



Guardian

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Photo of the Month



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

A shadow cast by Spc. Matthew Solis, liason monitoring team 4, stretches out over the Southtown volleyball court as the sun sets May 18. Outdoor sports are a popular weekend and after-work activity now that temperatures are generally a little warmer.

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is produced for personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East)

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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY SGT. BRANDON KRAHMER- Sgt. 1st Class Robert Drum, TF Talon, and his teammates give it their all during a tug-o-war competition held on Camp Bondsteel May 18. The event was part of an organization day, during which a cookout and other sporting events were held.

BACK COVER PHOTO BY SGT. BRANDON KRAHMER- A squad of Danish Army Soldiers from MNTF(C) and TF Alamo Soldiers from MNTF(E) pulls security as a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter lifts off after flying them out near Kosovo's Administrative Boundary Line with Serbia for a cross-boundary patrol on May 9.



GG's

column



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Photo by Spc. J. TaShun Joycé

Above, right, Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Task Force (East), stands next to Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter Staff Sgt. Gabriel Abalos, Task Force Falcon and Soldier of the Quarter Spc. Alan Myers, TF Dragoon, after they visited the Decani Monastery in MNTF(W) on May 29.

Left, Owens gets set to toss the jumpball at the start of a basketball game during the Basketball School of the Americas tournament run by 353rd Civil Affairs Command; Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Task Force Falcon at the Bill Clinton Sports Center in Ferizaj/Urosevac on May 11.

This edition of my column is for the children of all our deployed Soldiers. When you are a kid, summer is a great time to go outside and play, be involved in sports or learn to work around the house. The grass is green, the weather is hot and there is a lot to do. Friends, family, games and just having fun are part of your everyday experience. That is your occupation as a kid; to play, to learn and to grow. The outside world doesn't often intrude.

Life is different for the children of Soldiers, especially for the children of National Guard Soldiers and Reservist Soldiers. One day there was a letter in the mail, or a phone call, and soon you learned that your Dad or Mom would be gone for more than a year. They would be going to a place you never knew existed, to help people you didn't even know.

You may not have seen it at the time, but you and the other members of your family were called to duty that day also. Your service at home, even things that might not seem important, like paying attention in school and being obedient even with one of your parents gone, is important to the Soldiers and the mission here.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Gen. Peter Pace, recently described the children of deployed Soldiers as American patriots and role models for us all. Gen. Pace was right. Your patriotism takes the form of an unconditional love that sustains the Soldiers, here. The Soldiers appreciate your quiet and thoughtful service. They are as proud of you as you are of them. As summer begins I would like you to remember something for me.

There are some absolute truths I've stumbled onto in life. Few of them would be more important than the one that essentially says you and you alone are the one who chooses your own attitude. You are the only one who can keep your perceptions in line and your attitude positive. If you are honest with yourself, things are probably better than they seem most of the time. So stay positive.

We look forward to the day all of our families will be together again. Until that time, may the Lord bless you and keep you safe. Stay Safe, Stay Strong and Stay Positive!

CSM'S CORNER



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

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



Photo by Spe. Eugene Dubielak,
Task Force Houston

Above, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNTF(E), "grins and bears it" during the DANCON march held in MNTF(N) May 7. The DANCON is a 25.2 kilometer foot march hosted by the Danish Army Soldiers in KFOR.

Fellow Soldiers,

June is upon us and this month brings us to the six month point in our rotation. We have had multiple visits from KFOR 8 soldiers and the staff sections have already begun planning our exit strategy. These are welcome reminders that the clock is ticking and we are moving into the final half of our deployment.

At this point it is important to stop and assess what we have accomplished. Noncommissioned officer education system and schools have been a huge success. We have graduated over 150 Soldiers from the Warrior Leader Course and over 60 from Basic Noncommissioned Officer Courses. We have soldiers attending schools ranging from Small Arms Master Marksmanship Course to the Sergeants Major Academy. We are taking full advantage of an unprecedented opportunity for military education.

At the same time we are maintaining a safe and secure environment for the people of Kosovo and continuing to be a premier element of KFOR.

As an individual soldier, no matter what your job is, you are a critical member of the team. Each and every soldier is an integral part of this Task Force and we all share in the success of our mission. I encourage you to keep up the good work and keep each other safe.

Soldier On!

CSM Boyer



Down on the

TF VIPER MAY 13 @ RANGE 2



Spc. Michael Trejo, Task Force Viper and other Soldiers from TF Viper fire during a 9mm qualification range Saturday, May 13.

Approximately 15 firers from Task Force Viper were present at the 9mm range held May 13, at Range 2.

"In a normal situation the M9 is the preferred weapon (for Soldiers in Military Intelligence)," Sgt. 1st Class Danny Foley, training NCO, TF Viper, said. Foley was the range NCOIC at the range. "It's also cross training for the M-9 since E-3 and below will always carry an M-16, but this gives our soldiers an opportunity to cross train with the M-9," Foley said.

TF Viper ensures that their soldiers are able to go to the range at least once a quarter. "We're very interested in teaching safety," Foley said.

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Guardian

Photos by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



Pfc. Joseph Mercer, TF Viper, stands at the edge of the firing line and prepares to load his weapon for the next portion of the range.

To see more photos, visit the photo galleries of the Guardian online at: www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil

June 2006



A line of Soldiers' shadows can be seen as they practice standing firing techniques before the range May 6.



A TF POL/UKR Soldier practices a "dime and washer" drill, an exercise used to ensure proper trigger-squeeze techniques, May 6. This was just one of many tips and suggestions the Soldiers shared before firing.

Soldiers from Task Force Falcon and TF POL/UKR had the opportunity to get together and cross-train with each other's assigned weapon at Falcon 2 May 6. The Soldiers went through pre-marksmanship instruction on the weapon they would be firing, then moved on to the familiarization portion of the range. While firing orders were going through the range, Soldiers not firing took turns disassembling and re-assembling each other's assigned weapon to see who could get it done the quickest.



Photos by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

First Sgt. Charles Hunter (standing over a paper range target), psychological operations, Task Force Falcon, demonstrates safety and firing procedures of the M-16A4 rifle to TF POL/UKR Soldiers who participated in the joint range at Falcon 2 May 6. More than 20 U.S. Soldiers had the opportunity to train on and fire the Ukrainian AK-74 assault rifle.

Stage 4 - Train the trainer

Well, here we go again. Another month has gone by here at Camp Bondsteel and we have made it into the Spring/Summer months. On a daily basis, I look around CBS and notice an unbelievable turn out of Soldiers conducting physical fitness training. I see Soldiers running on the track, playing softball, shooting hoops on the basketball court and even running radar hill.

I'm seeing Soldiers; eat healthier in the dining facility, sweating more in the gym and exerting more energy when conducting ANY sort of physical training. Look out fat cells; move over pizza delivery, Fit 2 Fight soldiers are coming through.

Our Soldiers here in Kosovo have done what I've previously challenged them to do. They have set goals for themselves, they have begun a new or continued in an exercise routine, and they are eating better (Fit2Fight Stages 1-3).

I am the Commander's Fitness Trainer for Task Force Falcon. Since the beginning of this deployment (almost one year ago), I have administered many Army Physical Fitness Tests. I have calculated the height/weight percentages for hundreds of Soldiers. I'm telling you, the hard work that each of you are doing is paying off drastically. There's no reason to stop now! This brings me to the concept of, "Train the Trainer."

What do those three words mean to you? Does it necessarily mean that you have to be of a certain rank/grade, a certain position, or even in a certain type of unit in order to "train the trainer?" No. Fitness wears no rank, holds no particular position, nor is it only necessary in certain types of units.

"Train the Trainer" (T3), is when a Soldier, regardless of rank, brings to the table a skill that will assist the squad, platoon, company or brigade in accomplishing all or a portion of their Mission Essential Task List (METL). That particular Soldier trains other Soldiers to become experts at a certain skill. Those Soldiers will grow into training other Soldiers and so on.

Maybe you're wondering how T3 ties into fitness? You're in luck; I'm going to tell you! How convenient is it to have hundreds of fitness experts all around Camp Bondsteel? How convenient is it that each of them have gone through rigorous physical training in a military training school (basic/advanced courses)?

Furthermore, how convenient is it that everything is laid out perfectly in Army Field Manual 21-20? This manual acts as a guide in training each Soldier. Its purpose is to; "Train the Trainer," meaning YOU! I confess that sitting down and reading an FM will put me to sleep every time. However, I will also confess that the times I have read an entire chapter from FM 21-20, I realized beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it has provided me with purpose, direction and motivation.

