

THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

On the move



An M109 self-propelled howitzer leads a convoy through the narrow streets of Brka during an exercise conducted by Battery A, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

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By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

BRKA, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The first thing noticed is the sound.

The slow, but steadily rising crescendo of metallic rumbling overcomes all other sounds at the bustling intersection in the small Bosnian town of Brka. People stop whatever morning activities they are doing and look down the street from where the deep, vibrating noise comes from.

Soon, several hulking forms lum-

ber into view, their wide shapes filling the narrow street. Arriving at the intersection, the armored vehicles slow down and creep around the corner, their tracks squeaking and clanking.

The residents of Brka are no strangers to armored vehicles, but the M109 self-propelled howitzer is not your typical armored vehicle.

“It causes a lot of stir,” said 2nd Lt. Brian E. Anderson, platoon leader for 1st Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion,

See MOVE page 12

Generation X cont'd

YOU MIGHT BE A GEN X'ER IF

While in high school, you and all your friends discussed elaborate plans to get together again at the end of the century and play "1999" by Prince over and over again.

You, yes you, sat down and memorized the entire lyric sheet to "It's the end of the world as we know it."

You took family trips BEFORE the invention of the mini-van. You rode in the back of the station wagon and you faced the cars behind you.

You've ever used the phrase "kiss mah grits" in conversation.

You've recently horrified yourself by using any one of the following phases:

- "When I was younger"
- "You know, back when..."
- "Just can't (fill in the blank) like I used to"

Schoolhouse Rock played a HUGE part in how you actually learned the English language.

You're starting to view getting carded to buy alcohol as a GOOD thing, and you're ready to marry the next person who cards you when you want to buy cigarettes.

You ever dressed to emulate a person you saw in either a Duran Duran, Madonna, or Cyndi Lauper video.

The first time you ever kissed someone at a dance came during "Crazy for You" by Madonna.

You remember with pain the sad day when the Green Machine hit the streets and made your old Big Wheel quite obsolete.

The phrase "Where's the beef?" still doubles you over with laughter.

You read the "Hot Video Games Player's Secrets" guide for Mortal Kombat just so you could find the hidden screen, and play Pong again for old time's sake.

You ever wanted to be gagged with a spoon.

UP FRONT -- MISTAKES/HUMAN ERROR CAN BE COSTLY

Human error, mistakes. Knowing that we will never totally eliminate them, we all must come to grips with minimizing them. Part of the human-error problem is caused by soldiers deliberately doing something they know they shouldn't be doing, knowingly violating established rules and procedures. Another part of the human-error problem is reasonable performance error by soldiers — errors caused by mission stress, lack of training and guidance, loose supervision and other factors related to what we call the system.



that care by exhibiting loyalty to the unit, personal discipline and loyalty to and concern for his peers.

Individual soldiers must care enough about their professional performance and the performance of the other members of their unit to police themselves and their fellow soldiers. It is not enough to be our brother's keeper; we must also be a brother who's easy to keep. Leaders must care enough to fix accountability, tighten supervision, set standards of performance and parameters for operations, and require that all operations be conducted within those parameters.

There are ways to get at human errors caused by shortcomings in the system: Improve training and written procedures, tighten supervision — in short, fix the system. Fixing the individual is another matter. Caring leadership is the key. Caring implies discipline, and caring is a two-way street. The leader cares for the soldier; the soldier returns

Noncommissioned officers of Task Force Eagle, I am putting the challenge to you. A challenge all of you should already have as one of your goals during this deployment. See you all Up Front!

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

Limitations

The focus of today's article is limitations. Many things limit what we are able to accomplish. Limits are set on us by our equipment, our own abilities, the chain of command, the tactical situation, weather, and many other facets of life. In many cases, the limitations are there for our welfare.

Such as a speed limit. The speed limits were developed with the road conditions, traffic conditions and the limitations of our tactical vehicles taken into consideration. Exceeding the posted limits places the vehicle and its occupants at an unacceptable risk level.

Another limitation that comes to mind is the lap belt still found in some of our M998 HMMWVs. The lap belt is an adequate restraint device, but must be worn properly to provide the maximum benefit. The lap belt has a limitation. Crossing the occupant at the lap only, it offers no restraint to the upper torso. In the event of a collision, the torso will still flex forward and then snap back. What could be done to reduce the impact of the limitation of the HMMWV lap belt?

One thing that comes to mind is the Kevlar helmet. If the Kevlar helmet is properly worn with the chin strap fastened and tight, the helmet will protect the occupant's head from impact. However if the chin strap is loose, the helmet itself becomes a risk. Imagine it bouncing around the inside of the HMMWV.

Maj. Gary R. Spegal, 1st Infantry Division Safety Office

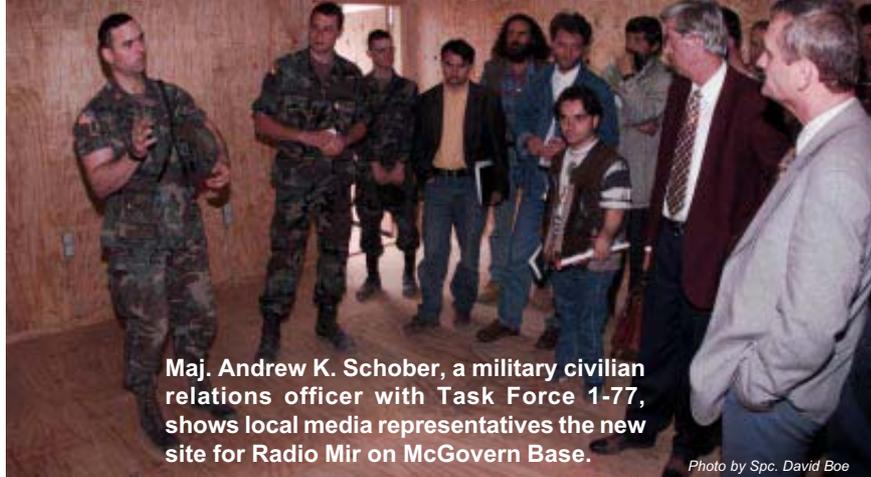
The Talon

THE TALON is produced in the interest of the servicemembers of Task Force Eagle, headquartered at Eagle Base. **THE TALON** is an Army-funded newspaper authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas, under the provision of AR 360-81. Contents of **THE TALON** are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle. **THE TALON** is published weekly by the 1st Infantry Division (Task Force Eagle) Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina APO AE 09789, Telephone MSE 551-5230. E-mail: talon@pop1-email.5sigcmd.army.mil. Acquire the Talon and other Bosnia-Herzegovina related items from the 1st ID Homepage: www.1id.army.mil. Printed by PrintCom. Circulation: 6,500.

