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THE TALON

Friday, April 25, 1997

Operation Joint Guard, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Serving the soldiers of Task Force Eagle

Observation Post Nine --

Nothing but footprints

Spc. Roy M. Johnson, a team leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, looks over the remains of what used to be Observation Post Nine.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

OBSERVATION POST NINE – For 16 months it provided an indelible presence right in the heart of the Zone of Separation. Its drab structure of clumpy pickets, slinky concertina wire and faded sandbags provided a sharp contrast to the war-torn town of Omerbegovaca that surrounded it. All gone now – torn down and leveled by the very people who once inhabited it.

Despite its rather utilitarian name, Observation Post Nine was a symbol of IFOR and SFOR's mission of peace-enforcement. Now it's only a memory – and, ironically, a new symbol of the success of the peace-enforcement mission.

"All we're going to leave here are footprints," said 1st Lt. William G. Jacobs II, executive officer of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. The "Ramrods" were the last tenants of OP-9, occupying the checkpoint for less than two months before the word came for its removal. Jacobs, 26, was put in charge of the mission. The

See FOOTPRINTS page 12

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Back to nature

This list is circulating among Forest Service employees. These are actual comments left last year on Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by backpackers completing wilderness camping trips:

"A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed?"

"Escalators would help on steep uphill sections."

"Instead of a permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce worldwide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness."

"Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands."

"Found a smouldering cigarette left by a horse."

"Trails need to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill."

"Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests."

"Please pave the trails so they can be plowed of snow in the winter."

"Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them."

"The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals."

"Reflectors need to be placed on trees every 50 feet so people can hike at night with flashlights."

"Need more signs to keep area pristine."

"A McDonald's would be nice at the trailhead."

"The places where trails do not exist are not well marked."

"Too many rocks in the mountains."

Up Front -- Getting in step, Standards Review I

Now that the majority of folks are in place and the smoke is beginning to clear, it is time to get in step. I feel it is most appropriate to review some of the 1st Infantry Division's uniform standards.

Jungle boots; everyone is asking when they can be worn. The division standard is, they are authorized for wear from the 3rd Monday in April through the 3rd Monday in October. With that, there is a 30-day caution zone, which allows commanders to authorize jungle boots for wear 30 days prior to or 30 days after the official wear date. The official wear date this year is April 21. I cannot emphasize enough to the chain of command how important it is to exercise good, sound judgement when deciding to wear jungle boots. As you can see already, the weather at times can be very kaleidoscopic. Soldiers must understand that keeping feet warm and dry is the ultimate goal. Never, ever risk not being prepared. There aren't too many things worse than wet, cold feet.

Next, the Physical Fitness Uniform. The PFU can be worn to and from your PT location. Commercially purchased gray or black biking shorts or the equivalent can be worn under the PFU shorts. The length of the biking shorts must end above the knee or higher. Civilian type shorts (with inner liner) and tops (which bare no midriff) can also be worn providing they are in good taste and kept in serviceable condition. The wearing of this gear is also acceptable in the evening or during non-duty hours in your living and shower areas. PFUs, whether Army grays or civilian, are not to be worn in the PX or Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities.

Command Sgt. Maj. S.L. Kaminski
1st Infantry Division (Forward)

Accidental discharge

In recent days accidental discharges of weapons have occurred at several base camps in the area of responsibility. This is an indication that soldiers are not properly clearing their weapons and leaders are not paying attention to details. Many of our soldiers have duties that require them to frequently travel on and off camps and perform guard duty or Quick Reaction Force. As they complete the mission, leaders, as well as soldiers, must ensure that magazines are taken out of the weapons and the weapons are properly cleared. Follow these safety tips:

- **Take time when clearing your weapons.**
- **Point muzzle of the weapon into the barrel.**
- **Stay focused on what you are doing.**
- **When in line to clear your weapon, stay alert -- stop any unsafe act immediately.**
- **Drop everything that you are carrying and proceed to clear your weapon properly.**
- **Be personally responsible for weapons safety.**
- **Follow the proper procedure for clearing weapons. Make sure the magazine is out of the weapon and visually check the chamber for a round.**
- **Stop and correct any unsafe act -- especially those, regardless of rank, who are not clearing their weapons properly.**

By the Task Force Eagle Safety Office

The Talon

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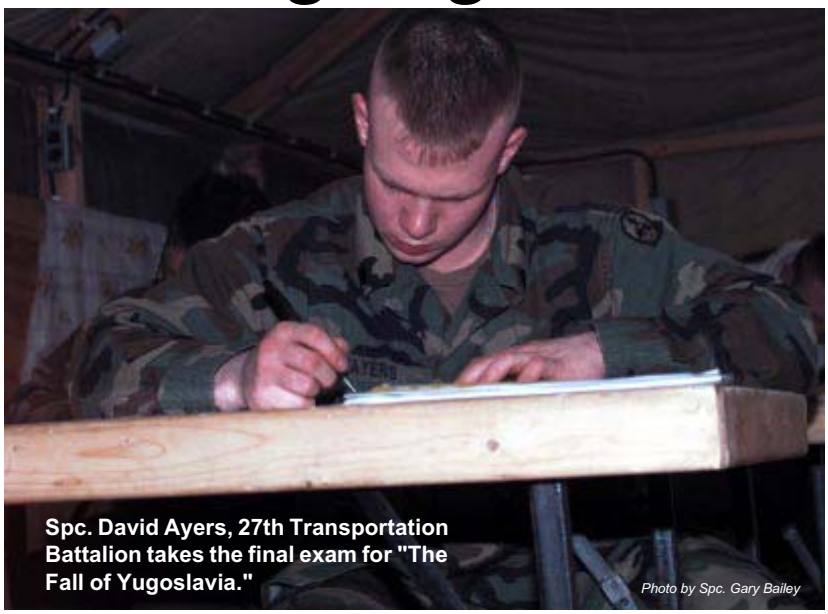
Read and pass along-- a Talon is a terrible thing to waste

What's going on here?



Spc. David Ayers, 27th Transportation Battalion takes the final exam for "The Fall of Yugoslavia."

Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP SAVA NORTH -- Muslims, Serbians, Croats. Kosovo, Slovenia, Montenegro. Milosevic, Itzebegovic, Tudjman. Racial hatred, nationalistic radicals, ethnic cleansing. These words and many more have been tossed about with reckless abandon. Many soldiers have no idea what they mean, who they are, or why they're here. What are the various factions? Why do they hate each other? Who fought in the war and why? There is hope. Enlightenment is possible. A seminar offered by the University of Maryland explained much to soldiers at Slavonski-Brod April 12-13.