Sometimes I hear Soldiers complain about boring physical training sessions. I hear them ask, "Why do I have to do this?" And sometimes, I hear a Soldier say, "I passed my APFT, why do I have to do PT early in the morning?"

Understanding and providing purpose for physical fitness sessions will motivate Soldiers to be more active participants in PT. Also, it will help eliminate the bad attitudes that some Soldiers have when it comes to fitness. Circuit training, exercise drills and obstacle courses can all be great tools if you're looking to spur up your training session.

T3 is a way to educate and guide Soldiers to perform better. Chapter 1 from FM 21-20 gives you an overall introduction to physical fitness training, from the FITT Factors to the phases of fitness conditioning in Chapter 1 to nutrition and fitness in Chapter 6. I've talked about all of these in previous Fit 2 Fight columns.

Cardio respiratory Fitness and Muscular Strength/Endurance (Chapters 2 and 3) will be my focus in next month's column called – Improve to Max Your APFT!

Keep up the hard work and remember, **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 how to 'Train the Trainer.'



Q&A

SPC. NICHOLAS LOERA
ASSISTANT SQUAD LEADER,
2ND SQUAD, 2ND
PLT., CO. A, TF ALAMO



Pauses briefly on May 22 to talk about the opportunities his deployment has provided for him and to discuss the similarities between his military duties and his civilian job.

Q: How old are you?

A: I'm 26-years-old.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Austin, Texas.

Q: Do you have a family?

A: Yes, I have a wife and three children, all under six-years-old.

Q: How has this deployment been for you so far?

A: This deployment has been a good experience for me. We get a lot of training done that we wouldn't do at home.

Q: What do you do here and in your civilian life?

A: I work as a supervisor for Verizon and I am assistant squad leader. I ensure that our Soldiers are equipped for patrols and are capable of doing their jobs. Being a supervisor has really helped me with this responsibility.

Q: What is your favorite part of this deployment?

A: Being out there and interacting with the people is the best part of this deployment. Seeing how other cultures live is great and being with my squad is wonderful. They are a good group of guys and I love working with them. Our unit is a tight-knit group.

Q: What is a typical day for you?

A: A typical day is PT, mission prep., conducting the mission, doing closing operations and getting ready for the next day.

Q: What have you accomplished while you have been here?

A: Being here given me a chance to finish my EMT (emergency medical technician) course.

Q: What is the hardest part of being deployed?

A: Being away from my family is the hardest thing, but being here has made my family stronger because we realize what we have taken for granted and it has brought us together.

Q: Is there anything that you would like to add?

A: There are a lot of opportunities here for a lot of different things. It's great and I enjoy it.

MNTF (E)

MNTF (C)

Cross-boundary Operations

during

Soldiers of MNTF (East) and MNTF (Center) conducted a three day cross-boundary operation showcasing cooperation and other capabilities between the two task forces May 8-11.

Story, photos, layout and design by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Operation New Frontier

Under a cover of darkness, a multi-national squad of Kosovo Force Soldiers, lead by 2nd Lt. James Benson, platoon leader, 1st Platoon, Company A, Task Force Alamo, waited for an inbound UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to pick them up and take them to a remote hilltop near the Administrative Boundary Line May 9.

While the helicopter was still a few minutes away, the Soldiers saw headlights from an approaching vehicle and leapt into action as they set up a hasty vehicle checkpoint along the road.

After stopping the vehicle, greeting the driver and performing a quick search the Soldiers let it pass and resumed their positions waiting for the aircraft.

The hasty vehicle checkpoint and night observation mission were both part of Operation New



Clockwise from top: A MNTF (East) Soldier watches as his ride swoops down toward the landing zone on top of a hill in the MNTF (Center) area of responsibility May 9. A multi-national patrol, consisting of Estonian and U.S. Soldiers, walks off the top of a hill where they conducted a brief observation mission during Operation New Frontier. 2nd Lt. James Benson, TF Alamo (bottom left) checks his map and watch after reaching their objective and setting up an observation point. While the squad was waiting for their ride out to the observation point, they set up a hasty vehicle checkpoint. The truck the inspected was carrying a load of potted plants.

Frontier, a joint exercise held between Soldiers from Multi-National Task Forces East and Center.

Benson explained that their participation in this mission helped showcase the ability of the different task forces to cooperate on numerous types of missions.

"There was a series of tasks that KFOR wanted validated, which is basically we just go out and execute these things and prove that KFOR can do it," Benson said. "One of those tasks was to air-assault a platoon into an

area that's not in their own AOR (area of responsibility). So, we moved into task force north's area instead of operating in east's area where we usually operate."

Two platoons from A Co. were air-assaulted into the AOR belonging to MNTF (North), near the Administrative Boundary Line.

During their three-day stay in the field, the troops of Co. A., as well as Estonian and Danish Army Soldiers who worked with them, performed patrols throughout the area, set up and maintained 24-hour security of their assembly area, executed

vehicle checkpoints and accomplished a multitude of other tasks and missions.

Sgt. Adam Martinez, 2nd Plt., Co. A, Task Force Alamo, shared what it was like to work side-by-side with Soldiers from MNTF (C), and also what he learned from working in an AOR that wasn't his own.

"It was great," he said. "I worked with the Danes, and what we did was basically split up two of our guys and assigned them to the Danes and they

See CROSS BOUNDARY...Page 31

THE BASKETBALL SCHOOL

goes back to the basics and scores big wins

Staff Sgt. Edward Cammon, G-1 NCO, TF Falcon talks to one of his players with the aid of his translator and stresses the importance of sticking to the game plan. Cammon emphasized the player's need to use his size to exploit the opposing team's height disadvantage



(left to right) Volunteer referees Harold Williams, MWR, Sgt. First Class John Kudia, 353rd Civil Affairs command, medical and sports sergeant, and 1st Lt. Tony Fears, executive officer, HHC, TF Falcon confer.

The 353rd Civil Affairs command, Task Force Falcon and the Camp Bondsteel Morale, Welfare & Recreation office united to sponsor a spring basketball clinic for local youths, male and female ages 10-18, to learn American style basketball fundamentals at the Bill Clinton Sports Center in Ferizaj/Urosevac.

Prior to the double elimination tournament held April 30 – May 11, 2006, 120 youths from local schools and basketball leagues were assembled and broken down into age groups 10-11, 12-14, and 15-18 forming 12 teams, four teams within each age group.

The players were given basic instructions on dribbling, passing, shooting, organized offense, zone defense, and rules of the game.

"The philosophy of the program was to teach ethnic tolerance," Chicago native, Sgt. First Class John Kudia, 353rd CA command, medical and sports sergeant, said.

The instructors aimed to instill the concepts of tolerance, hard work, and freedom of spirit and the freedom to perform to the best of one's ability, Kudia said. In addition to the league philosophy, the values of sportsmanship, physical fitness, and skill acquisition were also stressed.



because we were only allowed to use the indoor courts on Mondays and Tuesday," Kudia said.

Besides the basic rules of basketball a few others were incorporated to support the league philosophy. These additional rules included:

- Only playing zone defense to make the game less physical.
- Monitoring playing time to ensure that everyone regardless of ethnicity or skill level would be given equal playing time.
- No jewelry such as watches, rings, and earrings for safety reasons.

- Random number selection so no disagreement would occur from the youths not getting the number they wanted.

- A post game handshake with the opposing team to facilitate sportsmanship every game.

"It took some time for them to adjust to our different rules," Heat coach, Pittsburg, Calif. native and Austin, TX resident Sgt. First Class William Bland, TF Falcon, Headquarters and Headquarters Co. inventory non commission officer in charge. "I had a very good translator so they knew what I expected of them. We were on the same sheet of music."

Playing the zone was probably the toughest thing for the players to grasp, Kudia said. In European play zone defense is prohibited so the youth prefer to attack the ball instead of controlling floor space.

12 The length of the games depended on the weather because some of the games were played outside

L OF THE AMERICAS

with the local youth

Story, layout & design by: Spc. J. TaShun Joycé
Photos by Spc. J. TaShun Joycé and Maj. Paul Pecena

"I was surprised at their skill level, especially with the females," Kudia said. "For their ages their level of play was advanced."

Putting the school together took quite a bit of planning, he said. After getting the idea while watching professional athletes play at the Clinton center, Kudia shared his idea with the center's director, Ramadan Artemas. Artemas came up with the name and recruited the local youths to participate, Kudia said.