- 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
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- Copy Editor . . . Spc. Terri Cook
- 1st Infantry Division PA NCOIC . . . Staff Sgt. Gregory W. Binford
- Translator . . . Arijana Salihbasic

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

Demand truth



Maj. Andrew K. Schober, a military civilian relations officer with Task Force 1-77, shows local media representatives the new site for Radio Mir on McGovern Base.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE—The media is a powerful organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and through it, many of the country's problems can be solved. So said Maj. Andrew K. Schober, military civilian relations officer for Task Force 1-77, during a media seminar held May 8 at McGovern Base.

The seminar, the first of its kind at McGovern, brought together media from both the Republic of Srbska and the Federation to discuss issues and concerns, develop future joint projects, and strengthen working relationships between the media, the Stabilization Force and the Office of High Representatives (OHR). Schober said the seminar was a starting point for a more proactive media in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The whole thing really excites me," said Schober. "I see such a powerful organization of journalists that I feel they can make a difference in the country if they all team up together."

Twenty journalists from the region surrounding McGovern Base participated in the morning seminar. Lt. Col. James K. Greer, Task Force 1-77 commander, and Duncan Bullivant, from the public affairs office of the OHR, were on hand to answer questions and provide feedback from their respective organizations. Schober, who presided over the seminar, said he came up with the idea of a media seminar at McGovern about three months ago during one of the many radio interviews he coordinates for the task force commander.

"There's a mayors' meeting and there's a police chiefs' meeting, but there isn't a media meeting," said Schober. "I figured, we need to have a media meeting. They're just as much a part of the democracy and wellness of the country as anything else is."

Schober wasn't alone in his vision of a united media helping to keep peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Resid Ahmetovic from Radio Bet told me once that if I could

make this work it could probably solve half the problems of this country," said Schober. "That really sparked my interest in starting these meetings."

"When we work together it helps people know that there are peaceful ways to accomplish what they want done," said Greer, who supported Schober's idea and allowed McGovern to be a neutral meeting place for the civilian media. "And the media is, in fact, one of those peaceful ways."

Greer said when citizens are not informed they tend to be scared, and thus might react violently to things they normally might not have a bad reaction to. The challenge, he said, is to make sure people are well-informed of events and activities. "A lot of challenges are coming up -- elections, freedom of movement, other decisions," said Greer. "And our ability -- all of us -- to work together will assist in those things being accomplished."

Bullivant said the media in Bosnia-Herzegovina was, in a large part, responsible for much of the violence that has happened in the country. It's time, he told the media at the meeting, to take responsibility for keeping the peace.

"You have got an important part to play now," said Bullivant. "I would ask you not to get caught up in political games, but get caught up in political truth. Demand the truth."

Some of the issues and future projects discussed were joint live broadcasts at Radio Mir, a young adult call-in show, American cultural exchange, and greater communication among the civilian media, SFOR and OHR. Schober said a lot of positive thoughts came out of the first meeting, and another is planned for May 29, and for every two weeks after that.

"It gave them a chance to get together and discuss their problems, discuss working together, and discuss working more with SFOR," said Schober. "They're looking forward to continued meetings," he said.

Why is May important for the people of Tuzla?

I'm writing this from my memories of the years 1992 and 1995. Some things happened which made a huge impression on Tuzla. The small town was pure and didn't know what war could bring to its heart.

May 15 has grave meaning for all inhabitants of Tuzla -- the beginning of the war in Tuzla.

For the first time the noises of exploding shells and bullets, real fighting, was heard. In their minds it was like a bad dream. But it was not a dream. It was real.

With the help of volunteers with hunting rifles and some artillery, the brave people of Tuzla made a defense of their town somehow. They didn't let the enemy go into the town and take command. So, breaking with their plans, the enemy started to fire on Tuzla from the surrounding hills. This continued throughout the rest of the war, and just when we thought it was almost finished, the worst day of my life occurred.

On May 25, 1995 a dark cloud covered our town. One shell killed 71 young people and wounded another 121. The shell blew up in the Tuzla district, the heart of town. That massacre was one of the worst in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were young people and children from 3 to 35 years old. That day is forever marked as a day of sadness in Tuzla. All the people who survived this war live with its mark on their hearts.

I'm hoping that something like this will never happen again. With the coming of U.S. troops the madness stopped. I would like to thank all Americans for their sacrifice, because they came here and helped our people, and we know what you are doing for our country and we are proud of you. We also know that you are far away from your homes.

But one more thing. You will go back to your homes and see your families again. Most of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina lost their families and homes -- you are the ones who helped to save more lives and you are the ones who brought peace on this area and you should be proud of yourselves. Thank you for everything you have done for us, for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We hope for a better future.

Arijana Salihbasic, Task Force Eagle PAO translator

Confident controllers

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

COMMANCHE BASE – Helicopter pilots are an observant bunch, but even the most alert pilot needs the help of competent soldiers in the control tower. From an elevated perch at the end of the flight line at Commanche, members of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment provide pilots reliable assistance during take-offs and landings.

“We are the best Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs) in the Army,” said Sgt. David Smith, training noncommissioned officer for Co. A, nicknamed the “Scavengers.” “The most important thing you can have as an ATC is confidence, because if you have confidence, you will sound confident on the mike to the pilots who rely on your help.”