The class, taught by Maj. Glenn Schweitzer, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, was "The Fall of Yugoslavia." It examined how Yugoslavia collapsed, how war broke out and how peace was established.

"The class gives students who are serving with the American forces an idea as to what they're doing here," Schweitzer said.

Schweitzer said that it is important that soldiers understand peacekeeping missions, because the military will be increasingly involved in these kinds of missions.

"Major Ralph Peters wrote an article in which he said he envisions the world of the future having small criminal organizations with high technology, and the question becomes what kind of Army do we need to deal with that threat," he said.

Students learned both the reasons for the Yugoslav war and how some small groups affected it. In learning that, the students also gained an understanding of how these groups work.

"You can see that kind of thing happened in Yugoslavia. There were small paramilitaristic groups which often financed their activities with black marketing and criminal activities," he said.

The course explained how the six republics of the former Yugoslavia erupted into bloodshed, and how three ethnic groups (Croatians, Serbians and Muslims) were involved.

In addition to the lecture and videos the class had special guest speakers. Brigadier General Zeljko Kukec, from the Croatian army (HVO) spoke of the war and current affairs in Croatia.

Kukec spoke on the day that Croatia was holding its municipal elections. It was also the day that Vukovar and the rest of Slavonija (Serb-held territory in Croatia) was to be returned to Croatian control.

Kukec, a representative of the United Nations Military Defense Office for Croatia, fielded questions from students after his lecture.

Another guest speaker was Lidija Stjepanovic, an interpreter for Civil Affairs at Camp Sava North. She shared some of her personal experiences during the war.

Schweitzer covered the Stabilization Force mission and the process of the Dayton Peace Accord implementation as well as the differences between U.N. methods and NATO methods.

"The U.N. Protective Force (UNPROFOR) provides deterrence once a cease-fire has been established. They didn't have a mandate to protect or defend," he said.

He explained that NATO Forces have equipment and rules of engagement which differ from UNPROFOR.

Schweitzer has a BA from West Point, an MBA from Golden State University and is seeking a doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in International Affairs.

News briefs

Risk assessment

Commanders are reminded that prior to each mission, risk assessments should be conducted. At a minimum, risk assessment will include the following: tasks to be performed, hazards/risks identification, risk rating, control options and countermeasures, and the residual risk associated with the mission.

Tunnel safety tip

Leaders should ensure that when convoy commanders give their safety briefing prior to movement, they include the hazards and countermeasures of entering unlit tunnels in the area of responsibility. The hazards include lack of lighting, no center line markings, dirty headlights, oncoming traffic and excessive speeds. Countermeasures include a vehicle commander alert to any type of hazard, staying to the far right of the road, ensuring headlights are on and clean, staying alert for passing vehicles and reducing speed by at least 5 mph/8kph.

Snakes

As the weather warms up, the activity of snakes in the area will increase too. Remember, leave snakes alone -- do not try to scare, or kill them. You can avoid snakes by looking before you lift. Snakes like to hide under objects where it is damp and cool.

If bitten by a snake, contact medical personnel immediately. Do not try to suck the venom out of the wound or cut the wound to bleed the venom out. Do apply a constricting band (not a tourniquet) and ice the area of the bite.

Heat casualties

The warming weather will also increase the risk that soldiers will become heat casualties. On warmer days soldiers should drink double amounts of water. If it becomes too hot outside units should use the work/rest schedule. Soldiers should wear loose clothing. Keeping in good physical condition helps to climatize and keep heat sickness away. As the temperature soars the heat categories will be implemented. Soldiers should be aware what category the temperature is in and act accordingly. The use of ample amounts of sunblock will also help.

Taking care of soldiers

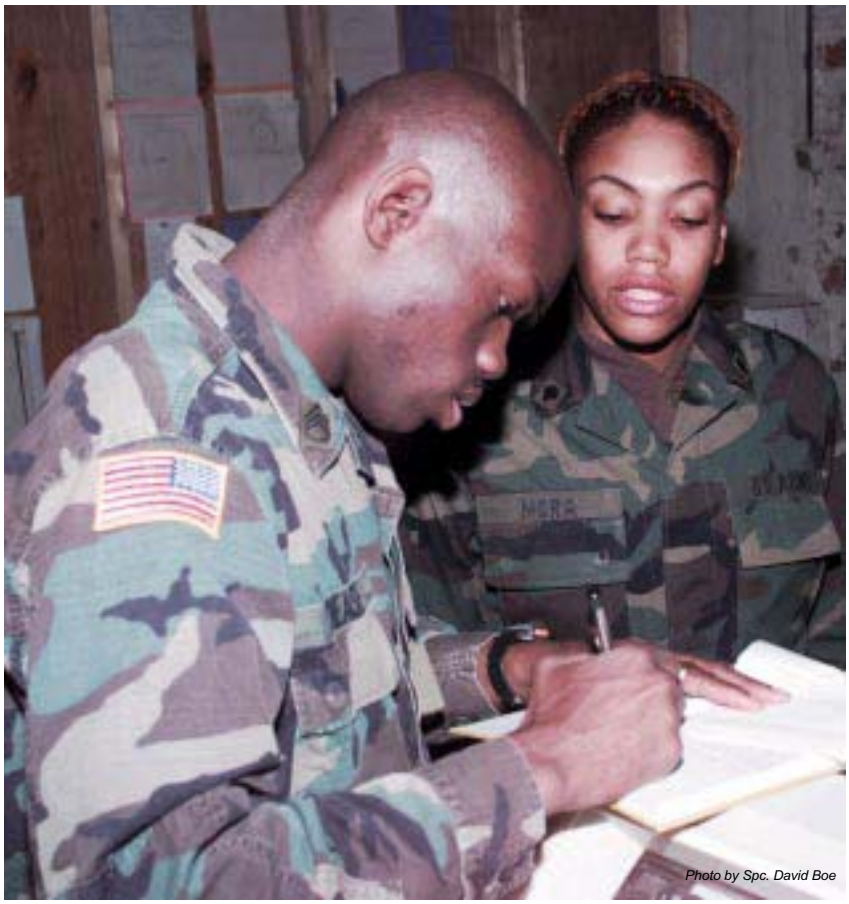


Photo by Spc. David Boe

Staff Sgt. Garland L. Dease and Spc. Vonetta J. Mora, both of the 678th Personnel Support Battalion, review records.

