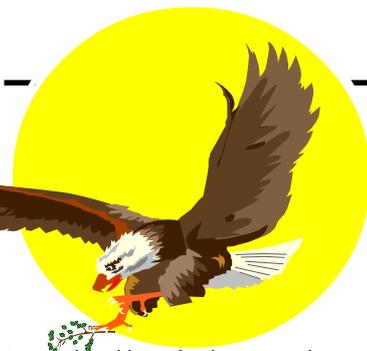


THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

Fast and furious



Soldiers from Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, are preparing the M109 Howitzer for firing during training exercises in support of Task Force 1-26.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

Fast and furious, the advance party rushes in. The critical element is speed. Soldiers conduct mine sweeps and ensure all obstructions are out of the

way. They scramble to lay down tape and stakes in order to lead the howitzers exactly along the azimuth of fire. Commo is functioning and flawless. The big guns rumble into place.

“Once we pull into position, we need to be ready to fire within minutes of the time the first vehicle stops,” said Pfc. Alton O’Neil, a 22-year-old Lafayette, La., resident who works as a member of the advance party, 4th Section, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery. “My job is to bring the guns within 20 miles of the target on the azimuth of lay.”

Recently, Btry. C, 1/7 F.A., assigned to Task Force 1-26 area of responsibility, participated in a battalion competition for tactical performance. 1/7

F.A. is the task force field artillery for Bosnia.

“We have to keep our Ready X time, the time it takes to be ready to fire, to a minimum,” said 1st Lt. Stephen S. Koh, 1st Plt. leader, Btry C, 1/7 F.A. “This ensures that there is a minimal lapse of artillery coverage in the area of responsibility. Our objective is to be ready in minutes.”

The platoon is evaluated on expedience and precision. This includes how the advance party operates, how accurate the guns roll in, and how the guns are prepared and fired. A platoon consists of four howitzers, four ammunition carriers providing rounds and one Fire Direction Center with a See Big Guns page 12

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The question is...

Why do we drive on parkways and park on driveways?

Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?

If buttered toast always lands buttered side down, and cats always land on their feet, what would happen if you tied a piece of buttered toast to the back of a cat?

If the 7-11 is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, why do they have locks on the doors?

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

Why are there floatation devices under plane seats instead of parachutes?

Have you ever imagined a world with no hypothetical situations?

How does the guy who drives the snow plow get to work?

If you're driving at the speed of light and you turn on you headlights, what happens?

If con is the opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of progress?

Do vegetarians eat animal crackers?

Why, when you transport something by car, it's called a shipment, but by ship, it's called cargo?

You know that little indestructible black box that's used on airplanes? Why can't they make the whole plane out of the same substance?

Why is it that when you're driving and looking for an address, you turn the radio down?

What does Geronimo scream when he jumps out of a plane?

Why don't sheep shrink in the rain?

Why are they called apartments when they're all stuck together?

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

As I walk around Tuzla Main and on my many visits to other base camps, I have noticed several uniform violations. We are all professional soldiers and must dress correctly.

One concern I have is the wearing of the civilian physical training uniform.

This uniform was never authorized to be worn as a leisure outfit at the end of the day -- it was designed to give soldiers options.

The standard issue of PT clothing is not enough to sustain the soldiers during this extended deployment. I've seen individuals wearing the civilian PT sweats as a leisure suit. This practice will stop now. PT clothing may be worn while doing PT, while in the living area, and between the living area and the shower point. If you are walking to the post exchange, PT gear is unaccept-



able. The mixing of military and civilian clothing is also unacceptable

The next concern is the wearing of canvas jungle boots. Regulations state that jungle boots can't be worn between Oct. 15 and April 15.

Wear the leather boots we have been issued. Late-

ly some of the days have been rather mild, but remember, the weather can change at any time to cold and snow. When the calendar pages hit April 15, break out the jungle boots.

Poly-pro tops and sweaters issued to us are not designed to be worn as outer garments. They are to be worn under the BDU top.

As we start the re-deployment cycle, remember to stay focused on your mission, look sharp and dress according to regulation.

By Command Sgt. Maj. James W. Laws 1st Infantry Division (Forward)

Redeployment

Redeployment is coming. We want to maintain 1st Infantry Division (Forward) combat readiness and improve operational efficiency through risk management and the performance of risk assessment.

There are three phases in the redeployment process -- Preparation and breaking camp; Convoy movement from base camp to the redeployment and intermediate staging bases, and from railhead to home station; and rail operations, loading and unloading equipment. Phase one will be covered this issue with the remaining phases to come in future issues.

