















# Navy airman supports Army as translator

By Spc. RICK ROTH

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Only a few weeks ago, Navy Airman Vlada Musicki was at sea level working on Sea Stallion helicopters at Sigonella, Sicily. Now, Musicki is perched high above Bosnia on Hill No. 722 working as a translator for the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion.

"When the war here escalated, I had a good idea I'd eventually end up here, though I didn't think it would be with the army," said Musicki, a 23-year-old St. Petersburg, Fla. native.

Trained in helicopter repair, Musicki is part of the Navy's Heavy Combat 4 "Black Stallions" stationed at Sigonella. Once the Navy learned of his ability to speak Serbo-Croatian he was given a language test, and after scoring well on the test, Musicki was attached to the 501st and relocated to Hill No. 722. The hill is called "Golo Brdo" by locals, which translated means "the naked hilltop."

"I didn't know what was in store for me," said Musicki about his future working with the Army in his first joint exercise.

A first generation American with Serbian ancestry, Musicki still has family living in the former Yugoslavia, and though his family is aware of his presence here, he has not yet had the chance to visit them. While growing up in the United States, Musicki frequently visited family in the

## Navy airman Vlada Musicki, a native Yugoslavian, chats with Bosnian children.

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Balkans, spending a total of about three years in the former Yugoslavia.

Aside from his job as a helicopter mechanic and his current role as a translator, Musicki's ultimate goal is to be accepted into the Navy's SEAL program.

"I just want to see if I've got what it takes," Musicki said.

Having served almost three years with the Navy, Musicki sees his current position as a military intelligence translator as a career step in the right direction.

"It's a team effort up here," said Musicki, the only sailor on Hill No. 722. "We're all part of the U.S. Armed Forces and we're just out here to do our job."

## West, from page 1

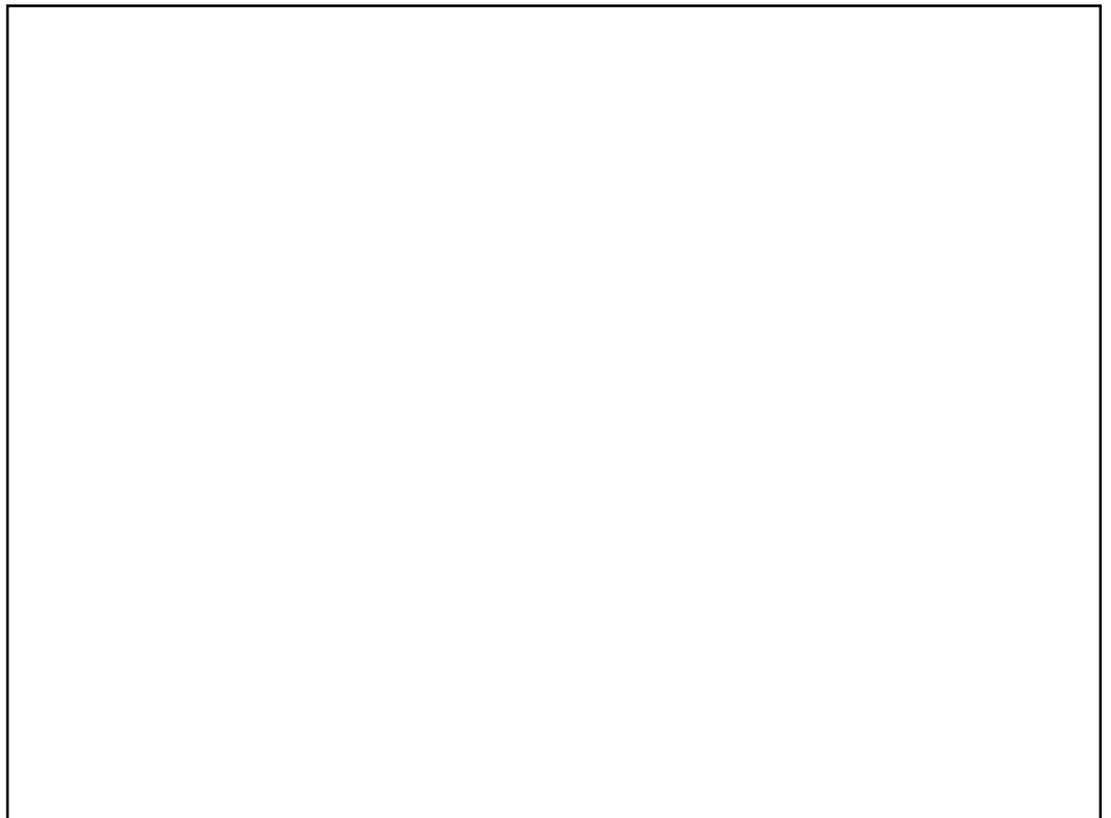
West again spoke of the Army's commitment to Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. He also reiterated that U.S. forces deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina are still on a 1-year timeline.

"What we are doing is what we should be doing and we are doing it well and doing it appropriately," West said, defending the country's role in the mission.

"In the end, our soldiers will leave with the feeling that they made a difference," he said.

West said he felt welcomed by the troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "I'm always excited when I get to be with soldiers ... their morale lifts my morale," he said.

The Secretary assured troops that America is behind them. "Every one of these soldiers is having an experience of a lifetime that will be with them all of their lives," he said. "And when they think back ... I need for all my soldiers to realize that — despite the cold, the hardship and the mud — there was never a doubt for a single hour of a single day that they didn't have the complete support of the American people."



Army Secretary Togo D. West Jr. (right) and Col. Robert G. Shields, 130th Engineer Brigade commander, cross the famous pontoon bridge over the Sava River.

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