Confidence is in no short supply with the team manning the control tower at Commanche. The team is a fiercely proud group who enjoy their work and love the challenges of working in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

“I wouldn’t trade this job for anything,” said Staff Sgt. Bill Lepto, noncommissioned officer in charge for the control tower at Commanche. “This is the best job in the Army.”

The ATCs of Co. A are on duty everyday. While ATCs in the United States or Europe are stereotypically portrayed as stressed out and overworked, Army ATCs move at a decidedly slower pace.

“There is some misconception on what the ATC does. Our main purpose is to provide assistance during emergencies,” said Lepto. “We are always ready to go in case of emergency.”

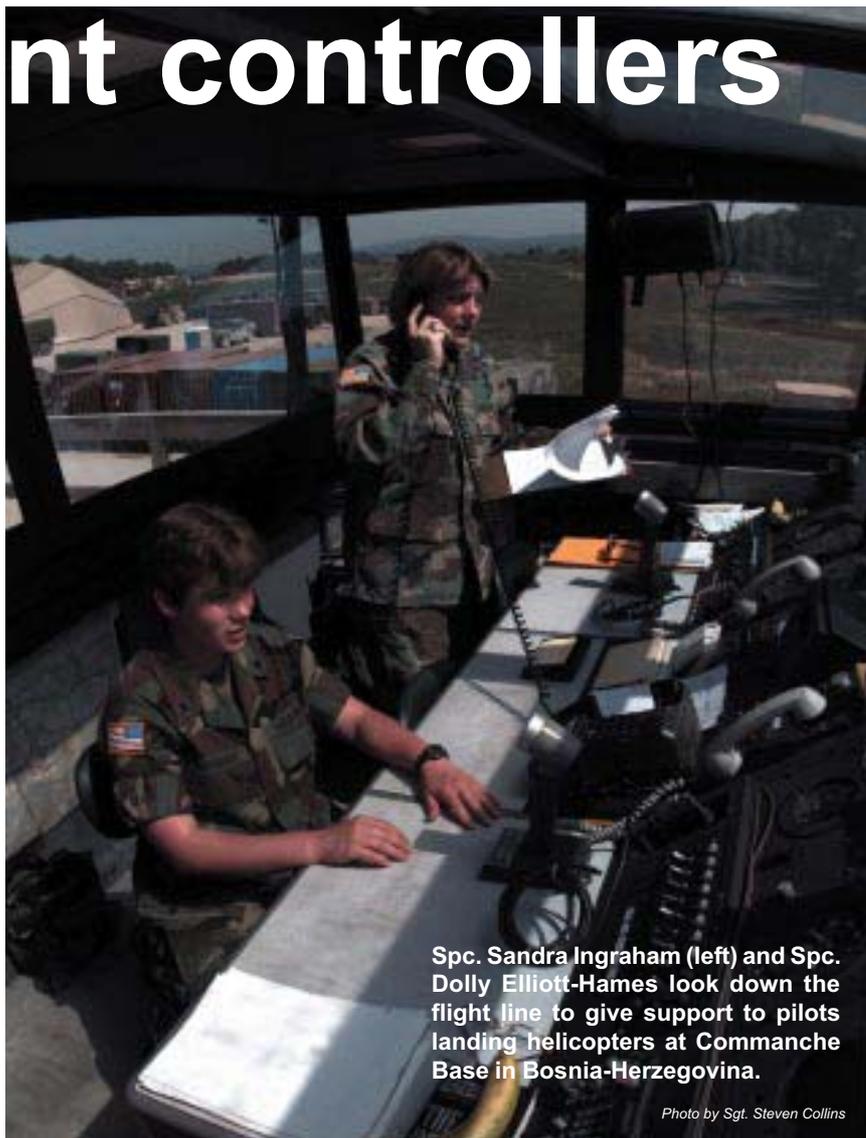
More mundane tasks involve being aware of all the traffic on the flight line. There are usually several helicopters at Commanche, and a multitude of flights coming and going each day. The ATCs must maintain constant vigilance, keeping pilots informed on traffic, both on the ground and in the air.

Controllers are also crucial for “hot refuels.” Since it takes about several minutes to refuel a helicopter after it’s been shut down, pilots like to refuel while the engines are still running. This reduces fueling time but involves safety issues. Controllers need to keep an eye on hot refuels to ensure no other vehicles get in the way.

“You have to keep good track of what’s going on down there (at the refueling point),” said Spc. Dolly Elliott-Hames, an ATC from Splendora, Texas. “We are here to ensure the safety for the pilots.”

Being an ATC requires patience — and a good ear for radio chatter. The control tower at Commanche, recently rebuilt with more powerful radios, hums with the sounds of radio talk. A good controller learns to translate the sometimes unintelligible garble into understandable speech.

“You have to tune your ears,” said Spc. Sandra Ingraham, a



Spc. Sandra Ingraham (left) and Spc. Dolly Elliott-Hames look down the flight line to give support to pilots landing helicopters at Commanche Base in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

“The most important thing you can have as an ATC is confidence, because if you have confidence, you will sound confident on the mike to the pilots who rely on your help.”

— Sgt. David Smith

controller from Flint, Mich. “When we got here, I was having trouble understanding anything on the radios. But it doesn’t take long to tune your ears.”

Listening is key, but speaking is probably most important. When a pilot needs information, a controller must speak clearly and concisely. Even the smallest misunderstanding between controller and pilot can lead to disaster. Speaking with confidence requires knowledge and ATCs are always learning.

“Every place you go you need to learn what makes that place

unique. So you’re constantly in the books, learning and reading,” said Smith, a native of West Milford, N.J. For example, before coming to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the controllers at Commanche needed to learn about flying in Bosnia-Herzegovina and about the surrounding area.

Essentially, being an ATC in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not much different than being an ATC in Germany, where the 3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Reg., is based. The controllers know the pilots and the

mission. But it has been a challenge for the controllers.

“The living conditions are different, obviously and we would rather be at home, of course,” said Lepto. “But we could be doing the job in Germany or even at a post in the U.S. and it would really be no different than here.”