- Commanders identify critical tasks to be performed and necessary equipment for those tasks.
- Back plan as necessary to meet critical redeployment dates.
- Complete a staff review of all OPLANS and Annexes.
- Prepare vehicles and equipment for redeployment.
- Review load plans.
- Identify hazards and "sensitive class" cargo -- mark them.
- Conduct PMCS on all vehicles and equipment.
- Ensure that all vehicle's safety related equipment is on hand.
- Check each vehicle for loose rounds or pyrotechnics and for munitions tucked onto storage compartments.
- Fuel tankers must be purged.
- Conduct hazard analysis, risk assessment, of redeployment.

By Lt. Col. Troy Vincent, Division Safety Officer

THE TALON

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- 1st Infantry Division Commander . . . Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs
Editor in Chief . . . Maj. William L. DuPont
364th MPAD Commander . . . Maj. Frank Partyka
OIC . . . 1st Lt. Robert M. Inouye
NCOIC . . . Sgt. 1st Class Daniel M. Ware
Editor . . . Sgt. William L. Geddes
Features Editor . . . Staff Sgt. LaVonna A. Rohloff
1st Infantry Division PA NCOIC . . . Sgt. Gregory W. Binford
Translator . . . Arjana Sabanovic
Illustrator . . . Sgt. Corwin L. Reed

My friends, my heroes



Photo by Spc. David Boe

Pfc. Isidro A. Martinez(left), and Spc. Michael D. Buchanan, both of Company C, Task Force 1-18, meet with Verka Brkic in her home two months after treating her for injuries from a minestrike.

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

Pfc. Isidro A. Martinez doesn't consider himself a hero.

The 20-year-old Anton, Texas native said he was just doing his job when he and Spc. Michael D. Buchanan came to the aid of two minestrike victims in the town of Omerbegovaca last Dec. 20.

At least one person thinks otherwise.

"They are my friends and heroes," said Verka Brkic, who was treated by Martinez when her left foot was blown off by a mine. Brkic had been attempting to help her mother-in-law, Ana Brkic, who only seconds before had stepped on a mine which tore her lower leg away. Ana died soon after arriving at the hospital. Verka, with the help of Martinez, Buchanan and other soldiers from Company C, Task Force 1-18, survived. "I could have died without their help. Nobody could help us except them."

Brkic was able to personally thank the two soldiers for their efforts when they visited her on Feb. 25 at her temporary home a few days after her release from the 21st Combat Support Hospital.

"At first it felt kind of strange meeting her, but after a while I was glad she doing all right," said Martinez.

"I felt it was nice to see the lady again, but when she started talking about her mother-in-law it kind of upset me," said

Buchanan, 22, of Wellesville, Ohio. "But I feel it was nice to see that the work we did paid off for her, and that she is happy with us."

The two soldiers sat on a small couch in a cramped room and listened silently as Brkic related what happened to her and her mother-in-law that day. She said the two had been talking about their health when her mother-in-law stepped on the mine.

"We heard some kind of sound like a rifle shot, and she sat down, grabbed her leg, and said, 'daughter, I lost my foot,'" said Brkic. "I thought somebody had shot her with a rifle. I tried to pick her up and I stepped on another mine. I was thrown a few meters and couldn't help her after that."

Soon afterward, Brkic's husband, on finding the women on the road, ran to Observation Post 9 for help.

Martinez and Buchanan said they would never forget the scene Dec. 20 when they arrived with members of their unit in two M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

"I had never seen anything like that," said Martinez. "I was real nervous at the time."

"When they brought the older woman to me, and everything two inches below her knee was missing, I looked at the wound, then looked at my squad leader, and I was just kind of overwhelmed that it was so bad," said Buchanan. "I never pictured a human's limb half missing."

See HEROES page 12

NEWS BRIEFS

Mother Nature has been kind to us, providing beautiful weather over the past few weeks. With this weather also comes pesky critters, TICKS!

The Veterinarian has seen several of these on the working dogs. They are out there and they carry disease. Those of you that have soldiers working the perimeter or patrolling, have them check themselves and each other closely.

When a tick is found on a soldier it can be removed by grasping the head with tweezers and pulling straight back. DO NOT put oil over the tick, squeeze it or use a match or lighter to cause it to back out.

This may cause the tick to regurgitate, spit, into the blood stream and potentially infect the host. The aid station will remove any ticks you are uncomfortable removing. Questions should be directed to 1LT Spears or 2LT Hermick at 558-5804.

Everywhere a sign

As redeployment nears, take a moment to refresh your memory as to European road signs. An above average percentage of redeploying personnel have been involved in auto accidents when they return, so the time will be well spent.



