

TALON



Talon

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Putting out fires **First Sergeant stars in movies;** **24-hour COMMO service**

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

Quite a few of the articles I write are items that need to be worked on, or things we are not doing as well; topics I want you, the soldier to focus on. There will always be things we need to improve and do better; I want to write on a different topic this week.

Many distinguished visitors and VIPs visit Task Force Eagle's Area of Responsibility (AOR) each week, and often times, many on the same day. I want to give you feedback from the visitors.

At times, it's difficult to see if you are making an impact on what goes on in the AOR on a daily basis. I can tell you when a distinguished visitor arrives here; they want to know the "ground truth." Any briefer here tells them "ask any soldier, sailor, airman or marine, they will tell you." Some of you have the opportunity to escort these visitors, provide security or share a meal with them. Others have attended ceremonies or presentations. Also, there are the indispensable "behind the scene" soldiers that make the events go smoothly; these soldiers never go unnoticed by the visitors.

Every visitor that comes here comments on at least two things; the appearance of the AOR, and the troops' technical competence and morale. Your appearance is mature and professional. They are impressed with your teamwork and your ability to do it with a smile. Many visitors arrive here not knowing what to expect. When they leave, they leave with the confidence that our country's best are at work here.

You execute your missions professionally and skillfully. Everyday, someone somewhere hears about the great accomplishment being done by the members of Task Force Eagle. Each one of you has made a dramatic, positive impact on the Task Force. Keep up the great work, and remember that, "Today is the best day to be a soldier."



On the Cover

Private First Class Eric Hiatt adjusts the tactical satellite antenna on his SHARC vehicle during a Camp McGovern meeting. Hiatt is a signal support systems specialist with Company C, 141st Signal Battalion. (Photo by Specialist James E. Baker, see page 11)

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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: Sergeant 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.

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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 Buddy Ferguson
Layout and Design Editor Specialist Martha Louise Reyna
Assistant Editor, Photo Editor and Webmaster Sergeant Robert R. Ramon
Translator Mirela Zunic

March 15 decision sidesteps proprietorship issue for Brcko



NATO Secretary General, Dr. Javier Solana (left) and Borko Reljic (right), mayor of Brcko, discuss their meeting with reporters on the steps of the Office of the High Representative, three days before the release of the Tribunal's decision. Reljic told Solana that whatever the decision, the people of Brcko would work together to implement it peacefully.

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

The long-awaited decision as to who will control the city of Brcko was reached on March 15, and that decision is to wait.

The Tribunal decided that a reasonable delay in the decision will provide a firmer foundation for selecting the most equitable result, according to the Supplemental Award document released by the Arbitral Tribunal for Dispute over Inter-Entity Boundary Line in the Brcko Area.

The IEHL is the line that separates the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Republika Srpska. The Tribunal had to decide whether to leave the IEHL where it is currently; move it north and east and annexing Brcko for the Federation; or create

a neutral, international district around Brcko.

The Tribunal was established on February 14, 1997, when it became apparent that the Republika Srpska-controlled area of Brcko Opstina was going to be a difficult area in which to enforce the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia, otherwise known as the Dayton Accords.

It was set up in conjunction with the establishment of the Office of High Representative, which was headed by Deputy High Representative for Brcko, U.S. Ambassador Robert Farrand. Farrand was given the power to set binding regulations in the aid of the implementation of the Dayton Accords. His office was given the job of monitoring both entities' compliance with both the regulations and the Accords.

Brcko lies in the middle of the Posavina Corridor, an approximately 5-kilometer wide strip of land connecting the eastern and western portions of Republika Srpska, which also separates the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (commonly known as the Muslim-Croat Federation) from Croatia.

Tensions in this area of "political crossfire" were very high in 1997 and violations of the Dayton Accords were common. Throughout 1997, according to the Supplemental Award, "(Republika Srpska) authorities in Brcko, directed by the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) headquartered in Pale, effectively resisted all of the supervisory programs looking toward Dayton compliance in the Brcko area."

