

THE GUARDIAN EAST

Breaking Down Barriers:

Nightstalker and LMT
help a town get rid of
the past

"Thank You"

Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones **MNTF-E Commander**

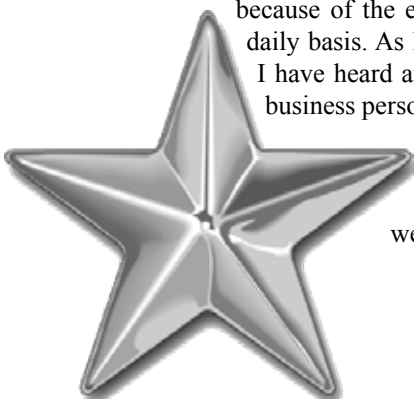
Of all the topics I could have drawn from in this edition of the Guardian, two came to mind quickly. The first was borne out of the Task Force (TF) patrols I have gone on with each of our battalion organizations. The second from the exceptionally efficient and often transparent yet critical services our AST and civilian contractors provides us on a day-to-day basis.

It has been my privilege to patrol with TF Hellas, TF POLUKR, TF Nightstalker, TF Sabre, TF Arctic Eagle (being thunder-stormed on the aerial leg of the latter) and our LMT's. I plan to do the same with our HCT's, MP's and EOD, as well. I have learned a great deal on the patrols, and appreciate whatever modification to your normal routine you have allowed to accommodate me.

It is a pleasure to see our fine soldiers do their routine but very important jobs here in Kosovo...from the ground up. It is a far different perspective to be engaged in the day-to-day activities most of you face on a routine basis, than to read of your activities in reports; not to take anything away from the importance of your reports. Your reports are not only reaching us at the TF Falcon level, but they are assisting in painting an accurate picture of your Areas of Operation (AO), whether word for word or synthesized, up to COMKFOR and JTF-Naples level and beyond. You are making a significant difference through your reporting, and I want you to take pride in that effort, as I do.

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Through application of your training, your creativity and your personal initiative, you are proving the theory of the "strategic corporal" concept. This goes far beyond the "every soldier is a sensor" concept, which of itself is highly important to us in its own right. However, the professional connections you have made with the citizens in your AO's have been profound...and as I have witnessed in my patrols with you. This goes far beyond driving around or through our AO's. You are engaged with the citizens...eye-to-eye. You are connected to the communities. You are treating them with dignity and respect, and have correspondingly gained their respect and trust. Their overwhelmingly positive feedback is that they are safer and more confident in their everyday life because of the efforts you extend to them on a daily basis. As I travel on my patrols with you, I have heard and witnessed this from farmers, business persons, spouses and children around their homes, teachers, school administrators, students of all ages - at many of the schools we have visited



have walked through, and from the civic leaders that we meet with on a routine basis. You are making a profound difference through your professionalism...and I want you to know that I appreciate that. Your individual and collective efforts can make a strategic difference.

OUR AST CONTRACT EMPLOYEES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

What often is nearly invisible to us is the exceptional individual and collective efforts of our civilian employees that make a far-

“You are engaged with the citizens...eye-to-eye. You are connected to the communities. You are treating them with dignity and respect, and have correspondingly gained their respect and trust.”

from-invisible impact on our daily lives here at Camp Bondsteel. We must not take their help for granted. From the aviation mechanics that keep our Blackhawks in the air, to the exceptional work of our security teams, to our dining facility staff, MWR staff, logistical teams, maintenance support, contracting support, special support and our program administrators (and know I haven't listed everyone here). They provide essential services to us on a day-to-day basis; support that provides us with far more than our basic needs. For all of you that assist us in our tactical missions, I want to thank you for your efforts, your courtesy, and the professionalism you bring to your jobs. We cannot do ours without the help you provide us.

The source of our operational strength truly comes from our Team of Teams, working together for a common end state. I thank you all for your exceptional individual efforts and the cooperation between our Teams.

“FREEDOM'S FORGE!”

“Our Soldiers Need Engaged Leaders”



Command Sgt. Maj. Rob Whittle
MNTF-E

all in a leadership role. I challenge all of you, if you notice what can be perceived as misconduct along these lines, to immediately **Intervene**, **Act** upon the misconduct, and **Motivate** our Soldiers and civilians to do what's right. We can set the standard, and maintain the positive climate for intervention, Soldier safety, and Soldier respect.

During the months of April and May, company First Sergeants will be teaching Suicide Prevention Phase II. This is a mandatory training event. The unfortunate trend throughout the Army has us all alarmed and I want to remind Soldiers that suicide is a permanent solution for a temporary problem. Remember the **ACE** acronym, **A**sk your buddy (Have the courage to ask, and be direct), **C**are for your buddy (Remove any means of self injury. Listen to your buddy), and **E**scort your buddy (Never leave your buddy alone. Escort to your behavioral health professional).

To keep our Task Force safe, a heightened state of awareness and the practice of good risk management both on and off the job are necessary to mitigate risks. I suggest the following:
~Wear all your personal protective equipment...seat belts,

helmets, and eye protection!

~Maintain control of your vehicle. Remember speed kills!

~Do not count on being lucky...be prepared for things to go wrong!

~Remember that fatigue is not your friend...have a good rest plan and stick to it!

~Know the risks involved in everything you do...keep your risks to a minimum by using the risk management assessment card!

~If you can't reduce the risks to an acceptable level...Inform your Chain of Command!

~Demand that your subordinates, peers, and superiors manage their risks, too!

~Defensive driving – Passive driving is the best practice.

2009 is the Year of the NCO. Our Soldiers need engaged Leaders, not bystanders, we need Leadership, not Likership.

As many of you are aware, we are still well within the cold and flu season. The key to staying healthy is simple preventative medical measures. You need to ensure you are getting enough rest, washing your hands with soap and warm/hot water. Cold water is not as effective for killing germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Other key actions for you and your battle buddy to stay healthy are for you to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Remember mission first, and you cannot effectively accomplish your mission by being sick.

Throughout our train up, we coined the phrase “Stay the Course”, this goes hand-and-hand with April 2009 being recognized as the Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault Prevention month. I want to take some time and reflect upon what this really means. Many of you may have heard of the Army's “I AM Strong” campaign. The letters I, A, and M stand for **Intervene – Act – Motivate**. This puts us

SNAPSHOT

COVER PHOTO:

Tearing it down

Soldiers from TF Nightstalker and the LMT remove security barriers around a cultural building in Kamenica/Kamenice, one sandbag at a time. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith)

BACK PHOTOS:

Protecting children

EOD eliminates another threat as troops visit a school to educate about the dangers of ordnance. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Adam-David Pepper and Spc. Darriel Swatts)





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THE GUARDIAN EAST

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HAZARDS CAN OCCUR IN OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS TOO

AVOID WORKPLACE INJURIES . . . BY AVOIDING THESE!

You have heard me talk in March on Vehicle Safety and in April I discussed the impact of sports injuries. As we continue to tackle hazards associated with vehicle operations, sports and training injuries, we often overlook the hazards within our own workplace. We place ourselves in danger every day by the nature of our mission, but what if I asked you about a frayed electrical cord, toxic chemicals, climbing stairs, lifting heavy objects and cluttered hallways? Could those workplace hazards get you a first class ticket to the hospital? You bet they can.

Workplace safety is about preventing injuries and about protecting the health of Soldiers, Army civilians and contractors by ensuring safe and healthy workplaces. Each duty day brings its own set of unique hazards to the workplace. Tripping over materials left on floors and other walkways; being hit by falling objects, slipping on greasy, wet or dirty floors; running into poorly stored items; or cutting or puncturing the skin of hands or other body parts on sharp, projecting materials. Because of our daily routines, it's easy to get complacent and not recognize these hazards. A proactive workplace safety program reduces risks by identifying hazards and developing control measures before accidents occur.

The most common type of safety issue in workplaces are tripping and falling, however, there are many others to considered. The following are the main safety issues and how you can prevent them:

Falls

- ~Anything above shoulder level should be retrieved with the use of a step stool or ladder.
- ~Chairs should always be used flat on the floor and not leaning back. Chairs with a "leaning" feature shouldn't be pushed beyond their limit which may result in over-balancing.
- ~Chairs and boxes should never replace ladders and step stools.
- ~Pathways should be kept clear.
- ~Electrical cords and wires must be kept out of pathways.
- ~When seated, excessive twisting, leaning back, and bending over should be avoided.

General Safety Issue Practices

- ~Keep the work environment clean. Throw away trash and keep floors free of obstacles and unnecessary items.
- ~Spills should be cleaned immediately to avoid slips.
- ~Immediately report any defects in the workspace such as loose floor boards, broken railings, broken doors, broken steps etc.
- ~Refrain from participating in any form of horseplay.
- ~Keep sharp objects such as scissors and tacks in closed containers.
- ~Air vents should be kept unobstructed.

Remember, the most important way to prevent safety issues in the workplace is to use common sense at all times.