"I work for the parks department in my civilian life," Kudia said. "My first MOS (military occupational specialty) was recreation specialist, but that was in the late 70s. If the job still existed I would probably still be doing it today."

After agreeing to provide jerseys for all 120 players Kudia needed to come up with 20 euros for each player.

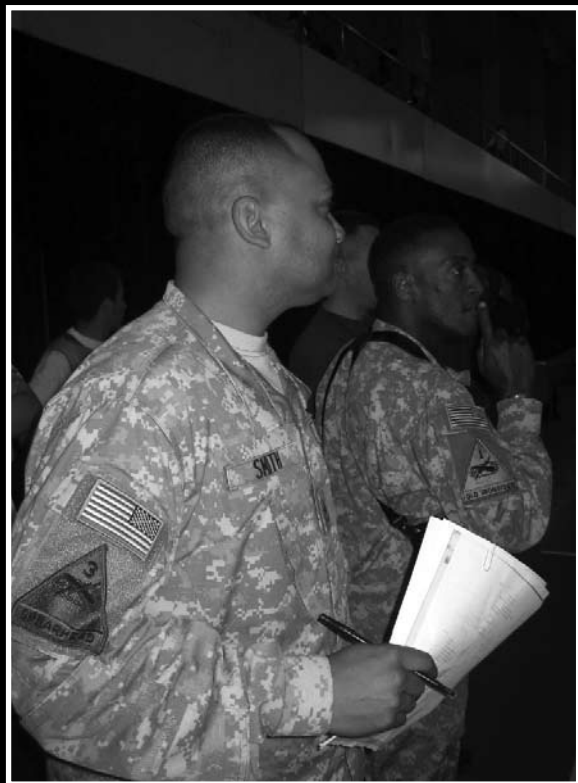
In what many may call divine intervention, collecting the money needed to purchase the jersey turned out to be no problem.

"I've worked with sergeant Kudia before and I was interested when he asked for help," Bryan, TX native Lt. Col. (Ch.) Bruce Postma, Unit Ministry Team, TF Falcon. "I suggested that he bring his need before the Chaplain Field Fund council. The council voted to support the project."

"In March within two Sundays the church had collected roughly 2300 Euro. Being so close to what was needed it was easy to get the rest of the money," Kudia said. "Chaplain Postma helped out a lot by raising the money and being out there every day."

"I was available to volunteer, assist with coaching, and help wherever I could," Postma said. "I've coached my four children and I have enjoyed coaching and playing with them."

The volunteer support for the school was amazing, Kudia said. The coaches and referees from the Task Force came out every night to do their part. Harold Williams and Adrian Jones from the MWR were extremely helpful and are being put in for commander's letters, he said.



Above, left: Staff Sgt. Stanford Smith, TF Falcon and Staff Sgt. William Bland, inventory NCO, HHC, TF Falcon watch as their team executes the plays they went taught during practice.



Above, right: During a timeout, Cammon huddles up with his team to give them a few pointers and ensure that his players were having a good time.

"I think these kids are very much like my own," Postma said. "They enjoyed being around each other and enjoy athletic competition."

"It was a good experience and getting such positive feedback from people -- is great," Bland said. "We were the underdogs and we came back to win the tournament with two minutes left. Seeing the expressions on their faces during the last few seconds of the game was the most amazing part."

Task Force Houston gets N-Snych

1st Lt. Zach Hall, assistant S-3, JIC liaison officer, TF Houston, provides a first-hand account of a May 12 synchronized patrol along the Administrative Boundary Line with the Serbian Army & MNTF(E)

"Has everyone flown before?"

"No" came a reply.

Those must have been the magic words for the Blackhawk pilots who began weaving and banking through a long narrow valley on their way to drop off their load of six Soldiers and one interpreter. Such began the air insertion for the Alpha Company Argonauts of Task Force Houston into northern Kamenica/Kamenice for their Administrative Boundary Line synch patrol with the 549th Vojska Srbije Crna Gora (Army of Serbia and Monte Negro) along Route Oak.

After a few minutes of action that would have made a rollercoaster look like the ferris wheel, a request for a sick bag ended the exhilarating maneuvers.

At 10:40 a.m. and finally on terra-firma, the patrol were 2 kilometers from link-up and happy to use their feet again. After being tasked by his company commander to plan the air insertion and lead the patrol, Spc. Idel Dibirdi, TF Houston, plotted a round-about route to lessen the effects of thick vegetation and rugged mountainous terrain on his team.

TF Houston conducts between six and eight synch patrols with the Serbian Army each month. The patrols are code-named with monikers such as Wolf, Grizzly, Tiger, Mountain and the most recent patrol; Puma. The names for some of these routes are definitely not misleading.

The patrols serve two purposes, the most important of which is the interdiction and discovery of possible smugglers, smuggling routes and illegal woodcutting. Additionally, these patrols serve as a cooperative effort between the two armies. At the conclusion of each patrol, Soldiers often exchange food, patches, or other goods.

Noon arrived and the link up occurred. After a few pleasantries and air-to-ground coordination with the Apache helicopters, the patrol was ready to commence.

The ABL is a 423 km boundary line

between Kosovo and Serbia-Montenegro created in 1999 when Serbian forces agreed to withdraw from Kosovo. KFOR began using Apache helicopter support on synch patrols as a means to further facilitate the interdiction of illegal activity and give the pilots valuable training along the ABL.

Synch patrols are conducted along the ABL in a series of bounding movements to checkpoints along the ABL. KFOR Soldiers move in patrol formation on the Kosovo side of the ABL while the Serbian patrol mirrors these bounding movements on the opposite side.

"The synch patrols are a great opportunity to work with the Serbian Soldiers. They (Serbians) are always very professional and really enjoy working with American soldiers," Dibirdi said.

The Serbian patrol is often led by one of two liaison officers from the two brigades that are responsible for the ABL in TF Houston's sector. Capt. First Class Milan Strbac, LNO, 549th VSCG, LNO, led this patrol along Route Oak, a patrol that he helped design when the synch patrols were first started during the KFOR 6A rotation in 2004.

"This was my first patrol to lead, and it allowed me to develop my leadership skills and experiences that will be invaluable when I attend OCS (officer candidate school) after we return from deployment," Dibirdi added.

At each check point the two patrols rested to gather their strength from the sometimes 300 meter ascents over the terrain. This break also provided the opportunity for some conversation and good-natured humor.

A senior VSCG officer said the synch patrols have helped reduce the barriers that once existed between the two armies and in the process the Soldiers have learned different techniques from their colleagues. These patrols are symbolic of the cooperation between the two armies, he added.

Synch patrols also provide Soldiers with the opportunity to maneuver in the breathtaking scenery of the Kosovo mountains. This patrol did not disappoint as the temperature was mild and the rain held off until the patrol returned to Camp Bondsteel.

Staff Sgt. Santiago Munoz, S-7, targeting NCO, Information Operations, TF Houston said he had an awesome experience maneuvering through the mountains and valleys on his first synch patrol. That sentiment was echoed by other first timers on this patrol.

TF Houston personnel join the Joint Implementation Commission prior to each patrol for a local meeting with the VSCG LNOs to coordinate the upcoming missions. The meetings are also an opportunity to discuss issues that may have occurred along the ABL since the last meeting.

"This is the forum to raise questions that have been brought up by locals or to share information about smuggling activity along the ABL. Through our cooperative efforts, we hope to limit or discourage illegal activity in our respective areas of responsibility" Sgt. Linda Stafford, JIC NCO, TF Falcon, said.

While no illegal activity was observed on this patrol, TF Houston Soldiers have interdicted cattle smuggling and scared off illegal wood cutters in the past.

Synch patrols are a valuable aspect of the KFOR operations. Regardless of the future status of Kosovo, the relationships

"The synch patrols are a great opportunity to work with the Serbian Soldiers. They (Serbians) are always very professional and really enjoy working with American soldiers."

Spc. Idel Dibirdi, Co. A, TF Houston

and experiences developed while conducting the synch patrols will help foster greater international cooperation in the years to come.

Argonaut commander, Capt. Rusty Weedman, Co. A, TF Houston, summed-up the synch patrols best, he said, "They allow us to do a great many things: maneuver with a foreign army, interact with the local population, hone our infantry skills (and) develop junior leaders.

"Perhaps most of all, they provide us with a killer workout. If we are able to do nothing else than disrupt and discourage the illegal activity that occurs along the ABL, then we have to consider our efforts an overwhelming success," Weedman said.