The Supplemental Award says that some Federation officials refused to allow the return of former Serb residents to Sarajevo, and other communities within the Federation, showing that the Federation's compliance has been imperfect as well.

Both sides have made strides in recent months, including the installation of Milorad Dodik as new R.S. Prime Minister in January 1998. Dodik has said that it his hope that the IEHL will be an irrelevant issue, with no more meaning in the future than a state boundary line in the United States.

The Tribunal also stated in the Award that tensions and instability in the region remain high. According to a press release from the Arbitration Tribunal, during the final arbitration phase, the Republika Srpska will have to persuade the tribunal not to transfer Brcko to the Federation, or turn the city into a neutral district.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Corda, commander, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who has control for SFOR over the area around Brcko, said his troops are being told to be on guard. "Brcko and the implementation of the arbitration decision has been a team effort," Corda said. "That is, it has included all of Task Force Eagle. Even though the arbitration decision has been announced, we must be ready for any response."

336th – Where There's Smoke...

Story and photo by Sergeant First Class Sherry L. Claus
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

"Team Two, this is Chief. We have a member of Team One down inside the building."—"Chief, this is Team Two, copy, on our way in."

Following the hose to the downed firefighter and keeping physical contact with each other, the two-person team made its way through the smoke filled building. The lead man called out obstacles and their positions as he swept his arms in a wide arc in front of him.

Crawling on the floor through the darkness and wearing bulky gear hindered the progress of the duo as they determinedly worked toward their fallen comrade.

The minutes ticked by, the air crackling with tension as well as flames. The rescuers encountered obstacles such as trash cans, furniture, and piles of burning rubble. Finally, coming to the end of the hose, they found their fellow firefighter trapped beneath a couch which had apparently fallen through the ceiling.

"Chief, this is Team Two, we have located the victim and are preparing to return." "Team Two this is Chief, be careful."

After extracting the victim, the team retraced their path by

following the hose still attached to him and soon reached safety. "Chief, this is Team Two, mission accomplished."

Search and Recovery/Rescue training is a very valuable tool for the 336th Engineer Platoon Firefighters, a Reserve unit out of Wisconsin.

Although the 26-member unit trains daily on hoses, pump operation and fire safety and prevention, this is the first time they've trained to do Search and Recovery/Rescue since coming to Bosnia in early February.

A hot, sweaty 25-year-old female firefighter from Greenfield, Wis., emerged from beneath the helmet and oxygen mask beaming with pride.

Specialist Kristine S. Fejes listened intently as Specialist Robert L. Barker, the 29-year-old Beechpark, Ill. native acting as Fire Chief, critiqued the team's performance.

Fejes and partner Private First Class Andrew J. Perfetti, a 19-year-old native of Duluth, Wis., were understandably pleased with the training. The adrenaline was still rushing through their systems as they assisted the next team for a similar training.

"We need this type training – it doesn't hurt to explore all options that could occur at a fire scene," said Fejes as she helped Specialist Michael K. Lohr, 24, from Hales Corners, Wis., hook up his oxygen.

Perfetti agreed. "This is good training and we need to do this. A lot of people forget to do Search and Recovery/Rescue and it's probably the most important part of firefighting," said Perfetti. "This is where we actually save people."

Perfetti turned to a new participant and checked his gear. The young man in the orange fire-resistant suit seemed a little out of place among the 336th members dressed in tan coveralls. However, the Wisconsin unit has done everything possible to make Sergeant Thomas Nystedt, a 28-year-old Swedish generator mechanic, feel at home.

Nystedt, a civilian firefighter from Lycksele, Sweden, is serving his six-month contract with the Swedish Battalion at nearby Camp Oden. As part of a fairly new program instituted by the last group of U.S. firefighters stationed at Eagle Base, soldiers from Camp Oden are training with the 336th.

The Swedish army has no firefighter units. Instead, soldiers carry a secondary skill in fire fighting. By training with the U.S. units here, they are able to either brush up or learn new skills.

