I will cover in my next column on Stage 3 - Nutritional Awareness and Your Metabolism.

STAY FIT 2 FIGHT!



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Fit 2 Fight Columnist Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett, non-commissioned officer-in-charge, Army Physical Fitness Test, Task Force Falcon writes this month about the three Phases of Fitness.

Q&A

Master Sgt. Jose Rosa TF Falcon, 125th M. P. Bn.

Master Sgt. Jose Rosa took a few minutes March 22 to talk about his experience thus far in Kosovo, some of his goals for his time here, a past experience with the Puerto Rico National Guard, and also about the weather...

Q: How is your deployment here in Kosovo going so far?

A: It's a good time, and I like it. I like it because this (police work) is my civilian job back in Puerto Rico.

Q: Before you mobilized, what did you do in Puerto Rico?

A: I'm retired from the Puerto Rico State Police as the rank of colonel, and I was also a State Fire Chief.

Q: What's your favorite part of this deployment thus far?

A: The mission, and the purpose of the mission of a peacekeeper. That's something I believe in, and just being an MP, my job.

Q: What is an average work-day here like for you?

A: I work 12 hours every day, and the other 12 I'm on call.

Q: Are you enjoying the change in climate?

A: It's different in Puerto Rico. We don't have snow. All year it's 75, 80 or 90 degrees. It's too cold here.

Q: When you get a little free time, what do you do with it?

A: Free time? Well, I call my wife and family in Puerto Rico. I have very little free time, though. I call my family and go to the gym. That's my free time.

Q: Have you discovered any misconceptions you might have had about the mission here before arriving in Kosovo?

A: When we received training at Fort Hood, it was clear our mission here was peacekeeping. It's the same. The scenarios they gave us are the same as what we're experiencing now.

Q: Do you have any goals for your time here in Kosovo?

A: To get in better shape in the gym, and to complete the mission.

Q: What do you enjoy most about working with your unit?

A: It's a good group, and disciplined. I know everybody because we're from the same company



in Puerto Rico and we've all worked together.

Q: You recently competed in a marksmanship competition here. Can you tell us what that was about?

A: In this competition, I shot pistol, and I scored the highest score in the pistol group out of (competitors from) 14 nations. I shot 100 percent on the 9mm. I'm also a member of (the) Puerto Rico team of the Governor's Dozen (pistol).

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add?

A: In Puerto Rico in the 1990s, from '92-'97, there was a big program to reduce drugs and crime. I was the designer of this program. What I did was coordinate with different state and federal agencies and the National Guard. We brought police and MPs to high-crime areas. After the MPs and police took over the high-crime areas, the civil, state and federal agencies (we coordinated with) came in to work with the areas.

"When I was between 16 and 21 that (program) was going on over in the island. The program started when I was in high school and ended when I was in university. It was something that brought a lot of peace to the people in high-crime areas. I admire him for that."
-Spc. David Castro

Interview, story, photo, layout & design by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Task Force Dragoon... Creates its own

After a highly defensive, low-scoring game it was evident that a few Soldiers from the newly-assembled Task Force Dragoon basketball team may prefer shooting something else besides a basketball.

Part of their early on-court miscommunication could be attributed to the fact that these energetic athletes were all volunteers. They had never actually played a single regulation game together or even practiced for that matter. However, no one ever practices for a pick-up game that is intended for simple recreation.

The game turned out to be a double header with players from the TF Dragoon Military Police Company going head-to-head against the male faculty members of the Selami Hallaqi Elementary School in Gjilan/Gjilane. Even without the on court flair of the National Basketball Association All-Stars both teams still managed to put on quite a show.

The first game ended with a final score of 40 – 36 in favor of the Selami Hallaqi faculty. Afterwards, both teams took a brief intermission to trade teammates. This increased interaction between the players and to made the experience a little more interesting.

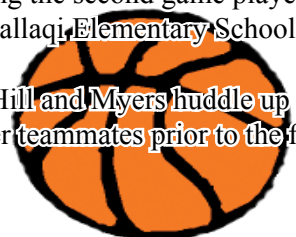
“It was an enormous amount of fun for us,” 1st Lt. Rodger Hinds, executive officer, MP Company, TF Dragoon, said. “We just wanted to have a good time and socialize. It was a wonderful sense of camaraderie and cohesion between all of us.”

Since adopting Selami Hallaqi after being introduced to the faculty and staff by the Kosovo Protection Corps the 1-142nd Family Readiness Group in Bentonville, A.R. agreed to help sponsor a cultural education program where Soldiers work with teachers in the classroom called Arkansas Kosovo Kids (ARKO), Hinds said. The idea of playing each other in a basketball game stemmed from the work



ABOVE: Arkansas native Sgt. Jeremy Hill executes a lay-up after driving the lane during the second game played at the Selami Hallaqi Elementary School gym.

LEFT: Hill and Myers huddle up with their other teammates prior to the first game.



March Madness



Story, photos, and layout & design by
Spc. J. Tashun Joycé

1st Lt. Shaun Jackson, TF Dragoon MP Company grabs the rebound quickly pushes the ball downcourt during an exhibition game between the TF Dragoon basketball team and the Selami Hallaqi Elementary School faculty on March 16, 2006 at the Selami Hallaqi gymnasium.

we are doing in the classroom.

"We believe that through education we can instill in our young citizens the value of freedom of expression, cooperation and tolerance," Hinds said.

Soldiers, usually in teams of two accompanied by a translator are present in the classroom giving lessons at least twice a week, Hinds said.

"We want to build a relationship with the locals to let them know that we are here for them and we actually care," Spc. Alan William Myers, a forward on the TF Dragoon basketball team, said.