**SLIPPING
ON SPILLS**

**TRIPS ON
CORDS**

**OPEN
CABINETS**

**CLUTTERED
AREAS**

ALWAYS USE GOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

2009: Year of the NCO



U.S. Army Europe Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Beam (standing left of pole) poses with Soldiers of Task Force Nightstalker and the students of Liria primary school in the city of Gnjilane/ Gjilan. Beam visited the school and handed out school supplies purchased by the California National Guardsmen as part of their community outreach program. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adam-David Pepper)



Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Beam leads MNTF-E non-commissioned officers in a 5k fun run around Camp Bondsteel. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Paul Wade)



Breaking barriers

KFOR helps a town get rid of

Story and Photos by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith

Picture a life where you lived in fear of bombs falling from the sky, of explosive mines littering the ground. You would not feel very safe and would constantly worry about your home and family. A decade ago the people of Kosovo had these worries. That was why KFOR Soldiers placed Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium (HESCO) barriers at the Kamenica Cultural Center in Kamenica/Kamenice, Kosovo.

Throughout Kosovo HESCO barriers can still be seen placed around important government and cultural buildings. Now, with a safer and more secure environment, MNTF-E Soldiers are working to remove those same barriers.

In late April MNTF-E Soldiers with Task Force Nightstalker and Task Force LMT (Liaison Monitoring Team) participated in a mission to help cleanup the Kamenica Cultural Center. The cultural center had several large HESCO barriers that were covering part of the area and were getting in the way of the citizens who use the cultural center.

"The barriers were put in about ten years ago by KFOR. Now that they are no longer necessary the community asked us to make the cultural center look more pleasant," said 1st Lt. Jonathan Key, the Officer-In-Charge for the Liaison Monitoring Team operating in Kamenica.

The HESCO barriers were put up to protect the cultural center from any bombs or air attacks, said Key.

"The fact that we are taking them down is a step in the right direction. Its showing the community that things are much safer than they were ten years ago and we no longer need barriers to protect the buildings."

Assisting the people of Kosovo is an important job for the KFOR Soldiers and the removal of the HESCO barriers was a top priority.

"It was important that we take down these HESCO barriers," said Key. "It shows the community that we are here to help out and create a safe and secure environment. They no longer need the HESCO barriers so it is a great example to show them they are safe."

After ten years it's a nice feeling for the Kamenica/Kamenice citizens to see the barriers go. To the local citizens the HESCO barriers can serve as a symbol of the NATO air war and a constant reminder of those dangerous times. Now with the removal of the barriers it shows the people the developing safety of the region.

It's important that the people see these barriers go, said Key, there is no longer any need for them and it shows the people that they are safe, while at the same time showing them we still care about their situation and want to help the community.

Helping the community does not just involve cleaning up the community center for the Camp Bondsteel Soldiers.

"We have other projects to help the community," said Key, "just last week we cleaned up the city for Earth Day. We're planning for another cleanup in the summer."

The KFOR Soldiers are always striving to make events that will bring people together.

"A main goal for us is creating events to bring Serbian, Albanian, Roma, and others together," said Key, "it's important for us, especially if we can get the kids together."

The cultural center is a good place to host the events that can help bring people together, and bringing people together is what the LMT does.

The biggest thing the Liaison Monitoring Team does is our job to feel the pulse of the community, said Key. "If anything is about to happen, good or bad, we usually have a heads up on it and KFOR can jump in and get involved."

Without the bulky HESCO barriers the citizens of Kamenica have a visible reminder that they live in a safer environment and can now use their cultural center to the best of its abilities; furthering the effort to bring people together.

Page Layout by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith

for the community

the past



An MNTF-E Soldier gets help from a local Kamenica/Kamenice girl while on a mission to remove Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium (HESCO) barriers from the Kamenica Cultural Center.



Sgt. Alan J. Gubba, Alpha Co. (Aztecs), 79th BSTB, Task Force Nightstalkers, and Staff Sgt. Joel Antonio, Liaison Monitoring Team One, move sandbags from a HESCO barrier during a mission to beautify the cultural center in Kamenica/Kamenice.

See more on this story by watching the KFOR Files



Two MNTF-E Soldiers try and have as much fun as they can while moving sandbags during a mission to remove HESCO barriers from the Kamenica Cultural Center.

SOLDIER-TEACHERS: MAKING THE GRADE

Story and Photos by
Spc. Rich Stowell

With textbooks in one hand and a rifle slung over his shoulder, an Army specialist enters a classroom building on Camp Bondsteel and turns in his midterm essay.

He sits down for the evening's lecture about free speech in the military. The class, Introduction to Law and the Legal Profession, is offered by Central Texas College through the Army Continuing Education System (ACES).

The Soldier's instructor is a member of the Bar in the state of California, and a former high school English teacher. He is also the Chief of Military Justice for Multi-National Task Force-East (MNTF-E).

"I enjoy teaching in the Army because I get to see a different side of Soldiers," said Capt. Dwight Stirling, from Long Beach, who works full-time for the California Army National Guard as an attorney.

The National Guard and Army Reserve

Soldiers who are deployed on the KFOR mission are constantly training to maintain mission readiness. Hundreds of them are also taking advantage of the opportunity the Army gives them to further their civilian education.

There are a few that stand at the head of the class who are making sure that students have the best instruction. They are the Soldier-teachers of MNTF-E, and they are putting their valuable civilian experience to work in a way that will benefit the Soldiers in their classes long after this deployment and even their careers in the Army.

Stirling clearly relishes being able to work with his students in a relationship distinct from a typical military dynamic. Likewise, the many students in classes taught by Soldiers like him get to see a very different side of their instructors, one that highlights their creativity and cooperation.

Personnel at the Education Center agree.

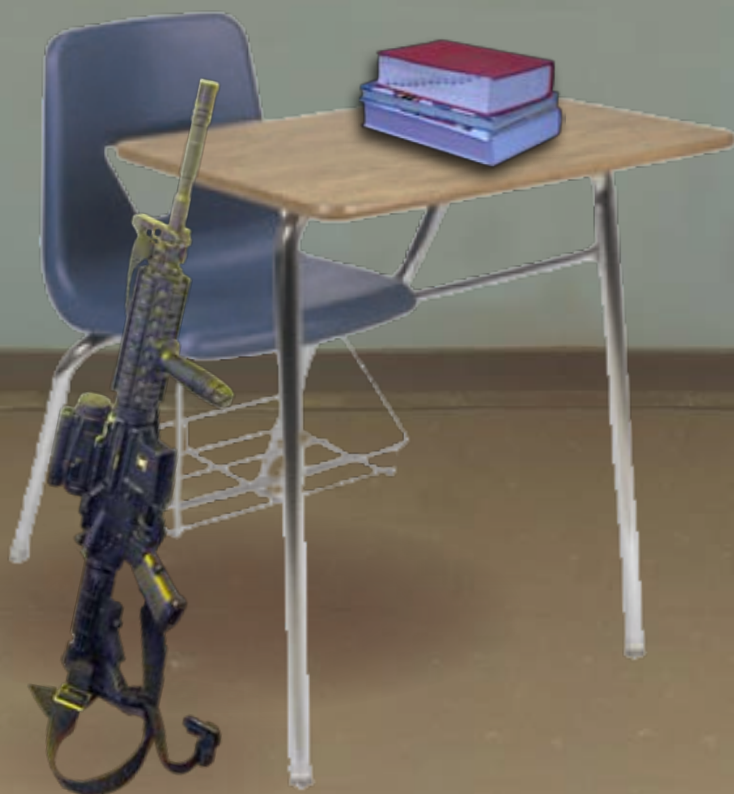
"It is great to see Soldiers working together this way," said Fitore Aliu, Central Texas College's (CTC) Field Representative for Camp Bondsteel. "They offer each other valuable opportunities to develop personally and academically."

SOLDIERS MAKE GREAT TEACHERS

"We encourage all soldiers to take advantage of classes offered through the Department of Defense Education system," said Aliu. "Soldiers here at Camp Bondsteel have a unique opportunity to benefit from a variety of course offerings and some of the best instructors."

It takes a special kind of person to meet the demands of a deployed Soldier and a teacher. MNTF-E has several that fit the bill. Two Guardsmen and one Reservist bring civilian teaching expertise with the Soldier's tenacity and discipline to Camp Bondsteel where they are helping fellow Soldiers get ahead in life.

1st Lt. Gregory Andrew, an Emergency



Room Nurse with Task Force Med Falcon, and Master Sgt. Daniel Parrish from the Joint Visitors Bureau (JVB), join Stirling as MNTF-E's cadre of Soldier-teachers.

"I've got no more intelligence than anybody," said Andrew, "but I've got experience and I've got education. So that's how I approach these students."

Andrew, a Reservist from Texas, teaches the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)—Basic Certification Course through CTC, which meets 12 hours a week.

"Nobody is any smarter than anybody else," he said, "but I've been around longer than most of these people, and I've been educated, so that's what I'm here to share with them."

Andrew speaks in a low drawl; his slow deliberate speech underscores a fatherly demeanor and suggests a genuine concern for his students and sense of duty to teach them.