"It's a good opportunity to do job rotations with the Americans because we can learn from each other," explained Nystedt. "It's a great chance for new experiences, too."

The 336th feels the same. Unit commander, First Lieutenant Linda Sue Schwarz, 27, of Milwaukee, Wis., is very excited about the prospect of continuing the program begun last year by her predecessor.

"The unit is really getting into this sharing of information and training. We also spend off-duty time with the Swedes and learn more than professional skills from one another," she said.

Nystedt leaves for home in about three weeks but plans to introduce his replacements to the members of the 336th in order to assure the succession of this training.

Suddenly, the phone rang. Seems there is a suspicious smell of smoke inside a building near the walking gate. The international team leapt to the fire truck and took off in that direction. After all...where there's smoke...there's the 336th firefighters!



Specialist Kristine S. Fejes of the 336th Engineer Firefighters Platoon stabilizes herself during ladder training at Eagle Base.

Mayor improves “City” of McGovern

Mayor estimates \$500,000 in camp improvements

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

If you're walking with Captain Robert Downs, you can't walk from one end of Camp McGovern to another without frequently stopping. Someone will have information to pass on to him, or he will see something that needs to be addressed. The radio on his hip will crackle with requests for his presence; or advice; or orders.

Downs, the 35-year-old Levittown, Penn., native, holds the title of “mayor” of McGovern, which makes him responsible for all operations and property of the camp, from the gravel under soldiers' feet to the cots in which they sleep. He, and the troops that work for him, must track the camp's sensitive items as well as deal with the camp's “work force,” including Brown & Root, Navy Seabees, Army combat engineers and BCCA.

Downs is also the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop of the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, a unit of over 200 people and their equipment that's split between Camps McGovern and Colt.

With so many responsibilities, Downs said he's grown a lot as a person and has learned some valuable lessons during his tenure as mayor. “I've definitely learned that you can't make everyone happy,” he said.

Downs' day, which typically begins a 5 a.m. and ends at 10 p.m., is a constant barrage of questions and requests, small and large. “My biggest challenge,” he said, “is putting out the little ‘fires’ that come up every day and making sure force protection runs effectively.”

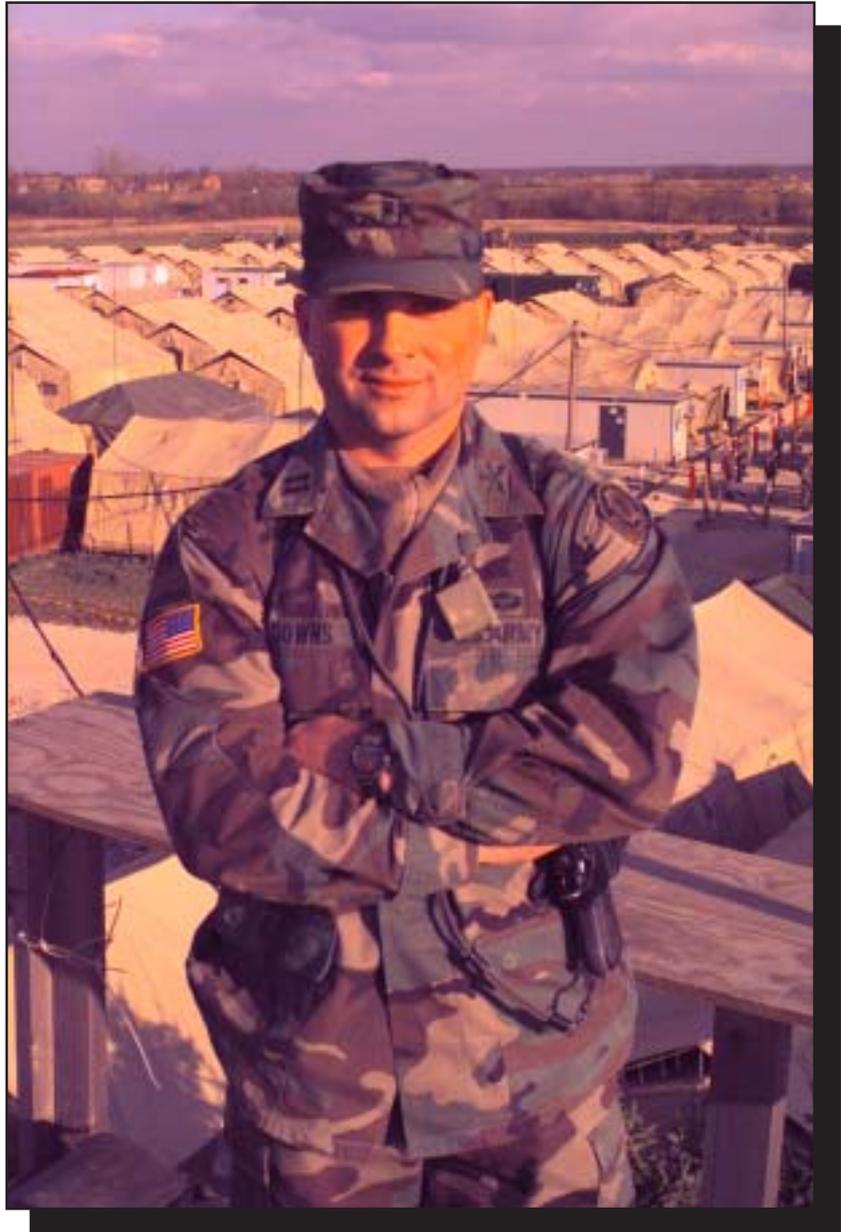
It is a task that he appears more than equal to perform, however. Since he became the mayor in August, he estimates that he's brought in over \$500,000 in improvements to soldiers quality of life. Not an easy thing to do.

