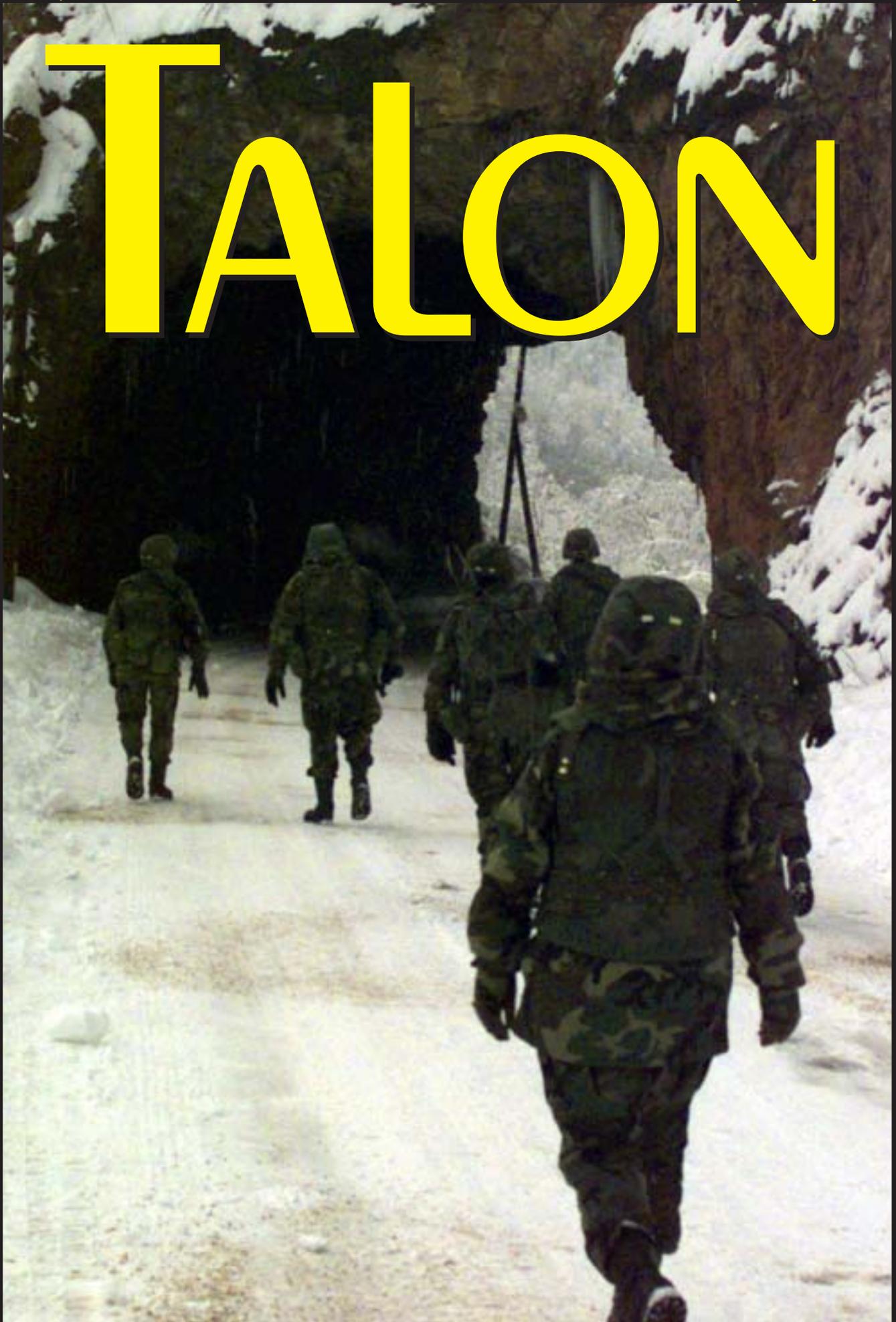


TALON



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Company C, 1/36 Inf. Reg. soldiers on patrol during a Srebrenica implementation meeting.