"I feel an obligation to meet the students' needs. That's my duty to them. It seems to work pretty well," he says as

Page Layout by Spc. Rich Stowell

RIGHT: Capt. Dwight Stirling leads a discussion in his Law class. FAR RIGHT: Stirling addresses a student's question. BELOW: Master Sgt. Parrish talks about teaching techniques with a colleague. BOTTOM: 1st. Lt. Gregory Andrew reviews the previous night's homework with his EMT students.



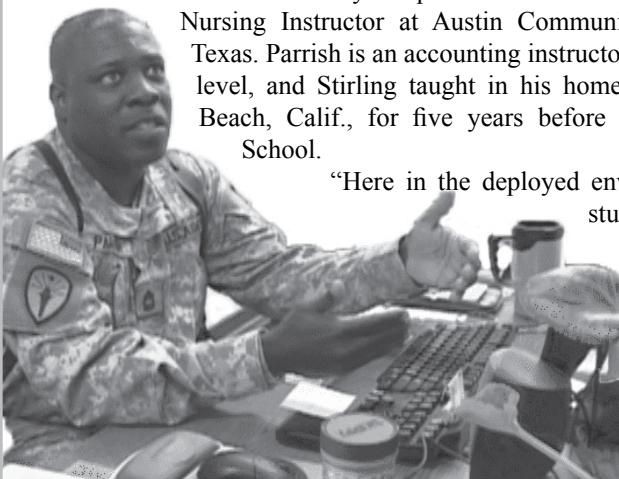
he replaces his spectacles, which betrays a confident expertise in his subject matter.

The Lieutenant takes pride in his work as a teacher, looking forward to having more qualified first responders in the task force.

Parrish shares Andrew's enthusiasm. "Teaching civilian stuff is like the icing on the cake," said Parrish, who teaches accounting for the University of Maryland University College (UMUC). "When you get to teach a civilian course, now I'm teaching stuff that I'm more comfortable with, so I can teach accounting my way. It makes it more personal."

SOLDIERS COME WITH EXPERIENCE

Each of MNTF-E's Soldier-teachers has civilian teaching experience. Andrew, who drills with the Army Reserve's 5501st United States Army Hospital in San Antonio, is a Clinical Nursing Instructor at Austin Community College in Texas. Parrish is an accounting instructor at the college level, and Stirling taught in his hometown of Long Beach, Calif., for five years before going to Law School.



"Here in the deployed environment, my students are very respectful," said Stirling about the differences between teaching Soldiers and civilians.

"Civilians in a normal classroom can be very undisciplined and can be very unruly. We all know that; we've all been in classrooms where fellow students are talking, not paying attention, not coming to class."

Parrish, too, has noticed the willingness and order of the troops. "For the most part, Soldiers I have worked with are very eager to learn. They want to learn new things, and it's always easier to teach those who want to learn," he said.

Parrish visibly wants people to want to learn. He wears a perpetual smile and his optimism is almost infectious. When the conversation turns towards teaching, the corners of his mouth turn up slightly more.

"[Teaching] wasn't a designed path. I started out with the education first and just continued it. Once it was all said and done I said, 'wow, I have the option to teach now!' I enjoyed it, so I thought, I might as well pursue it. It's always been a passion of mine, to be able to teach."

Parrish was set to teach accounting at Sacramento City College just before the KFOR deployment. He is eager to start teaching this summer, and relieves the excitement by working on a book, *Me, My Papa, and Numbers*, designed to get young children excited about using numbers. He has the same high hopes for

the Soldiers around him as he has for his 9 year old son, Corey, for whom he is writing the book.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY BENEFITS STUDENTS

The Army has given each of these Soldier-teachers valuable skills and insight into their students' minds. Parrish refers to teaching the Army Standard, and Stirling acknowledges the discipline and obedience instilled by the Army lifestyle as a powerful tool for students learning any subject.

All three take those skills and go further.

"My objective in teaching is both to communicate information but also to affect how students actually think; to examine their thinking process, and how to improve or adjust that thinking process," said Stirling.

Learning is so much more than acquiring information for the Captain. His students regularly participate in Socratic-style seminars, in which they toss ideas, questions, and opinions back and forth.

His classroom is quiet, befitting the many Army uniforms that fill its seats. But there is a thoughtfulness that is almost palpable, as the students process ideas and try to grasp the complex topics that their instructor is sharing.

In one lecture, he had a student play the part of "Supreme Leader" to get his class to consider the different ways that a government could respond to subversive speech.

Andrew also takes the view that the class as a whole is better suited to accomplish learning tasks than any one individual. In the EMT course, students review homework and quizzes in a discussion format before breaking out into small groups for hands-on exercises.

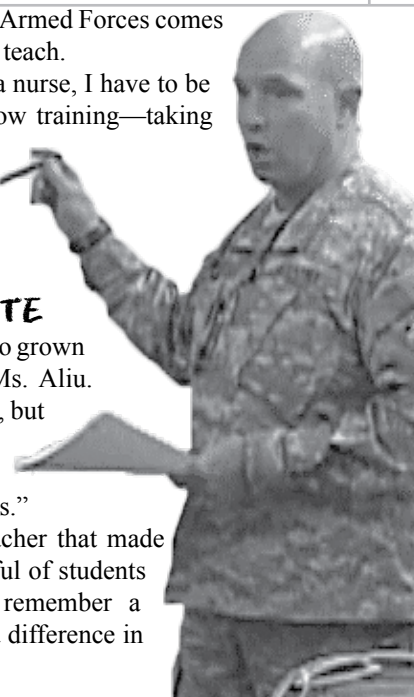
Andrew's desire to serve in the Armed Forces comes from the same internal instinct to teach.

"As a Soldier, an officer, and a nurse, I have to be an educator. It reminds me of how training—taking what I've learned; taking my experiences and distributing those to the people that I work around—comes naturally to me."

STUDENTS FORTUNATE

"Students have an opportunity to grown in boundless ways," reiterates Ms. Aliu. "All of our teachers are dedicated, but the Soldiers who come to Kosovo in service to their country are a great addition to our faculty teams."

Many of us remember a teacher that made a difference in our lives. A handful of students here at Camp Bondsteel will remember a Soldier and a teacher that made a difference in theirs.



See more on this story by watching the KFOR Files

K9

Dog Nose Best

The military working dog section assigned to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, is made up of active-duty Soldiers from Germany from various units. Together they hosted a joint explosives and drug search training session in late March with other K9 units from NATO countries. Teams from Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic, as well as the European Union Police and Kosovo Police were in attendance for training designed to help K9 handlers adapt to the will of their dogs and recognize the dogs body language once it has found its target.

The KFOR mission is built upon a multi-national cooperation platform and having Multi-National Task Force-East (MNTF-E) soldiers stand side-by-side learning from each other is extremely important. It is no different with the dogs that are trained to protect those Soldiers, and that is why the dog/handler teams have converged on the Mid-Town gym, to learn from each other what techniques work.

"I have a Belgian Shepherd and her name is Conny. We came to this training to see how other K9 teams work and train," said 1st. Sgt Sandra Jones, a police officer with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). "This is the first time Conny has accompanied me on this type of training mission."

The type of training the international teams practiced on was in finding dangerous items and narcotics that the camp's Provost Marshal section hid around the gyms workout equipment. Testing the scent abilities of each dog was a large focus of the training and part of the reason why the class was held in an area dominated by human body odors.

According to nhm.org, dogs can sense odors at concentrations nearly 100 million times lower than humans can. It was Jones' job to teach Conny how to bypass the scents that didn't mean anything to zeroing in on the one that would send up a red flag.

Jones and her 5 year old dog worked as a team finding all three stashes of hidden drugs. Like most working breeds of dogs, Conny appeared excited for the test and was rewarded for her accomplishment by playing a game of tug-of-war.

Normally Jones, who is from Osnabrueck, Germany, goes to training sessions without her dog, to learn the handler's portion of the mission but this time, she saw the importance of learning how other K9 units operate.

"The training today gives us the chance to work with international soldiers and gives our dogs experience finding their types of explosives," Jones said. "We have the opportunity to get to know each other and share tips and techniques about our dogs and training methods."

Lt. Lars Persson, a native of Stockholm, Sweden, is a trainer of K9 handlers for EULEX dog teams. He has been a policeman for over 22 years and reinforces the most basic principle of how a dog works.

"Dogs first want to use their eyes to find something and we train them to use their strongest asset, their nose," said Persson as he helped the handlers understand their dogs' movements, behavior and reactions to their owner's emotions, which all develop the proper response.

One proven training practice in search and detection work is the use of consistency. Using the same voice commands, hand signals, body language and search methods in a repetitive sequence conditions the dog and helps them learn faster. During the training each dog displayed different reactions when it found its target and alerted its handler but the same steps were taken to find the item and reward the dog for a job well done.



1st. Sgt. Sandra Jones, a police officer from Osnabrueck, Germany, and a K9 unit member of EULEX, rewards her dog Conny after she successfully found hidden drugs.



Lt. Stephan Krejcy, a Czech Republic policeman and EULEX K9 member, gets control of his dog Yan before their class on drug and explosives search training.