Finance - Helping YOU Handle Your M\$NEY



LEFT: 1st Lt. Steven Brantz and Spc. Michael P. Williams show some of the currency they are responsible for during the performance of their duties. "In actuality, Brantz said, "if a single cent is missing at the end of the day, we're required to stay behind until that cent is accounted for."

ABOVE: Behind the familiar scenes of the Finance Customer Service Desk, Staff Sgt. Milagros Carmona works on military pay processing, leases, mortgages and other duties to ensure that Soldiers' finances, and those of Camp Bondsteel, are taken care of properly.

"Go talk to finance."
"Well, check your LES, and if you're still having trouble we can go see finance."

"Yeah, just go over to finance and they'll help you with your travel voucher."

"You mean you haven't gotten an Eagle Card at finance yet?"

"Oh yeah, they cash checks over at finance."

These are just a few of the most commonly heard quotes around Camp Bondsteel directed towards the 685th Finance Detachment. The 685th was deployed out of Massachusetts to support the 36th Infantry Division Soldiers of KFOR 7, MNTF(E).

In the mind of the common Soldier, finance is associated with things like pay problems, allotments, and travel vouchers. Yet outside of these familiar areas that Finance does handle, there are number of other duties Finance carries out behind the scenes.

"We do a combination of a few different things," said 1st Lt. Steven Brantz, 685th Finance Detachment, Task Force Falcon. "We take care of the influx and out flux of funds throughout the entire Bondsteel area to make sure that all of the operations keep running. We take care of the lease payments for the ground we're walking on, all the way up to the bread rolls you eat at the DFAC (dining facility): we pay the baker."

Finance also handles adjusting pay for Soldiers who are deployed over seas.

"Once we get here (overseas) everybody gets coded into the system to make sure they get the appropriate pay and benefits," said Brantz.

"Our workload is incredibly heavy, both on the incoming and outgoing portions of the mission to make sure that people's pay gets reflected appropriately for the area that they're in," Brantz said.

"We also handle making adjustments to your pay when you get your E-5 to make sure you get paid big time," said Brantz with a smile.

See FINANCE.....Page 30



Sgt. Nicholas Terry, Co. D, TF Houston shoots an azimuth, after plotting his first point during land navigation testing at Falcon Four.

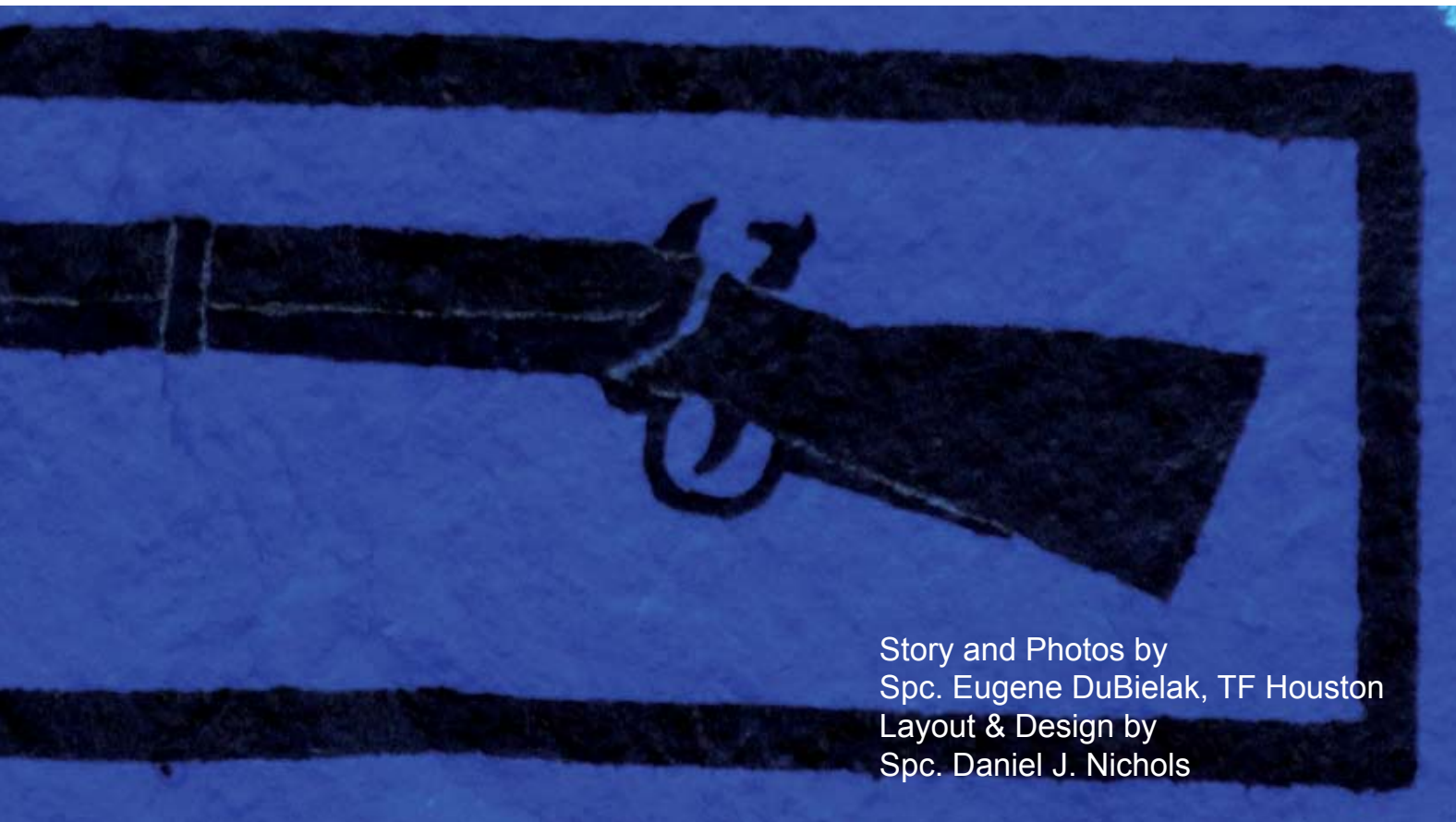
On a cool Kosovo morning Sgt. Brandon Hosford from Task Force Houston's Delta Company fought through exhaustion and his 24th-mile in two days. As he made his way up the incline that marked the end of the road march, instructors and candidates encouraged him to finish. He completed the last of the prerequisites that would allow him to continue testing.

Afterwards Hosford said "I was real concerned about the road march going into it, I have never been that good at them."

Hosford was redoing the road march due to the tough Expert Infantry Badge standards set by United



Sgt. Daniel Kaster, MNTF(E), loads practice rounds into the upcoming lane testing.



Story and Photos by
 Spc. Eugene DuBielak, TF Houston
 Layout & Design by
 Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

States Army Infantry Center at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Hosford finished in three hours and five minutes, five minutes over the standard.

The road march came after three days of working to meet the other requirements set by the USAIC. The week before, Hosford and fellow candidates completed a day and night land navigation course and qualified expert with the M-16/ M4 series rifle on the Falcon Four range. They achieved a minimum score of seventy percent in each event for their age group in the Army Physical Fitness test.

The candidates with an Infantry Military Occupational Specialty who managed to pass the prerequisites

would go on to face other challenges. Some might wonder why these Soldiers would subject themselves to the physical and mental demands of the testing.

Sgt. 1st Class Baley, Co. D, TF Houston, answered that question. "I had a First Sergeant who made it clear that no matter what badges or qualifications you already had the EIB was the mark of an Infantry Soldier and all who were eligible should try for it."

Once the prerequisites were completed, the testing moved to the EIB site located on south Camp Bondsteel. The instructors, themselves EIB holders or experts in a specific field, set up the lanes in advance.

See EIB.....Page 28



the 240-B machine gun as he rehearses for



Medic Spc. Joshua White, Co. D., TF Houston, tends to Sgt. Javier Coronado, Co. A., TF Houston after the grueling 12-mile

DANCON MARCH



KFOR Soldiers walk up an incline at an easier portion of the DANCON route located on the outskirts of Mitrovice/Mitrovica. The route begins on pavement then later turns into a rugged dirt road with steep hills and sharp turns that continue upward overlooking the countryside.

Despite the cold and rainy conditions that lingered within the Kosovo skies the morning of May 7, a mass of Kosovo Force Soldiers numbering 1,071, representing all walks of life assembled at Camp Olaf Rye near Mitrovice/Mitrovica to walk together and participate in the Danish Contingent March.