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

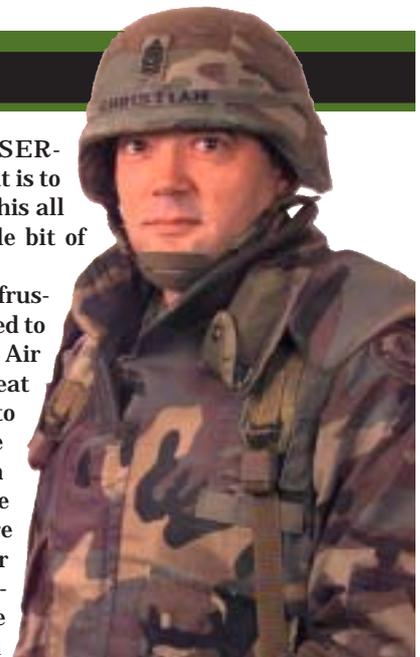
"Morale is a force multiplier." So what does this mean? This means that a positive outlook can make a person and a unit better than it already is. It means that you need to approach your job, the day's activities or the task you have directly at hand with a positive outlook and a smile. You will not only feel better about what you are doing but you will also affect all those around you into being more positive in their daily routines.

Each of us have "bad days," this includes command sergeants major. But one mark of a good unit is that it continuously works on morale and Esprit De Corps.

Last week I was having a not so good start to the week. As I walked into the Headquarters, not one, but four different soldiers gave me a big

"GOOD MORNING," or "HOOAH SERGEANT MAJOR!" I thought how great it is to be in this Task Force with troops like this all around me everywhere I go. That little bit of inspiration is still in me today.

It is easy to become discouraged and frustrated if you choose to do so. All of us need to remind each other that the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marines are great institutions. We now have the charge to make better than they were when we came into them. Looking for the good in the organization and speaking positive about it and those who are part of it are great ways to make this happen. So for all of you who help keep a command sergeant major's attitude in the right place and keep my moral up, "THANKS," and remember that, "TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO BE A SOLDIER."



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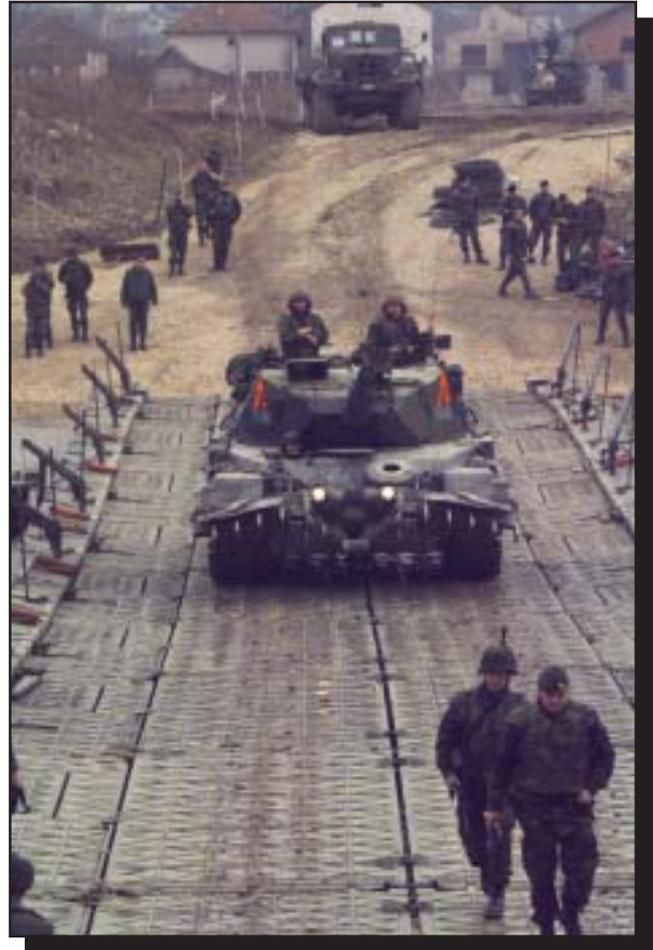
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The Bridge of Nations

Joint effort of nations makes passage possible



Finnish soldiers drive a RAISU across the Bosna River via the newly placed PMP float bridge.



Ground guides lead Danish soldiers in a German made Leopard II main battle tank across the Bosna River via the new PMP float bridge.

Story by Captain Gordon Tate and Staff Sergeant Lilian Falco
Photos by Staff Sergeant Lilian Falco
345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

In January 1998, soldiers from Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Denmark and the U.S began a joint effort to build a float bridge across the Bosna River near Doboj.