Russian soldiers carry wreaths to lay at the base of a memorial to soldiers who died during World War II.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

MOUNT MAJAVIC, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The monument at Mount Majavic rises from the foot of a long stone staircase in a small valley. On the four sides surrounding the monolith are names of the dead. The engravings include Serb, Croat, Muslim and Russian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during World War II.

The ceremony of the 52nd anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany was held May 9, at Mount Majavic in the Russian sector. The day honors the allied soldiers of World War II who died in combat on Yugoslavian soil. Presiding over the event were Col. Al-

exander Pavushchenko, Russian Airborne Brigade commander, Brig. Gen. John P. Abazaid, 1st Armor Division assistant division commander (maneuver), and Brig. Gen. J. Mark Curran, 1st Infantry Division assistant division commander (support). A traditional Russian honor guard from the 5th Airborne Company rendered a military gun salute and the national anthems of the United States, Russia and Serbia were played.

After the formalities, an elderly doctor, Voilalar Magazinorio, shuffled slowly to the base of the iron monument. "This man," he said and gently touched the raised letters of a name with his weathered fingers, "He was my gymnastics instructor when I was going to college in Tuzla. Many years have past but the memories of the war are clear. We were young boys then."

Magazinorio traveled from Brcko with a small group of veterans who served in World War II. "We were fighting against the Germans at Belgrade," he said. "They had several combat divisions in Yugoslavia but could not conquer it." Pointing to the monument, he recalls, "On Dec. 25, 1943,

there was a very big battle and 10 from my company were killed. Without sacrifice, there is no freedom. And with no freedom, there is no victory."

In 1941, a coalition was created involving the United States, Russia and Great Britain. This alignment grew, sweeping together nations worldwide to fight against the Nazi threat. Fifty-two years after the end of the war, soldiers of Russia, the United States, and other countries are participating in Operation Joint Guard. The grandchildren of the heroes that fought in World War II are now in Bosnia-Herzegovina to maintain stability.

"Today, in former Yugoslavia, we commemorate our heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sake of saving the world," said Pavushchenko during a speech. "We, the inheritors of this combat glory of our fathers and grandfathers are proud of this great honor and are putting forth every effort for the triumph of peace on the land of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

During the Cold War, the militaries of Russia and the United States nervously looked at each other through weapon sights, built up nuclear strength and focused training toward conflict. IFOR, now SFOR, is history being made. The two powers of the East and West, through close interaction, joint patrols and exercises are again one force with one mission. And that mission is peace.



Voilalar Magazinorio approaches a monument to soldier who died during World War II.

Photo by Spc. Susanne Aspley

SFOR well armed

Story and Photos by Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

GLAMOC RANGE, Bosnia-Herzegovina — First a thunderous roar shakes the very air, startling even the most steeled veteran. Then a red light flashes on the hillside, followed several moments later by a boom. As the smoke rolls away from the impact site, the acrid smell of gunpowder assaults the nostrils. When the smoke clears, there is no doubt — SFOR is well armed.

The firepower demonstration was hosted by the British at the Glamoc Range in the British Sector, Multinational Division-Southwest, on March 30.

Seven countries participated in the demonstration; the United States, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Canada, Malaysia, Russia and Germany.

Leaders from the Former Warring Factions were invited to the demonstration.

The United States demonstrated the AH-64A Apache Attack helicopter. Piloted by Chief Warrant Officer Ed Heidtke, and Chief Warrant Officer James Douglas, both of 1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, 4th Aviation Brigade, Commanche Base.

Heidtke is the 1st Bn, 1st Avn. Reg. standardization pilot and Douglas is the battalion armament officer.

According to Maj. Doug Gabram, 1st Bn., 1st Avn. operations officer, the demonstration was held to "show the former warring factions' leaders the weapons capability of MND-SW and SFOR."

Hovering ominously over the armor and artillery, the Apache locked on and unleashed its 30 mm cannon and several 2.75 high explosive rockets at the targets on the hillside of the range. The helicopter wasn't able to fire their Hellfire missiles, Gabram said. "We couldn't fire them because of range restrictions."

SFOR started planning for the demonstration two months prior to the event, said Gabram.

"The amount of preparation that went into this was incredible, and safety was always first priority," he said.

1st Bn., 1st Avn. Reg., is part of the Operational Reserve, which means they go to support

anyone in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I have soldiers from other countries. It's between all the countries involved.

"The opportunity to work with them, they learn," Gabram said.

Other groups involved in the demonstration include the 1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment; 4th Regiment Royal Canadian Armoured Corps; Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; 654 Squadron, Royal Canadian Armoured Corps; and Scots Dragoon Guards.

The demonstration featured a variety of weapons, including the M1 Abrams tank, the M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzer, and the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System. The demonstration was a grand finale several systems for a force to be reckoned with.



Left, an SFOR soldier prepares to fire downrange... Right, soldiers position armor elements for the demonstration. Background, air and ground troops pull all the pieces together for the firepower demonstration at Glamoc Range.

armed

na. In this capacity they need to be able to work with
es. This project allowed that kind of cooperation be-
ived.

with other nations is always an advantage. We learn,

the demonstration are; 101 Regiment Huzaren Prins
oyal Artillery; 4/73 Special OP Battery; 2nd Battalion,
n Light Infantry; 6 Czech Mechanized Battalion; 3 Ma-
quadron, Army Air Corps; 7 Squadron, Royal Air Force;

red 18 weapon systems. Even with earplugs the thun-
h system demonstrated its power individually, and as
ns fired at once, proving beyond a doubt that SFOR is



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National Day



Stephon Botten parachutes into the National Day celebration at Dobo.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

DOBOJ -- Fireworks shake the morning calm. A patriotic, inspirational speech sets the tone for the day. Marching music gets toes tapping. Red, white and blue streamers create an atmosphere of festivity during a lunch where special, traditional food is served. Even the candles adorning the dining room tables are red, white and blue, looking like popsicles with swirling colors. Swarms of excited children wave red, white and blue flags drink Cokes and Pepsis and eat ice cream bars which melts in the hot sun as fast as the kids can lick the drips.