Not only do the work orders have to be written and rewritten, but they must also be “defended” to the Joint Acquisition Review Board, which approves the projects.

According to Downs, it is often a lengthy, sometimes frustrating process of getting a work order approved. He said, however, to see a project completed that he has fought for makes it all worthwhile.

“Seeing the improvements done on this camp for the soldiers – the nice gym, the sidewalks, the new fighting positions, the linoleum floor in the (dining facility) – is the best part of this job,” he said. “Believe it or not, a sidewalk keeping a soldier out of the mud is a morale booster.”

Credit for the projects, Downs said, has to be shared with



Captain Robert Downs, Mayor of Camp McGovern has brought approximately \$500,000 in camp improvements

the soldiers who assist him on a daily basis, especially HHT's First sergeant Larry Adams. While Downs is ultimately responsible for all the work that gets done – or doesn't get done – on McGovern, he said he rests easier knowing he can put jobs in the hands of Adams.

On top of it all, if you ask Downs if he would run for reelection if mayor of McGovern was an elected post, he'll smile and answer with one word: “Absolutely.”

ETAC marks night targets with

Story and photos by Sergeant Tim Fischer
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

MAKO 41: "that's your target, call in with direction, expect clearance on final."

ANGRY 01: "ANGRY 01 is in from the north with Maverick, friendlies in sight, taking the lead vehicle."

MAKO 41: "ANGRY 01 you are cleared HOT!"

The mission is to provide Close Air Support (CAS) while working alongside the U.S. Army, and the person charged with this mission is Technical Sergeant Charles W. Holbrook, (MAKO 41). The 35-year-old Air Force Sergeant is a 15-year veteran attached to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry

Regiment at Camp Bedrock. "I control close air support as an Enlisted Terminal Attack Controller, (ETAC). My job is to identify, locate, and mark targets at a close range to the friendly forces," said Holbrook.

"It's real important for me to paint a picture for the pilots flying the aircraft. This is a close air support, which means, the friendly forces are in a close proximity to the targets and that's why I give them as much visual information as possible," said Holbrook.

Once the target is identified, then the ground commander has the option to use air support, or not. Holbrook must then request a CAS mission through Tactical Air Control party.

