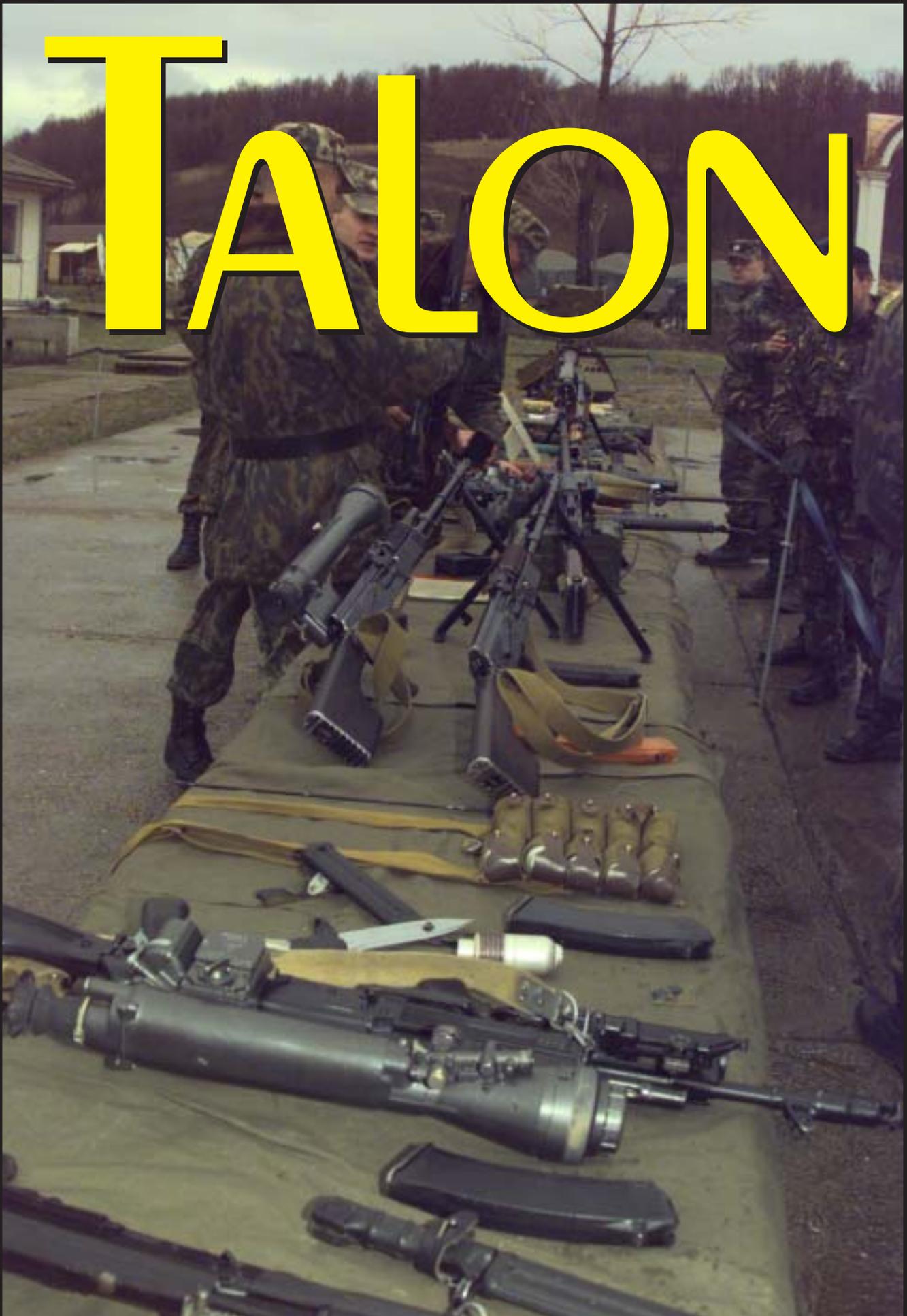


TALON



Talon

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On the Cover

The display of small arms at the Russian equipment exhibit was quite extensive. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Conrad College, 372nd MPAD)

The Task Force Eagle web site is located at www.tfeagle.army.mil

The Task Force Eagle web site will offer breaking news as it happens on its new web site. Messages to Task Force Eagle soldiers as well as information for soldiers is available. The Talon On-line is updated every Saturday. Webmaster: Sgt. Robert R. Ramon. Or contact us at: The Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina APO, AE 09789, Telephone MSE 551-5230, Sprint 762-5233.

