

TALON



Operation Joint Forge, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Eagle

Talon

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Sergeant Chad M. Benansky conducts dismounted foot patrols at the Lukavac railhead with his partner Condora. (Photo by Sergeant Tim Fischer, see page 11).

"A good commander is someone who can step on your boots and still leave a shine." – A group of soldiers

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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 Dwight J. Brown Task Force Eagle CSM

I am not a stranger to Task Force Eagle and Bosnia-Herzegovina, or for that matter, to the soldiers of the 1st Armored Division (1AD). In July 1997, I was appointed as the Command Sergeant Major for the 1AD at Bad Kreuznach, Germany. Since then, I have made numerous visits to Eagle Base and the various camps in MultiNational Division (North).

I am a native of Lexington, Ky., and in January 1973, I enlisted in the U. S. Army. My stateside assignments have been at Fort Riley, Kan., Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Drum, N.Y.

My past deployments have been to Saudi Arabia, Haiti, twice to Somalia and Florida's Hurricane Andrew Relief.

I completed all the NCOES courses up to the Command Sergeant Major Course at Fort Bliss, Texas. I also completed the Drill Sergeant Course, Operations and Intelligence Course (Battle Staff) and Joint Fire Power Air Ground Operations Course.

During my visits to the Balkans and Task Force Eagle, it has been my observations that under the skillful leadership of Command Sergeant Major Carl E. Christian, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the soldiers have proven to be "Super Troopers" and high expectations are already in place. I expect to continue that proud tradition and maintain the same high standards.

Force protection, with the consideration to soldiers' safety being paramount, will continue to be the focus of our mission. I encourage all Task Force Eagle soldiers to remain focused and continue to make our country proud for the unselfish contributions toward the peace-keeping mission in Operation Joint Forge.

I look forward to my time here and serving as your Task Force Eagle Command Sergeant Major. I especially look forward to meeting as many of the Task Force Eagle soldiers throughout the base camps as I can. **"Dare to make a difference"**



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Tuzla Air traffic keeps controllers busy

Story and photos by
Sergeant First Class Frank Casares
345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

In the fast paced world of the 90s, the airport is the community's hub of activity. Airplanes are taking off and landing, people are scurrying about, and cargo is arriving and departing. Tuzla Air Base in Bosnia-Herzegovina is no exception.

According to the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Control Tower, Master Sergeant Steven Ames, of the 401 Expeditionary Air Base Group (401 EABG), the air base is the busiest United States Air Force control tower in Europe. Ames, a

Seattle, Wash., native said, "For fiscal year '97, this tower had 72,595 flight operations."

Up until recently, the tower control teams were handling approximately 1,600 weekly aircraft operations. "Since the TOA's (transfer of authority) started, our numbers have dropped to around 1,000 a week", said Ames.

This air control tower maintains 24-hour operations with three rotating teams. Each air control team consists of four persons; a watch supervisor and three control tower operators.

Staff Sergeant Thomas Hensley, watch supervisor with the 401 EABG, explained that when the landing aircraft are within 5-10 miles from the air base, one of the two control tower operators provide landing instructions. "My job here is to answer questions and assist in any situations that might come up," said Hensley, of Argyle, Texas. The third control tower operator is responsible for all the aircraft traffic on the ground.

The majority of the air traffic here consists of local flights to and from other base camps, and training exercises. Vermont Army National Guardsman, Staff Sergeant Oscar Wizner, Detachment 2, Company E, 111th Aviation Battalion and a new team member said, "The helicopter pilots that come here to practice landing and taking off, has helped me become proficient quickly on this job."

The forested area across the runways is used by the helicopter pilots to practice their HTA, or helicopter training activities. Pilots can practice flying with night vision goggles, simulated battle situations and hiding techniques among the trees.

Senior Airman Erik Peacor with the 401 EABG and a Vista, Calif., native said, "The Army has provided us the opportunity to practice helicopter control traffic and working with the fixed-wing traffic has helped the Army personnel. Normally, we (USAF) don't do much helicopter traffic and they (Army) don't do fix-wing traffic. It's a trade off."

Army Specialist Vickie Medford, from Phenix City, Ala., with Company E, 58th Aviation of Grafenwoehr, Germany, and attached to the 401 EABG, performs the ground control operator duties. Medford, from Vista, Calif., said, "As soon as the wheels touch the ground, I take over. Any aircraft taxiing on the runways or anywhere on the ground, belong to me."

As in any job in the military, teamwork is the key to mission success. With so many lives and equipment depending on their guidance, it is no exception here in the air control tower. "We're the heartbeat of the base," Hensley said.



(Left to right) Staff Sergeant Oscar Wizner, Specialist Vickie Medford and Senior Airman Erik Peacor share ground and air control duties at Tuzla Air Field.

PSYOPS uses air waves to reach out to 'next generation'

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

Presence patrols; weapons storage facility inspections; mine clearing and demolition; force protection; quick reaction force. These typical military missions have become buzzwords and phrases when talking about the U.S. Army's involvement in Operation Joint Guard/Forge.

But one of the most important missions — radio shows — seems to be overlooked or even misunderstood by many U.S. troops currently deployed in support of Operation Joint Forge.