"The Bedrock location offers us a great area to operate



Technical Sergeant Charles W. Holbrook shoots a Close Air Support Integrated Targeting System at a target the pilot can see from the sky. Holbrook a 15 year Air Force veteran is refining his skills and the skills of his men at Camp Bedrock.



Members of the Tactical Air Control party. Holbrook, middle - Gerardo Mercado and another soldier. They are conducting daily Close Air Support missions at Camp Bedrock.

laser to keep pilots on beam

with our equipment," said Holbrook. "We are constantly training with the pilots here in the Operation Joint Guard Theater. We not only work with the American Forces, but we also work with the Stabilization Forces (SFOR) here in the Tuzla region."

The marking of the targets is the most important job of the ETAC. One of the more technical means of marking is the Close Air Support Integrated Targeting System (CITS). This gives them the ability to shoot the target, then data burst the target information to the aircraft's computer.

"Using this method, is safe for the troops that are nearby," said Holbrook. "I train with this system during the day, and at night."

Despite his many duties and responsibilities, Holbrook

still finds time to go out into the local communities and deliver relief aid to the people in Tuzla. Holbrook enjoys going out and meeting the people of this country. He said he looks forward to the trips out into the communities.

"It gives me a sense of the peacekeeping mission we have here also," said Holbrook.

Realizing the importance of the Air Force in today's Air Land Battle Doctrine, it's good to know that the fighter pilots of SFOR have trained eyes on the ground, keeping close watch and ensuring the safety of the troops here in Bosnia. ETAC's role here is certainly an invaluable one; as a seasoned Colonel from the Army once told Holbrook, "The Air Force's ETACs are kind of like the American Express card: You never leave home without it."



l Party, left - Technical Sergeant
right - Robert L. Zackery conduct
Camp Bedrock.



Technical Sergeant Charles W. Holbrook is making a visual contact with an F-16 fighter. He is the eyes on the ground for the fighter planes at Camp Bedrock.

1SG leaves options open for Hollywood



First Sergeant Allen R. Stokes (left) the first sergeant of Battery B goes over a planned convoy route with his troops. Stokes has distinguished himself not only during his 21-year military career but also in a budding film career.

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

The military career of most soldiers is marked by a series of campaigns to give meaning to their contributions in the nation's defense. There are those who have made an impact not only in the military, but also in the private sector.

First Sergeant Allen R. Stokes, 39, of San Bernadino, Calif., the first sergeant of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery, is a soldier who has made his 21-year career among the troops and on the screen, respectively. Stokes has appeared in "In the Army Now" and "The Tuskegee Airmen."

"The Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to act. However, I'd rather be here with my soldiers than doing something that I like," Stokes said.

The amiable first sergeant came to the attention of Hollywood during his stint as a drill sergeant at Fort Sill, Okla., where movie site locators for "In the Army Now" were choosing between Fort Sill; Fort Leonard, Mo.; and Fort Jackson, S.C.

When the star of the movie, Pauley Shore, came to Fort Sill, Stokes told Shore that he should join the Army and make the movie after a couple of years of service. According to Stokes, Shore asked him what is it like having a drill sergeant in your face.

Stokes proceeded to give the young actor a taste of what can happen to a new recruit. The actor endured several minutes of ear-shattering commands with intense eye-to-eye contact.

Thereafter, Stokes did not think much about the movie. Meanwhile, he continued doing his job. Months passed before Fort Sill was selected as the movie site, and was offered to play himself as a drill sergeant. As an added bonus, he was made the military consultant for the movie – a capacity that he relished.

He acquired more acting experience through his various roles in the "The Tuskegee Airmen." Stokes played a Jeep driver; a 2-½-ton truck driver; a pilot; a drill sergeant, and a stand in for Laurence Fishburne, the star of the movie.

Just like in the Army, where soldiers must be personally and professionally adaptable, the film industry requires its actors to have similar traits.

"I think the opportunity to do something different than my normal job and work with experienced professionals has heightened my awareness of how blessed I am," Stokes said.