In addition to the ARKO Kids program, three schools in Bentonville (one elementary school,

one junior high, one high school) are involved in a letter-writing program to communicate with Kosovar students in the classroom.

"We started the program in January and have had excellent results," Hinds said. "They (the students) believe it is a worthy cause.

They are learning the history and culture of America and the kids back home are learning the history and culture of Kosovo.

We are showing our children back home in our community that we as U.S. Soldiers are doing our part over here. We are

also demonstrating the fact that community can be a global concept."

"We believe that through education, we can instill in our young citizens, the value of freedom of expression, cooperation and tolerance," Hinds said.



Photo by Sgt. Pedro Martiz, HHC, Task Force Alamo

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, talks about Army transformation with TF Alamo Soliders on March 19 after an early morning run during his visit to Camp Bondsteel.

Army's top NCO returns to experience everyday life of Soldiers on CBS

The Army's top enlisted Soldier visited here for two days to experience the daily life of American troops deployed for a year as part of Kosovo Force 7's Multi-National Brigade (East).

During his stay, from March 18-19, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston ate chow with command sergeants major, lower enlisted Soldiers and noncommissioned officers in the two dining facilities; ran over 5 kilometers during early morning physical training March 19 with Task Force Alamo NCOs from the Texas National Guard's, 36th Infantry Division; watched explosive ordnance disposal detonate a controlled blast; drank

a coffee at the cappuccino bar in Southtown; got a haircut at the barber shop and spoke to Soldiers during a town hall meeting.

Then on Sunday afternoon, he met with military police Soldiers deployed here from Puerto Rico and did a commercial for the 4th Public Affairs Detachment's Guardian Review TV show and Guardian magazine.

Preston did all this in 24-hours.

"It's good to see a sergeant major run with NCO's," Sgt. 1st Class Leonard Frias, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Alamo.

On a normal Sunday Frias said he is usually sleeping on Sundays at the early morning hour.

"I think it's awesome to have the Sergeant Major of the Army come run



SMA

Story, Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

s around Bondsteel SMA runs around Bondsteel SMA Runs around Bonds



runs around Bondsteel

Photo by Spe. Michael O'Neal, HHHC, Task Force Alamo

Center, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, joins Task Force Alamo noncommissioned officers at 6:10 a.m. on March 19 for an early morning run during his two-day visit with Multi-National Brigade (East) Soldiers at CBS.



Sgt. Delia Nieves, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Task Force Falcon, listens to Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston talk to Military Police Soldiers from the PMO at 1 p.m. on March 19 during his two-day visit to Camp Bondsteel.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

LMT4 + KPS + 30 Youths

Equal one winter weekend of fun on the slopes.



Some of the youths from the multi-ethnic youth winter camp in Brezovica/ Bresovica March 3, ski down, and prepare to climb the hills outside to glide back down again on skis, snowboards, and sleds.

Story, Photos,
Layout & Design by
Pfc. Daniel J. Nichols



April 2006

Thirty Kosovar youths from neighborhoods in Viti/Vitina left a hotel in Brezovice/Brezovica March 3, to head towards the only ski lift in Kosovo, on their first day of a multi-ethnic youth winter camp.

But what happened was a little more than just a bunch of kids getting together to go ski. It was an effort to reduce the ever present tension between Albanians and Serbians in Kosovo by bringing the teenagers (ages 16-17) of those ethnicities together.

"This is really what the KPS (Kosovo Police Service) community relations division is trying to do," Sgt. Robert Klementich, NCOIC, Liaison Monitoring Team 4, Task Force Alamo, 36th Infantry Division, Multi-National Brigade (East) said. "To bring the Serbian and Albanian youths together for a social interaction.

"The youths are currently broken down into separate schools," Klementich said. This event provides an opportunity for these youths to have a social engagement, where they can have fun, and get to know each other, he said.

"The aim is to get these youths to talk, and develop communication that they normally don't have," said Klementich.

After the long, winding, snow-covered drive up the mountain to reach the ski lift, the kids poured out of the bus with smiles and ski gear intact. Intermixed with them was the LMT team, along with KPS officials and some older, more experienced skiers to help teach techniques to the younger up-and-comers during the weekend.

"It's important to reach out to the youth because that's Kosovo's future," Spc. Matthew Solis, Member of LMT-4, TF Alamo, 36th Inf. Div., MNB(E) said.

See YOUTH CAMP.....Page 30



Two boys from Viti/Vitina share a conversation during lunch at the hotel in the ski lodge, March 3.

Guardian



CORDON

TF Alamo & TF POL/UKR BAT. drop in on Dimce/Dimce

Story, Photos, Layout & Design
by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

As Apache helicopters hovered overhead, Multi-National Brigade (East) Soldiers searched two compounds looking for smuggled goods, weapons and contraband 700 meters from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia border in joint operation "Speakeasy" on Mar. 5.

The first cordon & search mission of the current MNB(E) Kosovo Force 7 rotation was conducted by members of Company B, Task Force Alamo, 36th Infantry Division, Texas National Guard and Task Force Polish/Ukrainian Battalion in the tiny hillside village of Dimce/Dimce.

"For an operation this size it went very well," 2nd Lt. Michael Blew, platoon leader, 1st Platoon, Company B, Task Force Alamo, said.

Besides the helicopters, there were 48 military vehicles involved in the operation Maj. Jaime Olivo, commander, Task Force Alamo, said.

"It was very successful," Olivo said. "We were able to achieve our objective; let them know KFOR is here. Violation of the law within (MNB(E)) will not be tolerated."



Spc. Michael Arenal, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Alamo pulls security outside a searched house during a joint cordon and search operation with TF POL/UKR BAT. in Dimce/Dimce on March 5.

Cordon

The cordon platoons were flown in on two Blackhawk helicopters at precisely 9 a.m., and dropped off on the lush, green farmland behind one of the houses.