"The biggest challenge was inter-operability, but they were obviously successful," commented Captain Darrell Wasson, base camp assessment team chief from Eagle Base, Tuzla. Wasson's knowledge of float bridges was gained through experience as a platoon leader in an engineer unit. According to Wasson, the Russian designed Pomtommo Mostovoj Park float-bridge is also known as a pontoon bridge.

Existing bridges were downgraded by the Nordic Polish Brigade due to damage and inability to support armored traffic. The new bridge is a permanent fixture and will allow all vehicles to pass, added Wasson.

The procedure to install the bridge was quick. Using mine-sniffing dogs, hand-held detectors and the RAISU, a mine flail that clears up to 17,500 square meters in one hour, the explosive ordinance disposal team from Finland cleared the area of

land mines.

Next, the Danish soldiers surveyed the area, and it took approximately 40 minutes for the Hungarian soldiers to construct the bridge.

Due to an exceptionally warm winter, the melting snow is rapidly causing erosion along the banks of the Bosna River. This erosion could loosen mines causing them to fall into the river and detonate when contact is made with the bridge. To counter this threat, the Hungarian engineers installed a net called an anti-mine boom. Mines and other debris are caught in the boom.

Second Lieutenant R. Partol, an Estonian platoon leader is responsible for security of the bridge and rotates the duty with other Estonian platoons.

"The cooperation between the NORDPOL units and the Hungarian engineers was excellent," noted Lieutenant Colonel Jan Sejr, the Danish operations officer for NORDPOL.

Soldiers of the different armies watched as Danish soldiers in a German-made Leopard II main battle tank made their way across the bridge and became the first armored vehicle to make the crossing. The mission was a success.



Bosnians prepare a new roof for a house in Stari Rasadnik.

ZOS communities rebuild near Brcko

Story and photo by Specialist James Baker
345th Mobile Affairs Det.

In the midst of war-torn villages near Brcko, construction workers are resuming the painstaking task of rebuilding single-family homes from the debris created from intense shelling at the end of the Bosnian Civil War.

The presence of Stabilization Force peacekeepers has helped make the rebuilding effort possible, said Major Rick Pitts, civil affairs liaison at Camp McGovern.

Pitts, of the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade, an Army Reserve unit from San Antonio, recently reviewed the ongoing reconstruction in communities in the Zone of Separation. He said that residents have been able to return to their normal activities.

The war years dislocated thousands of residents from their homes. Families were torn apart, students were unable to attend schools. Residents were unable to shop safely at the markets.

Now, in villages such as Brod, Stari Rasadnik, and Brodusha, signs of life are emerging from the rubble as nearby U.S. peacekeepers provide security.

"The goal of this mission is encapsulated in the civil affairs elements. People who are leery of their well-being, have safety issues. Once these needs are met by the presence of the soldiers here, the civilians can focus on food; clothing and shelter, in addition to transportation and medical concerns," said Pitts.

In the villages near Brcko, approximately 200 families have begun the process of rebuilding their lives. The initial step is

getting assistance with the construction of their homes, according to local officials.

International agencies under the auspices of the United Nations are providing the funding and the material for this reconstruction effort.

"Much of the work taking place here is predicated on the outcome of the March 15 arbitration talks determining the status of Brcko, a city pivotal to all sides involved in the Dayton Peace plan," said Pitts.

Currently, Brcko is coveted as the strategic point for control of the Posavina Corridor that runs parallel to the navigable Sava River. The atmosphere is still tense even though the war is over. A 4-kilometers wide area called the The Zone of Separation, established an inter-entity boundary line that is marked by white stakes with orange tops. On each side of the IEBL, two kilometers are allotted to the communities north and south of the line.

During the latter days of the war, the streets, houses, neighborhood boundaries and communication lines were hotly contested in the Brcko area. Negotiations to resettle this area have been slow, as many issues remain unsolved.

Consequently, the construction activity that is occurring now is the result of the negotiations of last summer.

On a national level, a license plate, and a flag have been agreed upon.

"We are witnessing the birth of a new nation as the foundation takes shape before our eyes." Said Pitts. "The troops here now can be proud that they had a hand in making it possible".