He said that he was a sergeant first class with 18 years of service – the traditional cut off point to make the promotion list for a first sergeant slot – considering the possibility of taking an early out. As fate would have it, he not only made the promotion list but also got a glimpse of what may be a second career when he leaves the Army.

Stokes jovially speaks of becoming a movie extra and making some quick money in occasional parts that may come his way. "It's funny how I'd literally been around the world three times over the course of my career, when acting fell into my lap. Now, I may have something to look forward to when I hang up my boots," he said.

Task Force Eagle NCO and SOQ selected

Story by Sergeant Robert R. Ramon
 Photo by Staff Sergeant Lillian M. Falco
 345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Top-notch! High-speed! These are the types of service members the five sergeants major and the command sergeant major were interviewing. The tension could be cut with a knife as service members attempted to become the next noncommissioned officer or soldier of the quarter.

Sergeant Jennifer L. Waters, NCO in charge of the Comanche Base Aid Station with the 127th Aviation Support Battalion, was chosen as the Task Force Eagle NCO of the Quarter.

Waters credits her unit for the recognition she received. "I received a lot of support from the 127th battalion first sergeant and sergeant major," she said.

According to her supervisors, Waters has already shown she is very capable of taking on leadership roles despite being an NCO for only several months.

"Sergeant Waters continuously mentors her soldiers in all aspects of medical care as well as tactical and technical knowledge of basic soldier skills," said Command Sergeant Major Michael R. Marler, command sergeant major of the 127th Aviation Support Battalion. Marler went on to say that Waters executes all duties as the NCOIC of the Comanche Base Aid Station in a professional manner.

The Task Force Eagle Soldier of the Quarter, Private First Class Matthew J. Taylor, an Apache helicopter repairman with the 4th Aviation Brigade, credits his wife as one of the major

reasons for him being honored with this title. "My wife has supported me through this," he said. "She encouraged me to pursue my career."

Taylor's long term goals are to achieve the rank of warrant officer and become an Army Aviator in addition to obtaining a degree in the aviation field.

According to Lonny D. Lord, First Sergeant of Company D, 1st Battalion, 501st Aviation, Taylor is very proficient at his job. "Taylor has continuously set the standard for his soldiers to emulate. (His) professionalism and the dedication he has shown during the execution of his duties as an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter repairman are unmatched by any peer," said Lord.

Command Sergeant Major Carl E. Christian, Command Sergeant Major of Task Force Eagle, said service members from all branches and all countries involved with Task Force Eagle are eligible to become the NCO or soldier of the quarter. "There are some great soldiers out there no matter what branch of service; no matter what country they come from," Christian said.

Soldiers are judged on everything from military appearance and competence to confidence in themselves. "To know you're being scrutinized for all the things you do and then walk in (to the board room) and have the confidence, faith and trust in yourself is a great thing," said Christian. "And that will carry on when they go back to do their job again." Included with the titles of NCO and Soldier of the Quarter is an Army Commendation medal, the Task Force Eagle commander's coin, a certificate, an AAFES packet containing a \$50 gift certificate and coupons, and dinner with the Task Force Eagle commander.

Plans for the next board in May are already underway. The search for another two top-notch, high-speed soldiers has begun.

"Do we get the best of the best," asked Christian. "Yes! And I'll tell you, there is a lot of the best of the best out there!"



Sergeant Jennifer L. Waters (left), NCOIC of the Comanche Base aid station, assists Private Heather Dutz (right) medical specialist, with preparation of an IV.



Private First Class Matthew Taylor, Task Force Eagle Soldier of the Quarter, an apache helicopter repairman, conducts a maintenance check on an AH64, Apache helicopter.

Bosnian Food Day a hit at Dobol

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Jack McNeely
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

When most of the 600 U.S. troops here say they have tasted the local culture, they really mean it. The inaugural Bosnian Food Day was held Sunday, March 8, at the Camp Dobol Dining Facility (D-FAC). With the exception of a few negative comments, the Bosnian cuisine was well received by those stationed at Dobol.