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE -- When Spc. Vonnetta J. Mora found out she was being deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina, she was initially scared: scared of the mines, scared of the turmoil, scared of the unknown.

Fear, however, gave way to concern. As a personnel management specialist with the 678th Personnel Support Battalion, a Reserve Unit out of Nashville, Tenn., what did she have to do to be mission ready? As it turned out, there was a lot to do. Mora, 22, had to drop classes at college, give her job notice, arrange her finances, and, most importantly, say good-bye to her 2-year-old twins.

"I am a single parent, so I had them stay with my parents," she said. With that, she was on her way to Bosnia-Herzegovina for a few months of active duty with the U.S. Army.

Mora is no stranger to being on active duty or the Army. Prior to going into the Reserves a year ago, she served over three years on active duty in Frieburg, Germany, following in the footsteps of her father, a career soldier who served in Operation Desert Storm. Now it was the daughter's turn.

Concern gave way to relief. Mora arrived at McGovern Base with a team from her unit and liked what she saw.

"I was really impressed with the setup here," said Mora. "We're getting the necessities as well as the luxuries."

Mora said the only bad thing about her deployment is missing her family and children, but added that life at McGovern Base gives her peace of mind.

"Of course you're away from home, but at least you have things here to keep your mind off of it and keep the time going," she said. "They're making it as comfortable as possible."

It's ironic that the comfort and peace of mind that Mora finds at McGovern is due in no small part to her and her co-workers' own efforts. The 678th PSB's mission at McGovern is to make sure that all personnel actions for soldiers are taken care of -- everything from ID cards and tags, to promotions, to records. It's a mission that eases the load on the line units, said 678th PSB team leader, Staff Sgt. Garland L. Dease.

"The line units, they have tough jobs," said Dease, 31, a native of Nashville, Tenn. "They're out there doing the best they can, and we're here to augment and support them -- that's our job."

What they are doing in Bosnia-Herzegovina is no different from their Reserve mission back home, with the possible exception of their more austere surroundings, said Dease.

"I would be upset if we were here just cleaning up the toilets in headquarters and stuff like that," said Dease. "But we're doing exactly what we're supposed to be doing -- you can't ask for anything better than that."

Dease, a 10-year Reservist who is a law enforcement officer in civilian life, said he was excited about being deployed. He said he missed out on the unit's last deployment to Operations Desert Shield/Storm because of school.

"When they said we were going, I said, 'OK, good, let's go -- let's do it!'" said Dease. "I mean, that's why I put this uniform on."

It's the interaction with people and taking care of the soldier, said Dease, that appeals to him. It's why he's worked in personnel services his whole military career.

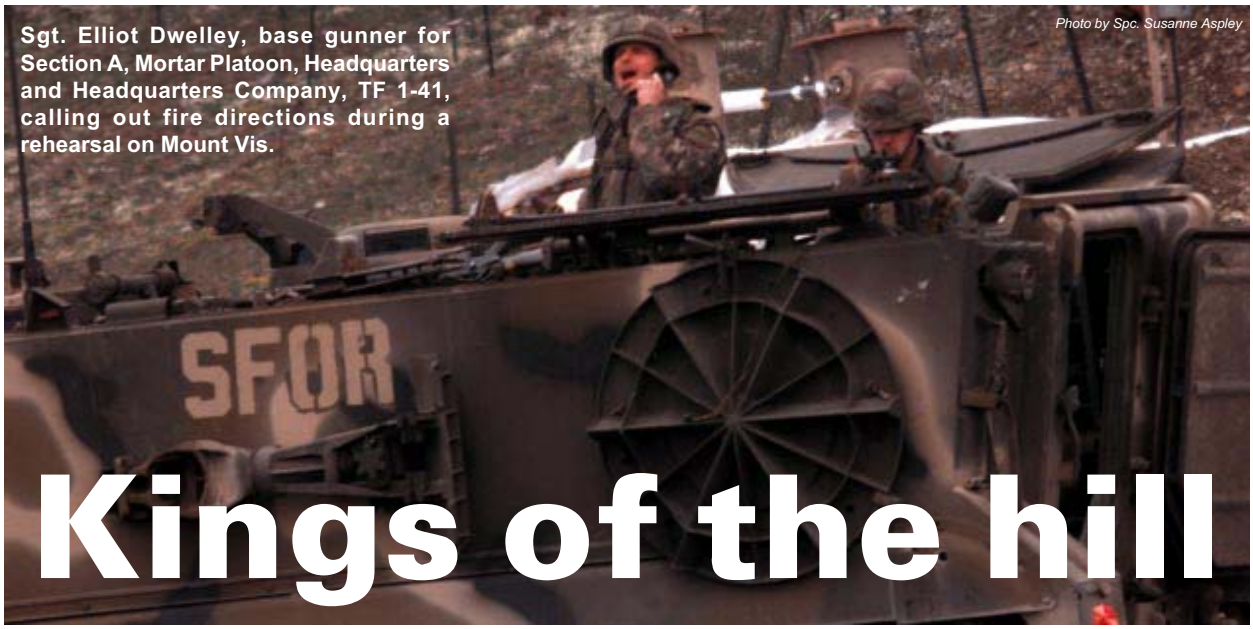
"When a soldier comes with a problem or wants to update something, I can give him or her the answers, and that's the most gratifying thing about this job," he said. "It's all about taking care of soldiers -- that's what we're here for."

Spc. John T. Roberts, 21, the team's records specialist, said their mission to the soldiers is just as essential as having a PX or commissary.

"Soldiers would not like being here if they knew their whole military career had to be put on hold while they were deployed," said Roberts, a college student from Louisville, Ky. "This way, even though they're still down here in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they can still get promoted or whatever they need done. It's not much different than being back in the rear."

For now it's business as usual in the personnel services office. It's a mission, said Mora, that is no different than their active-duty predecessors.

"The people we replaced were active duty and we're doing the exact same thing they did," said Mora. "We're here like everybody else -- we're eating the same, sleeping the same, showering the same, and we're doing the same job, so we're contributing just as much."



Sgt. Elliot Dwelley, base gunner for Section A, Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF 1-41, calling out fire directions during a rehearsal on Mount Vis.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

Kings of the hill

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

MOUNT VIS, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- From the heights of Mount Vis, the entire countryside unfolds into a clear, panoramic view. Strategically, the expansive scope is ideal because nothing goes unnoticed, not troop movement, the Tuzla airfield, or traffic.