Up Front

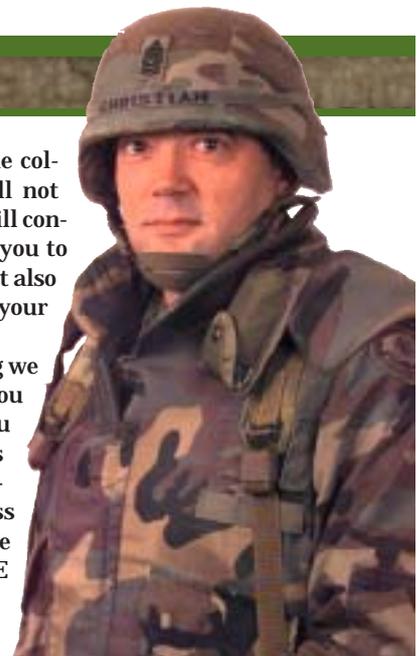
By Command Sergeant Major Carl E. Christian
Task Force Eagle CSM

"Have you enrolled in any college classes?" I ask this question to soldiers everywhere I go. I am really amazed by the response I get. Nearly 75 percent of the soldiers tell me, "I'm thinking about it," or "I took one class when I first got here and I have not taken any more." These answers come from soldiers who have been on the ground for three to four months. Also, every base camp has an education center on it and even some of the hilltops get visited on a routine basis.

It's hard for me to believe that there are not more personnel taking advantage of college, since the Army now pays for 90 percent of the tuition assistance. And, the availability of the education personnel makes this one of the best

opportunities that soldiers have to take college courses. Add to this that you will not only further your education level, but will continue to gain knowledge that will help you to be competitive in your military careers. It also allows you to prepare for the life after your military career.

Education is important in everything we do. When you stop learning is when you have decided that, "You Are All That You Will Ever Be." If you think this article is talking about you, then go visit your education center and get enrolled into class today. Remember that if you utilize the education center that "TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO BE A SOLDIER."



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Task Force Eagle Commander Major General Larry R. Ellis
 Editor in Chief Major Jim Yonts
 OIC First Lieutenant Jacqueline E. Abbar
 Managing Editor Sergeant First Class Frank Casares
 NCOIC Sergeant First Class R. W. Ferguson
 Layout and Design Editor Specialist Martha Louise Reyna
 Assistant Editor, Photo Editor and Webmaster Sergeant Robert R. Ramon
 Translator Mirela Zunic

Education at McGovern

98% of engineers enrolled in courses at camp

Story by Sergeant Greg Waltman
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Engineers at McGovern Base will have more to show for their deployment than skinned knuckles and bruised thumbnails.

Most will be on their way to earning a college degree.

Ninety-eight percent of the soldiers from Company A, 16th Engineer Battalion, have taken the opportunity to enroll either in courses for college credit or Army courses. The engineers either took courses offered at McGovern, or signed up for various college-level or military correspondence courses during their time in Bosnia.

"Right now I'm working toward a basic associate's degree," said Private First Class Bryan Henrichs, who was seated in his Speech 200 class. "Plus, I am enrolled in a correspondence course for engineers that includes NCO leadership, route reconnaissance and first aid."

After each day's missions are completed, soldiers from Company A put down their gear and picked up their books. Command leaders have encouraged the soldiers to take advantage of the opportunities available here.

"Our leadership is all for it. They will make the time for you to go to class," said Henrichs, of South Shore, S.D.

"Ninety-eight percent of our soldiers are enrolled in either correspondence

courses or college courses. Obviously, we have not forced them to take the classes, but we ensure that we facilitate the education requirements of the soldiers that take these classes. This is one of the things that the soldiers will take with them from Bosnia," said First Lieutenant Adam Balukonis, of Salem, N.H., executive officer for Company A.

"This is the best opportunity that they will ever have to go to school, and our platoon sergeants encourage them to take the correspondence courses. They are great for promotion points," said Company A's First Sergeant Todd Burnett, of Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The soldiers have their own reasons for taking the courses. Some see furthering their education as a means to achieve long-range goals.

"Right now I'm taking homicide investigation; I'm working toward an associate's in criminal law," said Private First Class Michael Knight.

"When I get out of the military I'm going to try to get hired by the police department or the FBI," added the Cedartown, Ga., resident.