"It's different all right," said Private First Class Joshua Hanson, 24, of Yucaipa, Calif., as he took another giant bite of his Cevapi — a pita bread filled with beef links and grilled onions. "It's a huge pita bread. The meat's a little different. But overall, I'd say it's okay."

Another Troop F, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment mechanic, Specialist Greg Gilbert, 21, of Panama Beach City, Fla., served up higher accolades. "It tastes a lot like Greek

food, of which I am particularly partial; so I like it a lot," he said.

According to John Worley, assistant manager of the Dobol D-FAC, the Bosnian Food Day was held March 8 as a sidebar to International Woman's Day. "It actually pumps up our local staff. They know they are providing an important service to the men and women of the U.S. armed forces," Worley said.

Edisa Hasanovic, a 21-year-old cook and interpreter for the staff was the first to stir the ingredients for a successful Bosnian Food Day.

"I asked the manager and he thought it was a good idea," said Hasanovic, who began cooking at Dobol in March 1996. "The other cooks here also thought it would be a good idea."

Bosnian-styled rice and chicken and respective cheese, potato and meat pies were offered during the Sunday dinner. The U.S. troops first studied the labels on the serving line, which included Bosnian Cinber, Burek, Sirnica, Cevapi and

Bosnian Potatoes. After testing the dishes, the majority offered the international thumbs up signal of approval.

"It was pretty interesting. It was not as spicy as American food. It was good," added Private First Class Jerry Onken, 28, of Onamia, Minn., another Fox Troop mechanic.

The overall endorsement of the local cuisine was not surprising to Hasanovic. Although weaned on American food the past two years, Hasanovic would much rather partake of her homeland creations. "In our food, we use more grease and different seasoning. We make mostly pies," she said.

Furthermore, Hasanovic is grateful for her opportunity to work at the U.S. camp. In fact, the opportunistic Bosnian became proficient with the English language only during her two years at Dobol. "I watched a lot of American movies and talked to a lot of U.S. service members.

"Working here is the greatest thing to ever happen to me. The money is good and I make a lot of friends here," said a wide-eyed Hasanovic.

Back in the kitchen, where the army of cooks and kitchen aids continued to shuttle the local cuisine to the serving line, Worley commented on the evening's success. "Basically, we are giving the soldiers an insight into the local culture. They are not allowed to go out on the local economy and purchase these kinds of food," he said.

So now Camp Dobol soldiers can actually say they have "tasted" the local culture.



Fatic Mustafa, a first cook at the Camp Dobol D-FAC, prepares Cevapi, a Bosnian pita bread complete with beef links and grilled onions.

SHARC attacks COMMO problems

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

Communications are the lifeblood of a modern, technological world. The U.S. Army relies not only on the increasingly sophisticated equipment but also the highly trainable soldier to keep the channels of communication open. Signal support systems specialists, Privates First Class Eric Hiatt, 21, Albuquerque, N.M., and Antwon Shields, 22, Moreno Valley, Calif. are on the "cutting edge."

The soldiers, members of Company C, 141st Signal Battalion, are part of an elite four-man team designed to keep the 1st Armored Division communications operational during mobile missions away from Eagle Base, Tuzla. Hiatt and Shields are the technicians who literally make the connections possible. They are on call 24-hours with a quick response time in their Single Channel Highly Mobile Army Radio Communication (SHARC) vehicle that houses an FM radio; a radio telephone; a tactical satellite radio; and an international maritime satellite.

"We spring into action when there's a call that can't get through. In addition, we do all the groundwork in terms of looking at the available electrical capacity and circuitry to determine what is needed for the mission at hand," said Hiatt.

Since arriving in Bosnia, the team has provided communication support for the Division during numerous National events such as the Republic of Serbia National Assembly meeting. Most recently, Hiatt and Shields set up their SHARC vehicle at Camp McGovern where numerous VIPs were gathered for a conference on the Brcko arbitration decision.

Both soldiers are in their first enlistment, but they are extremely confident in their abilities as they gather increasing experiences from each mission. Camp McGovern provided them the opportunity to do wiring work, in addition to setting up the SHARC vehicle.