The inner cordon was set up by Soldiers from 2nd Plt., Co. B, while 3rd Plt., Co. B, TF Alamo covered the outer cordon nearby for 'blocking missions.'

These were set up in case anyone tried to make a run for the border.

"From our objective it is going well," Spc. Wayne Suttle, 3rd Plt., Co. B, TF Alamo, said. "We do more concentration on the inner (cordon)."

He added that this was his first cordon and search operation.



SS



SEARCH

Above, top photo, Spc. Johnnie Gonzales, 1st Platoon, Company B, Task Force Alamo, watches the perimeter as the house behind him is searched. Above, bottom photo, Staff Sgt. Andres Perez, 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Alamo examines a 12-gauge shotgun found in one of the houses searched during a joint cordon and search operation with the Polish/Ukrainian Army Battalion on March 5 in the tiny FYROM border village of Dimce/Dimce. story. The owner of the gun was not home, but his brother was. He told Soliders he kept the gun for his sibling as a safekeeping measure to keep his brother's children from playing with it. The man also has a permit for the weapon, but it was expired. So the TF Alamo Soldiers left the weapon in the house and called KPS.



EOD TRAINS UP KPS

*Story, Photos,
Layout and Design
by Pfc. Daniel J. Nichols*

March 17, a conference room at the Kosovo Police Service headquarters in Ferizaj/Urosevac filled up with KPS personnel to take a class given by Task Force Falcon's Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

The class is given to basic police officers on identifying and reporting Improvised Explosive Devices and Unexploded Ordnance, Staff Sgt. Michael Lindenberg, TF Falcon, EOD, said. "It's basically a requirement for the en-

tire KPS force to remain police officers," he said.

"The training is very welcomed by the police officers here," Sgt. Iliz Gashi, training noncommissioned officer, Ferizaj/Urosevac KPS, said. "The police officers here have shown a lot of interest in this training class and they all want to go," Gashi said.

"Our training of the KPS," Sgt. First Class Stewart Houston, NCOIC, TF Falcon EOD, said, "directly effects their ability to react to incidents involving UXOs in a timely manner, and will further enable them to mitigate the hazards of a UXO."

Different EOD teams give the class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. "Every EOD soldier across the Army participates in giving this kind of training, everyone from E-4 to E-8 and even our commander," said Houston.

Friday's group of instructors consisted of Lindenberg, Spc. Eric Kramer, TF Falcon, EOD, and an interpreter who Lindenberg spoke through to the KPS for the duration of the class.

The class material consisted mainly of the actions to use when encountering a UXO or an IED. How to identify it,



FAR LEFT - Staff Sgt. Michael Lindemberger stands in front of a class of Kosovo Police Service officers giving a class on IED and UXO identification and reporting. LEFT - Staff Sgt. Michael Lindemberger goes over the individual aspects of each ordnance during the class. BELOW - Along with a computer with slides, the EOD team giving the class brought examples of ordinances as visual aids to present during the class.



cordon the area, and report it to higher.

"It's very similar to the UXO and IED training that US Soldiers go through," said Lindemberger.

Throughout the course of the class, Lindemberger not only instructed KPS verbally on how to identify IEDs and UXOs, but also brought defused ordnances to provide visual aids to the students.

Each time a familiar explosive device found in Kosovo was shown, a murmur of recognition would arise from the KPS students.

"UXO mitigation is an

ongoing problem for any country that (has) gone through a war," Houston said.

After the period of instruction, the Soldiers from EOD stayed behind to answer any of the other questions the KPS had. After everyone had left, the EOD team packed up, to return again the following Monday.

"We began these classes in the beginning of February," Lindemberger said, "but I think we're approaching week eight," he said.



Staff Sgt. Michael Lindemberger, TF Falcon, EOD, imparts information concerning the IXO/UXO training to a KPS officer after the class.

"This kind of training is happening in every division across Kosovo," Lindemberger said, "and it will go on until we have the entire KPS trained."

TASK FORCE HOUSTON PROVES THAT 2nd Plt., Co. D Soldiers donate goods to families

Story, photos, and layout & design by Spc. J. Tashun Joycé



Left, Staff Sgt. Christopher Adams 3rd squad, 2nd plt. Co. D, TF Houston passes items purchased at a store to fellow squad members ,center, 2nd Lt. Dominic Rondinelli and Sgt. Antonio Retana in front of

After years of turmoil, the province of Kosovo is in a dramatic rebuilding phase. In the wake of intense fighting that devastated the Kosovo infrastructure and left many families impoverished and without shelter, places that have taken in these refugees often do so with the bare minimum.

One of these places is a small two story apartment building in the heart of Gjilan/ Gjilane that houses 16 Kosovar families ranging from young couples, families with young children and some elderly residents.

While visiting the shelter for the first time, Soldiers from 2nd platoon Company D, Task Force Houston, witnessed the harsh living conditions these families are forced to endure and were compelled to take action.

"Once we discovered how they lived it made us feel bad," Sgt. Antonio Retana, 3rd squad leader, 2nd platoon Company D, Task Force Houston, said.

"We saw the black mold, the children

sleeping on the floor and the children's lack of clothing. We felt that if we wanted to do something good here it would start at the shelter."

Despite these conditions the people living there are in good spirits and appreciate the support that they are receiving, 2nd Lt. Dominic Rondinelli, 3rd squad 2nd Plt. Co. D, TF Houston said. Most of the families reside there for about a year or two until they get back on their feet or find work, he said.

"It is the best environment that the municipality can provide for them at the moment, but there are a lot of needs that need to be met at the shelter and they lack the supplies to properly maintain it," Rondinelli said. "It makes you reflect on the things you complain about at home and begin to appreciate what you have."