Specialist Ian Mahon has a good reason for taking an individual study course that is teaching him to speak and write German.

"My fiancée is German, and since it's out here, why not? It's a correspondence course with a textbook, video and audiotapes available through City College of

Chicago. After finishing the lesson, you take it to the instructor, he grades it and you start the next section," said Mahon, of Allentown, Pa.

The University of Maryland, Central Texas College and City College of Chicago offer college courses to soldiers stationed at the various base camps throughout Bosnia. The courses are not free, but recently the price tag was reduced with the Army's help.

"Right now for all soldiers in Operation Joint Guard, enlisted soldiers can get 90 percent tuition assistance. This is something different from the rest of Europe and the states, where it's 75 percent. This was just put into effect February 1," said Pat Ruddell, an education counselor for the Army at McGovern.

"We also offer the DANTES program, the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support. Under the DANTES program, soldiers are offered free testing, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test," explained Ruddell, of El Paso, Texas.

Soldiers interested in enrolling in the upcoming courses should see the representative at their base camp education center.

"Term four will begin in March for the University of Maryland and Central Texas College, City College of Chicago is an ongoing thing. They are also offering weekend courses that are one semester hour credit," said Ruddell.

DoD keeps close eye on deployments

American Forces Press Service

The Department of Defense is watching deployments of military personnel closely to determine how they affect quality of life among service members.

In an effort to deal with the situation of more frequent deployments for all of the services, the department is aiming at a goal of no more than 120 deployed days per year, according to Rudy de Leon, defense undersecretary for personnel and readiness.

Some units deploy more often than others, and DoD is intensifying its tracking

in order to reduce deployment times.

Service members are mainly concerned about predictability in deployments, de Leon said. "If we can put that predictability in...I think we will have made a great stride for our people," he said.

Certain units will deploy more than others, such as search-and-rescue, military police and electronic warfare units. The Pentagon is looking at ways to offset frequent deployments, however. One way is to use the Reserve Components more often. In Operation Joint Guard, for example, reservists make up 20 percent of the force.

Each branch sets its own deployment goals, using guidance from DoD. The Army tracks both unit and individual deployments. The Air Force tracks deployments by individual and weapons systems, while the Navy and Marine Corps aim for a six-month deployment goal.

All the forces agree that deployments for high-demand units and individuals will continue to be frequent.

In situations when deployments can't be shortened, such as Operation Joint Guard, the Army can authorize a unit to exceed the limit, or get relief from the Army Reserve and National Guard.

Unexploded ordnance: hidden menace

Story by Specialist Beth Holland
124th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The Bosnian countryside is littered with the hidden remnants of war; unexploded artillery shells, mortar rounds, and other munitions. This dangerous live ordnance can be found anywhere at any time.

Task Force Eagle counts on Explosive Ordnance Disposal units to handle all dangerous ordnance found by soldiers.

Since anyone can find unexploded ordnance, or UXO, soldiers must know how to report it correctly so EOD technicians can find it easily and dispose of it properly.

"We find most of our ordnance up north, in the Zone of Separation, and near Camp McGovern. Wherever the fighting was the heaviest, you'll find EOD there," said Chief Petty Officer William McReynolds, a Navy EOD technician with EOD Mobile Unit 2, of the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Va.

McReynolds is a part of the joint Army-Navy EOD unit that takes care of UXO throughout Task Force Eagle. The 30-man group, consisting of EOD technicians and support personnel, is divided among every task force here.

Soldiers and EOD find ordnance not only in places where there was heavy fighting, but also where combat was light.

"We have civilians who stop our trucks because we have the UXO symbols on them. We find UXO in houses, fields, and on the sides of the roads. In the Camp Bedrock area, you find locals who were involved in the fighting who have some ordnance in their basements. They try to hand off live ordnance to patrols," said McReynolds, of Virginia Beach, Va.

There are specific ways that soldiers should handle ordnance if they find it, according to Staff Sergeant William Wittenbraker, an EOD technician with the 703rd Ordnance Company (EOD), of Fort Knox, Ky.

"The best way of doing it is if you're on a

foot or mounted patrol and you come across a UXO, send it through your task force Tactical Operations Command with a UXO Nine Line Spot Report," he said. "(This) is a Skill Level Two task in the Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks, so it's something that every E-5 and above should know."

Similar to the nine-line medical evacuation report, the report is simple

taken by the unit at the scene.

Wittenbraker and McReynolds stressed the importance of marking the UXO.