The Serbs held control of the mountain throughout the entire war, according to Sgt. Elliot Dwelley, squad leader with Mortar Platoon, Headquarters Company, Task Force 1-41. Lining the buckling road up to the summit are tall wooden frames, like clotheslines. During the war, the Serbs draped tarps and blankets to conceal their movement up and down the mountain. Four times the Muslims tried to capture the key position. Four times they were turned back -- but not for the absence of trying.

During one attack, the Muslims moved an artillery battery onto a nearby mountaintop and began an assault, Dwelley said. The attack progressed, nearly forcing the Serbs off the mountain. The Serbian commander, from his bunker which is still standing, called artillery onto his own position hoping to repel the Muslims off the hill. Unfortunately, his brother-in-law, who was in a bunker 75 meters away, received a direct hit from an artillery round. The commander ended up losing his brother-in-law, but drove the Muslim invasion back down the hill.

According to Dwelley, when the United Nations took control of Mount Vis from the Serbians, their commander said he would be back in a year to reclaim the mountain.

"But we are still here and he's not coming back anytime soon," said Dwelley.

Dwelley, from Portsmouth, N.H., has been in Bosnia-Herzegovina for two weeks. The Gulf War veteran said, "We provide fire support to Camp Dobol and the surrounding area of responsibility. We stay on alert basically 24 hours a day. I have no complaints because I work with a great platoon. We just do what we are trained to do, everyday."

Sgt. Tom Pavone, Company A, 1st Battalion, 13th Infantry, is a fire support team sergeant stationed at Camp Dobol. He is part of a forward observation team that would roll out with the tanks to an area in need of fire support.

"We call the mortars and give them the location of the target so they can fire," Pavone said. "I ensure the rounds impact where they are needed. If not, I call back with adjustments to the target."

Illumination rounds are used during peacekeeping missions. The rounds come out of the tube and burst above the ground, lighting up the area. This can help control riots or disperse crowds.

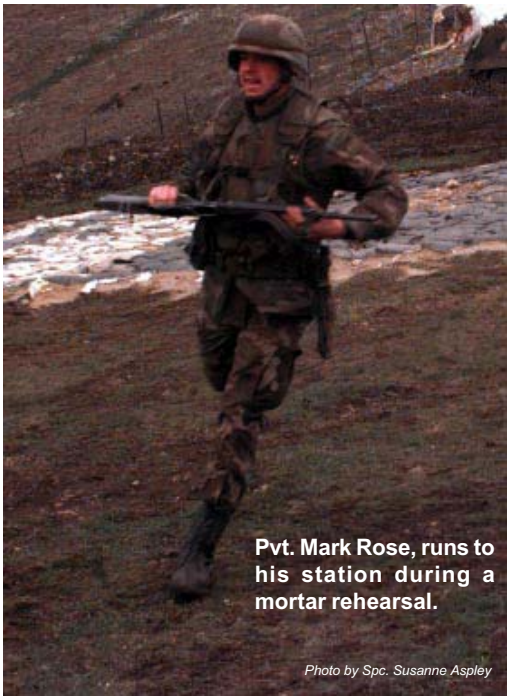
"We can see everything in the illuminated radius. It shows that we have control of the situation, and that we can reach anybody we want," Pavone said.

In addition to security for the mountaintop, 1st Lt. Joe Cieslo, Mortar Platoon leader on Mount Vis, explains the operation of the Mortar Platoon. "We need to be ready in a minute's notice. Hopefully we will never be used, but we rehearse everyday," Cieslo said. "This is excellent training for us while still taking part in a real-world mission."

The soldiers conduct crew drills and squad training daily, plus everyone pulls guard duty. There is also one section of the platoon based at Camp Demi.

"Bosnia-Herzegovina has been through a lot, but from our mountain, it's beautiful. As far as what happens after we leave, that is up to the people that live here. We will have accomplished our mission," Cieslo said.

"I think we (the United States) did the right thing by coming here," Dwelley said, looking towards the bullet-ridden farms lining the long road up to the mountain. "This country was being destroyed and the small children had to grow up with that. It would have been a lot worse for them if nobody stepped in. Some of the children might not even be here at all. In that as-



Pvt. Mark Rose, runs to his station during a mortar rehearsal.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

From top left, clockw
loading the heavy w
water hose as it is lo
Spc. Brian Wooten u
***Background,* Membe**
that it is operational

Fire control

Story and photos by Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE -- As the flickering flame grows into a bustling array of orange-yellow billows, everything in the tent is covered with ever-changing shadows. The soldiers, on all fours, staying close to the floor, make their way to the exits located at either end of the general purpose medium tent.

Minutes seem like hours as the engulfing flames destroy everything in their wake. The occupants conduct a head count safely away from the inferno that has fed on their home and personal belongings. In a mere seven minutes, photos of loved ones, deployment memorabilia and duty equipment sizzle and snap as their remains drift toward the heavens in a thick black cloud.

It is the job of the 264th Engineer Detachment (Fire Fighting), a National Guard unit from Allendale, S.C., to prevent this situation from occurring, and contain the fire if it does.

"We are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and always on guard to provide fire support throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina," said Spc. Brian Wooten, a firefighter. "Even when we are asleep we know that we could be awakened at anytime."

The 264th Eng. Det. is responsible for fire control for Army aircraft and post structures.

"If an aircraft crashes we ensure the safety of the personnel on the aircraft and extinguish the fire with minimal loss of life and property," said Staff Sgt. Jeff Harter, fire chief.

"We can be anywhere on Tuzla Main in less than five minutes," said Harter, who is on his third deployment in six years.

"We would have to be careful with all of the diesel, aircraft and heater fuel, but we would respond just like a fire back home," said Harter.

Responding to hazardous material fires can also be difficult.