No Passing

No Stopping



Mandatory direction of travel

Quayside or river bank



Guarded Railroad crossing

No Motor Vehicles



HMMWV, car collide



Spc. James W. Langley, 21, a wheeled vehicle mechanic of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 1-18, inspects the damage to the HMMWV that was involved in a head-on collision with a civilian vehicle.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

Two civilians were killed, one civilian and four U.S. soldiers injured, in a head-on collision between a HMMWV and a civilian vehicle just north of Srebrenik on Route Arizona, Monday.

Four-year-old Adnan Huselija was pronounced dead at the scene by local police, said 1st Lt. Darlene Altman, station commander, Task Force Eagle military police station. Kemal Huselija, 30, Adnan's father and the driver of the civilian vehicle, and another civilian, were transported by civilian ambulances to Tuzla Main Hospital. One of the men died at the hospital according to the U.N. International Police Task Force

U.S. soldiers involved in the accident, all from E-139, Target Acquisition Battery, were 2nd Lt. Madison Carney, Sgt. Forrest Halliburton, Chief Warrant Officer Ernest Metcalf and Spc. Rob-

ert Thornell. All suffered lacerations, were evacuated to the 21st Combat Support Hospital, Blue Factory, treated, and released.

The accident occurred at approximately 10 a.m. when the civilian vehicle, a Volkswagen Rabbit traveling south on Route Arizona, attempted to avoid a pedestrian crossing the road and swerved into the HMMWV, said Altman, who was in a military police convoy ahead of the accident.

"The assistant driver of my last vehicle saw what happened in his rearview mirror," said Altman. "Once he got a hold of us we turned around and came back to see what we could do."

Altman said that once they arrived at the scene of the accident, the MPs secured the area and called in the medics. The HMMWV was recovered by a wrecker from Task Force 1-18, and towed to McGovern Base.

The accident is still under investigation.

Accident makes safety an issue

By Staff Sgt. LaVonna Rohloff
364th MPAD

The HMMWV accident Monday illustrates the importance of safety. Sometimes circumstances cause accidents even when everything has been done correctly. Safety is a concern for everyone, everyday, everywhere, constantly. The rules and guidelines are set up by safety policies, but we have to put them in force, follow them and be on guard.

Someone is here to help. "Safety is endless," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Matthews, the Task Force Eagle Base safety noncommissioned officer in charge at Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry

Division.

Matthews and Sgt. 1st Class Roger Johnson, Eagle Base camp mayor, recently conducted an informal survey on the road in front of the white house at Eagle Base. They randomly hailed down passing vehicles to check if the occupants were wearing their seat belts. Within a two-hour period of time, only one soldier from 15 vehicles checked was wearing a seat belt.

"Once you step into a vehicle you need to have the seat belt on. It is United States Army, Europe policy," said Matthews. "From the senior leadership all the way down to the private, all need to wear seat belts." Ultimately it is the convoy com-

manders' responsibility to see that all occupants wear seat belts. Almost every state has rules requiring vehicle occupants to wear a seat belt. "Why should it be different from home," said Matthews.

Matthews also conducts camp safety assessments and trains others on safety in the U.S. sector, and coordinates with the Air Force safety NCO. He does not fix things to make them safer -- that is left to individual sections and people working in the area. "My job is to point out," he said.

"Safety is knowledge," said Matthews. Currently he is working on certain areas

See SAFETY page 5



Staff Sgt. Richard Price, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division, lets Dick the explosives dog sniff wire which may have been used in the bombing, while Staff Sgt. Ronald Hartley, 2nd Ordnance Detachment, EOD Forward, left rear, and Russian Army Maj. Oleg Babinsky, an engineer platoon leader with the Russian Brigade, look on.

Photo by Spc. Tracey L. Hall-Leahy

Bombing attacks continue

By Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ware
364th MPAD

The early February morning quiet was shattered when ten explosions destroyed homes in an unoccupied village three kilometers south of Dugi Dio in the Multi-National Division-North area.

At approximately 1 a.m., Feb. 22, the series of explosions were reported by both the Russian Brigade and Task Force 1-26. Responding ground and aerial elements from TF 1-26 found nine homes in the village of Mumici destroyed. The homes were unoccupied and several were already heavily damaged from the war. The damage was confined to an area where there are no cur-

rent resettlement plans. However, the damage was not limited to the village of Mumici. Gajevi was also the victim of bombing attacks on the same day. A number of pre-fabricated homes under construction by Muslims who are scheduled to return to the area were destroyed. Unfortunately, the attacks on Gajevi were not over.

On March 2, at approximately 4:50 p.m., a crowd of Republic of Srpska citizens gathered in Koraj and marched to Gajevi carrying clubs and sticks. The crowd grew during the march and included approximately 150 people by the time it reached Gajevi.