No, it's not the Fourth of July somewhere in the United States. It's May 17 in Dobo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Approximately 50 Norwegian soldiers participating in Stabilization Force operations coordinated a celebration in honor of National Day at their NORDPOL Brigade headquarters 30 miles north of Tuzla. In Norway's history May 17, 1814, marks the country's declaration of independence and ratification of its constitution.

"We are not celebrating our independence, but our constitution," said Brig. Gen. Gunnar Lundberg, Norwegian contingent commander, "built on the same principles as the Magna Carta, the U.S. Constitution

and the French Constitution." Lundberg presented the keynote speech that began festivities for approximately 100 invited guests from several nations including the United States.

The day's events began with "fireworks" in the form of nine small mine charges set off at 6 a.m. The Norwegian National Anthem precluded Lundberg's remarks. Uplifting Norwegian music followed the speech, and then the highlight of the morning's agenda was presented. Two paratroopers from the Norwegian Army Special Command executed a superb jump leaping from a Black Hawk helicopter 8,000 feet up. Grenadiers Stephen Botten and Hans Hoen, billowing red smoke, careened towards the earth at 120 miles an hour, maneuvering their bright red, white, and blue chutes to within a few feet of the exact landing spot on the parade ground.

Guests were then served a buffet-style lunch complete with smoked salmon, lobster halves, and shrimp as well as an extensive variety of other Norwegian dishes. Sgt. Christopher S. Mays, 413rd Civil Affairs NCO, is stationed at Dobo. "Here we have many holidays because there are seven nations represented in this brigade," said Mays, a U.S. Army Reservist from Lubbock, Texas. "Being stationed at Dobo has given me the opportunity to have many interest-

ing experiences, like this special lunch."

1st Lt. Peter Aumaas, NORDPOL Administration officer supporting G-2, coordinated the day's activities. "We invited soldiers from the different battalions and divisions that we work with on a daily basis," said Aumaas. "We had an excellent parachute drop today. Lunch offered an extensive variety of traditional Norwegian food, and we treated a great number of local Bosnian children to soda, hot dogs, and ice cream. Everything went well. We had no mishaps."

"The Second World War taught us that isolationism is not the road to follow," said Lundberg. "To achieve success, peace, and prosperity, you simply *have* to cooperate, communicate, and trade across borders." As evidence of this statement, Lundberg said that Norway was among the first nations to deploy troops to the U.N. peacekeeping and observers missions. "Here in Bosnia we have participated together with several other nations in the first NATO operation from the very first day." Lundberg expressed hope that his nation's contribution in Bosnia-Herzegovina, together with the other NATO nations "facilitate conditions for peaceful and prosperous development of this beautiful country which has the great potential of being one of the real beautiful pearls of Europe."

MAYTAG REPAIR, ARMY STYLE

By Spc. Paul Hougdaht
129th MPAD

CAMP COLT -- It has become a common sight to see convoys of Bradley fighting vehicles and HMMWVs rolling along on patrols in the U.S. sector of northern Bosnia-Herzegovina as military police and infantry soldiers go about their peacekeeping missions. What isn't realized when those convoys are seen is the amount of work that soldiers out of the public eye do to make these visible missions a success.

The members of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry maintenance section are a prime example of soldiers working behind the scenes to make the overall mission a success. Their greatest satisfaction comes from seeing their vehicles return through the gate of Camp Colt after a long day or night of patrols with no breakdowns.

"We don't get a lot of recognition because we aren't out being seen, but without us, the infantry and other soldiers wouldn't be able to go out and conduct their missions," said Sgt. Manuel Messeguer, a senior Bradley mechanic.

In the two months that Co. A has been operating at Camp Colt, they have yet to tow a vehicle in their dispatch system back because of a breakdown. They attribute this success to the weekly maintenance program they use to make sure every part of a vehicle is functioning properly before it leaves the gate.

"The maintenance program pushes us and the driver to work on the vehicles on a regular basis," said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Alsop, Co. A maintenance supervisor. "We see things that the drivers aren't trained to see, things that may be really small, but always turn into a big thing later on -- usually at the worst time."

A quality assurance check is performed each week when the vehicle operator dispatches the vehicle. The Co. A mechanics go over the entire vehicle, looking for any problem that may cause failure when the vehicle is away from Camp Colt. The drivers are required to perform all the steps in the maintenance manual. They aren't always excited by the extra time and work it takes to dispatch their vehicle, but they also realize that their vehicle is in top condition when they get it back. The vehicle will take them where they need to go and back again.

The roads in Bosnia-Herzegovina are rough, and even at the low speeds the vehicles travel, they take a beating. Bolts that tend to come loose, suspension systems that fail and fluid leaks are just some of the problems that need to be dealt with before a major problem happens. New parts are continually being ordered and are used to replace the parts that are worn, missing or broken.

"We try to get our hands on things before they get too bad, because we would rather catch problems here before they go out. It's better to spend 30 minutes with a vehicle rather than a whole day if it breaks down somewhere," said Messeguer. "The operator does all the levels in the operation manual. We go further, we find the things the drivers aren't trained to find. It's a complete safety and mechanical system check."

"We're supposed to be like Maytag repairmen, that's how the system is designed," said Sgt. Vernon Enlow, a Co. A mechanic.