After meeting with the shelter's supervisor and discussing the needs of the building's residents, Rondinelli vowed that he and his squad would soon return, to provide these families with some much

IT GIVING HAS ITS OWN REWARDS

Families in Gjilan/ Gjilane



**Gjilan/ Gjilane grocery
a local refugee shelter.**

needed assistance.

"I wrote a letter to the families of second platoon to see if they could help us by sending things that would assist these families," Rondinelli said.

A short time afterward Retana and Rondinelli began receiving boxes filled with clothing, toys, school supplies and hygiene products from 2nd Plt. families and other community members who heard about what they were trying to do.

Equipped with a roster of all the families residing in the shelter, their specific needs were prioritized based on the size of their family and whether or

not they had younger or older children, this was to ensure that the things the families would receive were distributed fairly, Retana said.

In conjunction to the pouring of generous donations, members of 2nd Plt. took up a collection to buy additional things such as rice, flour, cooking oil and common hygiene products, Retana said.

After filling three vehicles with the items that had been purchased and collected these Good Samaritan Soldiers looked as if they may be trying to put Santa Claus out of a job.

"The families and the children needed it," Sgt. Jameson Welch, 3rd squad 2nd Plt. Co. D, TF Houston, said. "It's not much, but it shows them

'We saw the black mold, the children sleeping on the floor and the children's lack of clothing. We felt that if we wanted to do something good here it would start at the shelter.'

Right, Rondinelli demonstrates the art of being a bargain shopper by comparing prices.



Retana and Rondinelli pay for their items using money collected by 2nd Platoon.

that we care."

On a dreary March 2 morning curious and excited children watched with delight as the Soldiers unloaded the large boxes and giant garbage bags filled with goodies from their vehicles and headed into the supervisor's office as if they knew there was a surprise in store for them.

Each of the 16 families was brought into the office one by one and received their own special care package while taking the opportunity to thank the Soldiers for their generosity and take pictures with them.

The Soldiers appeared to be just as happy to be giving things away as the people who received them, they seemed to get a rush from being able to help others in need.

"It felt good to help these families out," Rondinelli said. "The look on the children's faces made it all worthwhile."

While visiting the shelter about once every 3 weeks, these Soldiers are continuing to build a relationship with these families and plan to carry on their help

effort as long as they are in Kosovo.

"I encourage everyone to try to help out as much as you can," Retana said.

"We just did a small portion but there is a large amount of Kosovo that still needs help."



Brush and Floss

Story & Photos, Layout & Design by
Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

At a small primary school in the village of Kllokot/Klokot, Task Force Falcon and TF MedFalcon presented a 'hygiene class' to students in grades kindergarten through eight, on March 21.

One portion of the class focused on dental care.

In preparation, the students had drawn pictures. The drawings were posted on the wall prior to the class. Some drawings depicted happy, healthy teeth in contrast to unhealthy, sad-looking teeth.

Children ranging in ages from 6-14-years-old, filled a kindergarten classroom for two one-hour sessions.

Before the class began, boxes of tooth brushes and toothpaste were brought into the Kllokot/Klokot school. The items were purchased by TF Falcon Civil Affairs and G-5 section personnel from Internet, to give to the students.

Sgt. 1st Class Terry Bumann and Spc. Anthony Pelliccio, both from TF Falcon CA, arranged for four dental students to come and teach the students about good dental care, for example, the correct way to brush one's teeth.

"Three of these students are from a dental high school in Ferizaj/Urosevac," Pelliccio said.

The name of the specialized school is 'Elena Gjika', a secondary school for teenagers planning a career in dentistry. The academics are preparatory for these students who will soon be studying medical dentistry at the university level.

"The class will be broken into four sections," Pelliccio said. "Fifteen minutes on dentistry, impetigo, lice and then scabies."

All of which are health issues among school aged children in the village, he added.

With a model set of teeth and an over-sized model toothbrush, the students were shown exactly how to brush their teeth; front, molars, and gums.

Several students volunteered towards the end of the oral-care lesson, to stand up in front of the class and demonstrate what they had learned.

Maj. Charles O. Starnes, deputy G-5, CA, TF Falcon, said the children of Kllokot/Klokot have contracted infections, such as impetigo, from raw sewage spilling onto the school playground from overflowing sewer ditches.

"About two months back," Starnes said, "I talked to the CA and we decided that some dental hygiene and preventative medicine classes are just what the doctor ordered for the kids of the town. We wanted to get the classes taught before the spring thaw when all the bugs get active."

Starnes said he has worked closely with Soldiers from the CA who have been acting as liaisons to the Serbian people of the village.



Students of the Kllokot/Klokot primary school demonstrate the correct way to brush one's teeth, following the oral-care portion of Tuesday's preventative medicine class.



Above, students await the next portion of the preventative awareness class. Each 15 minute quarter was based on a topic currently affecting the youth of Kllokot/Klokot; oral hygiene, impetigo, lice and scabies. Left, a young student of the Kllokot/Klokot primary school practices his brushing technique, following the oral-care portion of the preventative medicine class.

Chilly Children Benefit from Glove Drive

Story & Photos, Layout & Design by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

Kosovo, a land which throughout the year sees all four seasons, is currently winterized, as are its people.

While out on a mission, Capt. Jayson Baldrige, deputy commander, G-6, Task Force Falcon, noticed something unusual. The local Kosovar children would keep their hands tucked in their armpits, only sometimes removing them

quickly to shake hands with Soldiers.

"At first appearance you would think they are mad," said

Baldrige, "...but then you realize they have to do that to try and keep their hands warm, and from getting frostbite. The Soldiers reach out to shake their hand or give them a hug, and as much as the child wants to reach out, their hands are just too cold, stiff, dry and sore."