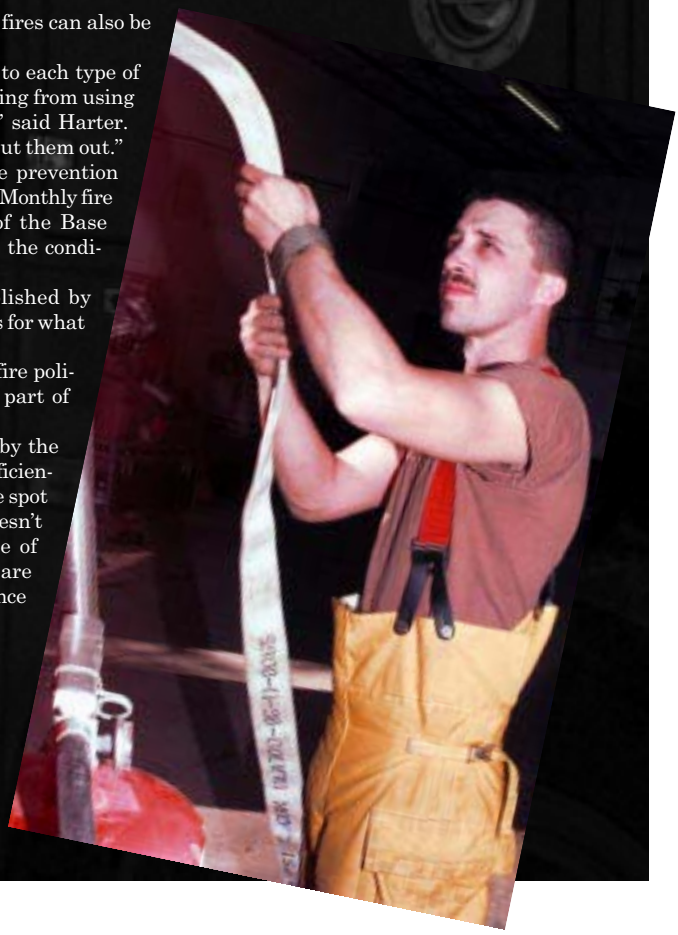
"We have to know how to respond to each type of hazardous material. It could be anything from using water to clearing a half-mile radius," said Harter. "Our job is to prevent fires as well as put them out."

The detachment coordinates a fire prevention program and conducts fire inspections. Monthly fire inspections are conducted as part of the Base Camp Coordinating Agency to assess the condition of the fire protection policy.

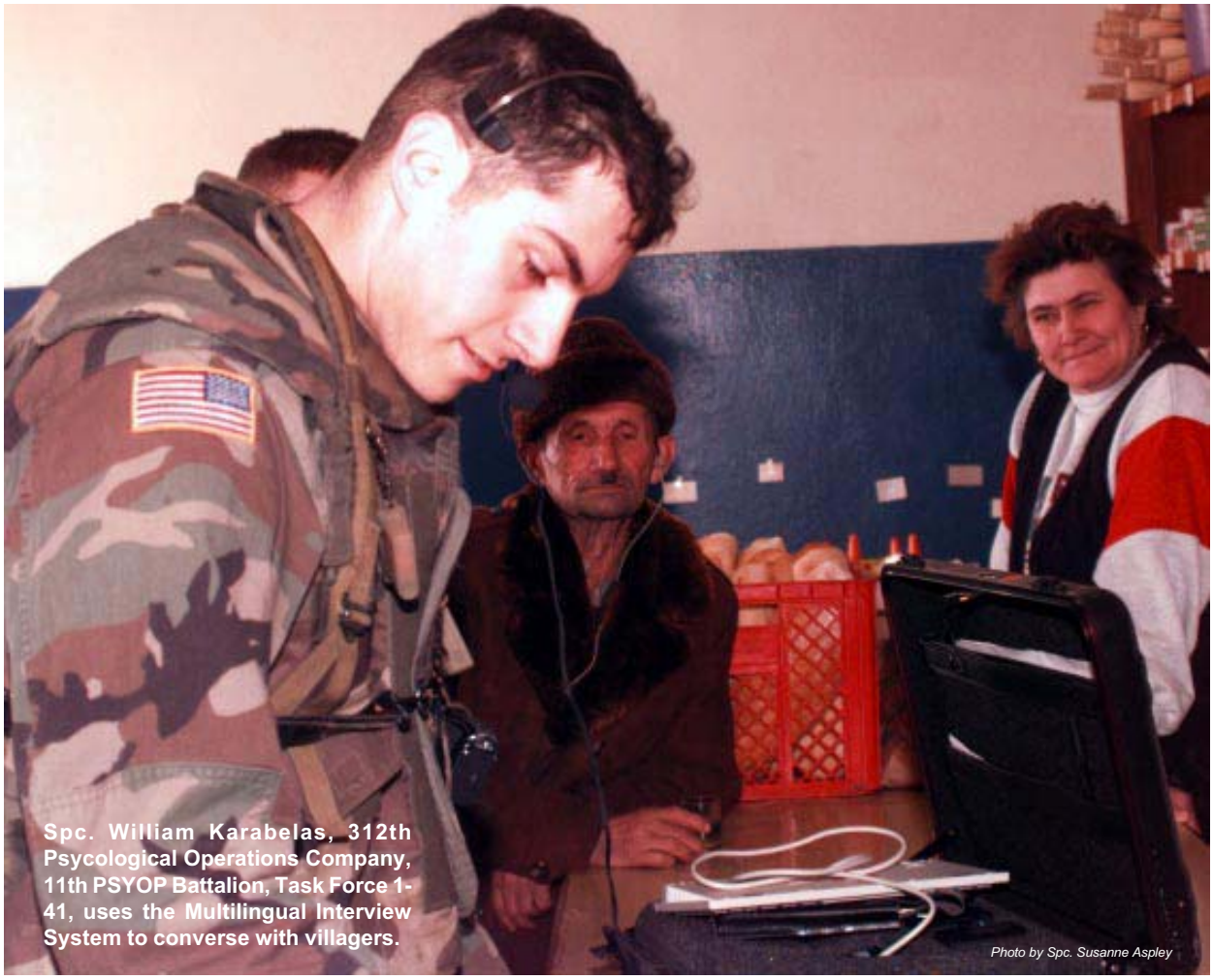
"Fire protection policy was established by Task Force Eagle to provide guidelines for what can and cannot be done," said Harter.

"We are making soldiers aware of fire policy rules," said Harter. "The biggest part of our job is fire prevention education."

The guidelines are being followed by the soldiers, said Harter. "When minor deficiencies are found they are corrected on the spot by the units. As long as everyone doesn't become complacent and stays aware of what they are doing and where they are doing it, we can greatly reduce the chance of a fire."



***lockwise,* Three members of the fire fighting detachment assist**
vy water hose onto the fire truck... Spc. Brian Wooten holds the
t is loaded onto the fire truck... Spc. John J. Belusz (close) and
ten use teamwork to load the attack hose onto the fire truck...
embers from the detachment inspect the fire truck to ensure
ional at all times.