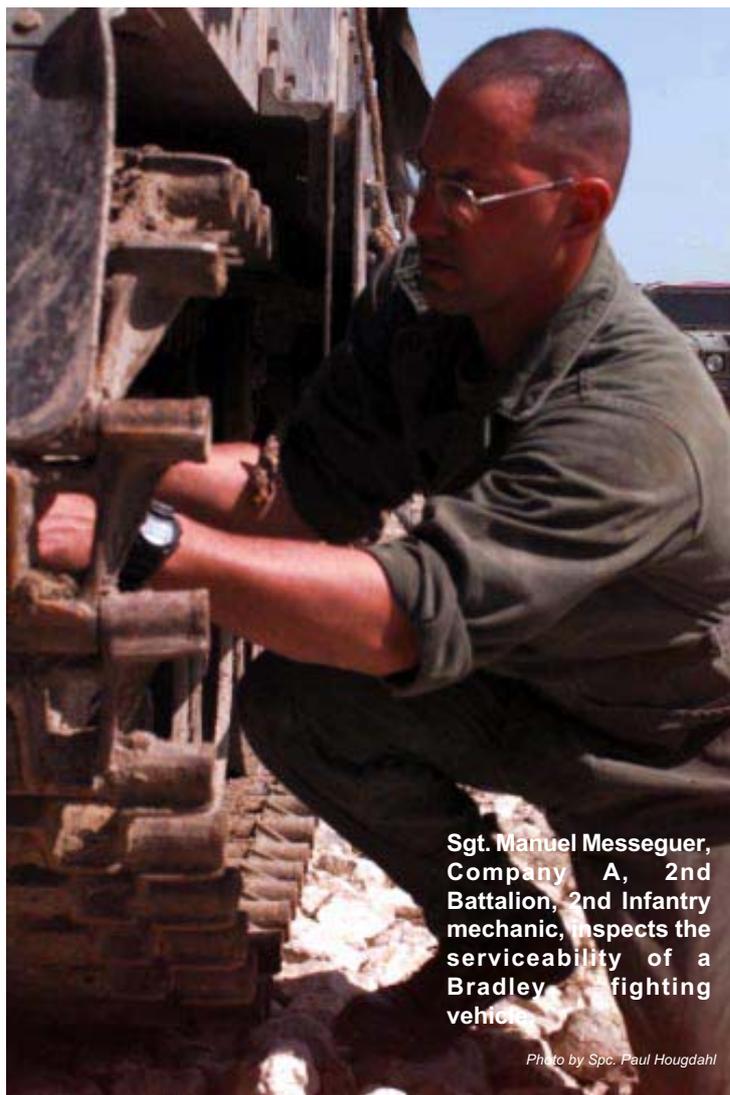
The Maytag repairman scenario does ring true in that they keep up routine maintenance so a major repair or a vehicle tow will not have to be made. It doesn't mean the soldiers stand around until something really breaks down as the Maytag commercials suggest. Because they work hard before a major problem occurs, missions are completed and soldiers return home safely.

Staff Sgt. Tony Hansley, shop foreman for Co. A maintenance said that being in Bosnia-Herzegovina with this section has proven to him what a good section he works with. He is proud of them because they are working with so many types of equipment they typically don't service and they are doing it so well.

"This is one of the best teams I've been on in my 16 years in the Army," said Hansley. "There is good unit cohesion and a lot of years of experience. We have Bradleys and HMMWVs plus 5-ton trucks and generators that we maintain. These soldiers have a lot of knowledge plus they always want to learn new things. We can get it done."

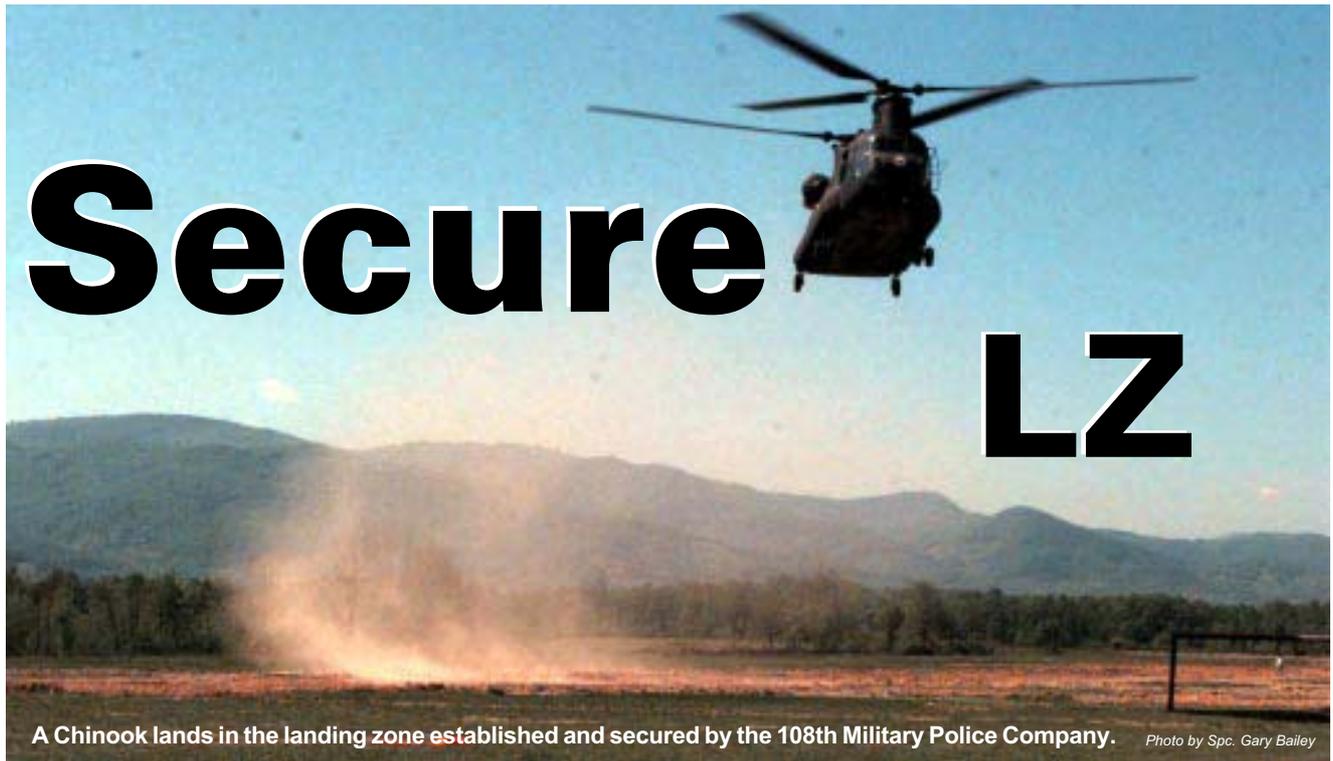
"We see things that the drivers aren't trained to see, things that may be really small, but always turn into a big thing later on -- usually at the worst time."

— Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Alsop



Sgt. Manuel Messeguer, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry mechanic, inspects the serviceability of a Bradley fighting vehicle.

Photo by Spc. Paul Hougdaht



A Chinook lands in the landing zone established and secured by the 108th Military Police Company.

Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

By Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — The open field is quiet, roasting beneath the hot Bosnian sun. The grass grows thickly in the peaceful repose. A cow with a missing horn lays down, resting itself on the green softness. In the distance a gentle *whup-whup-whup* fills the air, gaining in strength each moment. Suddenly the grass is thrown in a frenzy, whipping back and forth in a wild dance, and the cow lifts its head as if in challenge to the powerful gust as the CH-47 Chinook helicopter floats in, forcefully dropping itself on the field.

The children, who occasionally play soccer in the field, do not rush the helicopter. Nor does the cow. Even if they try, their approach will be quickly halted, because the 108th Military Police Company (Air Assault) is there.

The 108th MP Co., from Fort Bragg, N.C., has been stationed here as part of Operation Joint Guard since March. On May 11, they went to the former site of Steel Castle, an SFOR camp that was closed early this spring.

"We were tasked to establish and secure the landing zone (LZ) for a contingent of the Strategic Reserve Force," said Capt. George Rodriguez, 108th MP Co. commander.

Rodriguez said the group of soldiers and Marines went to the site to evaluate it for a possible SFOR Strategic Reserve Force concentration area.

The Strategic Reserve Forces' mission was to look for sites where they could be inserted and assembled quickly to be prepared to reinforce compliance with the Day-

ton Peace Accord.

The MP company went to the site before the mission to reconnoiter the area for a proper LZ for the Chinook.

"A lot goes into securing a landing spot," Rodriguez said. "You have to be sure there are no trees or power lines that could interfere with the helicopters landing. You have to look at other obstacles like roads, people, animals, uneven ground."

When the MP soldiers arrived at the site in their HM-MWVs they set up a perimeter to keep animals and people out of the LZ.

"We were mainly concerned about children and cows," Rodriguez said. "When we reconned the area, there were kids playing soccer in the field. In order to ensure a safe landing area, we set up early," he said.

Rodriguez said that this is the first time the unit has set up an LZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it is a routine mission for the unit at their home station.

"In the United States we have one or two platoons doing this kind of mission every month," he said.

Sgt. Stephen Morningstar, team leader, said that the training paid off.

"We practice this pretty frequently, so it's good that we got a chance to do it here," he said.

The company completed the mission with success.

"We got there on time, we set up on time and we left when done. The mission went with no problems," Morningstar said.

After the Strategic Reserve Force finished looking at the site, the Chinook came to pick them up. The MPs stayed to ensure a safe takeoff, and then they left, allowing peace to return to the field as if nothing had ever disturbed it.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Love directs his soldiers by phone as Pfc. Corey Matthews carries the radio on his back.

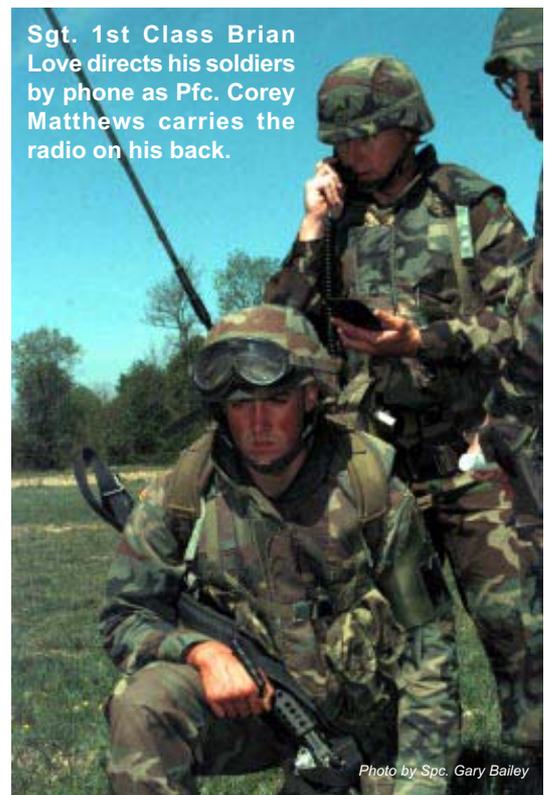


Photo by Spc. Gary Bailey

Tuzla youths "Play ball"

By Staff Sgt. Mark Geiger
300th MPAD

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- Excitement was in the air Sunday when an umpire's voice was heard yelling, "Play ball," in English for the first time at Tuzla Stadium. As they demonstrated softball before approximately 120 spectators, it was also the first time U.S. soldiers had the opportunity to interact with the local population without wearing battle-rattle.

Not long into the demonstration the spectators became the players. Children of all ages were invited onto the Tuzla Stadium field to learn softball from the American soldiers.

"It was the first time I ever got to talk with American soldiers," said Jasmin Grbic, a 14-year-old Tuzla resident. "The soldiers are much more normal than what we see on TV movies."

"I would like to do this every week," said another Tuzla teenager, Mirza Tupajic. "It's like the American baseball we see on television, only the ball is bigger. This ball is easy to hit," Tupajic said with a smile on his face and a souvenir softball tightly in his grasp.

Soldiers who participated in the event convoyed from Eagle Base to Tuzla Stadium. The soccer field was converted into two softball fields where soldiers played a few innings of softball as curious residents watched.

"I've played the game for a few years, and I was excited about the chance to exchange ideas and teach the kids about

softball," said Cpl. Dell Bishop, 486th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Patrick Thomas, MWR coordinator for Task Force Eagle Base, was surprised at the turnout of people. "It was great when we started pulling the kids onto the field and watching them play."

"We are as curious about them as they are of us," said Capt. Marty Nelson, Task Force Eagle CIMIC. "Understanding is the key to the peace process. We are trying to help the next generation of Bosnia's leaders understand we are here to help."