Baldrige said, with the help of his friends in Texas, he has begun a 'Glove Drive' back in the states.

"I want us to be responsible for being able to show these some 2000 kids near Camp Bondsteel, that Americans are caring and loving," said Baldrige.

Fellow Texan, biker-enthusiast, and best friend of Baldrige, Karen Weber, felt compelled to support the idea, and to help make a difference in these children's lives.

"Whenever Jayson goes out where the children are," she said, "he immediately, without even thinking about his own comfort, takes his gloves off and gives them to a child."

Weber said Baldrige has run out of gloves from giving away so many of his own.

Baldrige had expressed his concern to Weber, who started sending letters to community oriented Yahoo military groups, calling local stores and businesses, schools, and corresponding with two biker chapters.

Baldrige's membership and former position as chapter officer of an American Bikers Advocacy Transportation Equality group in Dallas, has encouraged fellow bikers, many of whom are Soldiers and vets, to aid in the Glove Drive.

"It is personal to us here in the Dallas-

Fort Worth area," said Weber, "because most of the Soldiers there (in Kosovo) are from our area, and even maybe our neighbor."

In support of the Glove Drive, drop-boxes have been placed in places such as elementary schools, police stations, colleges, and fire departments.

"We have reached the goal of 2000 pairs of gloves," Weber said, "including clothing, shoes, jackets and blankets."

"The gloves are on their way at the moment," she said. They are expected to arrive within the next week. Weber said there are more donation boxes to be emptied and those will be shipped as soon as possible.

"It's for children who were born into a war zone," said Weber, "and have no idea what it's like to receive gifts like these."

"Jayson feels that the drive will work as another form of 'ammunition' that the troops would like to use with the surrounding communities," she said. "By supporting the children, you support their families. By supporting their families, you support the Soldiers and citizens of the land."

"It's personal to us here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area."
-Karen Weber



Above, Capt. Jayson Baldrige, Task Force Falcon, gives gloves to local-national children.

'Grand Rounds' gives local Albanian/S health care professionals extra medical

Task Force MedFalcon hosted a lecture known as 'Grand Rounds', March 11 at the South Town theater on Camp Bondsteel.

The 'Grand Rounds' lecture is held every Saturday morning, scheduled to begin at 11:00 a.m.

Maj. Ron Eardley, chief nurse, Task Force MedFalcon, said the topics are always quite interesting, with some being more 'high level' than others. For example, 'anti-biotic cross-sensitivity', one of the lecture topics within the last four weeks, discussed properties of chemistry and physiology.

The March 11 lecture was given by guest speaker Capt. Anders Sandin, Md.,

from the Swedish Army. Sandin's lecture was entitled 'Diving Medicine', which discussed topics relating to medical conditions resulting from underwater-pressure on the body.

These lectures began as presentations for health-care professionals and personnel from Kosovo Forces and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, he said, but now welcome military and civilians.

"Although 'Grand Rounds' lectures are usually reserved for physicians," Eardley said, "we have seen a real good turn out of med. students and nurses."

Eardley also said that local attendees are from both Albanian and Serbian backgrounds.

"Part of the whole idea of 'Grand Rounds' is to bring the ethnicities together," said Eardley.

Eardley said the lecture is usually presented by a speaker, using visual-aids such as projected graphics, and a slide-show or power-point presentation of some sort.

Following the usually one hour lecture, 45 minutes is set aside for coffee and social discussion.

"We were providing lunch," said Eardley. "But due to the explosion of people attending, we've drained our food-budget! We've increased our numbers (of attendance) substantially!"

Future 'Grand Rounds' gatherings were scheduled to be held at Camp Monteith.

Eardley said the presentations have been held in several different places since they began.

"We've had anywhere from 30 to 70 civilians at our recent meetings," he said. "We don't want to lose our momentum."

This is why the 'Grand Rounds' Operating Group is looking to find sponsorship from local hospitals. Financial support and perhaps a larger facility in which to hold the lectures would be helpful, said Eardley.



Attendees of the Task Force MedFalcon 'Grand Rounds' medical discussion, listen as Capt. Anders Sandin, MD., Swedish Army, presented a lecture. The lecture on March 11 lasted approximately one hour and drew 101 participants.

Serbian l training

*Story and Photos by,
Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo
Layout and Design by,
Pfc. Daniel J. Nichols*



ABOVE - Capt. Anders Sandin, Md, Swedish army, presented a 'Diving Medicine' lecture where he discussed medical conditions resulting from underwater-pressure on the body.

Maj. Scott Byers, TF MedFalcon and part of the GROG, said he's optimistic in the future of the 'Grand Rounds' program.

For the program to continue past this rotation and become self-sustained there must be an interest as well as funding, he said.

"I do think it will evolve in some form of a larger scale," said Byers. "We're trying to get more local-national participation and involvement." More 'multi-ethnic interoperability' in such an environment, will ensure the program continues and all participants gain medical knowledge and awareness.

"Ethnicity is

irrelevant," Byers said. "Choosing topics to be discussed at 'Grand Rounds' is based on what pertains to a given health-care system."

"By definition," he said, "'Grand Rounds' is the discussion or study of a particular case. Our focus is to integrate with these discussions, medical assets of the local health-care providers."

Byers said the topics are not limited to even human care and medicine, for example, there have been some legitimate veterinary discussions. Also, an epidemiologist is expected within the coming weeks to lead a discussion on the avian bird-flu. The goal of each lecture is to have

relevance to the health community, and for every attendee to walk away with something.

"Our physical therapist is scheduled to present a lecture on back-pain," he said, "which, for example, can relate to everybody."

Byers said that the hospital in Gjilan/Gjllane conducted something similar to the concept of 'Grand Rounds,' but on a smaller scale. An important topic for the local sector hospitals to discuss is that of case and hospital management.