The DANCON is a popular Danish tradition for Danish battalions serving away from their homeland, dating back over 30 years and has taken place in Kosovo every year since 1999.

To take part in the DANCON, interested participants had to submit a registration form to the Danish battalion and pay a 20 euro entrance fee nearly a month prior to the scheduled march. For those who missed the deadline or were unable to participate on May 7, they were afforded the opportunity register for the next DANCON scheduled for June 4.

As early 4:00 a.m. Soldiers prepared for the two-plus hour trip out of sector loading up on large tour buses, cramming into humvees, and warming up their sport utility vehicles.

"The DANCON march is a good way to get Soldiers from different countries together to have a good time," Capt. T. H. Sigvardt, Danish battalion

"The DANCON march is a good way to get Soldiers from different countries together to have a good time,"

Capt. T. H. Sigvardt, Danish battalion Sports and Welfare officer, Multi-National Task Force (North)

Sports and Welfare officer, Multinational Task Force North. "Marching is a basic Soldier skill and having a good time training is a good thing."

By no means did being fun exclude the march from being challenging.

Soldiers who participated had only eight hours to navigate 25.2 kilometers of rough and hilly terrain wearing their complete uniform, carrying at least 22 pounds (10 kilos) and their issued firearm. Although the march was less about time and more about completion, a French Soldier from MNTF(N) crossed the finish line first in 2 hours, 12 minutes, and 13 seconds.

Heaves KFOR footprints on Kosovo soil

Story and layout & design by: Spc. J. TaShun Joycé

photos by: Spc. Eugene DuBielak, TF/Houston



A MNTF(E) Soldier shows his state pride by carrying the Texas state flag in addition to his required load throughout the entire DANCON March.



Sgt. First Class Ramiro Hernandez, G-3 training NCOIC, TF Falcon, was one of many Soldiers from MNTF(E), who participated and completed the DANCON March.



Above left: 1st Sgt. Richard Milford, Company D, TF Houston, keeps it moving.

Above right: Spc. Devin Warfield, TF Med Falcon, carries his drenched company guidon.



"To participate it is very important that you have done some serious training before participating in this, quite rough march to complete it without any injuries or blisters," Col. K. Pedersen, Danish Battalion commanding officer, MNTF(N).

Throughout the route there were several break points where Soldiers could get fruit, water, and medical attention if needed, before continuing the march. No serious injuries occurred during the event but for medical reasons three participants did not complete the march.

"I hope to see as many Soldiers take part in the next march," Sigvardt said. "Hopefully we will have better weather than we had on this one."

"It was an experience that everyone should go through," Sgt. First Class Ramiro Hernandez, G-3 training non commissioned officer in charge, Task Force Falcon. "It gives you a chance to find yourself and reflect on things besides just work and focus on what we have at home."

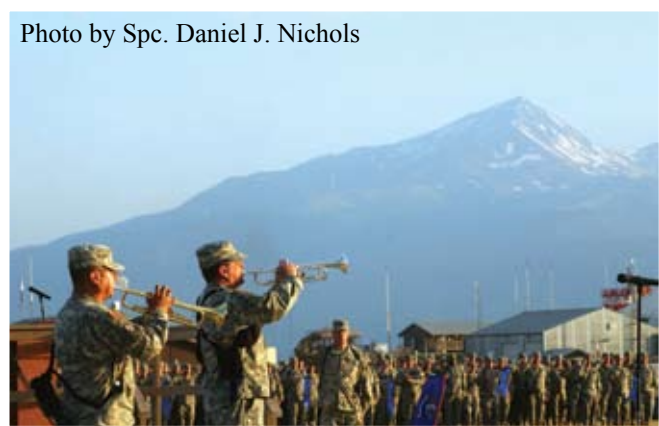
MNTF(EAST) SOLDIERS CELEBRATE

Story by Spc. J. TaShun Joycé Layout & Design by Spc. J. TaShun Joycé and Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



Above, ceremonial buglers, left, Staff Sgt. Andres Perez, 1st Platoon, Company B, Task Force Alamo and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Charles Martin, pilot, MEDEVAC, TF Talon play Taps, a 24-note bugle call that is played on many military installations as the call for lights out.

Left, on right, Spc. Chris Garcia (in front), next to Garcia from left to right, Cpl. Aaron Fowler, Spc. Jeremy Hughes, Sgt. Kyron Brown, Spc. Mario Flores, Spc. Robert Snoody, Spc. Liam Elliot and left, Sgt. Randall Snyder, squad leader, all from Task Force Houston Honor Guard, prepare to render America's highest honor; the 21-gun Salute.

Originally

called Decoration Day it was officially proclaimed Memorial Day on May 5, 1868 by Gen. John Logan, national commander Grand Army of the Republic, through the use of General Order number 11, which recognized May 30, as the day flowers would be placed on the graves of Union and Confederate Soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Although recognized by all northern states by 1890 many southern states chose to honor their deceased veterans on separate days throughout the year. Following World War I, Memorial Day changed from honoring those who died fighting during the Civil

War to honoring Americans who had given their lives in any war. With the passing of the National Holiday Act of 1971, Memorial Day was made

a federal holiday and recognized on the last Monday in May creating a three day weekend for federal employees.

"We wanted to get away from the back yard barbeque tradition Memorial Day has become and focus on its true meaning," Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNTF(E). "The purpose of this ceremony was to put the 'Memorial' back into Memorial Day. We wanted to do everything we could do to honor this day. That was the reasoning behind the gathering, the playing of the national anthem and

Hundreds of Multi National Task Force (East) Soldiers gathered on the Camp Bondsteel Parade Field, at sunset on May 29, to celebrate Memorial Day and honor those who gave their lives in service to America.

In a traditional military ceremony, lasting about 30 minutes, at dusk, each Task Force representing MNTF(E) assembled to pay tribute to America's fallen and

reflect on the sacrifices they have given for the nation. "As Americans deployed as part of the war on terrorism we have an opportunity to pause and pay tribute in a meaningful way," Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, MNTF(E) said. "This time of reflecting on fallen heroes is meant to highlight the purpose of Memorial Day. As we gather today to pay tribute to those that have paid so dearly for what we enjoy, each of you should remember today in a special way."

Memorial Day is a tradition dating back to the late 1860s.

"We wanted to get away from the back yard barbeque tradition Memorial Day has become and focus on its true meaning," Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNTF(E)

CELEBRATE MEMORIAL DAY

Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



From left to right, MNTF(E) Soldiers' Spc. Mario Ochoa, Spc. John Aguirre, and Cpl. Raymond Fanning, Company A, Task Force Houston, 36th Infantry Division, salute the colors during the Memorial Day ceremony held at 6:50 p.m., May 29, on the Camp Bondsteel Parade Field.

Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo



Spc. Christopher Dixon, guidon bearer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Alamo stands at attention with the TF Alamo colors during the ceremony.

Photo by
Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Sgt. Ray Binch, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Falcon, retreats with the colors at the close of the Memorial Day ceremony as the sun sets over Camp Bondsteel on May 29.

Background photo, the Memorial Day ceremony on CBS also included Soldiers from Task Force Talon, who not only had Soldiers in formation but also provided a stunning flyover with Apache and Blackhawk helicopters.

taps, the fly-over and the 21-gun salute. It was to commemorate the sacrifices of those who gave their lives to defend our nation."

"In all the wars we have fought, more than half a million men and women in uniform have lost their lives. Not all of the deaths occurred on the front lines, with people engaged in direct conflict with the enemy, but all died for the freedoms we treasure," Owens said. "So much of what we cherish today came at the price to their lives."

"To me Memorial Day means remembering the people who had the willingness to sacrifice everything they have and everything they know for the rights of American citizens and other people throughout the world," Pfc. Colin Brown, Company D, Task Force Houston.

"As we contemplate the sacrifice of those who have given their lives to secure our way of life, let us not forget the true meaning of this Memorial Day. For a terrible price in blood has been paid to secure our way of life for future generations," Owens said.

"The words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt are as true today as they were on the eve of World War II: 'Freedom cannot be bestowed, it must be achieved,'" Owens said.



"Until the day when the world is free from tyranny, our freedom will be preserved only if Americans continue to answer the call and prove ourselves worthy to be free," Owens said. "The brave souls we commemorate today have proved their worth, and in doing so, are examples of our nation's principles in action."