"Even though it's not a part of the nine-line report, soldiers can let us know if the UXO is marked, especially if they've improvised a marker," said Wittenbraker.

EOD has come across some unusual, but helpful, ways that soldiers and civilians mark mines.

"The best one I've seen is one that civilians make. They draw a little skull on cardboard, write 'mine' or 'danger' in Bosnian, and post it near the UXO. I've seen soldiers improvise mine markers with mosquito net pulls painted orange or a stick with the orange tape on it. During the night time, chemical lights work great if they don't violate security. I've actually seen a group of guys use stones to form an arrow and spell out 'UXO.' The guys didn't have enough material to mark it, so that worked really well," said Wittenbraker.

Though calling in and marking UXOs is crucial, accuracy and safety are more important to McReynolds.

"Safety is paramount. If you're hesitant to enter an area, simply take a GPS reading, give us an accurate range to the UXO from that point, and a direction in degrees," he said. "It makes it very hard to find it if we don't have an exact location, especially when you consider the size of some of this stuff."

McReynolds said that EOD technicians are leery of chasing after poorly marked UXO, especially in overgrown areas.

But in a country where unexploded munitions were once as common as mudholes, U.S. EOD personnel keep chipping away at the numbers, helping make the footpaths of Bosnia safe.



Photo by Sergeant First Class Toby Moore.

Navy EOD Chief Petty Officer William McReynolds, takes time to teach schoolchildren of the dangers of mines and other ordnance.

and includes date and time, unit name and grid coordinates of the UXO, method of contacting the unit, and type of munitions.

Also, the report should tell whether it contained nuclear, chemical or biological agents, threat level, impact on the mission, and protective measures

Full service only on safety

Story and photo by
Specialist J.M. Lowry
124th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Soldiers who work in the petroleum, oil and lubricants section at Camp Dobol don't rush out to check the oil or clean the windshield when a vehicle pulls in for a fill-up.

They have a much more important job.

When Army vehicles drive in to the self-service fuel point, POL soldiers make sure drivers fill up safely.

"Sometimes soldiers come up here expecting full service, but we're here to ensure safety," said Specialist Andy T. Fahey, 30, of Boston, a Company C, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment infantryman who works in the POL section.

Drivers become so accustomed to fueling their vehicles themselves that they often overlook safety measures.

"We make sure the vehicle is grounded and has a drip pan, that the operator is wearing gloves and goggles, and that the Hemett refueler is operating correctly," said Specialist Demetrius L. Thompson, 25, of Tulsa, Okla., a POL specialist with Company C.

If a vehicle isn't grounded a spark could start a fire. Without a drip pan, hazardous materials could leak. If gloves aren't worn, the fuel could burn the soldiers' skin. Fuel could splash into a soldier's eyes if he or she is not wearing goggles. If the fuel tanker isn't operating properly, soldiers won't get the fuel they need.

The POL specialists supervise the soldiers who fuel all kinds of vehicles — everything from Seabee dump trucks to Humvees and from 5-ton trucks to Bradley fighting vehicles.

Those vehicles use JP-8 diesel fuel, so POL specialists must be vigilant to prevent possible accidents and injuries.

"JP-8 is not only a skin irritant, but it also can cause frostbite," said Fahey. "And if JP-8 gets in your eyes it could cause permanent damage."

The POL specialists check for safety in other ways as well.

"There's a number of things that could happen at a fuel point," said Thompson. "Like, someone could be smoking too close to the fuel point. We watch out for things like that, too."

Smokers should stay at least 50 feet away from a fuel point, said Thompson.

Although the fuel point at Camp Dobol is not like a gas station in the U.S., soldiers can still pick up a can of oil.

The POL specialist can sign off on a can of engine oil or transmission oil, but they don't check the air or the oil on the vehicle, said Thompson.

"That's an operator job and this isn't a Shell station," he said.

Besides supervising the safety of

drivers refueling their vehicles, the POL specialists have another important job.

"We also collect used hazardous materials, like batteries," said Fahey. And the POL soldiers also collect scrap metal, according to Thompson.

Although the fuel point doesn't display the Texaco star or the green BP sign, soldiers can easily refuel their vehicles on the base camp, no credit card needed.



Sergeant David J. Karbo, a POL specialist with Headquarters Troop, 2-2 ACR, makes sure the transfer of fuel from one tanker to another runs smoothly.