Part of hospital management, he said, is financial; the hospitals need to manage the money belonging to each region and determine a successful budget, he said.

Sling

Task

Force Talon, in their efforts to provide a safe and secure environment here in Kosovo, completed a Sling-load Operation March 6.

At 8:30 a.m., 1st Lt. Clint Hughey, bulk fuels, officer in charge, Task Force Falcon, received a phone call, notifying him that a remotely located outpost in Multi-National Brigade (East) needed fuel.

During the month of February alone, the Kosovo Fuel Management Division was called five times to this remote area to provide emergency fuel.

TF Talon was asked to help transport the fuel quickly, as the weather was turning worse. Everybody was scrambling to pull the operation together; gathering equipment, making risk assessments, giving pilot-briefs,

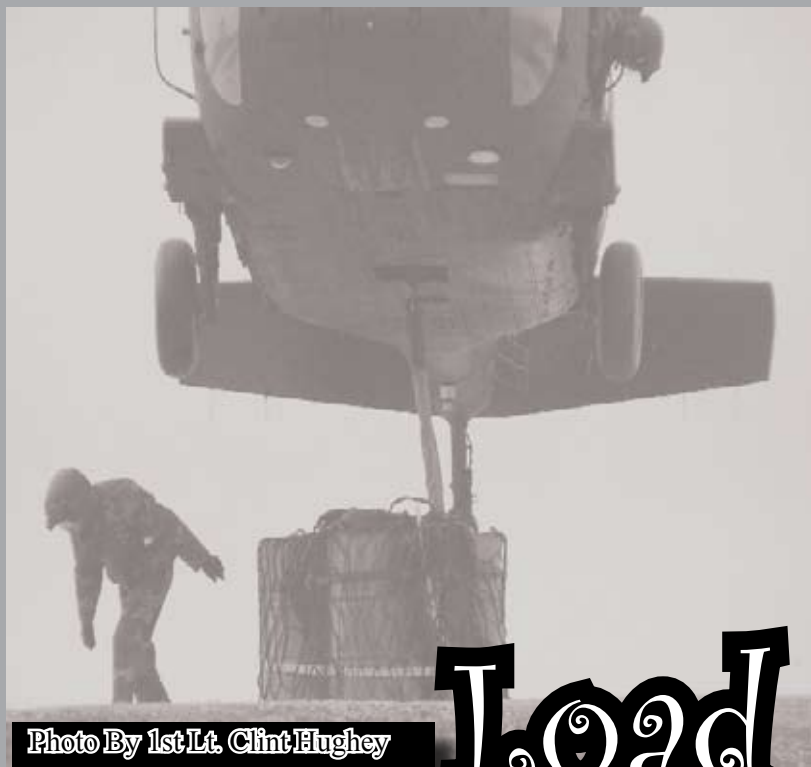


Photo By 1st Lt. Clint Hughey

Load

Photo by Spc. Eugene Dubielak, HHHC, TF Houston



Sgt. Eric Shaw, crew chief, 1st Platoon, Company A, Task Force Talon, 3-238th Combat Support Aviation Battalion, Michigan National Guard, looks out the window of a Blackhawk UH-60 helicopter in March, while wearing his 'Darth Vader' mask, during a flight over the MNB(E) area of responsibility. The mask cuts down on the wind noise when talking on the mic. Crew chiefs hang their heads out the window during landing to help the pilots touch down safely.

Story by 1st Lt. Clint Hughey, TF Falcon
Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

making aircraft checks, checking weather updates and sling-loading the fuel.

A key to delivering goods fast and on time, 'sling-loading' has most recently been used on a larger scale when supplying New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

By 10:30 a.m., TF Talon had loaded the fuel-drums, 200 gallons of arctic-grade diesel, for the six minute helicopter ride.

While the final adjustments were being made to the sling equipment, TF Talon crew members and pilots continued to be briefed.

Pre-flight checks were made and everything was 'good-to-go'. The bird lifted off with the precious fuel and the waiting game really began.

Still, matters didn't particularly improve for the pilots and crew.

Six minutes after take-off it began to sleet.

At 12:57 p.m. word arrived that the mission had been completed.

Photo By 1st Lt. Clint Hughey



A Task Force Talon crew member aids in preparing the sling-load of fuel.

"I'm a little bit nervous when they say they've shot at them before. They're looking for a certain gentleman on the black list, weapons (and) contraband," Suttle said.

Clear

Minutes later, Humvees from 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Alamo rushed forward from their hiding spot on the side of another mountain lower in the valley. They zoomed up the narrow alleyways to enter the cordoned area.

TF Alamo went into one family's compound high on the mountainside near the border of FYROM, while the POL/UKR BAT., split off to investigate another family complex, about 2 kilometers away.

"It was perfect coordination -- between aerial assets and ground assets," Blew said.

Both groups were also looking for a suspected arms trafficker/smuggler.

The man TF Alamo Soldiers were looking for wasn't there but several extended family members, including some of his brothers, were in the house.

Blew said that when they got to the house most of the family was already outside to see why helicopters were landing in their backyard.

Before going into the house, all the Soldiers put on sky-blue-colored footies to cover the bottom of their boots.

"We don't want to dirty up the house. We want to be respectful," Blew said.

Once TF Alamo's 1st Plt. cleared the house, the Soldiers put orange vests in front of rooms they had already checked and fluorescent orange markers on four sides of the house and barn. The markers were hung up as an all-clear signal to the helicopters circling overhead.

Next, the military working dogs were sent in to sniff for narcotics and explosives.

Search

Then the Soldiers began the search process.