Postal - Our MNTF(E) Mail & Morale Team

Pfc. Derrick Davis, postal, TF Falcon, sorts out packages by section and task force in the warehouse behind the front desk at the Main Post office on Camp Bondsteel, May 7.



Pfc. Veronica Jimenez, postal finance clerk, TF Falcon assists Maj. Jamie Olivo, commander, TF Alamo, with mailing a package from Camp Bondsteel back to the states, May 7.

Despite things like e-mail, instant messenger, and the capabilities of the Deployed Soldiers Network Lines (DSN), mail from family members and friends from back home continues to be one of the best sources of morale for Soldiers deployed overseas.

Receiving and sending mail from the states would not be possible without the hard working Soldiers in the Bondsteel APO Postal Detachment.

"We're basically the Task Force morale team," Pfc. Derrick Davis, G1 Postal Detachment, Task Force Falcon, said.

"We've always known it from the very beginning that we would be the morale team for the post," 1st Lt. Joanna Orozco, G1 Postal Detachment, TF Falcon said. "Everything we do affects almost every single Soldier on post."

Yet despite the large effect their mission has on the Soldiers at Camp Bondsteel, the Soldiers working in the Postal Detachment came together somewhat differently from other sections.

"Most commonly," Orozco said, "postal Soldiers are in reserves as a detachment and they're trained and trained. We are a group of random MOS's trained to this job for this mission only."

In addition to the pre-deployment training received at North Fort Hood, and in Hohenfels, the Soldiers in the Postal Detachment were also receiving job specific training at the same time.

"Most of us went to school while we were at Fort Hood," said Orozco. "Those of us who weren't able to go then, finished their training when we were in Germany."

Postal is separated into two distinct operations concerning mail at the Bondsteel APO.

"We have two jobs here," Pfc. Veronica Jimenez, finance clerk, Postal Detachment, TF Falcon, said.

Jimenez works the customer service counter, ensuring that outgoing mail is prepared and paid for correctly.

As a finance clerk, we mostly take care of the mail coming in, Jimenez said.

"We have to take care of handling money, stamps and other items we have to be accountable for; it's just a whole different responsibility from what happens in the back," she said.

What happens in the back, is the unloading, sorting, and loading of all incoming and outgoing mail that goes through the Bondsteel APO.

See POSTAL.....Page 30

The Army has always emphasized the importance of unity, which is key to readiness and successful training. Soldiers and leaders, conducting their training and duties within a pyramidal leadership 'chain' form, should develop and share mutual trust, empathy, common experiences, and a spirit of self-sacrifice. All of which determine the unit's performance while under pressure or combat stress. During deployment, being particularly concerned about strengthening Soldiers' resistance to psychological pressures is vital to mission completion. Cohesion may be the most important issue facing our Army. Especially while in combat, leadership excellence is key to achieve strong unity among sections. Leaders strong in character and confidence, who trust and empower their troops, turn-out highly capable and well functioning units. Those in charge who do not trust or empower their troops, will see their Soldiers become depressed and often lose motivation. Indifference and resentment, as well as jealousy, amongst the parochial levels of the 'chain of command,' unfortunately may surface should they feel threatened. Unity is incompatible with ignorant and poor leadership, hence dooming Soldiers to a needless expenditure of emotional and physical blood, sweat and tears...but we're all in this to self-sacrifice, right? In my opinion, a team structured by trust, empathy, and understanding, working hard for the mission should define 'self sacrifice,' not figuratively being beaten while tied to a stake. The chain of command needs to value their position by upholding high standards of discipline, respect and professionalism, being aware of their level of influence on their Soldiers. Pointless, mind-numbing activities and 'corrective training/action,' often yields nothing more than simply explaining what was done incorrectly, unless the incorrect act is repeated. There must be strong respect and awareness throughout the chain of command. Soldiers wanting to fulfill great promise need an environment conducive to their growth, not their reclusion. As a leader, showing genuine concern for Soldiers, not just concern for covering your own hide, greatly exhibits your possession of each Army Value. If you're a Soldier in charge of other Soldiers, you should take it very seriously; in your hands you hold the future leaders of Soldiers as well as the detriment of these leaders being of the inspiring or discouraging nature. Soldiers who are intelligent and fast learners continually demand more information, ideas and challenges from their leaders. Responding poorly to this scenario will show that the leadership is unable to keep ahead of their troops. Most young Soldiers want to be heard, to participate in decisions, and to be given responsibility as their proficiency grows, unless they are denied well deserved recognition of their proficiency. A greater empowerment of the lower level is important to sustain the Army's strength of numbers and personnel morale. No matter how large the enlistment or reenlistment bonus, a Soldier is going to realize the 'money' isn't worth the treatment, especially in such a voluntary occupation. No bright individual will remain in an institution where they're treated as disposable.

"There must be strong respect and awareness throughout the chain of command."

~ Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo~

Safety Office's Monthly Message

Our monthly safety slogan is "Leave fireworks displays to Professionals"

UXOs-With the soil shifting, our soldiers are coming across unexploded ordnance throughout our AOR. Be careful when dealing with UXOs. Take simple steps to prevent accidents, notify the TOC, mark the location, observe from a safe distance, wait for experts to deal with it, DO NOT DISTURB THE UXO.

Heat Related Hazards-Local weather can be dangerous. We have seen the temperature in the upper 80s, while we think "it's not as hot as Texas" or "it was hotter in Fort Hood" just remember the high number of heat casualties we had back in Fort Hood. We must slowly acclimatize our bodies to the change in temperature, drink plenty of water and avoid soft drinks. Ensure you're fully hydrated before you start your day. Be careful when you wear the IBA; it can dehydrate you quickly. While you're patrolling or doing searches, be extremely alert. Snakes love to hide in warm shaded areas. So, be vigilant when moving old wood or hay around, you don't want to be surprised.

Sports Related Injuries-Finally!! The weather here is nice enough for us to be outside playing, but while we play softball here, the rest of the world is watching the WORLD CUP. We are in the middle of our deployment and it is very important to stay active outdoors. I see quite a number of volley ball players using the sand court, exercising and having fun at the same time. What a great way to unwind after your weekly activities, and make new friends. Regardless what you choose as your way of exercising, stretch, condition and enjoy the sport or activity.

Last month's message I closed with a simple statement, and I liked it, so here goes again, "This is a great mission with terrific Soldiers. 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*

'KEEP THE CITY CLEAN'

THE KOSOVO POLICE SERVICE SCHOOL SHARES THEIR FACILITY TO HOLD ENVIRONMENTAL SEMINARS...

Story, Photos, Layout & Design
By Pfc. Christina Vanyo



Above; Clean-up trainees prepare to film the arrival of Kosovo Police commander.

Left; Student-trainees Bujar Dinolli, Bedri Pajaziti, Fisnik Jahiri, & Driton Topalli, all from Ferizaj/Urosevac, speak with Fahri Vishi, KPS commander, and Gafurr Imeri, deputy municipal president (both pictured right) while on a break from the day's seminar.



The Kosovo Police Service School in Vushtrri /Vucitrn gave use of their facilities to hold environmental seminars May 12 - 14. Students selected to participate will be trained for project 'Keep the City Clean,' scheduled to take place in early June 2006.

The project has two phases, the first includes initial training of 36 selected students, who then are required to train 15 of their peers not in the class. The second phase of the project is the actual garbage clean-up that will take place in Ferizaj/Urosevac.

The students will have approximately three weeks to train additional people.

Topics discussed were the importance of protecting the environment, the causes of

an unclean environment, health problems caused by an unclean environment, environmental law, how to safely pick-up and dispose of certain types of trash, and how to raise greater awareness of the subject.

Spc. Kimberly S. Gorman, 353rd Civil Affairs, Task Force Falcon, said, "The process of putting together the project began on the first of March."

"The project is being done by Civil Society Organization, 'Iniciativa Rinore Perparimtare,'" she said.

The first class of the day was environmental biology and ecology, lasting an hour and a half. TF MedFalcon also presented a class on health issues, for example, what diseases humans can contract from an unclean environment, Gorman said.

She said she hopes the mentality of the residents will change once they view others cleaning.

"We went over things like safety when throwing out chemicals, hazardous waste; safety when picking up garbage," she said.

Gorman explained that this project originated when Executive Director of the project, Kenan Gashi, noticed how the garbage was piling up on the streets of Ferizaj/Urosevac.



Above; Vishi and Imeri talk with the young trainees about urban-environmental awareness.

