

Lighting the night

TALON

Talon

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On the Cover

The 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Mortar Section provides illumination for an artillery exercise during Operation Joint Guard. (Photo by Private First Class Joseph A. Francis, 55th Signal Company, see pages 6 and 7).

“When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen.” – GOA George Washington, address to the provincial Congress of New York, 26 June, 1775.

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

The Task Force Eagle web site offers breaking news and photos on its web site. The Web site provides information concerning the Turk, Russian, and NORDPOL Brigade assigned to Task Force Eagle, as well as U.S. soldiers stationed in Bosnia. The Talon On-line is updated every Saturday.

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

As new units arrive at the base camps and become settled in, it is essential that a smooth transition is made between the arriving and departing units. Officers and NCOs need to take the helm by providing hands-on training, defining duties and responsibilities, set the parameters for guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP) and the expectations of the office. The key issue here is for the operation to continue to run smoothly during the transfer of authority.



I am one of those who will be starting my own transfer process very soon. As I begin, I want to share a couple of things I observed which will assist you in making your stay a rewarding one.

The tasks we do here are primarily at the basic level. Refresh yourselves with basic soldier skills like; guard duty, weapons clearing, radio procedures, reporting, pre-combat inspections and pre-combat checks.

Stick to the basics. Most major base camps have a small arms range, so conduct basic marksmanship training routinely. All the camps have plenty to eat and some great fitness equipment. Develop a physical fitness routine and enforce a basic physical training program to include a healthy diet.

Everywhere you go the education folks are there or will come to you. Education is a basic element for success. Take advantage of this great opportunity to become more marketable and competitive in your career.

For my last piece of advice I would say to take one day at a time and that it is not the number of days you have remaining but how you utilize your days.

And Remember...“TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO BE A SOLDIER.”

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Teamwork ensures successful mission

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

One of the first things a soldier learns in basic training is; there is no 'I' in team. With troops rotating in and out of Bosnia, during Operation Joint Guard, soldiers must implement teamwork to ensure a successful peace-keeping mission.

Soldiers of Battery F, 144th Field Artillery are just one example of why teamwork is paramount in today's Army.

Mobilized last November, F-BTRY was augmented with soldiers from Pennsylvania and Colorado, who volunteered to deploy to the war-torn region with the California Guardsmen.

Arriving at Fort Stewart, Ga., the section had only three weeks to build a working relationship before arriving in Bosnia. During that train-up period, the radar section was tested and evaluated to make sure that they met the standards required to perform the mission.

"I thought it was going to be challenging because of preconceived ideas of the National Guard and the fact they don't have an opportunity to train on a daily basis," said Chief Warrant Officer Alexander Sosa, an active duty Radar Section Chief of the 2nd Field Artillery Detachment from Fort Campbell, Ky. "All that was erased due to their professionalism and tact."

The section used the short amount of time they had to build a cohesive team.

"It was a good marriage. Once we got to know each other (our strengths and weaknesses) we began to compensate and add to each others abilities," explained Juan Hernandez, 25, of Los Angeles, Calif.

Over the past seven months the section has been able to smooth out a few rough edges due to the real world mission of force protection.

"Our main goal is to protect the troops by monitoring areas with the radar for possible threats," explains Chief Warrant Officer Ricardo Arredondo, a 23-year veteran of Montebello, Calif. "We have attained a great deal of experience we can't get at home station with our limited training time."

The soldiers of F-BTRY have proven that teamwork is an outstanding tool for success. With their training limited to roughly 39 days a year, they have exceeded all

expectations by working together as one to complete the mission.

"We have attained a great deal of experience we can't get at home station with our limited training time."

Chief Warrant Officer Ricardo Arredondo



Specialist Bradley L. Billet boresights a radar while Corporal Juan Hernandez observes.

TCAIMS and Smart Cards tracks soldiers and equipment

Story and photo by Specialist Nancy McMillan
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The United States Army is keeping better tabs on soldiers, equipment and vehicles traveling throughout theaters around the world.

The technology to do this is not new to the military, but the software program called Transportation Coordinator's Automated Information for Movement System II (TCAIMS) and the Smart Card both are.

"The new system (TCAIMS) is Windows-based and tracks and produces a manifest of equipment and personnel for onward movement into a theater of operations," said First Lieutenant Christopher J. Hoermle, the Regimental Transportation Officer of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The program incorporates peripherals such as bar-code scanners, military shipping label printers, radio frequency tags (RF Tags), interrogators and the Internet.

"The bar code scanner reads the labels generated by the TCAIMS software," said Hoermle, 25, a Columbus, Ohio native. "The labels contain a bar code, transportation control number and just about anything else needed for identification of the contents of equipment."