The crowd set fire to nine of the remaining eleven pre-fabricated houses that were

spared on the prior attack. The two remaining houses, originally spared from destruction, eventually were destroyed by fire. Stabilization Force soldiers from the Russian Brigade who reinforced the 20 Russian SFOR soldiers already encircling the homes could not put the fires out. The crowd immediately dispersed after the homes were set ablaze.

These incidents represent a failure of Republic of Srpska police to uphold and enforce the law as agreed upon by all sides. All incidents are currently under investigation by local authorities and are being monitored.

SAFETY

from page 4

of safety assessment with his Air Force counterpart, Tech Sgt. Tony A. Williams from the 4100th Group (Provisional). Some Army and Air Force safety concerns cover the same issues, such as motor pool, guard tower and weapons. Other areas, like base vehicle operations, are predominantly an Army concern.

The Army is primarily concerned with ground safety and the Air Force with air safety and aviation. "You guys have a lot more here to check for safety," Williams said. "The Air Force and Army co-exist when it comes to safety. We interface with the Army and

get information from lessons learned."

A safety concern unique to the Air Force is the area surrounding the runway and the air field, an area normally located on the edge of the base. The area is inviting to birds and animals such as dogs, foxes and rabbits. Williams pointed out a swampy patch which will be drained and filled in with low grass to make it easier to keep vegetation down, and not be so inviting to animals.

Matthews has set up a monthly safety assessment program for Task Force Eagle with checklists covering a number of areas around camp. "The major game plan is to enforce the standards for the soldier," he said. "It's great, I get a chance to get out. I like doing this. When I go to a place I try to make a difference."



SUPPLY BY AIR

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE – As the two soldiers race past their commander, he offers them a high five for a job well done. This was the scene after Company A, 299th Forward Support Battalion, completed their mission here, Feb 18.

The 299th performed an internal (inside the helicopter) and external (using an ISU-90, a metal cargo container carried by helicopter) load of repair supplies for delivery to Camp Colt and Camp McGovern.

Sgt. Bienvenido Celestino, from Bronx, N.Y., is responsible for ground guiding the CH-47 Chinook to a safe landing for the interior load team. Once the bird lands, the back door opens and the team goes to work loading the supplies with a forklift onto the Chinook.

Celestino then guides the bird into the air and forward to the external load team. The bird hovers over the cargo containers as the three-man team, located on top of the box, secures the external load.

The ISU-90 has to be loaded and balanced to ensure that it will ride properly, said Staff Sgt. Ildefonso E. Barraza, a San Antonio, Texas, resident who works as the warehouse noncommissioned officer in charge.

The external load team moves to a safe location and the aircraft is guided slowly into the air. As it enters a safe distance, it makes a turn and flies toward its destination.

Although air supply is a part of the 299th's mission essential task list, this is the first time that they have performed both an external and internal lift simultaneously.

From top left, clockwise, Pvt. Eric J. Chevalier prepares riggings so the load can be picked up by the Chinook... Sgt. Bienvenido Celestino signals the Chinook as it arrives... Celestino signals the Chinook to a safe landing... The pilot explains the last minute loading procedures to Chevalier and Sgt. Andrick F. Brown... Soldiers hook the external load.



EOD – render it safe



The 2nd Ordnance Detachment blows munitions brought in by former warring factions

Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

A bright flash of reddish-orange light, followed a split-second later by a ground-shaking boom, turns to a smoky-black fog as the vibrating air returns to normal. The next moment is filled with people letting out the breath that was unconsciously being held, and the realization that though the explosive ordnance disposal unit's job is dangerous, it must also be kind of fun.

The 2nd Ordnance Detachment, 191st Ordnance Battalion, EOD, crudely put, blows stuff up. Headquartered at Camp Bedrock, the unit has two-person teams throughout the U.S. sector.

Though some things are blown up, something else is being built up; Army/Navy relations. Ten Army and six Navy personnel make up the 16-member unit.

The Navy personnel are from EOD Mobile Unit 8, Detachment 10, stationed in Sigonella, Sicily. Though from different branches and separated by a couple of countries, they are not strangers.

"We have worked with these guys and trained with these guys, done different projects together, so for us it was natural that they were the ones to come with us on this deployment," said Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Johnson, operations sergeant.

"It's good cross training, we get to see how the Army works," said Petty Officer 2nd Class David Andrews.

The team works together to accomplish their mission.

"Our main mission is to render safe all unexploded ordnance that poses a threat to the stabilization force or SFOR facilities," said Johnson.

The unit also provides technical expertise during weapons site inspection, conducts post-blast inspection, provides mine awareness training and unexploded ordnance bomb threat searches.

The unit disposes of confiscated and turned in former warring factions munitions as well. Since Nov. 25 they have destroyed more than 40,000 items. These items include mines, rockets, rocket propelled grenades, mortars and small arm rounds and weapons.