Depending on the dogs training and the mission, the dog sits and stares or it can bark or paw at the target location. While the dog is looking intensely in the direction of the find, the trainer pulls out the dog's favorite toy from a back pocket. The handler bounces the toy off of the spot and the dog catches its reward. The handler then gives positive reinforcement for a correct behavior and plays with the canine as part of its reward.

Another teaching point conveyed to the class is that the dog's reward should not be the same as the reward marker or found item. The reward marker is a signal that tells the dog that he has earned the reward.

Rewards can be praise, treats, play, or anything that the dog finds rewarding. Failure to reward after the task diminishes the value of the find and makes training more difficult.

If their handler is happy about their performance it could mean the world to a working dog as a person's emotions play a large role. Persson gave a demonstration with the help of Spc. Bryan Skipper and his dog Sammy on how a dog responds to body language with verbal commands.

see "K9" on page 24

STRONGHOLD

TO SOCCER BALLS

Civil Affairs helps a town strengthen its future

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Wade

Perched atop an extinct volcano in the mountainous region of Novo Brdo, Kosovo, stands the ruins of a 14th century fortress known as Gumnishtë. This medieval bastion was the center of a thriving metropolis; some historical experts say it exceeded London's booming population around the beginning of the 15th century. The stronghold, thought to have been built by the Byzantine Empire, had tremendous power and influence that was well-known throughout Eastern Europe because of the rich mines the hilly landscape produced.

This caught the attention of the nearby imperialistic Ottoman Empire who laid siege to the castle for 40 days, and on 1 June 1455, the Serbian inhabitants capitulated. In the centuries that followed the ancient city was ruled by many but none cared for its upkeep. As merchants moved their mining trade routes into the more accessible valley town of Gnjilane/Gjilan the population of Fortress Gumnishtë and its surrounding fortified settlements dwindled and its eventual decay began.

Despite Novo Brdo's rich history and the Institute of Monuments and the Regional Museum of Prishtina declaring the castle ruins and nearby dwellings the greatest archeological treasures in Kosovo, today the rural town, which means "New Hill" in Serbian, is considered one of the poorest municipalities in Kosovo, according to the Organization for Security

and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The residents are trying to stop this trend and are enlisting the help of every possible resource at their disposal. Luckily, the United States Army Reserve's 308th Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB), Detachment 26, based in Homewood, Ill., was assigned to the Novo Brdo region and willing to help. Another key resource that is a little closer to home is the community's youth (15-26 years old).

Fadil Llapashtica, the municipality's president of the youth network and center for training, information and tourism, believes his community's younger generation is the cornerstone to rebuilding what has been lost and securing a brighter tomorrow. His plan was to show them they are important to the future of their neighborhood and get them involved in the areas greatest income potential; tourism. He knows how to motivate them too, so he asked Ramush Mehmeti, Vice President of the Novo Brdo Municipality, to contact the KFOR MNTF-E Soldiers and ask for help. Mehmeti spoke to the CAB commander, Lt. Col. Michael Bogmenko, about purchasing sports equipment for their youth center since the area lacks any businesses to sponsor and provide contributions.

"We've tried different approaches within our framework to help the youth get involved and believe this is a good start. For the first time this year we are dedicating a lot of our attention to youth activities and hope it generates awareness in our municipality," Mehmeti said.

"Having sports in children's lives is special. Living here in a rural environment, the children are dispersed all about and sports can bring them together and this in turn develops into other beneficial things for the community," said Llapashtica. Fadil's plan was off and running when Bogmenko and his non-commissioned officer in charge, Sgt. German Moreno, showed up with soccer balls and uniforms.

"This is what civil affairs is all about. We love helping youths lead a production life and becoming a contributing citizen. With Novo Brdo's lack of infrastructure and few employment opportunities the town needs leaders to find a way to make something work. Kids are the leaders of tomorrow. So investing in their development is a smart decision. You can't go wrong," said Bogmenko, who has been a Chicago police officer for 30 years and works with the youth program in his precinct.

Novo Brdo's youth center (financed by the Netherland Government) is located in a newly built log cabin-style building, on a hairpin turn, halfway up a mountain. The tourism office is next door so it only makes sense that helping one will help the other.

"The youth center and rural tourism project are one and the same. They were another factor to be managed by the youth network. It was a way of getting them involved," said Mehmeti.

With their backyard practically a Smithsonian exhibit it only made sense to



FAR LEFT: Novo Brdo. **LEFT:** Bogmenko shows off the uniforms KFOR was able to purchase for the Novo Brdo Youth Network.

RIGHT: A youth carries some of the new soccer balls into the gym for the youth-versus-KFOR game .
FAR RIGHT: Youth center and tourism office/cabin. The castle can be seen on the hill in the background.
RIGHT BELOW: Lt. Col. Bogmenko and Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Reed pose with the Novo Brdo youth and their teachers and directors.



capitalize on the institutes claim. Fadil wants his community to be the first to showcase these historical finds to anyone interested in the past and has created a business with the Youth Network and Inhabitants of Vllasali and Bostane (nearby villages) presenting "the very first rural tourism offer in Kosovo".

Some of the activities the youth would be involved in include mountain biking, visiting farms to pick mushrooms, making of soap, jam and rakija, a local fruit brandy drink, and a guided nature trail to a tour of the medieval town.

Before the youth went out and saved the day they first had to take on the KFOR team in a game of soccer in the local high school gym. Despite the fact that many of the troops and their interpreters grew up playing soccer, it was no contest. The kids won by pounding the new soccer balls into the back of the net more times than the referee could keep track of.

"My advice is to practice more," said Visar Ramadani, a 14-year-old boy, when asked how the Soldiers could improve their game.

After the game the Soldiers spoke to some of the youth about their thoughts on living in a rural area, 1000 feet above the neighboring valley villages and what their future holds.

"We know we are important because [KFOR] visits us. We are small but we have lots of history and people will want to come here to see it. My friends and I know how important it is to our future that is why we go up there to the castle and slowly rebuild it stone by stone," said Arta Gashi, a 16-year-old girl and managing editor for the youth networks newsletter.

Novo Brdo's fortress was mentioned in official documents more than 680 years ago and is again today in newly printed tourism flyers. The rustic municipality has a new outlook on their future and KFOR are a part of it. Many new things are happening in an area that has remained unfazed by its modern neighboring cities but maybe it is time the mountain village did a little reinventing. After all Novo Brdo does mean "New Hill".



FIRE

FROM

HEAVEN

Task Force Hellas brings the Holy Light to Kosovo for the first time to celebrate one of the world's most important events

Story and Photos by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith

Every year billions of Christians flock to church on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is an event known to the world. But there is an event, that millions participate in, that goes almost completely unknown to the western cultures, The Ceremony of the Holy Light.

Every year on the day before the Orthodox Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, Orthodox Christians gather to be part of a miracle, in which a divine flame appears in the tomb of Jesus Christ. This unexplained event has occurred annually since the fourth century.

It is a modern day custom for European church communities to assemble outside of the tomb and eagerly wait for the priest to return from within with a lighted candle. At that time the faithful rush forward to capture a part of the flame on their own candle wick. The tiny flame spreads like wildfire as a thousand lights flicker in the air. With a protective nature of a new mother the flames are then carefully transported to all the major Orthodox countries in Europe.

For the first time in 1500 years, part of that flame was brought to Kosovo via Greece. Camp Rigas Fereos, home of the Task Force Hellas soldiers, received the Holy Light so that they could have the opportunity to celebrate the most important day of their religion.

"When I first saw the Holy Light arrive I felt great," said Warrant Officer Stefanos Koukouravas, the Deputy Commander of the Liaison Monitoring Team Office.

At the arrival of the Holy Light, Koukouravas and his commander Lt. Col. Touzopoulos Spyridon, the Commander of Task Force Hellas, carried the light to the church on base. The procession of the holy fire traveled between a platoon of Hellas soldiers forming a two-column honor guard.

"My commander and I received the light and brought it into the church," said Koukouravas. "It was very special that we got to receive it."

"This is a very important time for us. The light has never come to Kosovo before, so this is a big deal for us," said Koukouravas.

There was an enormous turnout at the decorated church where the soldiers sang hymns and passionately awaited a chance to hold a piece of the miracle for themselves.

Koukouravas was one of the singers in the church and during the entire evening he sang the hymnals that were required for the ceremony.

"All the hymns I sang were stories of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and how he came to earth to save all of us," said Koukouravas.

Religion is the cornerstone of many cultures around the world and the Hellas soldiers showed that their self discipline is more than just military bearing when they fasted in preparation for the Holy Light to arrive.

"I fasted for two weeks so I could feel closer to Jesus, and many of the soldiers here fasted for much longer than that," said Koukouravas.

Even though the Holy Light celebration is mostly unknown to the western world, it is still a part of Easter and what is important is even though the Hellas soldiers may be away from home, they still keep to their traditions.

"Even though we are separated from home, tonight all across the world Orthodox Greeks are celebrating Easter together," said Koukouravas.