Nelson was working with other SFOR soldiers to set up the softball event when Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, Multinational Division-North commander, coincidentally received a request from the Tuzla mayor to have some sort of athletic event between U.S. soldiers and residents.

"The timing was great," said Nelson, as he sat out of the bright Tuzla sun under the shade of a tree in left field home run territory. "General Meigs approved the event, pending many risk assessments and having force protection elements in place. After what I saw today, it makes me feel good about myself and my job."

Nelson and other softball organizers plan on playing games the next two Sundays. According to Cpl. Cory Check, softball NCOIC, individuals interested in playing softball can call him at the CPIC, MSE: 551-5231 for more information. Check also suggests that soldiers call early to assure a place on the roster, because space is limited. Participants are reminded to bring a hat, athletic shoes and lots of sunscreen. Buses depart from the Eagle Base PX Sunday at 9 a.m.



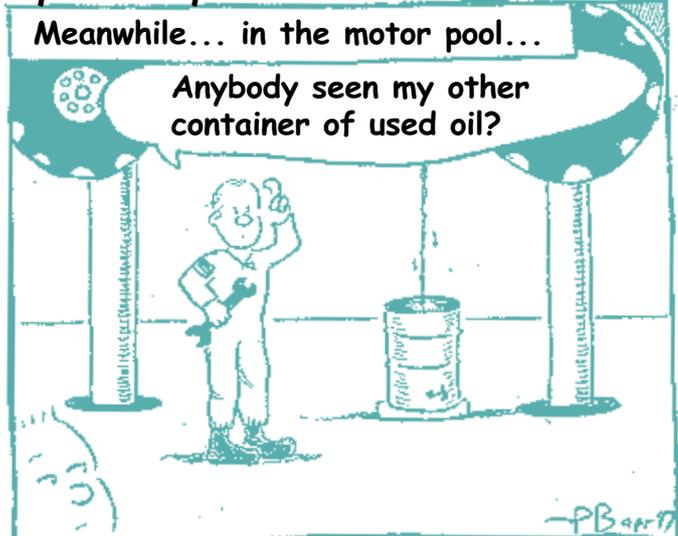
Sgt. Sean Anderson, 413th Civil Affairs Battalion, shows Jasmin Grbic, a Tuzla teenager, the proper softball batting stance.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Geiger

Turtles in the Box

starring Muddy and Dusty

by Capt. Peter Buotte





Pvt. Keith J. Tuck, 21, a cannon crew member with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, monitors radio transmissions from atop his M109.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

MOVE

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6th Field Artillery, McGovern Base. "Whenever we drive through the villages, people stop what they are doing and look at us."

The native of Edmond, Okla., said the M109 is indeed a powerful system. From its loud engine to its 155-millimeter howitzer, which reaches out past the front of the vehicle, Anderson said the M109 commands attention wherever it goes.

"They're big guns," he said.

The sheer size of the gun sometimes is a concern to Anderson when his platoon drives through towns such as Brka. "Every time we go out I'm concerned that one of my guys is going to cut a corner too quickly and take out a corner of a building," he said. "But the drivers I have are extremely experienced. We've done several exercises together as a unit and the guys know what they are doing. I've placed my trust in my men and they have never let me down."

Today's exercise entails half of Anderson's platoon — two sections — moving out to a field just outside of Brka and setting up a firing point in support of ongoing weapon storage site inspections and recon area patrols. After breaking free of the congested streets of Brka, the howitzers, accompanied by their ammunition carriers, an attached mortar section, and support elements, speed to the grassy field, where they maneuver into firing positions.

Soldiers spring from the vehicles and start setting up primary and secondary aiming references, aiming and safety cir-

cles, concertina wire, and communications. Crew members sitting on top of the massive, box-like turret of the howitzer monitor radio messages while noncommissioned officers on the ground bark out orders. Inside one howitzer a gunner yells out, "traversing left!" and the long gun swings left smoothly. He looks into a viewfinder, writes down a coordinate on a range card, then yells out, "Traversing right!" With an electronic whir, the gun swings right again. Behind him a radio squawks with an incoming report. In front of the howitzer a soldier jams a red and white aiming stake into the ground, then runs back to the track. All of

out of 1,000. For that they were awarded the red muzzle cover for their howitzer, an Army Achievement Medal and a three-day pass for each crew member.

"And you get deployed to Bosnia," said Spc. David L. Haynes, 24, the number-one man with fourth section. In addition to loading and firing the 155mm gun, the Memphis, Tenn. native must also drive the section's ammo carrier and deploy concertina wire at the firing position. To Haynes, winning "Top Gun" was no accident. "I've been with these guys for quite a while, so we know each other rather well," he said. "So, as far as working together, it's pretty great."

"It's exhilarating for me, the possibilities of what I can do," said Anderson. "By the same token it's very nerve wracking, because I do realize what I have, and I hope I never have to use it."

And not having to use the weapons is the main goal of the mission. "One of the biggest things we accomplish by rolling out the gate, besides making sure our men are trained and our equipment works, is showing our presence," said Alpha Gators' commander, Capt.

David M. Hamilton. "It's good for them (the Bosnians) to see us rolling through the towns, like Brka. They get a feel that we have overwhelming power, and that will hopefully prevent them from acting up and forcing us to use our guns."

But it's even more than just showing off the 155mm guns, said Hamilton. It let's the Bosnians see the soldiers behind the guns, he said. "They get the feeling that we are out here willing to be an active part of maintaining the peace."

"It's exhilarating for me, the possibilities of what I can do. By the same token it's very nerve wracking, because I do realize what I have, and I hope I never have to use it."

— 2nd Lt. Brian E. Anderson

this activity is happening at the same time.

"To the untrained observer it would seem like mass chaos," said Anderson. "But it's well organized. It's all very well planned, so once everyone comes into position they know where to go. Everyone has a key job that he has to do, and it always works out real well."

Fourth Section, 1st Platoon, knows all about working well together. Last June they won the battalion's coveted "Top Gun" award during gunnery, earning 992 points