Show-and-tell, Russian-style

Airborne Brigade hosts armament display for U.S. soldiers

Story and photos by Staff Sergeant Conrad College, 372nd MPAD

It was a day of show-and-tell, Russian-style. Reciprocating for being invited to a display of U.S. armaments recently at McGovern Base, the Russian Independent Airborne Brigade held a display of its own. The Russians lined up a potpourri of small arms, artillery pieces, armored vehicles, communications equipment and vehicles at Camp Uglijevic and invited U.S. soldiers to have a look.

Private First Class Charles Poland, 21, of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division, was thrilled with the opportunity to get an up-close look at some of

the materiel.

"I think it's cool that they invited us to see their weapons and vehicles," said Poland. "It's nice to see their equipment. It seems real proud of it. In fact, they're really proud of it."

Like other soldiers who visited the display, Poland had never seen before and clambered in and over the equipment. He saw an 1V119 Reostat and a 2S9 Nona arm.

Soldiers also were invited to dine in the mess hall, where they mingled with Russian soldiers.



The Russian Independent Airborne Brigade exhibits armored vehicles and other equipment at Camp Uglijevic.

U.S. soldiers

... us here, and that they're displaying their
"They've opened their camp to us and they
eager to help."

... e display, Poland handled weapons he'd not
... r the vehicles. Among those on display were
... rmed vehicles.

... e on Russian cuisine in the Camp Uglijevic
... Russian Army soldiers and traded souvenirs.



Private First Class Charles B. Poland sights down the barrell of his favorite Russian rifle. It has a large day and night scope and a grenade launcher attached.



Poland, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division, checks out a Russian anti-tank missile system at the exhibit at Camp Uglijevic.

What's got 100 wheels and is green?

Transportation company keeps goods rolling

Story and photo by Specialist Eric C. Barker
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The road to peace is not an easy one and can be bumpy at times, according to soldiers from the North Carolina Army National Guard's 1454th Transportation Company.

Despite geopolitical challenges, the unit — that saw action in Operation Desert Storm and now Operation Joint Guard in Bosnia — the 1454th TC soldiers keep rolling.

The Stabilization Force transporters now are delivering supplies to 10 base camps in the U.S. sector, Multinational Division-North.

"Our mission is to haul all the LOGPAC, Class 9 supplies (parts), water, food to all the surrounding camps," said Staff Sergeant Stephen Ferby, a truck driver with the 1454th TC,

"We don't get much time off. But I don't mind. We are very essential to the operation in country. It's our job to keep everybody well-supplied even if it means working every day,"



Road Warriors" Specialists Buddy Kinley and Keith R. Pauke, truck drivers with the 1454th TC and a Pressman for Oliver Rubber Co., talk over a route during a break at Camp Bedrock.

based at Guardian Base. Before mobilization, he drove a UPS truck in the U.S.

The guard personnel drive over Bosnian Roads daily.

"We don't get much time off. But I don't mind. We are very essential to the operation in country. It's our job to keep everybody well-supplied even if it means working every day," explained Ferby.

Stress is high, especially operating large trucks on small and congested roads, he said.

"The roads are small over here. They're not made for the big trucks. They are made for the compact cars, so our big trucks take up the whole lane. So you can imagine how tight a squeeze when you two big trucks going past each other. Traffic stops," said Sergeant Tony L. Davis, of Charlotte, N.C.

"There is very little shoulder to the roads," added Davis. "So it's difficult to pull off to the side to avoid some hazards. You have pedestrians walking down the middle of the road; you have tractors, horse drawn carriages, bicycles, potholes, dirt roads and reckless Bosnian drivers weaving in and out of traffic. It like playing a 3-D video game."

Deployment in the former Yugoslavia presents a challenge to any military unit, but their experience in Desert Storm has been useful on this deployment, he said.

"Actually, the driving conditions over here are better than Saudi. You still have people weaving in and out of traffic, but surprisingly they are not as reckless as Saudi drivers. They didn't care. They passed on the right, left and sometimes straight at you," laughed Davis.

After being deployed in Desert Storm, 1454th TC soldiers said they have a better appreciation of their role in a peacekeeping operation.

"The difference between here is Saudi was more of a war condition, whereas here it is more of a peace-time mission. Over in Saudi everything was go, go go. Here it's little more slower, we put safety first in everything we do," said Ferby.