Tradition is an important part of any culture and the Mediterranean soldiers don't do themselves a discredit. At the conclusion of the ceremony there was a loud celebration where the whole base seemed to be echoing with noise. Fire trucks were blasting their horns, fireworks were shooting into the air, firecrackers tossed by the happy soldiers popped and exploded underneath a burning effigy of Judas Iscariot. As the bell tolled midnight and it officially became Easter, the Hellas soldiers showed their joy at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



1. A group of soldiers with Task Force Hellas dance during an Easter Day celebration at Camp Rigas Fereos, Kosovo. The day consisted of dancing and feasting on traditional Greek food as part of a celebration for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. Warrant Officer Stefanos Koukouravas, the Deputy Commander of the Hellas Liaison Monitoring Team, and Lt. Col. Touzopoulos Spyridon, the Commander of the Hellas camp, carry the Holy Light to their church on base.

3. A group of soldiers with Task Force Hellas stand with lit candles in prayer during an Orthodox Easter ceremony.

4. A Priest with the church holds a candle lit with the Holy Light so that others may light their candles.

5. Koukouravas reads from a hymnal book during an Easter religious ceremony



Look mom, I'm on YouTube

The KFOR Files is the official video magazine for MNTF-E, bringing together the best videos from around the Task Forces.



There are 3 ways to Watch

1. Disc: get one free at selected distribution points, or ask your Chain-of-Command
2. YouTube: search "KFOR Files" on YouTube, or visit our Channel at www.youtube.com/user/69padonline
3. Website: go to sites.google.com/site/69padonline

Questions? Call us @ x3776 or 5204

2009



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MAY SPORTS AND EVENTS CALENDAR

SPORTS

CBS Soccer League
4 May - TBA

Memorial Day Weekend
Star & Stripes
Sand Volleyball/Basketball/Horse
Shoes competitions

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Monday - Wednesday - Friday
1500 - 1700 Fitness Orientations
by appt. NTFC
Tuesday & Sunday
0800 - 1000 Fitness Orientations
by appt. NTFC

MWR MONTHLY RUNS

Memorial Day 10K Run/Walk
Date: 25 May
Start Time: 0700 from STFC

TOURNAMENTS

Doubles Table Tennis Tournament
Date: 29 May
Time: 2000 NTCC
Sign-up deadline: 23 May

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

South Outdoor Stage
Derek Sholl (Country) 20 May
Jonalee White (Country) 24 May
Custom Made (R&B) 25 May

MWR DAY TRIPS

Check with your S1 or G1 for
details and sign up procedures



THE AST MWR TEAM SUPPORTS YOU

Give Me

Sight Beyond Sight

Story and Photos by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith

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Rarely do you stop to think what life would be like if you couldn't see. You certainly wouldn't be reading this story right now. It's the sense that we use more than any other, and the one we take for granted the most. That's why Texas National Guard Soldiers from the 2nd Medical Brigade, Task Force Med Falcon visited the Elena Gjika Medical High School, located in the city of Ferizaj/Urosevac early April.

The visit to the school was to instruct the students on the different diseases that affect eyesight, and the tools used to diagnose the diseases.

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Educational development of the regions youth has become a high priority among the rotating task forces deploying to Kosovo, that many units "adopt" a school. In this case TF Med Falcon's passion is with medical practice and the Elena Gjika Medical High School was a crystal clear choice.

"We come out to the schools here every other week," said Maj. John Miggins, the Strategic Communications Officer for the medical task force. "I put together a team and this week we decided to focus on teaching them the importance of the eye."

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At the time of the visit, the students were in their normal classroom hour but the KFOR 11 troops turned the session into a traveling field trip of sorts. The Camp Bondsteel Soldiers taught the students, who looked the part by wearing lab coats, about the basic refractive conditions of the eye and some of the major systemic diseases that can cause blindness.

Diseases that can affect an organ, or many organs at once, are considered systemic. Some systemic diseases are hypertension, diabetes, and glaucoma.

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Devoid of key 3-D training aids, the classroom offered little in something to hold, take apart and study. Luckily the Soldiers brought in posters, eye charts, and miniature models of the eye that helped the students to better understand the topic being instructed.

"We had a limited amount of resources to bring but it was still an exciting class," said Maj. Diane Boese.

"We had some very good visual aids for the children," said Boese. "As they were looking at the structures inside the eye, you could watch their eyes light up as they saw what they were looking for."

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Much to the children's delight, along with the visual aids there was also optometry equipment for the children to practice on. Ophthalmoscopes, a device to examine the retina, as well as a slit lamp; a device used to do an interior surface exam of the eye, were brought and became instant hits. Every student was allowed to use the equipment and practice some of the techniques that were covered in the class.

"There are a lot of bright young students here, and they are just a treasure for me to get to teach them," said Boese. "They were very receptive and really enjoyed us being there for them."

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Each student had a chance to ask their questions using the translators assigned to the Soldiers so there was no problem with any language barrier; the children picked up on the lesson very quickly, said Boese.

Page Layout By Pfc. Nevada Smith



LEFT: Maj. Diane Boese demonstrates how to use an ophthalmoscope and observe inside the eye with a training model during a visit in early April to the Elena Gjika Medical High School, Kosovo.

RIGHT: Boese, a doctor with Task Force Med Falcon, teaches the children the inner workings of the human eye using training aids they brought from the Camp Bondsteel hospital.



TF Med Falcon
makes the
importance
of eye care
crystal clear to
High School
children

Programs and schools that focus on giving children a higher education are critical to the development of Kosovo. While only in the 10th grade, the 16-year-old students of the high school are already better prepared to face the "grown up world."

"These are wonderful, bright children that will probably grow up to be their countries leaders," said Boese.

In history, the field of medicine has usually been filled by men, but even in Kosovo barriers are being broken and opportunities are emerging for everyone.

"When I was young, women were taught you could be nurses, secretaries or teachers, but no one told me I could be a doctor," said Boese. "So I when I went on to become a chemist, one day I decided why not be a doctor?"

Boese, who is the resident optometrist for TF Med Falcon, isn't the only person committed to helping people. When asked what motivated him to want an education in medicine, 16 year old Kushtrim Cakolli, who wants to be a surgeon said, "I want to become a doctor because I want to help people in need. Even though Optometry is not my area of interest I was pleased

by the visit, it was very interesting, and informative."

The students had nothing but good things to say about the medical Soldiers that came to visit them.

"I learned a lot of things that I did not know, like some of the diseases that can affect the eye," said Edona Hashani, a 16-year-old student, "It was very interesting and helped me a lot."

"Everything was interesting, I liked all the equipment, and the things that they explained to us today were things I had never heard before," said Gentiana Emini, a student at the school and resident of the village of Davidovc, "It would be good if they could have more visits like this, I liked the way the Major taught us a lot,

and everything I heard from her was very informative."

With the great example set by Boese, of how there are no limitations to what you can do if you set your mind to it, the children of Elena Gjika Medical High School now know that there are no limitations to what they want to achieve. With the knowledge passed to them by the MNTF-E Soldiers the children are better able to see their dreams come to life.

"These are wonderful, bright children that will probably grow up to be their countries leaders."

BOTTOM LEFT: Staff Sgt. Christopher Richey demonstrates how to use a Slit Lamp to two students. The Slit lamp is an optometry device used to examine the interior surface of the eye.

BOTTOM RIGHT: A student examines a friend with an ophthalmoscope. The ophthalmoscope is a device used by medical professionals to examine the retina.



See more on this story by watching the KFOR Files

Building the future

Task Force Sabre gives a local elementary school classroom a makeover

For a child going to the Ndre Mjeda Elementary School in Debelldë/Debelde, Kosovo, one of the first lessons learned is to share. On a typical school day, as many as 30 students squeeze into a classroom no larger than a one car garage. With only six desks and limited seats, seating is at a premium. Once the children get settled in, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, the teacher begins the class.

All that was about to change with a little help from a hammer and nail.

Soldiers from Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment, California Army National Guard, made a special visit to the school over a weekend to make sure Monday wasn't just another typical school day. Armed with tool kits, the Task Force Sabre troops went to work on giving the classroom a makeover.

The idea to lend a helping hand to this effort began when Zymri Ilazi, the town leader of Debelldë/Debelde, was asked what his concerns were during an adopt-a-school program meeting. Part of the task force's job, like Task Force Sabre, who patrols the vast number of municipalities in the Multi-National Task Force-East sector, is to get involved with local leaders and find ways to assist in rebuilding the infrastructure of the region. Ilazi told the Sabre commanders how Ndre Mjeda Elementary School, was in a state of disrepair, creating a poor learning environment for the children.

"We saw this as an opportunity to be able to immediately impact the community in a positive way, so we pulled some money together and bought all the material necessary to help make or repair the desks and chairs," said 1st Lt. Michael Harley, Alpha Troop Commander and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in Los Angeles County.

Knowing that submitting a formal request for materials through their chain of command could take up to a month to process, the Soldiers decided to give from their own pockets and personally help the community of Debelldë. Not only did they buy the supplies locally, but they also provided the labor in rebuilding the classroom's desks and chairs, with some help from the community, including some of the children who will be using the finished product.