Waterdogs create steady flow of H₂O

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

After the end of a long day, many soldiers at Camp Bedrock take for granted the fact that there are hot showers and warm meals waiting for them. Neither of these two necessities would be possible without clean, drinkable water.

One small unit makes sure there is always plenty of water available for every soldier on the base camp.

An eight-person team from Alpha Company, 123rd Main Support Battalion, of Dexheim, Germany, is the only military water purification unit that is providing water for a base camp in Bosnia. Since arriving in October, the team has purified an enormous amount of water.

Staff Sergeant Gustave Bloom, a water purification specialist and noncommissioned officer in charge of the group, said all the water used on Bedrock was produced by the 123rd MSB.

"We produce 40 to 50 gallons of potable water per person, per day here. We purify all of the water on Camp Bedrock," said Gustave. "Every drop of water on this camp is potable, including water at the boot washes, the sinks, and the DFAC (dining facility), which is our biggest customer. Since October, we've provided 4,722,905 gallons of water."

Their job requires constant maintenance and supervision of their four 600-gallon-per-hour reverse osmosis water purification units. The unit works 24 hours, seven days a week to purify the water that Brown and Root pumps up to the base camp from a nearby stream, according to Bloom.

"We work in shifts and try to have at least three people on at one time, with two people working and one person on break at a time. Water purity tests must be done every hour. We check the pH levels, chlorine levels, and the total dissolved solids levels. We also make sure that the equipment is working properly," said Bloom. "We have to make sure that everything is running smoothly, and that we have good continuity with our soldiers." Bloom and his soldiers work late into the night, changing filters and doing equipment maintenance that cannot be



Specialist Erik Raithe checks the water purity levels at the Camp Bedrock water purification site.

done during peak water use hours.

Without the unit's long hours of work, life would be a lot less comfortable

Water purification is no exception.

"Time is the hardest part. 24-hour duty is hard, it can be difficult to stay awake. Being away from my family is hard, too. For most of us, this is our second time here. The first time, we were here for a year and we expect to spend a full year here again," said Specialist John Zelasko, a water purification specialist from Normalville, Penn.

Being a member of a small unit can be difficult as well.

"The hardest part of my job is probably interpersonal relationships on the job. When you have any group of people marooned in a remote location, there are bound to be conflicts. That's not to say that we don't get along. We're very close, but those things happen," said Specialist Erik Raithe, a water purification specialist originally from Billings, Mont.

Bloom said overall, the members of this unit find that their jobs are worth the difficulties

"Our soldiers here work very hard. Water is often taken for granted. For me, it's satisfying to know that there's enough hot water for soldiers to take a hot shower and for the DFAC to cook," said Bloom. "Getting water out to the base camp is very rewarding."

"Without us up here, water conservation would go into effect. Usually, that means that there are no daily showers and limited water use."

at Bedrock.

"Without us up here, water conservation would go into effect. Usually, that means that there are no daily showers and limited water use. That affects morale, sanitation, and quality of living. Brown and Root wouldn't be able to wash out the portable toilets as often or steam clean the boardwalks. Water would also have to be trucked in from Guardian Base or Blue Factory," said Bloom.

With every job, there are difficulties.

Manning the gates of Demi

Ghost and Eagle troops maintain security

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

Guard duty is a way of life for the soldiers who watch over the east and west gates at Camp Demi. It's often a tedious and monotonous job, but one that is critical to camp security.

At Demi, nestled in the mountains south of Tuzla, the west gate is used for military traffic, while the east gate handles civilian traffic.

"The troops of the base camp are counting on us, and it's important that we safeguard them," said Corporal Jason D.

White, 21, of Shreveport, La., a Troop G, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment scout.

Soldiers scan their sectors from a fortified guard shack beside a gravel road. Guards control an iron gate that regulates traffic.

Ghost Troop soldiers man Demi's west gate, where they must check all military vehicles entering and leaving the camp.

"We check SFOR ID cards to make sure they're military only," said Private Pete B. Rohlfs. "We also check the identification number on the cards, too."

But besides identification cards, the west gate guards check for safety items, such as vehicle dispatch and safety records.

"We check the truck's dispatch to make sure they're signed by proper authority," said Rohlfs, 21, of Columbus, Ohio, a Troop G scout.