Chance meeting reunites old pals

Story by Master Sergeant Terry Brown
362nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A chance meeting of Operation Joint Guard soldiers in a line at a dining facility at Eagle Base recently turned out to be a reunion of neighbors from the same school.

Major Rob Ward, a member of the Army Reserve's 418th Civil Affairs Battalion from Kansas City, Kan., and Sergeant Justin Schreppel, a combat engineer with Company C, 54th Engineer Battalion, are from Oswego, Kan.

Ward, who is assigned to the 353rd Civil Affairs Battalion, works out of a tent located on Washington Boulevard in the base camp. When not on a field operation, Schreppel is on duty across the street in a tent in Tent City One. "We're neighbors again," said Ward.

Ward was Schreppel's sixth-grade teacher at Neosho Heights Elementary School in Oswego, in 1983.

"During a telephone call home, my grandmother, Edith Schreppel, told me she heard my former teacher was in the Army in Bosnia," Schreppel said, adding several days

later he ran into Ward in a chow line.

"He was standing right in front of me," recalled Schreppel. "I recognized him; I tapped him on his shoulder."

At first, Ward looked familiar to Schreppel, but the sergeant wasn't sure the major was his ex-teacher.

"After he recognized my voice, he came over and tapped me on my shoulder," Ward said, adding they sat down and chatted while they ate a vegetable lasagna dinner together.

The soldiers' conversation focused on hometown news, relatives, classmates and the military.

Schreppel said Ward was "a hard, but good teacher."

"I liked him," Schreppel said, adding Ward's classroom discipline had a military flair to it.

"He made us all keep our class-work folders neat and in perfect order by subject – spelling, English, math, science, and history," said Schreppel. "He taught all our subjects."

Schreppel noted the oddity of a reunion thousands of miles from home.

"I never thought I would run into someone from my hometown," said Schreppel.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Story by Specialist Todd Edwards
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Troop K, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, live-fired their 50 caliber machine guns and 40mm grenade launchers recently, the first chance during their deployment for some of the soldiers to fire vehicle-mounted weapons.

The exercise, held at a range near Tuzla, consisted of three parts; day fire, nuclear, biological and chemical fire, where soldiers engaged targets wearing protective masks and chemical gloves and a night fire, where soldiers used Starlight scopes at night to engage targets.

These McGovern Base soldiers, who spend most of their time wearing their peacekeeper hats, on presence patrols, escort duty or other tasks, relished the opportunity to air out their vehicle-mounted weapons.

"I like firing the best. We've been running around Bosnia for about six months and this is the first time we have actually gotten to fire our crew-served weapons," said Specialist Casey Crape, an infantryman with Troop K.

Aside from enjoying the training, the soldiers got some much-needed quality time with their weapons, said Staff Sergeant Dan Davis, a member of Troop K.

"It's good training for the gunners who have very limited

time for training," said Davis, "And once we get our hands on some ammo and the opportunity to shoot, we like to get those guys up and shooting."

The opportunity to train is important, said Davis.

"It's good training, yeah. But I'd like to get more rounds and get the guys more familiar with their weapons," said Davis. "You go to these qualification tables and that's all they see of ammo."

More time firing their weapons would help the soldiers more, said Davis.

At the range, the young soldiers have limited ammunition with which to practice, so every shot must count, said Davis.

"There's no familiarization fire, you get these kids on the guns, tell them to shoot and qualify, and they do good. They do really well," he said.

The goal of the training, however, was to sharpen the soldiers' warfighting skills, said Davis.

"We're out here to keep up our warfighting skills," said Davis, "Even though we're in a peacekeeping role right now, we need to keep up our ability to hit targets when we need to hit targets."

Swapping SUSVs for Humvees

U.S., Swedish wrench-benders trade places

Story and photo by
Staff Sergeant Elliott Minor
124th Mobile Public Affairs Det.v

Swedish sergeants Thomas Soderberg and Jesper Frohlin gave up saunas, the comforts of barracks life and savory fish dinners for a taste of American life.

It meant a week of sleeping on taut nylon and aluminum cots, living in tents heated by kerosene stoves and eating American cuisine, some of it considered unhealthy by the Swedes.

As a part of a two-nation mechanics' exchange, Soderberg and Frohlin learned how U.S. wrench-benders torque the bolts on Humvees and check the dipsticks of 5-ton truck engines.