The RF tag is a battery operated mobile component located on the outside of equipment, MILVANS and vehicles which stores the information entered into the system by users or obtained by scanning labels.

"The interrogators, which read the RF tags, are strategically placed in key locations," Hoermle said. "There is one at the Lukavac and Brcko railheads, ports of embarkation and debarkation and the ISB," he said.

As the equipment with the RF tag passes the interrogator, it reads the tag and sends the information back to a processor and the information is then available on the Internet.

"The TCAIMS is very user-friendly equipment compared to the old system, which is still in use and dates back 10 to 15 years," said Hoermle.

According to Hoermle, the RF tags and the interrogator were already in use when troops were first deployed to Bosnia and the overall system helps leaders maintain accountability and location of their equipment.

The Smart Card, first given to 100 soldiers on June 7, is also user-friendly and is a new system in keeping track of the number of soldiers in a unit and their location.

"The Smart Card is basically a credit card with a memory chip containing the soldier's name, social security number, weapon number, etc., that when swiped, creates a virtual manifest," Hoermle said.

"These systems both have 'in-transit visibility' because you know what you have, when you're going to finally receive it and also where it is located in between," Hoermle said.



First Lieutenant Christopher J. Hoermle, 2/ACR Regimental Transportation Officer, accesses information on the Internet concerning equipment moving across the Bosnian theater.

COUGAR squadron prepares for redeployment

Story and photo by Sergeant Oreta M. Spencer
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Making a list and checking it twice. Members of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment are preparing to go home.

After spending almost 11 months in Bosnia, these members from Fort Polk, La., are performing the necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition homeward.

"We have to inventory everything and pack it up so that it doesn't get broke during shipment. While doing this, we must also prepare a packing list. The list must include each item that we place in the MILVANs," explains Sergeant First Class Lance Lehr, 34, of LaHabra Heights, Calif.

Each packing list must be accurate and tell the location of where each item is placed in each numbered MILVAN.

"We have to number the MILVANs and make several copies of the list. One has to be placed on the outside of the MILVAN. Another copy will go to Unit Movement," Lehr noted.

The copies will act as recourse if anything should happen to the MILVAN during the shipment back to the U.S.

"The list also lets us track each item so that we can give an accurate account of all property," continued Lehr.

The long and tedious process will take the regiment approximately two weeks to complete.

"There are many tasks that must be completed prior to our redeployment back to home station," noted Staff Sergeant Scott Douglas, of Dothan, Ala. "We have to have a 100 percent accountability of all property that we not only brought over here with us, but also on the property that we have acquired since being here."

Sensitive items such as single channel ground and air radio subsystems (SINCGARS) radios, Communication and security (COMSEC) equipment, all

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Sergeant First Class Lance Lehr

hand receipted items and high dollar items, just to name a few, must be accounted for.

"Once we have completed the inventory, the sensitive equipment must be stored and packed in a secure sensitive items MILVAN," said Douglas.

According to Lehr, all equipment and the inside and outside of the MILVANs must be free of dirt.

"Customs will check to ensure that we do not bring any dirt back to the states, so everything must be completely clean and free of dirt," said Lehr.

Although the process is long, it means the beginning of the end to these soldiers stationed at Camp Dobil.

"We are very excited to be in this phase. It has been a long deployment and this means we are going home soon!" said Douglas.



Private First Class Travis Reardon sorts through the items on Sergeant First Class Lance Lehr's list.

2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment

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

The deafening roar of the 198 Towed Howitzer can be heard — and felt — hundreds of meters away as it propels a 100-pound 155mm high explosive round up to 30,000 meters down range with pinpoint accuracy. The last U.S. field artillery round has been fired on Bosnian soil by an American peacekeeper.

“I love the artillery! We’re awesome! There’s no one better — ‘How-Bat’ is the king of artillery,” exclaimed Staff Sergeant Patrick Powell, a 2nd Platoon section chief.

Despite the 32-year-old Sikeston, Mo., native’s overflowing confidence, the mission of the “big guns” has come to a close. The

change in unit structure for SFOR 3 and SFOR 4 does not include field artillery.

According to Powell, the Howitzer’s mission of providing long-range fire support will be replaced by the quick-strike capabilities of the Apache attack helicopters, Kiowa Warrior helicopters and internal firepower assets within MND (N) units.

Meanwhile, the field artillery soldiers realize it was their presence in Bosnia that kept the warring factions at bay in the months shortly after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord in November 1995.