"We check to make sure everybody is wearing seatbelts and kevlar," said Private First Class Bradley J. Randall, 20, of Bigfork, Minn., a scout for Troop G. "Safety is a major concern. We want to make sure everyone goes home safely."

The west gate soldiers do all this while still observing for security and keeping a good flow of military traffic.

Although the situation is similar at Demi's east gate, there are differences.

Eagle Troop soldiers are responsible for the east gate.



Private First Class Richard L. Reardon, a Troop E scout, scans a local contractor with a hand-held metal detector at Camp Demi's east gate.



Corporal Jason D. White, a Troop G scout, checks the west gate at Camp Demi.

They keep civilian traffic — Brown and Root employees, local contractors and interpreters — flowing smoothly.

“I’m usually outside checking people and scanning them,” said Private First Class Richard L. Reardon, 19, of Santa Clarita Valley, Calif., a Troop E scout.

Reardon not only scans people with his eyes, he checks them for weapons and other contraband by scanning with a hand-held metal detector.

“I try to search everyone as best I can and treat everyone equally,” said Reardon.

An interpreter works closely with the guards to help validate civilians’ identification cards.

“If there’s a hostile act, he’s our middle man,” said Specialist Anthony R. Padgett, 28, of Jacksonville, Fla., also a Troop E scout.

If there is a disturbance involving the local civilian populace the interpreter is there to help, said Franci Marjanovic, an interpreter for the Army. Eagle Troop soldiers realize the importance of an interpreter at the east gate.

“Without the interpreters, this gate would close down,” said Padgett. “Besides, he helps us stay awake.”

Marjanovic likes his job and understands its importance.

“I like to work with these guys here, and it’s a good job,” Marjanovic said.

Otherwise, east and west gate duty is much like duty at all guard shacks and towers.

The soldiers work in shifts for 24 hours. Some shifts are “on”, or at the shack, and some are “off”, where soldiers can relax or sleep. The soldiers scan their sectors, looking for any threat to the camp and its soldiers.

In the cold of the night, soldiers heat themselves with smelly kerosene heaters. Plexiglas windows protect them

from the wind. At the west gate, there is a reminder of just how important those windows are. It reads, “Take care of the Plexiglas, it will keep us warm this winter.”

Besides staying warm, soldiers also have to fight the urge to sleep and to become complacent. Sometimes the interpreters don’t always help, but the weather does. The cold plays a big part in keeping soldiers alert, said White. If the weather doesn’t help, there is always conversation with a fellow soldier.

“Good conversation keeps the morale up,” said Randall.

“The prime topic is what we’re going to do when we get home, and about the things we took for granted then,” said White.

Although soldiers work long hours, they say the time tends to go by quickly.

“As long as you stay busy time goes by fast,” said Specialist Allen P. Nicholson, 30, of Quincey, Fla., a Troop E scout. “And you’re constantly busy at the gate, so it’s easy.”



cks with higher command before opening the



Private First Class Bradley J. Randall, a Troop G, 2-2 ACR scout, closes the west gate at Camp Demi.

SFOR teachers in Bikodze school

Swedish and U.S. soldiers team up to teach

Story and photo by
Staff Sergeant Thomas C. Meeks
124th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The kids in their dirty and ragged clothes were busy playing in the muddy Bikodze school yard turned soccer field which still showed the scars of a bloody civil war. Even though the school house still bared evidence of the war, the kids seemed happy like kids at play anywhere.

As the Stabilization Force vehicles pulled into the parking lot the kids were so shocked to see them that their attention quickly turned to the soldiers inside.

U.S. soldiers who had teamed up with Swedish soldiers interrupted the soccer game and took time out of their busy peace-keeping schedules to brighten the lives of these kids. They taught classes on mine awareness, first aid, history of the U.S. and Sweden and answered general questions about Americans and SFOR. After each one hour class, the kids round-robin into other classes.

"It is always good for two allied forces to show the public that we are working together for the same cause," said Captain Richard Unda, 321st Civil Affairs Brigade from San Antonio.

According to Unda, the idea was first born when the civil affairs section from the Swedish Battalion contacted Camp Bedrock to try to get some school supplies for the mission. After talking for a while, Unda and his Civil Affairs team joined forces with the Swedish in their mission.