With the streets so small to begin with and having cars parked on either side, the garbage trucks do not have enough clearance to drive through and pick-up trash. Gorman added that a second goal of Gashi's is to create more parking lots to move the cars off of the streets.

Gorman said placing the project in motion was not difficult, but there was a lot of waiting involved.

"We contacted the local directors of bilateral programs, and from there they contacted their higher-ups to see if they could get funding," she said.

Then they worked with the KPS to reserve a classroom and set dates.

"After the dates were set, we started working with everyone to get it coordinated."

Gorman said the CA needed support from various people in order to successfully coordinate their project.

"We've worked with the municipal president and CEO of

Ferizaj/Urosevac, engineers, local-national garbage companies and transportation departments, college environmental departments, and local-station radio TEMA," she said.

Gorman has done most of her direct correspondence with Gashi, however, debating ideas, attending meetings and providing Kosovo Forces support, she said.

The seminar is about the importance of the environment, but also to promote teamwork and a group effort.

"This is the first seminar we've had in (Vushtrri /Vucitrn)," Gashi said, "we usually conduct these seminars in schools. It has been going very well."

Gashi said once the training portion is done, he can focus on the actual clean-up.

"I'm hoping for the 15th of June," he said. "People from Ferizaj/Urosevac, students, all the trainees, will be there. We're going to clean the city."

The presidents of the different municipalities will address their

citizens on maintaining cleanliness, Gashi said. Inspectors from the city departments of ecology will also talk to the communities, he added.

The progress so far has been good, Gashi said.

"One thing I'm concerned about is that the cities aren't implementing laws to keep the city clean," he said. "We will do some lobbying, take initiatives until the laws are implemented."

He explained that posters promoting environmental cleanliness will be strategically placed around the city.

"Besides discussing environmental and health issues," said Gashi, "tomorrow we'll discuss leadership, activism of youth, and civil society."

"I can say it's good that this started, this is the first time a project has been done like this in Ferizaj/Urosevac. Our goal is to make our citizens aware of the protection of the environment."

Outdoor



Above left; Spc. Matthew Solis, liaison monitoring team 4, serves a volleyball to his opponent during a one-one-one match he was playing May 18.

Above right; Spc. Charles Pepau, Task Force Alamo, slides into home during a softball game, May 19.

Below; 1st Lt. Robert Yunker (right), Task Force Talon, receives a 1st-place medal for his part in his team's tug-o-war competition on Camp Bondsteel May 18.





Left; Staff Sgt. Eric Mcleod, Task Force Falcon and Staff Sgt. Joe Cooper, TF Talon, play outdoor volleyball, Sunday, May 21.

Bottom left; Sgt. Justin Jensen, Task Force MedFalcon stands at the plate, May 19.

Below; Luis Sanchez, ITT employee, participates in outdoor volleyball, May 21.

Activities



June 2006



Guardian

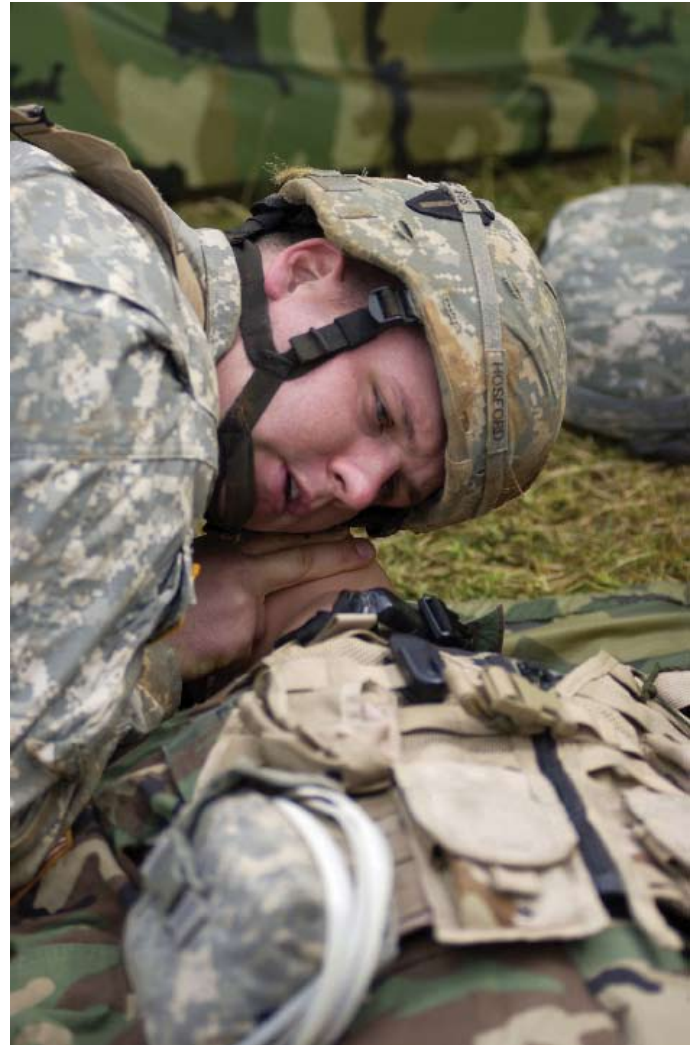
Hosford and the other candidates faced seventeen stations worth of testing. The stations tested the candidates in skill level one tasks common to the infantry. EIB testing should not be confused with Common Task Training.

1st Sgt. Richard Milford of Co. D, TF Houston said, "people always want to think this is CTT, it's not. Anyone who is awarded the badge earned it."

The EIB Tactical Operations Test Center tracked candidate's progress. "The Board," made up of EIB holders, monitored the candidates and the instructors. Candidates fell into one of four categories. Those who did not have a no go were considered "True Blue." Those who had not completed a task to standard were classified as a "single No Go." Those who failed to meet the standard at two stations were classified as "Blade Runners." The last category, "Returned to Duty" were Soldiers who failed to meet standards at three stations.

As Hosford and the other candidates made their way through the testing, Milford's comment about earning the badge would be proven. The exacting standards literally claimed "casualties" en masse.

The hand grenades and indirect fire stations were



Sgt. Brandon Hosford, Co. D, TF Houston, checks for signs of breathing as he evaluates a simulated responsible for the most "casualties" among the EIB candidates, with grenades claiming 21 Soldiers.

At the grenade station candidates had five practice grenades to complete the test. The candidates used individual movement techniques to approach a bunker position. Once in place, they tossed a grenade in the bunker, quickly rolled away and pulled security on the bunker.

The next substation was throwing a grenade at a silhouette. For candidates to be considered a go the grenade had to land within a five meter circle. At the final substation, candidates rose to throw their grenades inside of a simulated enemy fighting position from 35 meters. Most candidates made it through the first two substations with ease, leaving them three grenades to attempt the third.

A small crowd of candidates gathered to watch as others attempted and failed. Cheers would erupt from those watching when candidates hit the mark. If the grenade fell short of or missed their intended targets candidates heard the dreaded phrase, "You have time left at this station."

Hosford successfully assaulted the bunker and the silhouette targets. He moved onto the sandbags with three grenades left. His fellow candidates watched with interest. His first attempt missed its mark. Laying in the prone position he was informed that he had time left. Weeks of preparation came down to two throws.

He prepared for a second attempt on the enemy



An EIB candidate ascends one more foot up the steeper inclines of the road march course. The candidates were required to complete the 12-mile road march in under three hours to advance.

fighting position. He popped up briefly to see his intended target, then he returned to the prone and prepared his grenade. Removing the pin and safety he rose up briefly, heaved the grenade and scored a direct hit within the simulated fighting position. Relieved but realizing that he still had other stations to complete, Hosford smiled and continued on.

Fellow candidate Spc. Brian Gonzales, Company A, Task Force Houston, shared his fears about the grenade station saying "the grenades concerned me the most. I think that was everyone's concern during the testing. All the long days spent practicing -- throwing grenades over and over paid off in the end."

The next morning a quick look at the board in the operations center would show just how effective the grenade and indirect fire station combination had been. The third day of station testing found only eight of the original forty one candidates remaining.

Hosford and Gonzales began the final day of testing with remaining candidates realizing they had little or no margin for error. With five stations remaining attention to detail was crucial. One misstep or failure to follow exact sequence would see them returned to duty. With tension visible on everyone's face the candidates went about the testing.

Hosford and Gonzales huddled with the few remaining candidates and rehearsed for the remaining stations. Acting as graders for each they broke off individually and wished each other luck at the remaining stations.