Center, Sgt. Jon Perales, squad leader, 1st Platoon, 2nd Squad, Company B, Task Force Alamo and rear, reflected in mirror, Spc. Lee Hare, 1st Plt., 2nd Sqd., Co. B, TF Alamo search for contraband and weapons inside a house in Dimce/Dimce on March 5.

"We found a shotgun and a computer," Blew, said. "He's allowed to have it (the shotgun) if he has papers."

Staff Sgt. Andres Perez, 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Alamo took several photos of the serial number to see if

it matched or was related to any criminal history.

TF POL/UKR BAT., also found a 12-gauge shotgun with an expired permit.

The man said it was his brother's gun, but he kept it for him so his brother's kids didn't play with the weapon.

Unfortunately, the man had an expired permit.

So, the Soldiers confiscated the weapon. They also made sketches of the houses and compounds if future searches are necessary.

Later the confiscated shotgun was returned to the family and the Kosovo Police Service was notified about the expired permit.

"We support the local municipality and the KPS as a professional organization in protecting locals from lawbreakers," Olivo said. The operation was a show of joint interoperability, he added.

TF Alamo Soldiers searched the house and barn, while the POL/UKR BAT. Soldiers searched four houses and one barn/hay loft.

Meanwhile, Spc. Roy Barker, operations, TF Falcon, swept through the house and around the grounds with a metal detector.

The search team also looked through files, dressers, under pots and checked for false walls.

Soldiers found suspicious passport photos, financial records and some computer equipment.

Any place, any time

As the operation came to a close, the family was allowed back in the house and Soldiers from TF Viper did some tactical questioning. Tactical questioning is different than interrogation said a Captain from TF Viper, who asked that his name not be used.

"Everything has gone well so far," Cpt. Sean Ibarguen, company commander, Co. B, TF Alamo, said. "(The) purpose of this mission is to let people know we are flexible and (can drop in on) people anywhere, any time."

"I cannot think of any improves. I've never seen any thing like this coordination (and) I've been in eight years," Blew said. "These Soldiers executed (the mission flawlessly). We want to send a message that we're KFOR. We're here to help people."

What is the photo that would show victory or show progress in Iraq?

That question was posed by a deputy editor of photography for the Washington Times newspaper during my visit to their Washington D.C. headquarters in October 2005.

I was at the newspaper as a student visitor from an advanced class for Army journalists called the Editors Course. Each class visits a national newspaper in the Washington D.C. region for a day to learn and ask questions of that newspaper's editors and journalists.

My fellow students and I were on our one-day field trip to the Washington Times newspaper when we were asked the previous question.

The deputy photo editor at the newspaper asked us as a group during a portion of our tour of the facilities. He asked us the question, I think to make us really think.

Not just about just the current wars we're in, but what kind of story can a photo tell and in this situation, when will a photo show we are winning the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also asked us because he knew as military journalists, some of us would be deploying very, soon after we graduated from the course to one of the current "combat zones."

Some recent photos that came up were the pictures splashed across the world's newspapers and magazines, in the past two years, of citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq holding up their ink stained fingers, after they had voted for the first time in their lives in a free, democratic election.

But, that's a photo that we've already seen.

I thought back to before I came to Kosovo and started reading the Guardian magazine online to see what the province looked like.

I have to admit before hearing that I was going to be deployed to Kosovo I didn't know much about the Balkans, KFOR and hadn't really thought much about the area since the 1999 bombing campaign during the Clinton presidency.

I used to get Bosnia and Kosovo mixed up constantly before I came here. Once I heard that I was going to Kosovo last summer, I checked out photos in several Guardians from the past two years to see what if I could tell by looking at the pictures in the magazine what it was going to be like as a Soldier deployed to Kosovo.

I distinctly remember something that stood out. It was what the Soldiers weren't wearing, Kevlars and body armor.

The question from the editor at the Washington Times had triggered an image I had seen during my exploration of back issues of the Guardian.

I remembered seeing a photo of a foot patrol as they walked thorough a Kosovar village in one of those archived Guardians. I don't remember the village, but I remember the photo. And, I distinctly remember something that stood out. It was what the Soldiers weren't wearing, Kevlars and body armor.

The photo stood out in stark contrast to similar photos I'd seen from Afghanistan and Iraq. The photo I saw from a Kosovo foot patrol had Soldiers with weapons but no protective helmets and no bullet proof vests.

What also stood out was what the Soldiers were wearing, BDUs with soft caps and LBE's.

To me this showed one of two things, either the Soldiers were instructed not to wear helmets or flak vests to make a statement to the local population that they too shared the same risk of being shot or bombed as the community when they went out on patrol, or that so much progress had been made in safety and security in Kosovo, that it was standard practice to go out on foot patrols without a Kevlar and bullet proof plates, because the odds of getting shot or bombed was relatively low.

This photo showed me that the Soldiers deployed to Kosovo were at the end of a war in contrast to the Soldiers deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, who were right in the middle of it.

Before Sept. 11, Kosovo seemed to be the only 'the combat zone' where we had Soldiers deployed in harm's way. Now, the deployments and imminent danger have shifted heavily to Afghanistan and Iraq.

I thought about the picture I had seen in the old Guardian immediately after the deputy editor posed his question. My mind repeated his question again, "What is the photo that would show victory or show progress in Iraq?"

I raised my hand and said, "The picture that would show progress being made in Iraq and Afghanistan would be a photo of American Soldiers and local Army nationals conducting neighborhood foot patrols, in those two countries, without wearing their Kevlars and flak vests like the Soldiers deployed to Kosovo do."

This act will be a sign that peace is imminent and a safe and secure environment is actually real.

That photo, when taken in the future, will show what NATO and KFOR have achieved in the present day Kosovo, after 7 years of slowly rebuilding a war-torn area, not a perfect world but a generally safe and secure environment for the citizens of the province.