It was in the mine awareness class where the U.S. soldiers worked most with the Swedish.

"We didn't come here to take the lead in this. We're just here to help out as much as possible," said Petty Officer 1st class William Vandiver, 703rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit from Camp Bedrock. "This is just another area that the EOD can contribute to the peacekeeping efforts. It's an effort to show everyone that different countries can work together for the same cause."

"I'm sure they have been taught this before but it's always good, especially for kids, to re-instill what they have already learned," said Vandiver.

The first-aid class was taught by Swedish nurse, Sergeant Stig Wickman, who kept the class very basic since the "kids are so young with short attention spans."

After the classes, the day ended with members of the civil affairs team taking on several of the students in a basketball game.

"Overall this was a good experience for the whole team to interact with kids and allied forces," said Unda.

This is not the first time the kids have been taught mine awareness, according to Jasmina Mujkic-Catic, 27, Bosnian language teacher.

"These kids were here during the war and this is something nice for them because they now know for sure that there is peace in Bosnia," said Mujkic-Catic.



Captain Richard Unda (third soldier from left), 321st Civil Affairs Battalion, assists the EOD instructor teaching mine awareness classes.

Dobol's vampires rule the darkness

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

As the sun sinks in the western sky, casting the Tuzla Valley into eerie darkness, the vampires emerge from their dim abodes, the secluded places that shield them from the sunshine and frenzy of an Army base camp in Bosnia.

As most soldiers are settling down in their tents to play computer games, watch horror flicks and eventually sleep, Camp Dobol's vampires are just settling in for their nightly deeds, tasks they can really sink their teeth into.

Dubbed the Vampires because of the hours they work, not the length of their incisors, these eight soldiers run the tactical operations center of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, from sundown to sunrise.

The tactical operations center is the hub of the 2-2 ACR's peace-keeping activities in an 850-square-mile area that includes Bratunac and Srebrenica, some of the most volatile cities in Bosnia. Just about everything that goes on in the Tactical Operations Center is classified -- maps, briefings and operations orders.

"There are about 1,200 soldiers in the squadron," said Sgt. Raymond Fuller, 26, of Portland, Ind., the vampires' supervisor. "Their safety and security rests on these eight individuals who work in the TOC on the night shift."

Operating under their cloaks of secrecy, the vampires perform jobs they can really sink their teeth into. The work requires tact and attention to details.

They receive constant reports from night patrols and from guards protecting Camp Dobol. They also monitor world news developments on a television -- and sometimes even basketball playoffs -- and they prepare intelligence reports for morning briefings.

They also perform less glamorous Army duties, like sweeping the floors, making coffee and gathering donuts from the dining hall.

"At night, we know what we have to do and we get it done," said Specialist Marvin Seaton, 27, a radio operator from Talinina, Okla. "The night shift is like a big family. We get our jobs done and we make it fun."

The Vampires work 12-hour shifts, from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., seven days a week. Their nightly duties and daily sleep gives them little time to sightsee, even from the windows or

machine-gun turrets of Humvees on patrol or delivering supplies, like a lot of other soldiers.

"I've been to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Italy," said Specialist Raymond Gammon, 30, a radio operator from Clearwater, Fla. "I figure I've been to enough countries. Missing one isn't that big of a deal."

The Vampires say they have adjusted to the night life and being out of synch with the rest of the world.

During their daytime sleep hours, most say they wear head-



Sergeant Danny Harris of Jesup, Ga., checks a ground surveillance receiver that would alert him to camp intruders.

phones or ear plugs to dampen the drone of Humvees passing their tents, or just a thoughtless neighbor's stereo.

"Violence works for me," joked Gammon, a former Marine. "Turn off the stereo, 'cause if you don't, I'm going to kill you."

"I like the night shift because I tend to get more sleep in the day," said Private First Class Jacquet Triggs, 21, of New Orleans. "I put the sleeping bag over my head and go to sleep."

Major Jon Leonard, the 2-2 ACR's operations officer, said the Vampires play a vital role in the success of the mission. Since they work while most of their leaders are asleep, the Vampires are briefed each night on situations that may require them to roll someone out of bed.

"They do an outstanding job," Leonard said. "They're very important."