“We made a difference here. When the field artillery arrived, they were scoping out the tubes. They knew what they were, and they knew they couldn’t compete against them,” said a proud Sergeant Michael Carlan, a 25-year-old gunner from



Photo by Staff Sergeant Jack McNeely

Sergeant Michael Carlan sets the left and right deflection on the 198 Towed Howitzer at Camp Dobo1. Carlan is a 2nd Platoon, Howitzer Battery, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment gunner.



Members of the 2nd squad, 2nd Howitzer Battery get ready to fire. They are members of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Regiment fires last round in Bosnia

Gainesville, Ga.

But it was the Glamoc live-fire and demonstrations for other countries that burn brightly in the field artillery mind. In all, 1,500 rounds were fired at Glamoc, including hundreds of illumination rounds that lit up the night sky like a Fourth of July celebration.

"Glamoc was great," said Private Rastus Nelson, a 20-year-old powder man from York, Ala.

Furthermore, Private First Class Jessie Edison, 21, of Greenville, Miss., recalled a demonstration in January when his section showed off for the Russians, who are also participating in the multinational peacekeeping efforts. "I never thought I would get to show off for another country. It's something I will remember for the rest of my life," said the assistant gunner.

Perhaps Sergeant Billy Hodges, a 12-year Army veteran who tested the long-range accuracy of the Howitzer during Desert Storm, can put his two Balkan deployments into perspective.

"Bosnia has given us an opportunity to show other countries how well we work together as a team. They were impressed," said the 30-year-old ammo team chief from Auburn, Ala.

Hodges first came to Bosnia in 1996 as a member of 2nd Squadron, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment from Kirchgons, Germany. So what if the peacekeeping effort escalates and the big guns return? "No big deal to me. I've been here twice, I'll come back a third time," he responded without hesitation.

Meanwhile, for trivia's sake, it was Howitzer Battery's commander, Captain Seth Pilgrim, who fired the last U.S. artillery round on Bosnian soil.



Photo by Private First Class Joseph A. Francis, 55th Signal Company

ready one of the guns at Glamoc before the exercise. d Cavalry Regiment from Fort Polk.



Photo by Staff Sergeant Jack McNeely

From left to right, Private First Class Jessie Edison, Specialist Fernando Muniz and Private Rastus Nelson prepare to slam the 100-pound 155mm round into the breach of the 198 Towed Howitzer.

Petroleum technician keeps camps McGovern and Colt vitalized



Petroleum supply specialist, Sergeant Linda Johnson opens a fuel filter valve at the fuel systems supply point on the base camp.

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

The ability of a military operation to be successful can sometimes depend on the most mundane tasks, such as the ability to keep all the vehicles fueled. Sergeant Linda Johnson, 31, of Portland, Ore., is the Camp McGovern petroleum supply specialist who monitors and maintains the fuel systems supply point (FSSP) that provides fuel to not only McGovern but also Camp Colt.

Johnson, a member of the Supply and Transportation Troop with the Regimental Support Squadron deployed from Fort Polk, La, is detail-oriented in a position requiring daily contact with hazardous materials.

"I make sure that the JP8 fuel meets aviation standards that are applicable to aviation and ground use," said Johnson.

She has three tasks that enable her to be both a "hands on" soldier as well as a technician. Johnson walks the line of the fuel point to check the valves of the fuel hoses. Then, she recirculates the fuel by transferring fuel between two 20,000-gallon bags. Thereafter, she takes a fuel sample for submission to an Eagle Base Tuzla lab that tests the sample for fuel quality. On an every other day schedule, Johnson has 2,500 gallons of fuel available at the McGovern retail fuel point. Also, the versatile sergeant takes 5,000 gallons of fuel to Camp Colt in an 18-wheeler.

According to Johnson, the biggest concern that she has in these operations is the exhaust from the pump at the fuel point; there really is not any spillage. The FSSP implementing the 20,000-bag system is relatively new to McGovern that

previously used one 50,000-gallon bag for its fuel supply needs.

McGovern and Camp Comanche are the only two base camps that have this system in place. Johnson, who had previously worked at Coyote Station on Guardian Base, got the idea to use the 20,000-bag system from her experience working at the larger Guardian Base fuel point.

"I saw a need for a better way to deliver and store fuel than was currently in existence at McGovern when I arrived in February (1998)," said Johnson.

After reviewing the plans, Johnson submitted them to 1st Armored Division Supply, G-4, that approved the new FSSP implementation at McGovern. Brown and Root personnel subsequently built the FSSP in two days.