Spc. John Gaiabay gets a little help carrying a broken desk outside to repair from a school girl during a rebuilding project held at the Ndre Mjeda Elementary School in Debelldë/Debelde, Kosovo.

Story and Photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts





ABOVE: Spc. Javier Flores helps remove broken desks from an unused classroom so they can be repaired, making more room for the students. **LEFT:** Spc. Shawn Anderson puts his carpentry skills to work by screwing legs onto a desk.

"I have a little girl of my own, I would want her to be in a comfortable learning environment, so by helping these kids, we are showing how much we truly care about their future," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Cort of 1st platoon, Alpha Troop. "These kids are the future of Kosovo, when we show our support for them with the help of the community; we make their future that much better."

Working throughout the day, approximately 16 desks and chairs were either built or repaired. The furniture was stored in an adjacent classroom that was serving as a graveyard for broken items. Pulling what they needed to an outside work area and finally placing the newly repaired furniture in the classroom freed up much needed space and gave the children more room to spread out. An added bonus was given as the school also received a new white board, dry erase markers and chalk.

"These kids don't always get new stuff. By making them new tables and chairs, which is something so simple to us, it makes a huge difference to them," said Spc. Shawn Anderson of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Troop.

With the last nail driven home the Sabre troops moved on to the next lesson in sharing by handing out some new clothes and school supplies, donated by Lt. Col. Lars Staack, the Task Force Sabre Commander. Ilazi picked six children from the class, who come from underprivileged families, to receive the gifts. The items were given to Ilazi so he could personally hand them to the children who needed it the most.

"The one thing I hope my guys took away from this experience is that we all should think of ourselves less and other people more," said 2nd Lt. Tamgiao Huang, Platoon Leader for 2nd platoon, who organized the event.

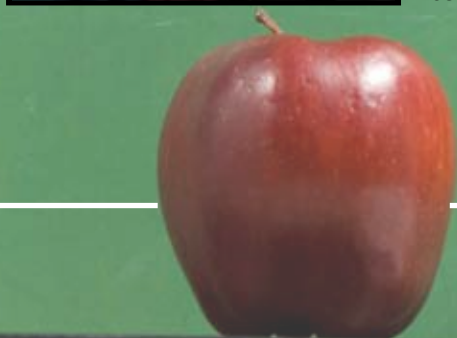
"That is what it is all about, thinking of other people prior to thinking about yourself."

With the Camp Bondsteel Soldiers assistance Debelde/Debelde's children will have a very non-typical school day on



ABOVE: Children from the town of Debelde/Debelde, Kosovo stand with their new clothes and school supplies donated by Task Force Sabre Soldiers. **LEFT:** Lt. Col. Lars Staack, the Task Force Sabre Commander, prepares to hand out candy and toys to very interested children outside of the Ndre Mjeda Elementary School.

BELOW: 1st Sgt. John Wheeler holds a desks backboard in place as a local Kosovar screws it in place.



Monday much to the delight of both students and teachers.



Earthworms and Fresh Heir



ABOVE: Sgt. Kenneth Larrabee laughs as Mathias, an Earthworms band member, shows us his killer pose as a door gunner on the M-240B machine gun mounted to a UH-60 Blackhawk during the bands visit to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The camp was only one of the stops on the Earthworms European tour with Armed Forces Entertainment.

RIGHT: The bands, Earthworms and Fresh Heir, pose with Larrabee and 1st Lt. Stan Skaw of Task Force Arctic Eagle after they arrived from the U.S. Later that night they played a mixture of hip-hop, R&B, jazz, and pop for the troops at the South Town fitness center. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts)



Until Every One Comes Home.

Pro Billards Tour



TOP: Professional billiards player Allison Fisher shows Soldiers stationed at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo a couple of trick shots during the Pro Billiards Tour on April 17.

LEFT: Allison Fisher and Kim Shaw treat Soldiers to a professional game of billiards.

ABOVE: Fisher uses a Soldier as a volunteer for one of her trick shots, where she will shoot the ball off of his mouth and make it into one of the pockets on the pool table. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts)



Polish soldiers of the representative unit lead the procession with the POLUKRBAT colors during a Change of Command ceremony.



The green (Polish), red (Lithuanian), and blue (Ukrainian) berets worn proudly by these soldiers clearly shows the MNTF-E effort.

POLUKRBAT continues their cooperative effort in Kosovo by rotating in new troops and new commanders

Soldiers of the Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian battalion (POLUKRBAT), who are part of the MNTF-E family of deployed nations helping maintain the peace in the Kosovo region, held a Change of Command ceremony on March 27. In attendance were distinguished guests, local mayors and MNTF-E Commander Brig. Gen. Keith Jones and his staff.

As part of the traditional ceremony, Jones receives the POLUKRBAT colors from the outgoing commander, Lt. Col. Andrzej Niemiec, and passes it to the incoming commander, Lt. Col. Mariusz Galeziowski.

The battalion flag being passed from one commander to the next symbolizes the transfer of authority.

Jones thanked the outgoing Niemiec for his service and welcomed Galeziowski with words of cooperation and friendship. "Lt. Col. Niemiec, your command has been marked by mission success, while maintaining an outstanding record of the safety of your troops. Your service in Kosovo has touched the lives of not only your troops but also the people of Kosovo," said Jones.

"Lt. Col. Galeziowski, today the important responsibility of this task force and this mission is placed in your hands," Jones said. "I'm sure your years of military experience will be a tremendous asset to the Polish/Ukrainian battalion mission as well."

Jones presented medals to soldiers of the multi-national battalion in recognition for their service to the KFOR mission and to the people of Kosovo region.

Both Polish officers shared their commitments to the NATO mission and the people of region, in speeches translated in multiple languages. They also awarded medals and plaques to their own troops and to the leadership of KFOR 11.



Ukraine sends home Airborne troops, replacing them with Marines to maintain a safe and secure Kosovo region

During a Transfer of Authority ceremony held at Camp Breza, April 10, outgoing POLUKR Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Alexander Komisarov (right), and incoming Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Volodymyr Veremchuk (left) salute MNTF-E Commander, Brig. Gen. Keith Jones.

"I am accepting command of some of the best troops that Ukraine has to offer," said Veremchuk. "Having the opportunity to work with a Multi-National task force gives us all the opportunity to exchange techniques with other nations, as well as learn from each other," said Veremchuk as he begins his six month tour. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adam-David Pepper)

EARTH DAY

2009



Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Wade

Almost 40 years ago Earth Day was founded and each year since, millions of people around the globe have celebrated it by getting involved in cleaning up their communities and paying a little more attention to the environment they live in.

Each rotation that has deployed to Kosovo has made an effort to not only educate the local populace about Earth Day's significance but to get their hands dirty, so to speak, by coordinating with certain villages and towns and clean up a patch of earth.

KFOR 11 is no different and despite a constant flow of rain falling on their efforts, Soldiers from various units armed themselves with rakes and shovels and helped clean up Kosovo, one trash bag at a time.

The countryside is worth it. The region is beautiful, with rolling hills decorated in a patchwork of farms and pastures, their rich soil plowed for the next harvest. Mountain ranges streak across the landscape, capped with snow late into spring and valleys gouge out habitable havens that can hide you away from the worries of the world.

But those havens and the people that live there couldn't escape the conflict that ravaged the region from 1998-1999. Ten years later the infrastructure has not completely recovered. Neglect and a decade without an effective waste management program are at the root of the problem. Many areas are still in disarray and trash litters the streets, fields and rivers, creating an eyesore for anyone trying to take in the splendor of the beautiful countryside.

The mountain retreat of Brezovica/Brezovice and the municipality of Strpce/Shterpce, was the focal point for the 40th Special Troops Battalion (STB), who are based out of Los Alamitos, Calif. The National Guard Soldiers hatched a plan with the help of Liaison Monitoring Team Seven (LMT 7), who patrols that area, and the Polish/Ukrainian battalion (POLUKRBAT), who are assigned to the local camp named after the village.

Brezovica is a ski resort and its ski center is located 2500 meters above the village on top of Sar Mountain.

Down in the valley, in the center of the village, away from all the modern machinery the village also provides a place to think about the past.

Warrior Park is smaller than a soccer field. It can't be very big because flat real estate is at a premium in a village that butts against a looming mountain slope and is also dissected by a winding river. However, its significance is huge. It was built in 1981 to honor the sacrifices the townspeople and surrounding areas made during World War II when local Albanian and Serbian partisans, putting aside differences, came together to fight their common enemy, the Germans.

When the MNTF-E Soldiers arrived, the park looked forgotten. Weeds were growing up through the stone. Someone that didn't respect the park's relevance had sprayed graffiti on the walls and garbage was clinging to almost every blade of grass and branch lining the concrete pathways. It had the appearance of never being used and was simply a place for trash to collect or cattle to graze.