'General Store' meets supply demands

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

Supply tents are like general stores in old western towns. They have a little bit of everything. And if soldiers can't find what they're looking for, the supply clerks can always order it.

All the soldiers need to do is walk to the supply tent and sign for an item. It's relatively easy to do, and it's important to have the supplies.

"We have our hand in everything you see — pickets, trucks, and even wardrobes," said Private First Class Jacob Wade, a Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment supply specialist.

"I don't think the camp could get by without us," said Wade, 25, of Terry, Miss.

"If they need the stuff, we give it to them," said Private First Class Brian K. Savoy, a 2-2 ACR supply shop specialist.

But it has to be mission-related, said Wade.

Although it might seem simple to just sign for such things as pens, notebooks, paper and nails, it really isn't.

"In theory, it's pretty easy," said Staff Sergeant Kenneth E. Blount, 38, of Edenton, N.C., the supply shop noncommissioned officer in charge.

But the supplies exchange hands via hand receipts and change documents, and supply soldiers have to be accountable for all the inventory, from Humvee parts and exercise equipment, to office supplies.

"We must have a 100 percent (accountability) on everything, 99 1/2 won't do," said Wade. That's the hard part, he said.

Supplies arrive daily from Guardian Base, according to Savoy, who orders the supplies for camps Demi and Dobil. Then supply shop soldiers distribute the items to various troop supply teams.

Soldiers have a lot of requests for various supplies.

"Anything they can imagine, they can ask for," said Specialist Aaron D. Leblanc, 22 of Rochester, N.Y., a Troop F, 2-2 ACR supply specialist.

Supply soldiers can special-order hard to find items.

"We want to make sure every soldier has what they need," said Wade. "And if we don't have it, we can order it for them."

But the simple things, like office supplies, are readily available.

"We must have a 100 percent (accountability) on everything, 99 1/2 won't do,"

"The biggest thing is pens and the little, green notepads," Leblanc said.

Supply carries items some soldiers might not think about, such as rank insignia for newly promoted troops.

Soldiers also can exchange damaged

and worn-out gear for new items, according to Leblanc.

Like cowboys visiting a general store, whatever soldiers need, their demand usually can be met by supply.



Private First Class Brian K. Savoy, a supply section specialist, inventories supplies.

Land mines no match for Panther

Story and photo by
Sergeant Terry Welch
345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Mud oozes from beneath the tracks of the vehicle as it lumbers down a Bosnian back road that has yet to be cleared of mines. No one inside is concerned about the danger.

That's because no one is inside.

At first glance the vehicle, known as the Panther, looks like an implement of awesome destruction. Two studded rollers are attached to the front of an M-60 tank chassis without the gun turret. Chains drag a cylindrical electromagnetic pulse generator between the rollers.

Looks are deceiving in the case of the Panther, however. This machine is designed to prevent destruction. Operated by remote control, it's an experimental mine-clearing vehicle. Its rollers can smash and explode mines without damaging the vehicle, and the pulse generator triggers mines with electromagnetic fuses.

The M-60 chassis is manually driven to the mine-clearing site, where members of Company A, 16th Engineering Battalion, attach the rollers with the help of a Combat Engineer Vehicle. The rollers are hauled to the site in the bed of a Hemmt.

Specialist Ian Mahon, of Company A, "drives" the Panther through a mined area by remote control from the relative safety of an armored personnel carrier that sits up to a hundred yards behind the mine-clearing vehicle. Mahon said at first he was excited to be operating the tank, but now it seems like it's "just a job."

But it's quite a job, walking a thin line between tedium and tension. The operator moves the Panther ahead up to a hundred yards, or as far as it can be moved and remain in the line of sight. It is moved forward and back three times, shifting the machine's position on the road (or surface being cleared) in order to make contact with both sides and the middle of the road with the rollers. Thoroughness becomes the order of the day, because an APC with attached bulldozer blade follows, and it might easily find under its tracks any mines the Panther might have missed.

On this particular day, the remote video camera enables the operator to see from the Panther's perspective isn't functioning and the road winds around corners and down hills. This forces Mahon to use all of the skills he's gained in two years of operating the vehicle, to keep it from sliding down the steep hillside at the road's edge or careening down the road out of control. He also tries to keep from destroying the natural vegetation at the road's edges.