Spc. William Karabelas, 312th Psycological Operations Company, 11th PSYOP Battalion, Task Force 1-41, uses the Multilingual Interview System to converse with villagers.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

Speaking the language

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

CAMP DOBOL -- The Multilingual Interview System (MIS) is a voice recognition computer system which, after taught the user's voice pattern, will audibly translate English into Serbo-Croatian. The compact instrument is currently being tested by members of Task Force 1-41 Psychological Operation Team at Camp Dobol.

"We take it out on missions and introduce it to some of the local people we know well. We are very fortunate to have been asked to test it," said Spc. William Karabelas, psychological operations specialist. Karabelas is a member of the 312th PSYOP Company, 11th PSYOP Battalion, a Reserve unit out of Washington, D.C.

The machine can be used two ways. The first is to speak directly into the microphone connected to a headset. The computer recognizes the user's voice and translates it quickly into Serbo-Croatian.

The second way the machine can be used is by choosing what to say from a pre-set menu of phrases displayed on the screen. The computer will repeat the translated phrase through a minispeaker that is clipped to the user's uniform.

The computer has been used in the villages of Osmasi and Zvornik. "People seem to really enjoy it and the kids get a kick out of it. It builds a sense of trust. It also gathers a crowd which allows us to do our mission, which is talking to people." Although there are a few glitches in the system, "hopefully the designers will perfect this. There might not be a need for interpreters," Karabelas, 26, said.

The Fairfax, Va. resident recently spent two days training in Germany with the MIS. The machine is run on a Windows 95 operating system. It is essentially a mini laptop. It uses a hand held screen, a 133-megahertz processor and two 340 megabyte hard drives. It can be plugged into a large desktop computer as well.

"Most people I have tested this with really enjoy it," Karabelas said. "They are amazed the technology exists. Some of the local people have never seen a computer, and here we come into a village with this machine, speak English into it and out comes Serbo-Croatian."

The computer is in the infancy stage and the Army has not yet purchased it. The one drawback is that the machine does not translate two ways, so a villager cannot speak Serbo-Croatian into the machine and have it translated back into English. However, the phrases in the module are direct questions that can be answered yes or no, or with simple instructions.

Currently the languages available are Arabic, Russian, French and Serbo-Croatian.

"The future is bright for this technology. Soldiers in contact with civilians will not have to rely on interpreters," Karabelas said. "It's nice to know that the Army has entrusted me to test this equipment in a practical, field environment."

Measuring up

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

EAGLE BASE -- When is an inch an inch? When is a volt a volt? When is a pound a pound? These are questions answered, with some degree of accuracy, by the soldiers of the 95th Maintenance Company (Test Measurement and Diagnostic Equipment), a small unit with a big mission.

"We're responsible for calibrating equipment for all military and civilian agencies in (Multinational Division - North)," said Staff Sgt. Nate South, one of only 300 calibration specialists in the Army. "We do stuff for the Air Force, for Raytheon, for Brown and Root. Everyone brings equipment here for us to check."

The Army has a list of 58,000 different types of equipment needing regular calibration. It is the mission of the 95th Maint. Co. to verify the measurements of any piece of equipment that measures. Using complex electronics and computer equipment, South, and his partner Sgt. Michael Shawn, can verify the accuracy of tools, such as torque wrenches, scales, voltmeters, radiacmeters and other important equipment used everyday by soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We check everything, from postal scales to the pieces that test Apache helicopters," said Shawn, a calibration sergeant from Fort Drum, N.Y. "We check anything that measures force, tension, volts, time, frequency, waves, torque -- anything."

The standards for measuring measurements comes from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce. At laboratories in Boulder, Colo., scientists determine measurements with the greatest degree of accuracy. The measurements from NIST are the standards worldwide, for both the military, government agencies and private industry.

"When they say it's a volt, then it's a volt. If they say it's an inch, then it's an inch. NIST even has atomic-powered clocks that give the exact time. The clocks only lose a second every million years or something like that," said Shawn.

The accuracy of the tools used by the 95th Maint. Co. can be traced back to NIST through a complex system of checks. NIST transfers the known standards to the main Army laboratory at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama. From there, the standards are passed to a series of laboratories throughout Europe and the U.S. The standard is then transferred to calibration teams.

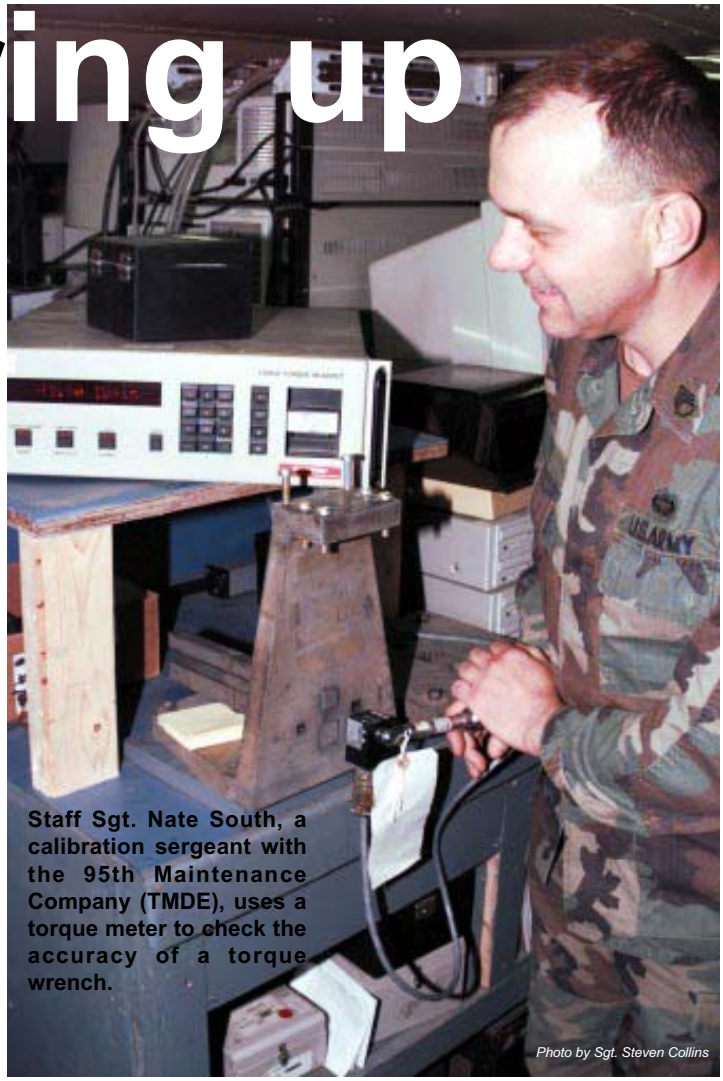
"We can trace the standards all the way back to Boulder. That way we know that the standards we use here are as accurate as possible," said South, a calibration sergeant from Manhattan, Kan.