Jadran Stojanovic was about to change all that. He is the appointed village leader and he met the KFOR troops at the entrance to the park with his own team, made up of local children whose school overlooks the memorial park. Closely watching the effort unfold were two elderly gentlemen who have family connections to those who fought and they are representatives for Strpce's version of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization.

"These children must understand how important this park is. We need to show respect for the people who fought for this country," said Stojanovic, as the children were lined up in the classic police call formation, waiting for their instructions from 1st Lt. Chiddy Adighije, executive officer for LMT 7.

With the rain falling, the children bolted to pick up their first piece of garbage. Hands covered in blue latex gloves they shoved as much as they could find into large trash bags, Adighije's promise of a five euro bill for having collected the most urging them on.

Fanning out, they swept through the park with lightning speed. The final pieces scooped up surrounded the towering sculpture at the far end of the park, which is shaped like a flame or torch, its sides separating at the top like blooming flower petals. Some say it is representing a human chest or cupped hands, offering an "open-heart" to those that gave their lives.

"We left to get a coffee and came back and the park is clean. An hour ago I felt ashamed and sorry for how we treated this monument. Now we can start honoring this place properly, again. It is important we did this today," said Bogoljub Vucic, a village elder and the local warrior organization representative.

see "Earth" on page 26

K9: Handler and dog learn new tricks

Continued from page 10

Skipper, assigned to 230th Military Police Co. in Kaiserslautern and a handler with the Camp Bondsteel K9 unit, was instructed to tell his dog to sit, lie down and stay. The dog did as ordered. Then Persson told Skipper to walk away and keep his back to the dog. Skipper was then instructed to give commands to the dog without looking at it. The dog was a bit confused and then walked over to his trainer.

"We need to give our dogs signals using our bodies as well as vocal commands that they are used too," said Persson. "When talking to a human, emotions play an important part in communication. When you are angry your body says things a certain way, and when you're happy your body language changes again."

Persson pointed out that even though Skipper wasn't looking at Sammy when he gave the command to sit, he still lowered his shoulders slightly, just like when he normally gives instructions to his canine.

"A dog picks up on the mind, body communication. It's not easy for a dog that can not see your movements. Just like it's easy for a person to read an email and misunderstand what the writer means without seeing their facial expressions," said Persson.

Spending almost every moment of every day while assigned together, the handler and dog relationship can go beyond simple work partners; it can become a lifelong connection. This bond only helps in knowing how to communicate with each other without actually speaking the same language.

"Yan is a 4 year old male German Shepherd. His job is to search for weapons and explosives. Our mission is to protect dignitaries and sweep building for bombs," said 1st. Lt. Stephan Krejcy, a Czech Republic policeman from Prague, and part of the EULEX K9 unit. "I had Yan since he was a puppy. I started training him as soon as my veteran dog was ready to retire," said Krejcy.

Jones' dog Conny should be working by her side for seven to nine years before her breed will have to retire, depending on how healthy she stays. When their dogs retire, the handlers keep them. The dog no longer has to work and gets to live the life a cat would envy.

Krejcy and Yan are the first K9 team from the Czech Republic to be assigned to the EULEX mission in Kosovo. They are joining a lineage that dates back to ancient times when "war dogs" were used by the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Britons and Romans to add to their fighting forces. Dogs are employed by the military and police forces all around the world and have performed various tasks from anti-tank warfare to logistics and communication to the more recent critical mission of mine detection.

What appears consistent throughout history are the contributions canines have given to those they serve. If the cooperation planning that brought together these countries and organizations, dedicated at keeping the peace, is an indication of how consistent they will be in the future then working dogs will always have a job to do and their handlers will be more than happy to reward them.



TOP: A German soldier from the EULEX K9 unit plays with her dog as its reward.

ABOVE: Two dogs search and find their hidden targets.

RIGHT: Lt. Lars Persson, a K9 handler trainer with EULEX, instructs Spc. Bryan Skipper and his dog, Sammy, on proper use of vocals commands and body language. **FAR RIGHT:** A Kosovo Policeman and his K9 partner search for drugs during a training class at Camp Bondsteel in March.





ALERT: The H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) and You

What is H1N1 (swine flu)?

H1N1 is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in April 2009 in the United States. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 Flu?

The symptoms of this new influenza A H1N1 virus in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Also, like seasonal flu, severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

How does this new H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of this H1N1 virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something

with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Are there medicines to treat infection with this new virus?

Yes. These anti-viral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster.

How long can an infected person pass the virus on to others?

At the current time, CDC believes that this virus has the same properties in terms of spread as seasonal flu viruses. With seasonal flu, studies have shown that people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against this new H1N1 virus. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Avoid traveling to areas with high rates of H1N1 flu (Mexico).
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective; always keep a bottle in your pocket.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

What should I do if I get sick?

Report to Sick Call. Upon entering the hospital put a mask on to protect others and wash your hands. Camp Bondsteel hospital is prepared to treat soldiers that test positive for flu.

VIP SNAPSHOT

CLASSIFIED



KFOR NATO security personnel gather to discuss better protection

Security Officer representatives from MNTF North, South, East, West, Center, KTM and MSU, joined forces at Camp Bondsteel to conduct cross-training and address present NATO system security issues. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Wade)

“WE’RE WATCHING YOU!”



EARTH: Cleaning up Kosovo

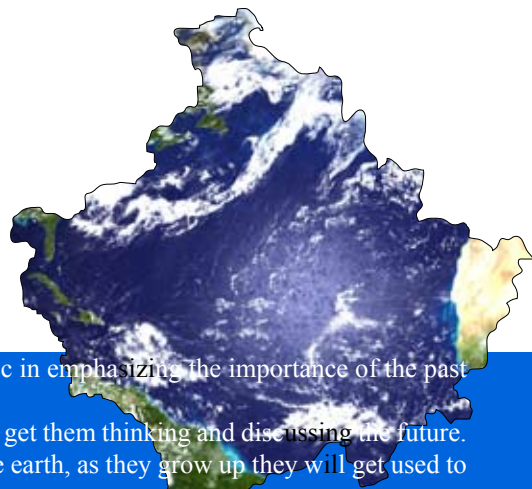
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STB's Command Sgt. Maj. James Norris, from Atascadero, Calif., agrees with Vucic in emphasizing the importance of the past but knows looking to the future is where this regions success will lie.

"We are hoping people will drive by and understand what we are doing here. It might get them thinking and discussing the future. I believe children are the future. If we can teach these kids here today to take care of the earth, as they grow up they will get used to doing that and hopefully make Kosovo a better place to live," said Norris.

"It is important that the children see this and know that if you care about your community you can make a difference. To come together as one we can affect where we live in a positive way," Stojanovic said, "We must keep it this way so every generation will remember. Years ago on what we call Warrior Day people would gather at all war memorials and give speeches to honor the sacrifice made. We would like to do that again here," concluded Stojanovic.

KFOR's Earth Day effort in Brezovica only skimmed the surface of the trash problem but it might have uncovered just enough so that something as important as giving all for your countries future might not be forgotten and if the Soldiers helped inspire someone with an open-heart and open-mind, to care for their community, then their environment might have a chance.



Choir of

St. Josef's Church

Stubla, Kosovo





ABOVE: 1st. Lt. Jonathan Key, Officer-in-Charge of Liaison Monitoring Team One, makes the first move at the Kamenica/Kamenice Chess Tournament, where all ages and ethnicities were welcome. His team tried their hand at dethroning last years champions, but no luck. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Paul Wade)



ABOVE: Gen. Carter Ham, the Commanding General for USAEUR and Seventh Army, visited Camp Bondsteel and spent a day with Liaison Monitoring Team Four. He sat down with Spc. John Young, 2nd Lt. David Romero, and the commander of the LMT, Maj. Kenneth Koop, during lunch, then received a briefing before walking through Team Four's assigned town, Vitina/Viti. At the LMT town office the general asked Pfc. Sandra Witcher, Sgt. James Waibel and Staff Sgt. Joel Norris what they thought about being a part of the KFOR mission and the LMT and how can they work themselves out of a job. "It is important that we not do something that they can do for themselves," said Waibel. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st. Class Paul Wade and Sgt. Adam-David Pepper)



ABOVE: Sgt. 1st. Class Seth Renfro (center, kneeling), NCOIC of Liaison Monitoring Team Six, poses with his team and local teachers from Kacanik after playing a soccer game in their town. The game was a great way to break the ice as the Soldiers will be working closely with the town's leaders to improve the area. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts)



ABOVE: Soldiers enjoy the Cinco de Mayo celebration held at the South Town fitness center. Task Forces competed in games and a few troops dressed up and provided live entertainment. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Louis A. Smith)



ABOVE: Command Sgt. Maj. Rob Whittle, Command Sergeant Major of Multi-National Task Force-East, KFOR 11, carries boxes of school supplies to donate to an elementary school in Ferizaj/Urosevac. Whittle, shows 2nd grade teacher Gervete Hajrullahu-Shholla a Mine Awareness coloring book with the help of an interpreter. KFOR makes every effort to connect with as many young children to warn them of the dangers of unexploded ordnance. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts)
RIGHT: 1st Lt. Molly Huggins, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, Alaska National Guard, gives students from the economics high school from Ferizaj/Urosevac, Kosovo a tour of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter assigned to Task Force Arctic Eagle at Camp Bondsteel. Erenisa Spairu, a student, sits at the controls during a tour of the camp as part of Arctic Eagles community outreach program. "I am enjoying being at the camp and would like to be able to fly a Blackhawk one day," said Spairu. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Adam-David Pepper)



LEGAL

L I N G O



Defending Those Who Defend America

My name is MAJ Kevin Thompson, and I am a member of the U.S. Army Trial Defense Service (TDS). TDS provides a full range of defense legal services to American Soldiers of all ranks. Those services include:

- ~ Representing Soldiers charged with military criminal offenses at courts-martial
- ~ Representing Soldiers during criminal investigations and before elimination or grade reduction boards
- ~ Counseling Soldiers regarding pretrial restraint, non-judicial punishment (Article 15), and various adverse administrative actions taken pursuant to military regulations
- ~ Counseling Soldiers on suspect rights and certain other matters.