"This is one of the hardest things I've done," he said. "You can get a five-second delay on your brakes and in five seconds it can get up to seven to ten miles an hour." While that may not seem very fast in your average Yugo, it's enough to turn the Panther into the machine of destruction it looks like it is.

Yet Mahon maneuvers the tank deftly, the only casualty being a small tree that was too close to the

roadside. Not bad for a man who never played video games because he was "pretty uncoordinated". (Since he's been driving the Panther, he's purchased a home video game system. He's getting better.)

The combat engineers know that this is not the stuff of Hollywood Army heroics, but they also know that the road they've cleared today is in an area that is going to soon be resettled. The burnt out shells of houses on either side of the road will soon be rebuilt and families will be moving up and down this road. The engineers know that they have helped this future come about.

Mahon, for one, is glad to be a part of the mine-clearing operation, especially since he's using the Panther. "I've been face-to-face – maybe eight inches – away from a mine," he said. "We're trained to do that, but I like this system a whole lot better."



Specialist Mahon operates a tank using the Omnitech Panther Remote Robotic System that lends the machine its name.

Patrol in the snow

Icy roads not an obstacle for Company C

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

When soldiers guard a checkpoint along a desolate route in Bosnia, they usually sit in a Bradley fighting vehicle or stand beside it. Infantry soldiers from Camp Dobol recently had a chance to do what they were trained for — foot patrols.

But this time it wasn't in the hot sun, or a jungle forest. This time it was in 10 inches of snow.

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, conducted a relatively short three kilometers reconnaissance patrol during one of the Srebrenica implementation meetings for an important reason.

"They (the commanders) wanted us to recon routes to see if they (local civilians) could bypass our checkpoints," said Sergeant Lash L. Bailey, 27, of Muskegon, Mich., a Company C, 1-36, squad leader who was in charge of the patrol.

The meetings in Srebrenica and other Republika Srpska towns are held to recognize new elected officials. Sometimes there is an outbreak of civil unrest during the meetings and the Stabilization Force soldiers are there to provide a secure environment for peace.

To safeguard a meeting site, soldiers deploy to certain areas to track the movements of people who could potentially destabilize the process.

The patrol started out when the sky was gray and overcast, but by the time they finished the sun was out in full force melting at least some of the snow.

The infantrymen started along the icy road, slipping and sliding, but maintained their focus of mission and sense of humor as they joked and poked fun at each other.

"I got to watch all the southerners try to adapt and overcome," said Bailey.

But it seems even northerners had a little difficulty, too.

"It was kind of fun with all the ice and trying to walk on it," said Bailey.

To soldiers from the south, this was a new experience, seeing all the snow covering the mountains and trees like a big white blanket.

"It was change of a scenery," said Sergeant Tracy Hawkins, 27, of Quinlin, Texas, a Company C, 1-36 Inf. Reg. team leader. Hawkins was not only referring to all the snow, but also just being in a different part of Bosnia.

Hawkins, who is stationed at Camp Dobol, was about 35 kilometers southeast of the camp during the meeting.

"It was nice being in a different place, one that we've never been to before," Bailey said.

The soldiers continued on until they came to a leaky tunnel. Large icicles, some as much as two feet long, hung from the side and roof of the tunnel. "The scenery was cool," Hawkins said, referring to the icicles and the snow.

"It was a very scenic view," Bailey added.

The tunnel was the turn-around point for the soldiers. As they headed back, they took a snow-covered side road.

The road went over a slow moving creek, which was frozen on both sides. Then it ran up the side of a large hill that overlooked a house down in the valley.

At this point, the patrol received the command to return to the checkpoint.

Even though it was cold, but sunny now, some soldiers had worked up a sweat. Although the soldiers worked hard, they liked the mission for several reasons.

"It's always nice to get out and see something new," said Bailey. "Even the snow up to our knees was okay."

"It was something different than just sitting or standing at a checkpoint," said Private Kenneth Cloud, 20, of Mansfield, La., who was the radio and telephone operator during the patrol.

Bailey and Hawkins said they would welcome more dismounted patrols.

It seems they'd all rather be on the move instead of sitting in a Bradley at a checkpoint.



Company C, 1-36 Inf. Reg. soldiers patrol during the Srebrenica implementation meeting.