Perhaps what Johnson is most proud of is the fact that there was no down time while the 20,000-bag system was being built. "I made sure that the HEMTT had fuel in it to last for the duration of the construction," she said.

The new FSSP is designed to minimize environmental hazards. The fuel goes through a filter instead of directly into a fuel bag as it formerly did under the 50,000-bag system. Water can be drained from the fuel hoses. Also, the new system enables water to be drained from the surrounding berms in the event that either bag should burst.

Johnson acknowledges that much effort goes into keeping the fuel point operational from 0900-1700 daily, which gives the impression of a smooth operation to the casual observer. "I imagine most soldiers take it for granted that fuel will always be available without giving consideration to what's involved in getting it to the retail point," she said. Now, that's a job well done.

159th AVN Regiment reflects on their accomplishments in Bosnia

Story and photo by First Lieutenant Annmarie Daneker
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Their bags are almost packed, their equipment is loaded and their calendars are all full of large Xs used to carefully mark off each passing day. The soldiers of Company H, 159th Aviation Regiment have worked hard since their arrival here in September 1997, and at the end of each day they have diligently performed that ritual common to many soldiers deployed in Bosnia

As they prepare to return to their homestation of Fort Polk,

"I enjoyed seeing all the soldiers pull together and I have seen a lot of unit integrity develop since we arrived here."

Sergeant First Class James W. Disotell



(Left to right) Sergeant First Class James W. Disotell and Specialist Joshua B. Perretta, both of H Company, 159th Aviation Regiment, prepare a piece of equipment for their unit's redeployment back to Fort Polk, La.

La., a few of the soldiers take the time to reflect on what they and their unit have accomplished during their rotation.

"Our mission was to support all of the aviation assets of Task Force Eagle and both Eagle and Comanche Bases," said Sergeant First Class James W. Disotell, the Shop's platoon sergeant from Shreveport, La. "We provided mechanical support to all the rotary aircraft at both bases."

Although they work at the airfields at both locations, they live at Comanche Base and shuttle back and forth between the two camps, he said.

When the unit first deployed to Bosnia, Disotell was one of the newest members. Over the long winter and spring months that he spent here, he has seen his unit evolve and come together as a group.

"I enjoyed seeing all the soldiers pull together and I have seen a lot of unit integrity develop since we arrived here," said Disotell.

In the eyes of Specialist Joshua B. Perretta from Fort Drum, N.Y., the mission was a success because of the excellent safety record of the unit during their deployment.

"The overall mission was a success in that no one was injured and we maintained a high level of readiness throughout the deployment."

Perretta also took advantage of available courses at Embry-Riddle University in general aviation mechanics classes as a way to both pass the time and provide a means of self-improvement.

As the soldiers of Company H, 159th Aviation Regiment finish packing their bags they will stuff all types of mementos and memories into their duffel bags. They will take home with them stories of adventures and missions to tell their families and friends. And the new unit that arrives to replace them will need to bring their own supply of blank calendars to mark off the passing days.

Mission complete – 16th Engineers return to Giessen, Germany

Story by Sergeant Gary Hicks
Photos by Sergeant Tim Fischer
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Six days and a wake-up for Charlie Company, 16th Engineers, as of June 13. Charlie Company is preparing to return to their home station in Giessen, Germany, after a successful three-month mission.

“Our mission has been a safe and successful one,” explains Sergeant First Class Charles Suber, a Jacksonville, S.C. native. “Mainly because we haven’t had any accidents or losses.”

Upon their arrival in early March, the engineers began classifying roads and bridges on six different routes for military use.

“We use various measurements and formulas to calculate the strength of a bridge, the slope of hills and arc of the curve (how sharp a turn is) in order to determine military load class,” explains Donald Salladay, 24, of Hawaiian Gardens, Calif.

“A load classification is used to alert drivers of route limitations.”

Between route classifications, the engineers improved the perimeter of Camp Bedrock by reinforcing it with over 3,500 meters of barbed wire and upgrading the guard towers and fighting positions.

One of the more peace oriented missions they performed was supervising Bosnian mine lifting operations.



Private James B. Mayo receives dynamite from Corporal Sean M. Tyree. Together they will prepare the charges to destroy the mines and bunkers in a former front line at Olovo, Bosnia.



Sergeant Randy L. Conley prepares the initiating system in order to destroy the front line bunkers near the town of Olovo, Bosnia.

“The soldiers monitored the BiH as they removed mines to ensure that procedures were in accordance with SFOR standards and done safely,” said First Sergeant Glen Baldrige, an 18-year combat engineer veteran and native of Portsmouth, Ohio.

Along with the clearing of 15 minefields the engineers also destroyed over 200 mines and 10 bunkers that could be used in future hostilities.