TDS is an independent unit within the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, and is not a part of the Camp Bondsteel chain-of-command. Rather, TDS offices worldwide report through their own supervisory chain to a separate TDS HQs in Arlington, Va. This independence from local commands allows TDS attorneys to vigorously advocate on behalf of Soldiers.

To show our independence, we wear a separate patch from everyone else.

The shield-shaped patch bears a sword which supports the scales of justice. The patch reflects the nature of legal defense work.

The sword supporting scales of justice represents the unit's mission to defend Soldiers at courts-martial and separations boards, seeking justice for Soldiers.

also The sword signifies that TDS personnel are Soldiers as well as lawyers. For more information about TDS, see www.jagcnnet.army.mil/TDS.

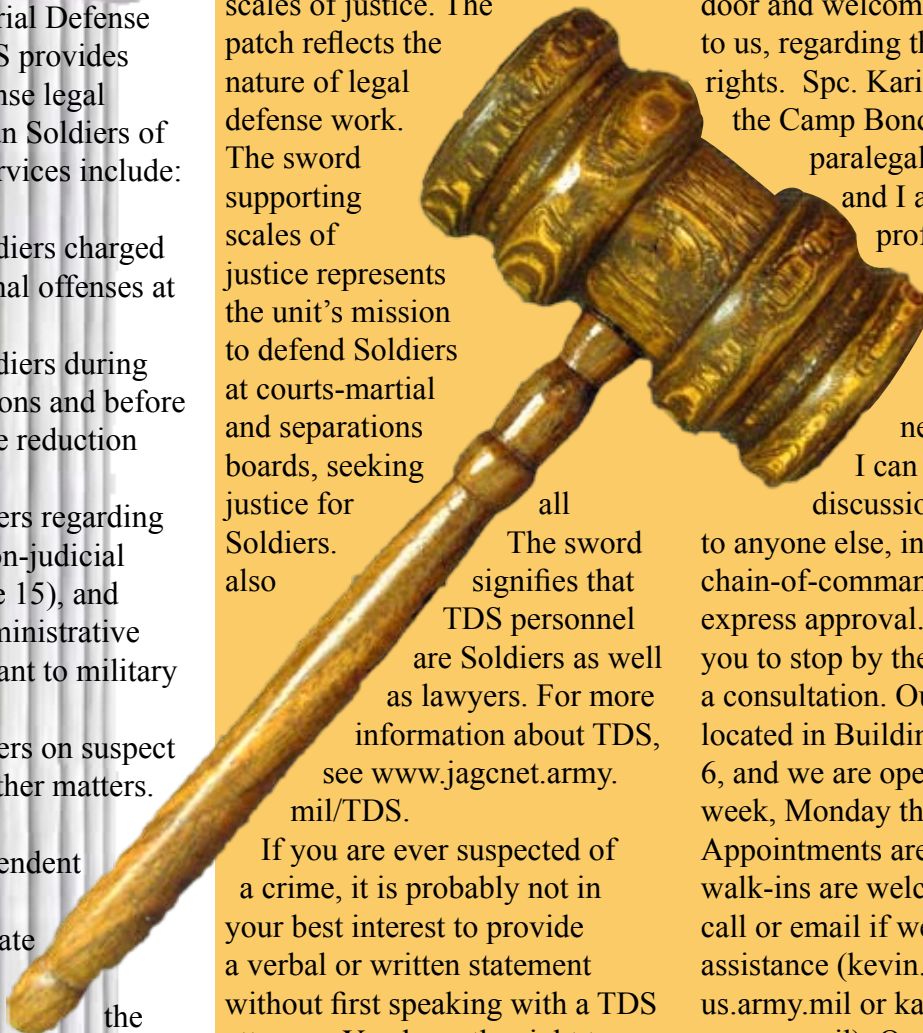
If you are ever suspected of a crime, it is probably not in your best interest to provide a verbal or written statement without first speaking with a TDS attorney. You have the right to remain silent. Simply put, if a government representative (i.e., a 15-6 officer, military police officer, etc.) seeks to interview you about a suspected crime, you have the right to politely and tactfully decline to speak about the matter. This right to remain

silent is not something to take lightly. It is a sacred right that the framers of our Constitution gave to you as an American citizen.

We at TDS have an open door and welcome you to talk to us, regarding this and other rights. Spc. Karina Foutz is the Camp Bondsteel TDS paralegal, and both she and I are bound by the professional rules of responsibility regarding client confidentiality. This means that neither she nor I can talk about our discussions with you

to anyone else, including your chain-of-command, without your express approval. We welcome you to stop by the office for a consultation. Our office is located in Building 1330C, Room 6, and we are open six days a week, Monday thru Saturday. Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. Stop by, call or email if we can ever be of assistance (kevin.v.thompson@us.army.mil or karina.foutz@us.army.mil). Our DSN is 781-4012, and our cell number is 774-675.

Note: I am re-deploying in July 2009; a replacement is tentatively scheduled to arrive in August.



Inspirational Insight

~ thoughts from the Peacekeepers chapel



"We Will Miss You Fadil"

Throughout our lives we meet people who have a significant impact on us by just being themselves and doing their job with passion and excellence. These people inspire us to become better people. Sometimes we only truly realize what they have meant to us when we suddenly lose them from our lives. Mr. Fadil Berisha, an Albanian language instructor at the University of Maryland on Camp Bondsteel (CBS), was one of these people.

On 24 April 2009, Fadil Berisha suddenly passed away at CBS hospital following an apparent heart attack. Mr. Berisha was a devoted husband to wife, Shyhrete and a father of four children, Rilinda, Ridvan, Riad and Rebiart. He was an educator for more than 30 years in the local community and then on Camp Bondsteel. More than 2,000 people attended his funeral including many of his former students.

By the number of people who paid their condolences on his passing, it was apparent that Mr. Berisha had a significant impact on the lives of many. His students on CBS remember him as always positive, always encouraging and always supportive. Although many Soldiers on Camp Bondsteel did not have the opportunity to meet Mr. Berisha during their short time in Kosovo, his death serves as a reminder that we have a brief time on earth and how important it is to make that time meaningful to the people we love and all those we touch everyday. Mr. Berisha set the example as an instructor and in life for many to follow. It might be that his final, and greatest, lesson to those who knew him, or only now know of him, is how much one person can make a positive difference in the lives of others.

He left a lasting impression on his KFOR 11 students. In short, some shared their impressions of Mr. Berisha:

Field Rep, Visar Azemi, UMUC, CBS, said that, "we lost one of our best educators..."

"Mr. Berisha was truly a very special person that touched so many people." said Maj. Tiggs

Col. Navarati said that, "Fadil made sure that no student was left behind"

Staff Sgt. Barthson said, "Fadil made my life in Kosovo so much easier"

Spec. Pierce said, "Fadil always smiled and was so passionate about teaching, he will always be missed"

Spec. Rodarte said, "Fadil taught with a big heart"

Spec. Deese said, "Fadil was always there to help"

Sgt. Witkowski said that, "Fadil made learning fun!"

On 30 April 2009, 14 Multi-National Task Force-East Soldiers visited the Berisha family in Ferizaj to offer their condolences. They presented the family with cards and a copy of a joint statement in Albanian that honored him. Mrs. Berisha was very appreciative of the visit and commented that the visit by MNTF-E students eased the pain of her loss. The meeting with the family was extremely moving. May God's blessing be upon the Berisha family.

It's always good finding people doing good things for others. Thank you for paying it forward.

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.
- Proverbs 22:1 (CEV)

Blessings, Chaplain Forsyth



Students greet Soldiers from the 184th Infantry from California. The children, who are from the Liria primary school in the city of Gnjilane/Gjilan, received school supplies purchased by the National Guard Soldiers of Task Force Nightstalker. They handed out the supplies as part of their community outreach program. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adam-David Pepper)

MAY 2009

THE **GUARDIAN** EAST

The British EOD set to depart KFOR went out with a bang as they announced their Change-of-Command on a nearby hill within Camp Bondsteel by exploding dangerous munitions found during their tour. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts)