The average soldier may question why it is important to be so precise. But accuracy is very important to the calibration teams, since accuracy may mean the difference between life and death. For example, the team calibrates torque wrenches used to fix helicopters. If the wrench is not calibrated correctly, a flight mechanic cannot be assured his job is being done correctly.

"I wouldn't want to fly in a helicopter fixed with tools that weren't calibrated correctly," said Shawn. "What if a mechanic tightens the rotors with an improperly calibrated wrench? Those rotors could come off in midair."

"It is a big responsibility, because we do more than just stick a label on a piece of equipment and say OK," Shawn said. "We test the equipment knowing that people rely on our test."

"We have the responsibility to decide whether a particular tool or piece of equipment is returned to the unit. If so, we put a label on the tool with the calibration date and the date it is due to be checked again. If it cannot be calibrated correctly, we must tell the unit that the tool needs to be replaced," said South.



Staff Sgt. Nate South, a calibration sergeant with the 95th Maintenance Company (TMDE), uses a torque meter to check the accuracy of a torque wrench.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

"Sometimes, I guess, the best test was to pour a shot and drink it."
— Staff Sgt. Nate South

South laughs when he remembers all the things calibration specialists once were called to test. "I heard stories that they used to have calibration specialists check the shot dispensers in the NCO club. Sometimes, I guess, the best test was to pour a shot and drink it."

The calibration specialists rely on volumes of technical manuals and on computer testing equipment. As the equipment gets more complex, the Army is becoming more reliant on civilian contractors. The number of military calibration specialists has decreased dramatically in the past few years and will only decrease more as the switch to civilian expertise increases, said Shawn.

"The move is away from soldiers, but you will always need soldiers, especially in deployments like this," said South. "Soldiers can go where civilians can't."

In the name of peace

By Spc. Paul Hougdahl
129th MPAD

CAMP COLT -- New commands taking over camps across the U.S. sector of Bosnia-Herzegovina find that there is a fine line between establishing a good working relationship with the former warring factions, and being tough with the factions when they have not followed the rules laid out for them in the Dayton Peace Accord and the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

Tensions between Stabilization Force soldiers and factions can run high, especially during weapon storage site inspections. Discrepancies are found; weapons are confiscated.

Weapon storage sites continue to be a problem for the factions. Many times factions don't follow proper storage and accounting procedures. After the war stopped, they just piled large quantities of mines, rounds and rockets into dark storage rooms. Many rooms are so tightly packed that during inspections, SFOR soldiers can barely turn around in them.

Company B, 1st Battalion 18th Infantry, has been operating out of Camp Colt as part of Task Force 1-77 for approximately two weeks now, and have already done several confiscations from the more than40 sites inspected each month.

Capt. John Lange, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, Task Force 1-77, goes over inventory lists of a weapon storage site with the Serbian millitary officer in charge.

Photo by Spc. Paul Hougdahl

Serbian soldiers lend a hand during a weapon storage site inspection where more than 400 anti-tank mines were confiscated.

Photo by Spc. Paul Hougdahl

The latest confiscation took place at a Serbian storage site where anti-tank mines were seized along with some hand grenades and small munitions. During an inspection two days before the confiscation, soldiers spent 14 hours counting every piece of munitions in the site. Using records from previous inspections, it was found that there was an excess of anti-tank mines and not enough of some hand grenades and small caliber rounds.

The soldiers confiscated the anti-tank mines that were over the amount listed from previous inspections and also confiscated the number of small munitions that were below what was listed previously.

"They were sort of mystified as to where the numbers came from. I'm not sure if they had a really good idea of what they had in their site," said 2nd Lt. Kent Lindner, a platoon leader for 1st Bn., 18th Inf. "They don't have the same types of standards we have as far as arms room inventory and proper accountability."

"As a new unit conducting our initial inspections we have been extremely thorough in making those counts with the vast collections of munitions and ammunition," said Capt. John Lange, commander of Co. B. "We've discovered some discrepancies that may have been additions since the last inspection or may have been overlooked in the past. We went ahead and worked it out with the faction and decided on the confiscation."

Many things are happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina such as the recent visit by the Pope. Checkpoints are being removed, the weather is warming up and people are moving around more freely. This can also add to the tension in the area. The soldiers don't want to increase the tension and want to have a good working relationship with the faction, yet they have a job to do and must follow the rules.

"I think the warring factions understand that we are here to do a job and I think the picture has been painted for them," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Beecham. "I heard one of the faction leaders say that even though he was upset we took some weapons, he said out loud, 'in the name of peace.' Everybody so far has been cooperating with us in the name of peace."

"We set out before them the things we planned to confiscate and we asked for their assistance," said Lange. "We said that in the best interest of good relations between both units their assistance would be greatly appreciated, and as we saw, their soldiers came out and helped us a great deal in making this an efficient, safe operation."

"Despite the fact that they were losing quite a bit of equipment, we had numerous compliments from them on our professionalism and how we went through and just did our job like we were trained without any partiality," said Lindner.

"It was hard to do an inventory in a small room like they had, we had to double check to make sure we didn't make a mistake ourselves," said Pvt. John Davis, a Bradley driver for Co. B. "We had 30 days of training before we came here where they covered all the what ifs. We are very prepared to handle this."