As Hosford finished his testing at the first aid station, instructors and fellow candidates stood by nervously awaiting the results. When Hosford stood up over the ponchos that shielded him from view the smile on his face told the story. He was modest and exhausted yet thrilled to have accomplished what few were able to.

As he walked toward the operations tent to turn in his score card he was mobbed by instructors and his Battalion Command Sergeant Major. It was only then that he allowed himself to truly enjoy what he had accomplished.



A sergeant from TF Strike, attempts to warm up after the road march using the poncho liner that was part of his required packing list.

Later that same day Hosford, Gonzales and four others would stand and receive the badges they had earned from Multi National Task Force East Commander Brigadier Gen. Owens, himself an EIB holder.

The ceremony, conducted by the main flagpole, was attended by Soldiers and staff from all Task Forces including Task Force Strike serving in Bosnia. On average only ten percent of candidates tested earn the EIB; the class had performed above the standard with sixteen percent earning the "mark of an infantryman."

THE FINANCE FIVE

5 Things You should know about finance

As quoted from 1st Lt. Steven Brantz
Compiled by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

1: Please read the finance newsletter

The Finance Office puts out a monthly news letter via e-mail that provides current information on all of the services Finance can provide Soldiers. Copies of the newsletter are also available at the finance office for Soldiers who do not have access to the local NIPR email.

2: Finance does not do cash travel advances

All travel advances for TDY travel are performed via EFT (electronic funds transfers). So if you need a cash travel advance, please visit the finance office at least ten days prior to your departure date.

3: Travel Vouchers and the Savings Deposit Program

If you haven't completed your travel voucher, please come in as soon as possible to do so. Processing gets more complicated the longer you wait, and when it gets more complicated you have a higher likelihood of taking longer to be paid, or it getting kicked back.

Besides if you get it now, invest it in the Savings Deposit Program and make a return on it. I recommend to every Soldier that they invest in the SDP. With guaranteed 10 percent interest, it's like a savings bond at 10 percent, that's unheard of!

4: Check chasing limit is \$745

If you get above \$745 it becomes a major loss of funds and we have to shut down the office and stuff like that. So the reason why we make a big deal about it is because if someone cashes and bounces a check above \$745 then we have to shut down and no one gets their money.

5: The Eagle Cash Card: If you don't have one, get one!

The Eagle Cash Card is the best way to go. It's safer than regular money. If you lose the eagle card, we'll replace it with the amount of money that was on it. If you lose money there's nothing we can do for you.

You can also put money *back* into your account. It's really useful to think that you can do that entire transaction. I wish ATM cards would allow you to deposit back.

Just come in and get one. There's lots of benefits.

FINANCE - Continued from page 15

Aside from the behind the scenes work, Finance personnel enjoy the duties that directly help other Soldiers the most.

"It's definitely something that makes me feel good when Soldiers say something like 'Thank you so much, because of you or because of the processing I was able to make my rent, or my wife was able to take care of things at home,'" Staff Sgt. Milagros E. Carmona, military pay review NCOIC, 685th Finance Detachment said. "That makes me feel good because I'm helping Soldiers."

"I believe that we help a lot of Soldiers," Spc. Bernie Koo, cashier, 685th Finance Detachment, said. "Especially when it comes to pay problems, or when they need money and they don't have checks with them."

"We're trying our best to resolve all of the problems some Soldiers have with their pay and we appreciate their patience," Carmona said.

"I would say the majority of my people put in 10 to 12 hour days," said Brantz. "I would say that once we close down we're usually here a few hours afterwards at least, and that's if there are no problems."

"I have incredible troops, I couldn't ask for a better bunch," said Brantz. "This unit does Massachusetts proud."

POSTAL - Continued from page 22

"After the mail comes in, we separate all of it by Task Force," said Davis. "After it's all separated we have mail call and all the different mail clerks come in and get their mail."

"Mail comes in, and we have mail call," said Orozco. "Somewhere between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. depending on when we receive the mail ourselves. Every day we get mail, they get mail, y'all get mail," she said.

Since the mail traffic through Bondsteel APO never stops, neither do the Soldiers who work there.

"We're open everyday, Monday through Sunday," said Jimenez, "...we have a full day everyday we work."

"My Soldiers work from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. six days a week," said Orozco. "They get one day off between Monday and Saturday. We try to keep their day off as steady as possible...we all work on Sundays by the choice of the Soldiers because it's our shortest day."

Despite the hard work involved, each Soldier takes pride in their job. "Each Soldier has been assigned to one specific task, and two additional tasks, and they take it very seriously to know what they're saying and be the experts of their sections," said Orozco. "They know that we support the entire post, as well as other US Soldiers off post, so they work hard to know what they're doing and to know that they're doing it right," she said.

gave us two guys.

So, we got to work hands-on with the Danes."

The focus of combining their forces was to emphasize joint-operability and cooperation between different task forces, Martinez said.

"As far as the cooperation between the two task forces, it was great," he said. "They got to see how we go out on patrol and I got their input on how they would actually go into an area and patrol that area."

Martinez said that overall, he enjoyed working with his multi-national partners in their respective AOR.

"Working with the Danes was pretty fun," he said. "The language barrier wasn't there because of the fact that pretty much all of them spoke English."

Benson echoed Martinez's sentiment on the cooperation between the two task forces.

"The Danes and the Estonians were absolutely great," he said. "All of them spoke excellent English. There wasn't even a problem with communications. They were able to execute absolutely everything we needed to do."

Martinez said the experience also gave him a broader view as to how cooperation between the task forces will work during future operations.

"Working in this area, which is basically the north sector, sort of brought a little bit more perspective on how to work with the other international KFOR Soldiers," he said. "To do that, we came to this area to work with each other and see how we set up our tactical assembly areas and do our patrols, so that worked out pretty well."

Benson said another element of the mission that was unique to this operation was the fact that his Soldiers were supported by aircraft.

"Another one of the tasks was to be completely sustained by air," he said, "which means nobody was trucking food into us or water into us. Our re-supply was all done by air."

During the re-supply mission, food for a company-sized unit was loaded onto a Blackhawk and flown out to the

troops. Upon touching down at the secured landing zone, Soldiers moved out from a nearby wood-line, quickly unloaded the food and carried the containers to a central point.

"That was welcome sight," Martinez said. "You can always use hot chow, especially in this cold area."

In addition to being able to take supplies out to forward units, another key task was making sure any potential injured troops could be quickly evacuated out of the field.

"We also attempted a MEDEVAC (medical evacuation)," Benson said.

The Soldiers treated simulated casualties and prepared them for evacuation, but Mother Nature had different plans for the mission.

"We went through the entire process right up to the bird taking off," he said. "Just like our extraction today, the bird was unable to take off due to weather."

But, a MEDEVAC performed by TF Talon and TF Hellas Soldiers May 8 went exactly according to plan.

Staff Sgt. Kelly Meyers, Co. C, TF Talon, said the mission went extremely smooth.

"Today's training mission went well due to the fact that we've done some prior training with the Hellas," he said. "We've practiced this type of scenario happening before."

The exercise involved a call for a MEDEVAC, to which Meyers's crew immediately responded, not knowing what possible simulated injuries they would deal with upon arrival to the evacuation site.

"We went in, treated the patients and evacuated them in a timely manner," he said.

As ONF drew to a close, Benson took some time to talk about what this exercise means to the people of Kosovo.

"We're trying to demonstrate to the people of Kosovo the effectiveness of the military forces in Kosovo and our ability to do all these things," he said. "It heightens the impression of the military forces in the minds of the people when they see we're capable of conducting operations like this, and it gives us more credibility."

Benson also said this most recent exercise, and the missions performed during, hints at how the task forces of KFOR will operate together in the future.

"I see us doing more missions like this," he said. "It's not just a validation task. The way that I see things happening here in Kosovo, it's going to force us to rely on missions like this in order to be able to cover the same amount of ground. So, I see this just kind of as a step in the direction that KFOR is heading."

Despite the sometimes-heavy rain and usually-cold temperatures, Benson looked back over his time in the field fondly, and expressed a sense of anticipation for future operations like ONF.

"It was great to get out into the field and not be freezing and buried in snow this time," he said. "Stuff like this is the reason that all of us joined the infantry, and I'm really looking forward to executing more missions like this."



Sgt. Ryan Cornelius, a crew chief with TF Talon, works to secure a simulated casualty into a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter May 8. The MEDEVAC was part of Operation New Frontier, a multi-national training exercise held from May 8-11 between MNTF (E) and MNTF (C).



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