"The explosives that are stockpiled are destroyed by detonation, we use explosives to dispose of them," said Johnson.

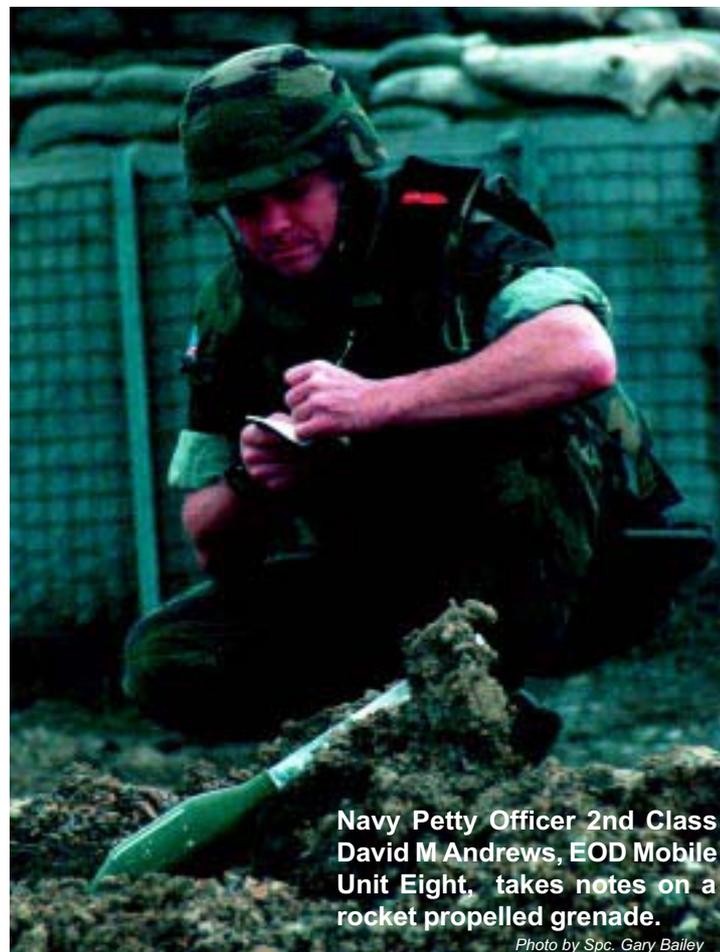
If EOD finds something on the ground, they blow it up in place.

"Only as a last resort do we get hands on. Our first choice is to destroy it in place. If it's in the road, we blow it in the road. There's really no reason to take extra risks." Johnson said.

The mission and teamwork have gone as planned.

"Overall, this mission couldn't have gone better. Our primary mission of responding to UXO is being accomplished. For all our missions, we've been there when we needed to be," said 1st. Lt. Jorge Serano, 2nd EOD (Fwd) commander. "There's a lot of esprit de corps here. We've pulled together professionally and as friends to accomplish this mission."

If there's any question whether or not Johnson likes his job, he'll answer it. "I think it's the best job in the Army. It's the most interesting thing I've ever done," said Johnson.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class David M Andrews, EOD Mobile Unit Eight, takes notes on a rocket propelled grenade.

Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

Celebrate Black History



Spc. Chantelle Y. Mitchell, 320th Adjutant General Postal Company, sings a powerful rendition of 'Sister' to Sgt. Brenda D. Singletary also of the 320th AG Postal Company.

Photo By 1st Lt. Lori Anderson

**By Spc. Gary Bailey and
1st Lt. Laurie Anderson
129th MPAD**

America. The world's great melting pot. Like the country which supports it, the U.S. Army also offers an abundance of cultural and ethnic diversity. As a part of this, base camps around the U.S. sector celebrated Black History Month.

At Eagle Base approximately 100 peo-

ple attended a program Feb. 28th which highlighted achievements made so far, as well as the struggle America still faces.

Black History Month is not designed to merely bring up the past, said Sgt. 1st Class Williams, the equal opportunity advisor who organized the program.

"We all come from different places in the world," Williams said. "We stereotype and assume a race is this way or that way.

We need to begin to check it out for ourselves. We need to put ourselves in a position to see where they've been, where they're going, where they're at, so that we can help each other out."

Education and awareness regarding different racial and ethnic groups also serves an important function in the military. "We still have minor problems, but with education and awareness we can go beyond that," Williams said. "We can begin to work together, we can begin to serve our country. For us it's part of our job, and with that job, it's the morale of the soldiers, it's bringing harmony and unity in the units, which makes us more effective on the battlefield."

Other camps also celebrated Black History Month, including Camp Bedrock, which honored black soldiers on Feb. 26.