Turkish Brigade aids blind

Photo and cutline by Turkish Brigade LNO

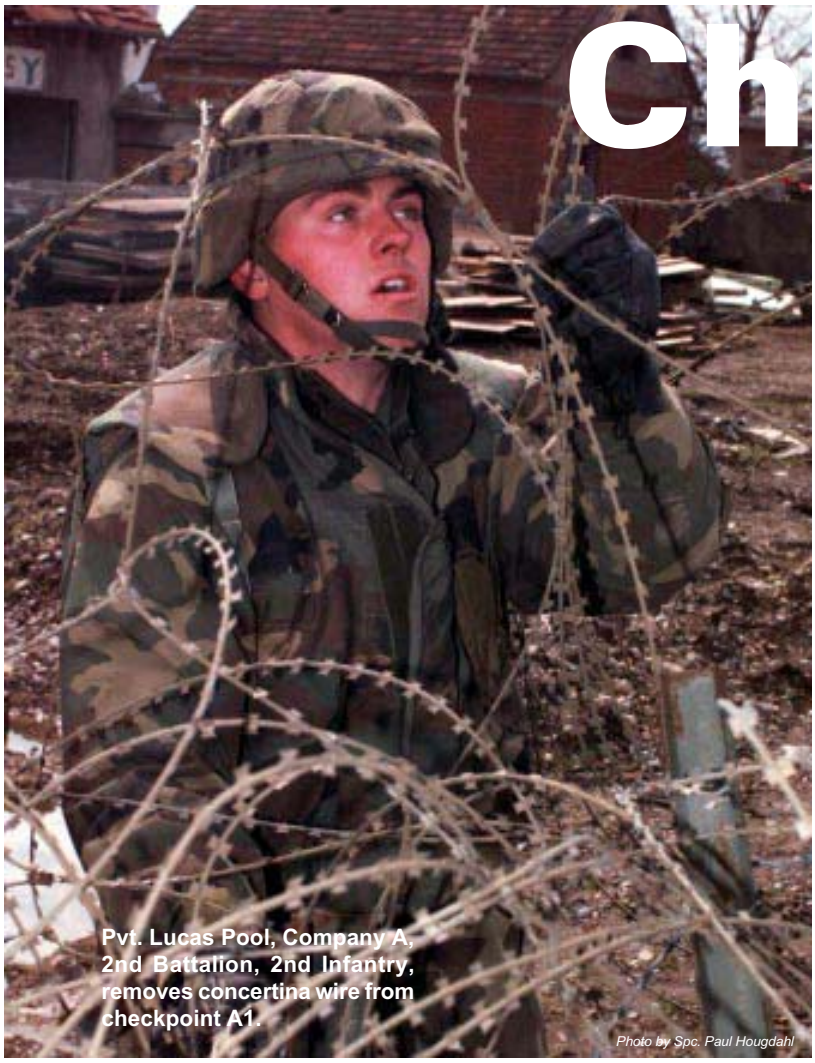
The Turkish Brigade continued its efforts to help the local people and organizations in its area of responsibility this March when it donated four tons of dry food stuffs, 75 speaking watches, 25 canes and seven cassette players to the Association for the Blind in Kakanj. These kind of humanitarian missions, the primary aim of which is to help the handicapped people establish healthy relationships within society, are one of the main goals of the Turkish Brigade's effort at establishing a special fund.

Turtles in the box

featuring Muddy and Dusty

By Capt. Peter J. Buotte

Change



Pvt. Lucas Pool, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, removes concertina wire from checkpoint A1.

Photo by Spc. Paul Hougdahl

By Spc. Paul Hougdahl
129th MPAD

CAMP COLT -- The only thing that appears to be constant in Bosnia-Herzegovina is change, hopefully change for the better. Things are gradually getting back to normal, and a large part of that is due to the work Stabilization Force troops are doing.

As spring continues to grab hold of the countryside, farmers are working their fields for the first time in several years. Cattle and sheep are grazing on new green grass and restaurants are again serving lamb and pork cooked over an open fire.

This change is also evident for the soldiers at Camp Colt, where 1st Battalion, 77th Armor --"Steel Tigers" -- have assumed command. Task Force 1-77 commands both Colt and McGovern Base.

During the month-long training at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany, the soldiers who are part of TF 1-77 trained in a situation that simulated conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Special emphasis was placed on training to understand the role of peacekeeping and the unique rules of engagement which accompany the role.

"Soldiers conduct face-to-face contact with the residents of local villages, and it's a great thing for the villagers to see, but the training in that respect is something that we've had to learn during our validation exercise in Germany and through our transition training here on the ground with our predecessor unit," said Lt. Col. James Heverin, III. "That's why our transition training was more lengthy and more involved than it would be in a normal battle handover mission."

"The training got us into the frame of mind that it's peacekeeping and not war," said Pvt. David Phipps, a Bradley driver. "Here at times the stress levels are high, because of misunderstandings between people and because of things like language differences. We are dealing with people's lives and whole families, where in war you have a defined enemy and are dealing with other combat units."

To ensure the safety of the troops at Camp Colt, aging gates, perimeter walls and sandbag bunkers are being rebuilt.

"Our primary goal is force protection: to not seriously injure or lose any American soldier. Number two is to continue with the successful execution of the peace enforcement mission and to continue to provide the opportunity for the factions to take advantage of the 500 plus days so that they can build toward a lasting peace," said Heverin.

With all the changes in Bosnia-Herzegovina occurring at this time, one constant is TF 1-77 soldiers doing their job to the highest standards.

FOOTPRINTS

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orders were simple: tear everything down and leave it the way it was found. At Jacob's disposal was one platoon from his company, as well as elements from Task Force 1-77 and engineers from the 642nd Engineer Company, Camp Bedrock.

"They've been working really hard," said Jacobs. "They've done an outstanding job. They have worked harder than anyone could expect; worked harder than they thought they were going to in the first place. It's been rough, but they've stayed motivated."

Jacobs said that after five days of work his soldiers had pulled down more than a kilometer of triple-strand concertina wire, and loaded approximately 30 truck loads of wood and sandbags.

"Some of the pickets were sunk so deep in places that we had to use Bradleys to pull them out," said Jacobs.

Observation Post Nine is the first of several checkpoints to be torn down to allow more freedom of movement in the sector, said Capt. Paul J. Finken, Co. C commander.

"It will also allow SFOR troops the mobility to use its forces in a mobile role as opposed to affixing them at checkpoints," said Finken. OP-9 was initially a deterrent against acts of terrorism in the area. However, he said, the situation has improved to where the observation point is no longer needed.

"The RS (Republic of Srbska) police are now actively patrolling the area with the supervision of the IPTF. The fixed checkpoint has lost its usefulness," said Finken.

There will still be an SFOR presence in the area, said Finken. By removing the observation point and using more patrols the SFOR soldiers will be able to cover more area and provide a more flexible presence.

"It's definitely a step in the right direction," said Finken.