In turn, their U.S. counterparts, Private First Class Jerry Onken and Private First Class Marcus Garza, learned how to fix Swedish machines, including SUSVs, tractor-like snowmobiles that crawl over ice and mud to reach mountain outposts, and Sisu six-wheeled armored personnel carriers.

Onken and Garza said they were impressed by the Swedes' friendliness and their dedication to hard work.

"I learned a lot about the way they lived, some of their traditions," said Onken, 27, of Onamia, Minn., a mechanic with Troop F, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment of Fort Polk, La. "Their food was excellent. They eat lots of fish, and if you don't like fish, you'll be eating lots of salad."

Garza, 24, of Waxahachie, Texas, said the Swedes were warm hosts.

"They acted like we had known each other forever," said Garza, a mechanic from Company C, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry, of Friedberg, Germany. "The food is very healthy. There's no fried food. It's just food that nurses the body."

The exchange led to the loan of a \$200,000 Swedish tire machine, and a soldier to run it, to Camp Dobol. The machine presses rubber inserts into Humvee tires, allowing the vehicles to

drive even with deflated tires. It can bang out five tires in 20 minutes, a job that would take a U.S. mechanic up to five hours to finish by hand.

The Swedish visitors to Camp Dobol found that they had to spend some of their time dispelling some romantic myths about their Nordic nation, stretching from the Baltic Sea on the south to above the Arctic Circle on the north.

"They think the Swedish girls go in bikinis all the time and have long blonde hair," said Frohlin, 28, of Falkoping, about 15 miles east of Gotenborg. "It's not real because in the winter, it's very cold — too cold to go in a bikini."

"They will ask us if all the girls are

wider variety of foods to choose from, but also more junk foods, such as hamburgers, chili dogs and french fries.

The mechanics' duties are pretty much the same. The work takes patience, good troubleshooting skills and a willingness to get dirty, Frohlin said.

Both said they enjoyed the opportunity to learn first-hand about other cultures.

"I really enjoy seeing how other armies work and how the equipment works," said Soderberg. "Your system is real good at taking care of large quantities. To get one part, our system might be a bit quicker."

U.S. soldiers seem to be more specialized than Swedish soldiers, Soderberg said.

"If you have a driver, he's a driver," he said. "Our drivers have several specialties. He's also the gunner and the one who makes most regular maintenance on the vehicle."

Soderberg and Frohlin are among about 450 Swedish soldiers in the Stabilization Force. All but the officers are reservists who serve six-month tours in Bosnia.

Swedish males must register for the draft at 18, Soderberg said. Most enter the Army for 7 1/2 to 20

months of training, then become reservists, subject to call-up any time. Reservists serve in the enlisted ranks and non-commissioned officer corps. Swedes who want to become professional soldiers become officers, said Soderberg, who will begin officer training when he returns home.

Captain Marshall McKay, maintenance officer for the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, at Camp Dobol, said the mechanic exchange will continue.

"Their mechanics did well and enjoyed it," he said. "We plan for it to continue as much as possible. The best benefit is not how to turn a wrench, it is (knowing more about) their organization and how the Swedes do things differently. It's the whole culture, even their conscript army."



Swedish Army Sergeant Thomas Soderberg looks on while Private First Class Joshua Hanson repairs a Humvee.

blonde," said Soderberg, 20, of Vallentuna, a suburb of Stockholm. "Most of the Swedish-born women are blonde, but not like the movies."

While Frohlin and Soderberg lived at Camp Dobol for six days, Onken and Garza savored conditions at Camp Oden, near Tuzla, where they could enjoy the comforts of its barracks, its sauna, its two bars (soft-drinks only for U.S. soldiers) and its healthful meals.

Soderberg said there are fewer choices in the Swedish dining halls. A typical breakfast consists of porridge, yogurt and hot chocolate, tea or coffee. The main lunch might feature fish and pasta.

"We always have a real good salad table," he said. "We can always eat salad if we don't like the food."

Frohlin said U.S. soldiers have a

Hot Fuel

Filling helicopters on the move is a dangerous job for AA crew



Corporal Dion Harrison, a fueler with the 159th Medical Co., hot-fuels a Blackhawk during an emergency.

Story and photo by Private First Class Eric C. Barker
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

During an emergency every second is vital. In a situation where a soldier is in an accident and injured very badly, medical evacuation helicopters are called in to evacuate the injured. There is no time to waste. A minute too long could be the difference between life and death.

If it's a long flight to a medical facility, the aircraft may need to be refueled. There may not be time to shut down to refuel. The MEDEVAC must be back in the air quickly.