Command Sgt. Maj. James W. Laws, 1st Infantry Division (Forward), a guest speaker, took time to reflect on the contributions that black Americans have made, highlighting Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of black history".

Law quoted Woodson, "We should not learn less about George Washington, first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen, but we should learn more about the forgotten 3,000 Afro-American soldiers of the American Revolution who made this father of our country possible."



Command Sgt. Major James W. Laws, 1st Infantry Division (Forward) spoke at the ceremony in honor of Black History Month.

Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

School visits leave 101st MI Bn. soldiers hoping children are ... **Getting to know us**

By Spc. Jenna C. Bisenius
300th MPAD

"The first thing I used to tell the children in my classroom is that if you hear any loud explosions, *get under your desk and cover your head,*" said Bosnian interpreter and former schoolteacher Emina Kabil of the downtown Tuzla school where she taught in 1995. "You never knew when grenades or shells would hit near the school...a couple of years ago, two children were killed by an explosion from a mortar round."

Kabil, 24, now works as an interpreter with Company C, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, at Eagle Base. In a strange twist of fate, Kabil got a chance to visit Pazir school, where she used to teach, when the 101st went on a goodwill mission to the school recently.

The purpose of the trip was to deliver donated goods collected by the 101st family support group in Wuerzburg, Germany, where the unit is headquartered. It is the third time the unit has visited the school since their arrival in October.

The supplies were well received. "The teachers do not get paid much, and yet they have often bought school supplies out of their own salaries," said Emin Sisic, Pazar's principle.

But equally important, Sisic stressed, was the interaction between the children and the visiting soldiers. "Some of these students started school in bomb shelters; they have never traveled, never seen the mountains. Their concept of America they get from war movies; they think all Americans are big Rambo's with every kind of gun. They need to be helped to realize that Americans are ordinary people, too."

After passing out the boxes of goods, the soldiers visited different classes and joked with the older teens who spoke English.

"Civilian-Military relations are part of our job," said Capt. Kent L. Webber, logistics officer with the 101st. "Visiting the school has helped our friendship with the teachers and students grow. When that friendship grows with the students, it grows with the parents also, and so a small piece eventually becomes part of a larger puzzle. In order to enhance the SFOR mission, it requires the good will and the cooperation of the people, and this is a small step in that direction."

"I'd like to see visits like this happen more frequently," said Spc. Charles W. Donze, supply specialist with the 101st. "It would give the local people here a chance to get to know us. Imagine if we had foreign soldiers occupying the United States, and they didn't take the opportunity to meet the Americans living there. We might come to believe that they think they are better than us. We might even speculate about their reasons for being there. We wouldn't know whether to act friendly or hostile towards them."

"Here on post," said Donze, "the Bosnians are friendly because they know us. The ones off post don't know what to think."



Sgt. Kelley R. Skalbeck, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, gets help interpreting a Bosnian school book.

Photo by Spc. Jenna C. Bisenius

"Unfortunately, we sometimes become dehumanized in their eyes," said Capt. David O. Tiedemann, commander of Co. C. "They only see the tanks, the weapons, the uniforms. Visits like this one to the school help Bosnians see that we are human too."

Tiedemann said that it is important for the 101st to be able to interact with the Bosnian public, to find out how they feel about issues like the Brcko Arbitration and other controversial topics.

"The mission of the 101st is to provide intelligence collection and analysis to the division," said Tiedemann. "The information we gather helps determine things like whether force protection levels on base should be increased, or whether we have enough forces to handle a riot or whether convoys through certain areas should be decreased."

There's more to it than just the information though. "When you look at those kids, you know why you're here," said Lt. Col. James H. Harper, 101st MI Bn commander. "You see their hope,

their dreams—If this country is going to pull itself out of a hole, it will be with the kids. The older students plan to go to college, the younger children in the school are preparing for an academic competition...they see a future."

It is a future Harper said he hopes to help them prepare for. "Cultural exchanges like our visit to the school are important. Many prejudices and

biases start in childhood, based on a lack of understanding. We need to get children in an international frame of mind as children. As adults, this will let them enter into a spirit of global community."

And perhaps avoid tragedies like the one described by Kabil, who said, "I will always remember a refugee girl in one of my classes. Her father had disappeared along with 10,000 other men from her town during the war. She couldn't read and wouldn't speak...she was very disturbed. She had been transported from her town to Tuzla with the rest of the women and children that were spared. All of them had been transported in trucks, like animals...they couldn't eat, couldn't go to the bathroom, couldn't even hardly breathe, it was so crowded on those trucks. Compared to her, my children in Tuzla were lucky."