"We can pretty much do anything electrically as long as we know the type of equipment and how it is to be used," said Shields.

Their Military Occupational Specialty training consisted of 17 weeks at Fort Gordon, Georgia; however, both soldiers indicated that much of their subsequent training has been either on the job or through correspondence courses available through college and the U.S. Army.

The training comes in the form of knowing how to distinguish between the various computer and telephone networks that circulate Bosnia. The Large Area Network is used strictly for computers. The Small Extension Node provides phone communications, and the Large Extension Node makes more phone lines possible.

"Half our equipment runs via satellite and the other half through radios on 110 volts with either a 1K generator for local missions or a 5k generator for remote missions. So, we have the ability to connect networks computer to computer," said Hiatt.

Typically, the communications team can have communications up and running in 30 minutes, according to Hiatt. For those missions where the electrical networks require some additional work, additional time will be necessary to trouble shoot and run the equipment.

The soldiers have a good rapport with each other and work well as a team in the small, confining equipment room on the



Private First Class Eric Hiatt (left) and Private First Class Antwon Shields (right), make preparations at Camp McGovern. The soldiers are signal support systems specialists with Company C, 141st Signal Battalion based at Bad Kreuznach, Germany, and deployed at Eagle Base Tuzla.

back of their vehicle. In Bad Kreuznach, Germany, where their unit is based, they were roommates together. Now, in deployment for Operation Joint Guard, they have continued to remain close.

"We find that our time is pretty much constricted with missions taking anywhere from four to five days, up to a week and a half or two, which makes us more appreciative of and constructive with our leisure time," said Hiatt.

Representative of today's soldier, both soldiers are intent on furthering their education and advancing their careers. Hiatt said he studies electrical engineering, the field that he hopes to major in college once his enlistment ends. Shields is proactive in learning about his MOS-related duties by correspondence courses.

"We have the kind of mission that you have to feel good about because not everyone has either the stamina or the ability to be on call 24 hours all the time," said Shields. "It's an honor to serve the Division in this capacity."

Coalition weapons training

Not just another day at the range

Story and photos by Sergeant Gary Hicks
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

He places a 100-round belt of 7.62mm ammunition into the feed tray of an M-60 machine gun, locks the cover and takes aim at a silhouette target down range. Carefully moving the safety to the off position, he gently squeezes the trigger. The distinct rhythm of the M-60 pierces the silence of the crisp morning air at Camp Dobol.

This scenario could represent any U.S. soldier, but today, it's Russian Lieutenant Colonel Serge Belov's turn to test his marksmanship skills on the M-60.

"I enjoyed firing the American weapons," said a wide-eyed Belov, one of 36 Russian Infantry officers to take part in a joint training exercise Thursday, March 12, at Dobol. During their visit, the Russians fired a variety of U.S. weapons, including the M-9 pistol, the M-249 Squad

Automatic Weapon (SAW) and the M-60 machine gun. They also viewed Armored Cavalry vehicles with mounted crew serve weapons such as MK-119 belt fed grenade launcher, and .50 caliber machine gun.

During Operation Joint Guard, U.S. forces routinely patrol routes in Multi-National Division (MND) North with Russian soldiers.

Belov is a 23-year military veteran currently deployed to Camp Ugljivec as a member of the Separate Airborne Brigade. He has been in Bosnia-Herzegovina for seven months as part of SFOR.

"I look forward to training with Americans because the training gets better every time and it's enjoyable," said Belov the, 41-year-old Riazan resident.

When asked about how American weapons compared to Russian weapons, he said with out hesitation, "They are great to fire, but our AKS-74 (5.45mm X 39mm round) is better for day to day airborne operations due to it's folding stock.

Even though he is partial to Russian weapons, one could not help but notice that he and his comrades were like children in a candy store. The candy being American weaponry.

Lieutenant Colonel Serge Belov fires an M-4 carbine at Camp Dobol during a joint training exercise.