That's where the 159th Medical Company AA (Air Ambulance) hot-fuelers come in. During a hot-fuel maneuver, a pilot can touch down and refuel his aircraft without having to kill the engine.

"When a soldier is hurt, the MEDEVAC helicopters need to be able to come back and get refueled in minutes," said Staff Sergeant Robert Bowen, a section chief with the company.

The company's hot-fuelers are on standby around the clock.

"The hot refuel point is a 24 hour operation. The POL (petroleum, oil, lubricant) section is on call 24 hours a day," explained Bowen. "We have to be ready to assist. When an aircraft comes back in they may have another mission, if not they still need to be refueled, repositioned and ready for the next mission."

The fuelers pump a large volume of heated fuel in a small amount of time. "We can pump out 70 gallons in approximately two minutes. On longer flights we can pump in up to 300 gallons in 10 minutes," he said.

Using hot fuel cuts down time much better than when cold fuel is used. Bowen explains, "The reason we use hot gas instead of cold gas is because we keep the aircraft running, we get it hooked up, fueled, repositioned and they are ready to get right back in the air. If they have to go out on another mission they are able to leave right from the hot point position. With cold gas we have to shut down everything and before they can leave they

have to start them up again. You lose a lot of time that way," said Bowen.

Preparation for incoming flight is important, he added. "As soon as we get the call from operations, we put on our protective gear, go down to the POL point and try to get ready for the aircraft 10 minutes prior to arrival," said Bowen.

Fueling an aircraft while its rotors are still turning and engine running can be dangerous, according to Bowen. Working with the flammable gas also can be risky.

"The main problem we worry about is static electricity that the aircraft may get while flying through the air," explained Corporal Dion Harrison, a fueler.

"We ground both the truck and the helicopter," he said, which helps fuelers prevent a spark that could start a fire. "We also don't fire-retardant suits, flight helmets and ear protection."

Hot-fueling is risky business, but it's an essential task that gets helicopters back in the air in short order.

Sierra 10

ZOS checkpoint promotes unity after war

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Elliott Minor
124th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Sierra 10, an important checkpoint in the early days of the peacekeeping mission, still stands like a sentinel in an area linking the Bosnian Federation and Republika Srpska.

Soldiers from Camp Dobol still spend fortnightly stints at the lonely outpost alongside a busy thoroughfare.

Located about three miles east of Dobol in the Zone of Separation, a four-kilometer-wide strip that separates the former warring factions, Sierra 10 was created to help stabilize the area and to control traffic.

Sierra 10 is often a primary stop when visiting dignitaries are touring the area.

Platoons from the 2-2 ACR have taken turns, pulling two-week tours at the checkpoint, surrounded by triple-strand concertina wire and living in tents in an area about the size of three football fields. Soldiers could watch the main road from the Muslim city of Tuzla to Serb city of Zvornik from the roof of a war-damaged house, where the American flag is hoisted each day.

The tours include mounted and foot patrol through the Bosnian Serb town of Osmaci and Mahala and the Bosnian

Federation town of Memici, all heavily damaged during the war.

Sierra 10 also has been an important meeting place for local officials and business leaders from both sides of the ZOS. The meetings have improved economic development in the area and have fostered better relations between the Bosnian Federation of Muslims and Croats and the Republika Srpska.

Local residents who have claims for damages to property against the Army meet with lawyers from the Staff Judge Advocates office in a tent at Sierra 10.

Soldiers enjoy their duties at the checkpoint because it gave them a break from the frenzied pace of base camp life. Platoons from Troop F, 2-2 ACR spend two weeks at Sierra 10 every six weeks.

"I love it," said Specialist Daniel Patterson, 22, of Escondido, Calif. "When I'm pulling guard duty at Sierra 10, there's just me and the guy I'm pulling it with. I can walk around the perimeter and enjoy nature. Two dogs follow us on dismounted patrols.

"The people are happy we're here," he said. "They think we're doing a lot of good."

The soldiers eat in a tent and sleep in tents. They work out in a weight tent and spend their free time reading, playing computer games and watching videos.

"Here we get to assess our platoon and do training with minimal interference," said First Lieutenant Lorenzo Rios, a platoon leader. "This is the place where the leadership comes together and we re-view the performance over the past six weeks."

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Littel, commander of Camp Dobol, said Sierra 10 has been a source of security for civilians who live in the area.