**"When you look at those kids,
you know why you're here,"**

-Lt. Col. James H. Harper

Paying claims; protecting the force

By Sgt. Steven S. Collins
129th MPAD

The narrow road leading to the small village of Papraca winds through the beautiful mountains of the Sekovici Municipality, near the Dobri Base Camp. The road is ancient, built many years ago for local farmers to take livestock and crops to market.

In the past year however, the U.S. Army has driven all sorts of vehicles on the little road, making it hard for even HMMWVs to travel the short distance from the paved highway to the village.

"These roads were not meant for the kind of vehicles we drive on them," said Maj. Carlos A. Martir, Jr., claims commissioner for Bosnia. Martir is a member of the 4th Judge Advocate General Detachment, Legal Services Organization, U.S. Army Reserve. "But the locals need these roads and since it is important we establish patrols and use the roads for other purposes, we are prepared to fix them," said Martir.

On a recent fact-finding mission, Martir discussed with village officials how the U.S. Army would repair the road. Through an interpreter, the village residents said they wanted the road paved, although the road has never been paved. Martir politely demurred, suggesting instead that the road would be patched up to fix the damage left by the movement of military vehicles.

"All we can do is put the property back to its original condition, not to improve it, but to put it back to what it was," said Martir. "We can't widen the road or improve the road, but we are prepared to fix it and make it passable for the local population."

Martir acts as a claims adjuster for an insurance company. He inspects damage done to property, people or vehicles and decides whether the U.S. Army will pay to fix the problem. Since Operation Joint Endeavor began in December 1995, nearly \$10 million dollars in claims has been filed by



Maj. Carlos A. Martir, Jr., 4th Judge Advocate General Detachment, goes over paperwork with a local citizen while the interpreter, Senad Tosunbegovic, looks on.

Photo by Sgt. Steven S. Collins

locals for all kinds of damages. Payments, however, have been kept low.

"We've paid about 10 percent of the claims," said Martir. "That's not bad for a mission that's been going on for over a year."

Many claims filed by locals are fraudulent. Many involve actual damage, but the amount requested is often inflated.

"We once had a claim for 20,000 marks (\$17,000) for a milk cow," said Martir. "The claim computed the cost of milk over a five-year period. Obviously, we didn't pay that much for the cow."

Some of the highest claims paid involved the destruction of trees. "Trees are a precious commodity over here. The older the tree, the more valuable it is. We have to look at the type of wood, the age, what the tree was used for, all sorts of criteria in

order to settle the claim," said Martir.

"Paying the correct amount for damage caused by military maneuvers is good force protection," said Martir. Having an officer from the U.S. Army meet with local officials and negotiate shows how much the U.S. military respects the locals rights.

"We pay for the damage we do and that's important. The perception on the part of the local citizens is that we are willing to meet with them and they can ask questions about what we are doing. These people are not accustomed to being treated that way and it helps us in the peacekeeping mission," said Martir.

"This is one of the best jobs I could have during this deployment. I work to show the people of this country that Americans are fair and that is satisfying," said Martir.