The 16th engineers have completed a successful mission that has benefited them as much as it has the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Shortly after arriving in MND (N), Sergeant Dameon Hosey and other engineers visited children at the Draguja Donja school north of Tuzla. The Engineers along with their Navy counterparts, the Seabees, distributed bags of clothing and toys to the children.

“It’s good to help people when you can, and especially good for us to interact with the kids because all they see is us riding around in the vehicles. Opportunities such as this allows us to understand one another,” explained Hosey.

“It’s been a great mission that I’m proud to have been a part of,” said Sergeant First Class Charles Suber. “The soldiers ascertained a great deal of real world experience that will help throughout their Army career, but more importantly the farmers are back in the fields and the children are playing once again in a peaceful environment.”

'Black Hawk' squadron returns to ensure peace in Bosnia

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

When the soldiers of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment (1/1 Cav) from Buedingen, Germany, crossed the Sava River on New Years Eve, 1995, they came face-to-face with the results of the civil war that pitted the entity armed factions against one another earlier this decade — destruction and desolation.

When the final busloads of the 1/1 Cav (Black Hawk) and its supporting cast arrived here Monday, June 8, 1998; the landscape had changed — dramatically.

"Now, you see the people — kids playing soccer and basketball and people walking along the streets," said an amazed Staff Sergeant David Cronin, 35, of Houston, Texas.

Cronin, squadron master gunner, is one of several 1/1 Cav soldiers who are returning to the Balkans for their second deployment. Their first participation came only a month after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord, which officially ended the civil war in November 1995. Back then, the 1/1 Cav was the first U.S. combat unit to cross the Sava in the initial wave of IFOR (Implementation Force).

Sergeant First Class Thomas Smith, 42, of Butler, Pa., recalled his first deployment. "Back then you would see the men drinking in bars, almost like they were waiting for us to leave so they could renew their fighting. And the women were out in the fields working," said the S-2 NCOIC of Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 1/1 Cav.

Today, there are nearly 8,500 U.S. troops strategically

stationed throughout Bosnia as part of Operation Joint Guard — the NATO-led peacekeeping mission.

Unlike its IFOR mission of establishing and enforcing peace from ground zero, for the next four months the 1/1 Cav will maintain the peace as an integral link in SFOR (Stabilization

"The first time we had to establish a camp. We lived in an open building with no water, no electricity and no sewer,"

Sergeant First Class Joel Rogerson

Force). The 1/1 Cav will take over the reigns at Camp Dobol and Camp Demi from the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Polk, La. The 2/2 ACR has commanded the two U.S. base camps since October 1997.

"Our main objective is to make sure the 2/2 ACR gets out without any break in the peacekeeping efforts, and to prepare for the First Cav," explained Sergeant First Class Joel Rogerson, 35, of Akron, Ohio. "It's a transition mission."

Meanwhile, Rogerson, the HHT, 1/1 Cav support platoon sergeant, compared the living conditions today to those of 1995. "The first time we had to establish a camp. We lived in an open building with no water, no electricity and no sewer," he said.

In 1995, the 1/1 Cav was dispersed throughout five locations surrounding Gradacac in northern Bosnia, he noted. "Back then the base camp was called Lodging Area Snead," he added.

Unlike their primitive accommodations of nearly three years ago, the cavalrymen and women today reside in hardened GP Medium tents or container express (CONEX). They have all the amenities of home, thanks to the ever present Brown & Root contractors.

Leading the 1/1 Cav over the next four months is its new squadron commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas "J.J." Smith and Command Sergeant Major Robert Braggs.

"This will be a major effort," said First Sergeant Michael Gartland, 38, of Mesa, Ariz. "We have only moved a little over half the squadron down here from Germany."

Despite the challenges that lie ahead for the 1/1 Cav in the next four months, it seems only fitting that the first combat unit to enforce peace in the Balkans has returned to ensure that serenity continues.



Sergeant First Class Greg Forney updates an administrative matrix, after he and other members of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment from Buedingen, Germany, arrived at Camp Dobol earlier this month.

Division Artillery cases colors



Photo by Staff Sergeant Lillian Falco
345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Casing the Division Artillery colors by (left) Colonel Mark T. Kimmitt and (right) Sergeant Major George Nelson on June 15, 1998, signified the closing of another significant chapter of Operation Joint Guard and Multinational Division North. As the colors were cased, artillery tubes throughout MND (N) were lowered in silence signifying a major victory in the progress of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Division Artillery soldiers deployed to Bosnia in September 1997, as part of Task Force Eagle.