I believe the same security and peace achieved here, can also be achieved in Afghanistan and Iraq. I think Afghanistan is a lot closer to one day soon having a similar environment to what we experience here. Iraq is seeing some progress and some set backs, but they should also get there sometime in the future.

In my opinion, that photo will be taken someday in the future. It will be taken because American Soldiers, their coalition partners and the majority of the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq have the resolve and the bravery to make their countries as safe and secure an environment in the future as Kosovo is in the present.

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When they see us interacting with them, they see we're not here to be 'hooah, hooah', we're just here to help them out."

Halfway through the day, everyone stopped to take time out for lunch.

The Soldiers sat in with the young adults, and were able to interact with them in ways that wouldn't be possible on a normal patrol mission.

Solis, along with others on the team, used to serve in a line unit as an infantryman, before

joining the LMT team. He said that his new job is a little different, but more beneficial to him and the people of Kosovo.

"On patrols you're just making sure everything is safe," he said.

"Being an LMT it's a little different: you get to interact with the people, so it's a little bit better than being in a line unit."

Although it was fun for all, more was planned than just skiing and the meal at the hotel in the afternoon.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Sgt. Michael Klementich, Liason Monitoring Team 4, watches kids, who attended the Multi-ethnic Winter Youth Camp sled down a hill at the ski resort in Brezovice/Brezovica March 3.

One of the evening's planned activities was to use an auditorium at the hotel to play soccer, Klementich said.

"On Monday they are also going to go to the municipality building in Viti/Vitina and see how the municipalities work, and meet with the municipality directors," he said.

"KPS has done this project by themselves over the last three years, but this was the first year they asked the LMT team to participate," said Klementich.

"We're doing one of the three pillars of our mission, which is take the pulse of the political, social and economic viewpoints of the

people of Kosovo," Klementich said.

But the youths that were present seemed to be participants in something far more important.

"These Kosovar citizens," Klementich said, "are involved in an activity that we hope will be a benefit to the citizens of the Viti/Vitina municipality and for Kosovo as a whole."

Safety Office's Monthly Message

April's Safety Message:

"Eyes are priceless, eye protection is cheap"

Pollutants / Air contaminants -- As snow melts, trash is almost everywhere in the region. The common practice of burning it, along with factories running at full capacity, increases the probability of eye injury. Conducting mounted patrols with the windows down, without eye protection, can also result in air-debris irritating your eyes. So wear eye protection. Foreign object damage and conjunctivitis (pink eye) are also important reasons for us to wear eye protection.

Regional diseases -- Local flies and mosquitoes are natural carriers of endemic parasites; ensure our Soldiers are using insect repellent while conducting dismounted patrols. Water borne infections due to pollution and runoff are common regional threats. Some of the local flora can cause allergic reactions and some regional plants have thorns or other means to introduce toxins into our skin. So make sure your Soldiers wear their uniforms properly and avoid contact with unfamiliar plants.

Sports Related Injuries -- With longer daylight hours, our Soldiers are going to start playing their favorite sports outdoors. Leaders, ensure players are stretching prior to exercise, wearing protective equipment and following the rules.

This is a great mission with terrific Soldiers. So, let's take care of these risks, enjoy the mission and keep our Soldiers safe. Stress safety in everything we do.

Lt. Col. Mario M. Alayon,
chief safety officer,
Task Force Falcon

with your NCOs. (It) is a good experience for the NCOs and for me personally," Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Merrill,



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Above, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston ran with Soldier early in the morning on March 19. Below, Preston gets a haircut at the South Town barber shop later that morning before his town hall meeting.



Photo by Cpl. Israel Freeland, Task Force Falcon

command sergeant major, TF Alamo, said.

After the run, Preston gave out coins to the top three finishers.

Next, he visited several other areas Soldiers frequent on Camp Bondsteel, to check out the facilities and how they are taking care of the Soldiers.

Then, he held an hour long talk about Army transformation, Soldiers' issues and a question and answer session with Soldiers at the South Town Gym.

During his town hall presentation, Preston talked

about his familiar and family ties to both the Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers and to their mission in Kosovo.

Preston was a sergeant major for the 2A and 2B KFOR rotations from June 2000 – June 2001 on Camp Bondsteel.

Also, Preston's son serves as an Army Reserve MP.

"He was deployed to Iraq for sixteen months," Preston said. "I watch the National Guard and Army Reserve very close."

The majority of the Soldiers deployed to Kosovo for the KFOR 7 rotation are Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers.

Most of them are from the Texas National Guard's 36th Inf. Div., with a sprinkling of Air Force Airman and Regular Army Soldiers.

Talking about Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, Preston said he uses the KFOR mission as an example during his travels to give people an idea of what the future will eventually look like in the Middle Eastern theaters.

He said the initial

Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Soldiers from MNB(E) listen to Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, during a town hall meeting at 11 a.m. on March 19 inside the South Town gym.

deployment to Kosovo in April 1999 included approximately 14,000 Soldiers, while today the U.S. Army contingent is down to around 1,800 and shrinking.

"We're trying to work ourselves out of a job," Preston said. "You're part of that drawdown here. You're part of that transition. I'm proud of all of you."

During Preston's last stop before heading out to the airport, Soldiers from the provost marshal's office gave him an honorary MP badge.

"He's a nice person," Command Sgt. Maj. Victor Franco, PMO, TF Falcon, 125th MP Battalion Forward, San Juan, Puerto Rico, said.

He talks with everybody. Rank doesn't make people, people make the rank," Franco added.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Soldiers from the Provost Marshal's Office, Task Force Falcon, surround Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, as he does a commercial for the "Guardian" magazine at 1 p.m. on March 19 during his two-day visit to Camp Bondsteel.



Guardian

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