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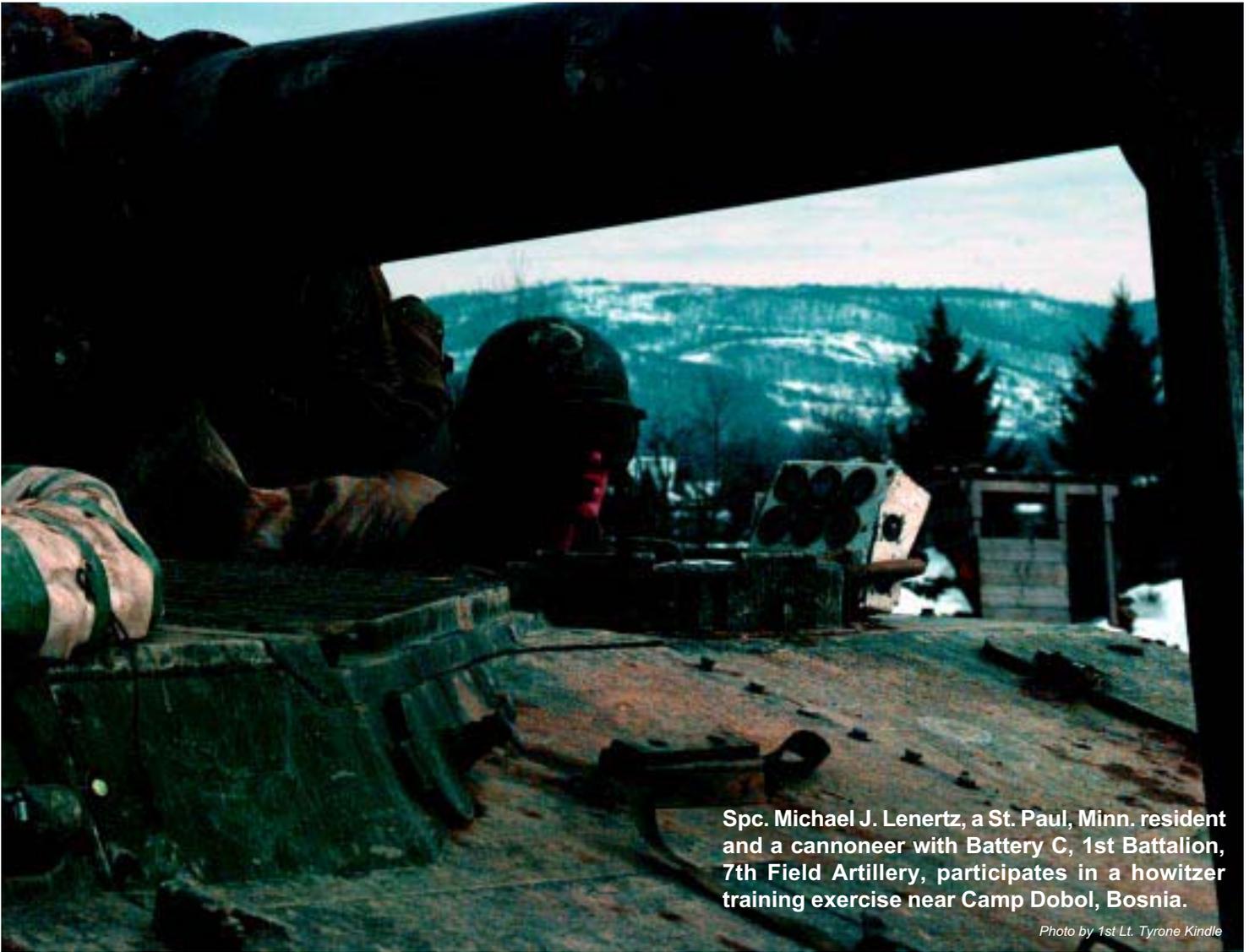


Reed This

By Sgt. Corwin L. Reed



Are you allergic to any medications?



Spc. Michael J. Lenertz, a St. Paul, Minn. resident and a cannoneer with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, participates in a howitzer training exercise near Camp Dobil, Bosnia.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

Big guns

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contingency of an alternate fire direction center.

"Howitzers can fire in excess of 20 kilometers and can deliver all types of munitions including laser guided," said Capt. John Fitzgerald, commander, Btry C, 1/7 F.A. "We are as fast as the tanks but can fire a lot further."

On target? There are many double checks to confirm correct survey and location information by computer. The forward

observer reports on accuracy and gives further instructions. "We conduct smaller scale operations and train for larger scale. At any time, at any location, we need to be ready to go in a minutes notice," Fitzgerald said. "We do this at every opportunity because it is essential we stay proficient. However, if we go home without firing a shot for real, then we (SFOR) have done our mission correctly."

"We are making progress in TF 1-26 sector," said Sgt. Lance R. Samuelsen, a 25-year-old Merced, Calif., resident who

works as the ammunition team chief, 4th Section, Btry C, 1/7 F.A. "We can't control everything that goes on in Bosnia. But the vast majority of people on all sides seem to be coming together. Of course, some areas here need more work than others.

"I appreciate that the chain of command really makes an effort to keep morale high during this deployment," Samuelsen said.

"The soldiers are motivated, detailed and know what they are doing," Koh said. "They have put alot of effort into training." The effort is obvious -- the high speed soldiers received a 94 percent on the evaluation.

Heroes

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Both soldiers, who have been in the military less than two years, said the training they received in combat life saving helped them respond to the situation.

"It clicked in when they brought the first victim out," said Martinez. "I just went out and did what I was trained for to the best of my abilities."

"I was tired -- I had just gotten off guard duty," said Buchanan, "But I found that little added extra to get me up the hill and treat that casualty to the best of my knowledge and get her evacuated as soon as possible."

"I thought they performed excellent," said Task Force 1-18 Command Sgt. Major Dwight E. Anderson. "Their training kicked in and they did what they were trained to do."

Anderson said what Martinez and Buchanan did that day was a part of the peacekeeping and peace-enforcing process.

"You have to take the moral high ground," said Anderson. "And reaching out to people who are most in need is the best way to do that."

On Dec. 20 Martinez and Buchanan, in doing their job, "reached out," and Brkic appreciated it.

"I thank them very much for their help, and I won't forget it," she

"I just went out and did what I was trained for to the best of my abilities."

—Pfc. Isidro A. Martinez

said. "I wish them a long life."