While cavalrymen and infantrymen in this war-torn region perform the routine missions, psychological operations (PSYOPS) teams throughout Multi National Division (North) work diligently to repair the scars left by war in the minds of Bosnia's youth and young adults.

"By using the radio stations we can reach a lot of people, especially those in our target audience," explains Staff Sergeant Eric Soto, 23, of St. Louis, Mo.

The "target audience" includes young adults between the ages of 17-30, notes Soto, a member of the U.S. Army Reserve's 307th PSYOPS Company from St. Louis. "We call them, 'the next generation,'" he adds.

On this hot summer afternoon, Soto and his other PSYOPS teammates from Camp Dobol deliver radio programs to two Zvornik-area radio stations — Zvornik Radio and Srpska Soko. Zvornik Radio is a large government-run station that broadcasts up to 150 kilometers north of Zvornik. Srpska Soko, an independently owned station, has a broadcast range of only 30 kilometers.

The radio programs feature an array of popular music, including U2, Queen, The Cars, Smashmouth, Megadeth and Alanis Morissette. Also mixed in like small 30-second advertising spots are military messages concerning mine awareness, resettlement, reporting unexploded ordnance (UXO), election registration updates and freedom of speech.

Other PSYOPS personnel produce the programs at Radio Mir (Peace) in Sarajevo, states Soto. He says young adults seem to absorb the radio messages better than the older generation. "The older generation is pretty much set in its ways. You can't sway their opinions," said Soto.

Soto arrived in Bosnia in February 1998, but this is not his first overseas deployment. The six-year reservist has performed PSYOPS duties in Honduras, Panama and Germany. While not wearing Army green, Soto works his way through college at Southeast Missouri State University.

Even though Soto has only been working the Zvornik stations for a couple of weeks, he already has the respect of the

Serb hard-liners that control the radio airways throughout the Republika Srpska.

"We know here that it is Sergeant Soto's job to stay in touch with the radio stations — both in the Federation and the RS," says Zoran Ivanovic, the 36-year-old director of Zvornik Radio.

Ivanovic admits he did not cooperate with the more "aggressive" IFOR soldiers when they first arrived in Bosnia shortly after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995. But SFOR troops are more civilian-friendly, and therefore have earned his respect.



Staff Sergeant Eric Soto presents radio programs to Zvornik Radio Director Zoran Ivanovic.

"These radio shows have helped bridge the gap caused by miscommunication during IFOR," adds Ivanovic, as shirtless youngsters play kickball in a nearby parking lot and young adults sunbathe along the Drina River — a little Americana blaring from their radios. "These shows are important in providing long-time peace."



Sergeant Derrick Floyd helps a fellow soldier with an administrative matter.

Personnel services battalion is soldier's link to Department of the Army

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

When a soldier needs military orders initiated the local Personnel Services Battalion (PSB) is there to make it happen. At Camp McGovern, the PSB is not a building – as it would be in garrison – but an office manned by four service members from various units.

During the recent redeployment of the 3rd Squadron of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3/2 ACR) from McGovern to Fort Polk, La., soldiers “discovered” the PSB when they needed orders to return home.

“We are the link between the soldiers’ S-1 and the Department of the Army. When they want to go on leave or pass, have an ID card made, get promoted, do a permanent change of station (PCS), we’re the people to see,” said Sergeant Derrick Floyd, 31, of Atlanta, Ga., who is deployed from the 502nd PSB based at Fort Hood, Texas. Floyd is augmenting the 90th PSB based at Baumholder, Germany, and deployed to McGovern.

The McGovern PSB is providing support to the 1st Battalion of the 35th Armored Regiment. In addition to the above, the PSB processes NCOER’s, OER’s, good conduct med-

als, “dog tags,” and “SIDPERS” (standard installation/division personnel system).

On a typical day, according to Floyd, 10-15 service members will come through the small office located in the nook of the tactical operations center (TOC). “No two soldiers are alike. So, we don’t treat each issue the same. We make sure that it gets handled appropriately through e-mails and phone calls so that they don’t have to worry about these details when they’re doing their missions,” Floyd said.

The U.S. Army is constantly looking for more ways to make administrative matters flow efficiently through the system. PSB personnel are always getting additional training to upgrade their skills to be consistent with the new technology available to them, according to Specialist Jeffrey Lamoreau, 22, of Gardiner, Maine, with the 4th PSB at Fort Carson, Colo., and deployed to McGovern. “There is hardly a year that has gone by in which I have not gone to school for more computer processing and general knowledge of administrative procedure, which represents an increasing emphasis that we stay current.”

Often overlooked by service members until they have an administrative issue, the PSB technicians are there when called upon to make service members’ lives easier by handling the details.

Seabees make improvements a



Builder Third Class Christopher Beloff marks a lattice brace for cutting.

Story and Photos by Staff Sergeant Robert Powell
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The mountains and fields of Bosnia-Herzegovina could hardly be likened to a desert. However, for soldiers at many of the Stabilization Force base camps, the Bosnian summer sun has made shade a commodity more precious than gold.

The Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133, of Gulfport, Miss., were assigned the task of bringing shade to Task Force Gator at Camp Bedrock. Their job was to create a lattice awning across the patio deck of the camp dining facility.

Builder Second Class (BU2) Samuel Schellinger, 26, of Douglas, Wyo., was the crew leader for the project. He said the project was meant to be a low budget structure.

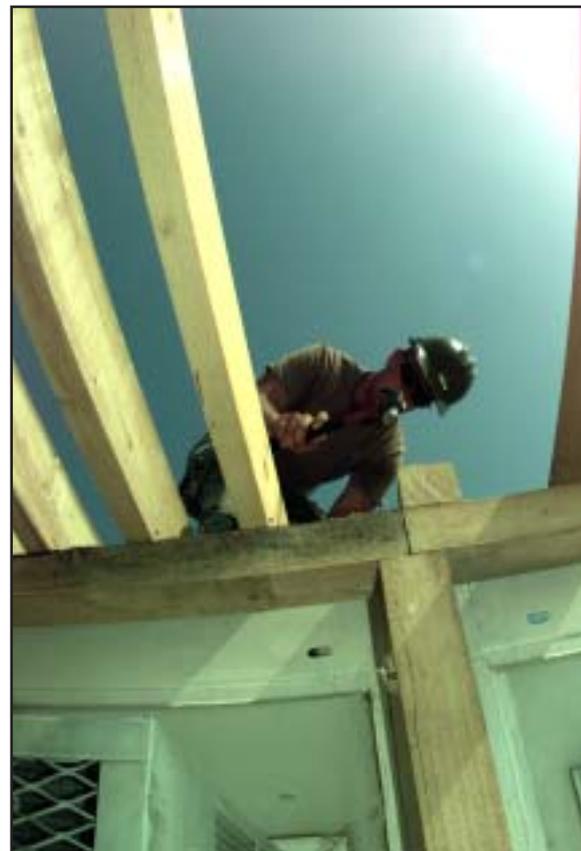
"It's not meant to be permanent," says Schellinger. "But it will benefit us, by giving us knowledge and experience in building an awning that is simple and functional, and give a place for the troops to relax."

Schellinger and his crew from the "Kangroos" of NMCB 133, have spent the past several months building Southeast Asia Huts (Sea hut) at Camp McGovern, as well as maintenance pads and petroleum, oil and lubrication (POL) lockers at Eagle Base.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael R. Martinez, commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment, proposed the awning to the Seabees during one of many scorching days under the harsh Bedrock sun.



Builder Jason Rutledge secures another lattice brace on a shade awning.



Working under an unforgiving Bosnian sun, Constructionman (BUCN) Jason Rutledge n lattice brace on an awning.

at Camp Bedrock

“They had done such a great job on our post office,” said Martinez. “They put that (post office) together with excess lumber, so I asked them to put together a plan for the dining facility.”

Schellinger said that the Seabees had never done anything like the awning before. “It took more planning. At the beginning, we started with wood that was too light-weight for the job, so we had to rethink the initial plan,” he said.

The eight Seabees, using nearly four to five thousand linear feet of lumber, worked for two days to finish the project in time for a Fourth of July and Mid-deployment party planned for Task Force 2/6.

Builder (BUCN) Jason Rutledge, 22, says the design of the awning was simple, and efficient.

“The design was made to allow fewer supports for better room and viewing. The boards are spaced six inches apart, so the eight-inch boards provide the most shade in the morning and evening.”

Rutledge, a native of Falmouth, Mass., says that it would take only another morning’s work to fix a full-corrugated roof to the awning.

“Weather wasn’t considered part of the equation, it was built for the shade,” said Rutledge.

“We’ve already started to get little comments from the soldiers, saying how nice it will be to have some cover from the sun,” Rutledge said. “That’s what makes the work worthwhile.”

“You’ll be able to take a little bit more time to eat, now that you can sit outside and enjoy it without the sun glaring off the white dining tables. Right now, in this heat, any little bit of shade is important.”



Builder Constructionman Second Class (BU2) Samuel Schellinger drives home a nail to secure a lattice brace on a new awning at Bedrock.



, Builder
nails in a



Builder Second Class Samuel Schellinger (foreground) sets a lattice brace in place on a new awning.

Hair stylists are a cut above

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

You won't hear any singing from inside this establishment. There may be four stylists in the shop, but don't expect any songs from this beauty shop quartet anytime soon. Instead, female soldiers deployed into Bosnia can find a full-service salon, staffed with hardworking stylists and offering a complete line of hair care and beauty services including perms, hair coloring, straightening and basic trims.

The Beauty Shop, which opened up inside the existing barbershop in April 1998, is staffed with eight stylists and one supervisor, who also pitches in and cuts hair. Appointments are rarely necessary: at any given time there are five personnel on duty, so soldiers who arrive from outlying base camps will have little or no waiting for a haircut.

Alma Husanovic, one of the stylists that works mornings, learned her trade in high school. "For three years I learned to cut hair in school, then I spent one year in a salon working as an apprentice. I have been at Eagle Base for three months and before that, I was at Bedrock," said the 19-year old from Tuzla.

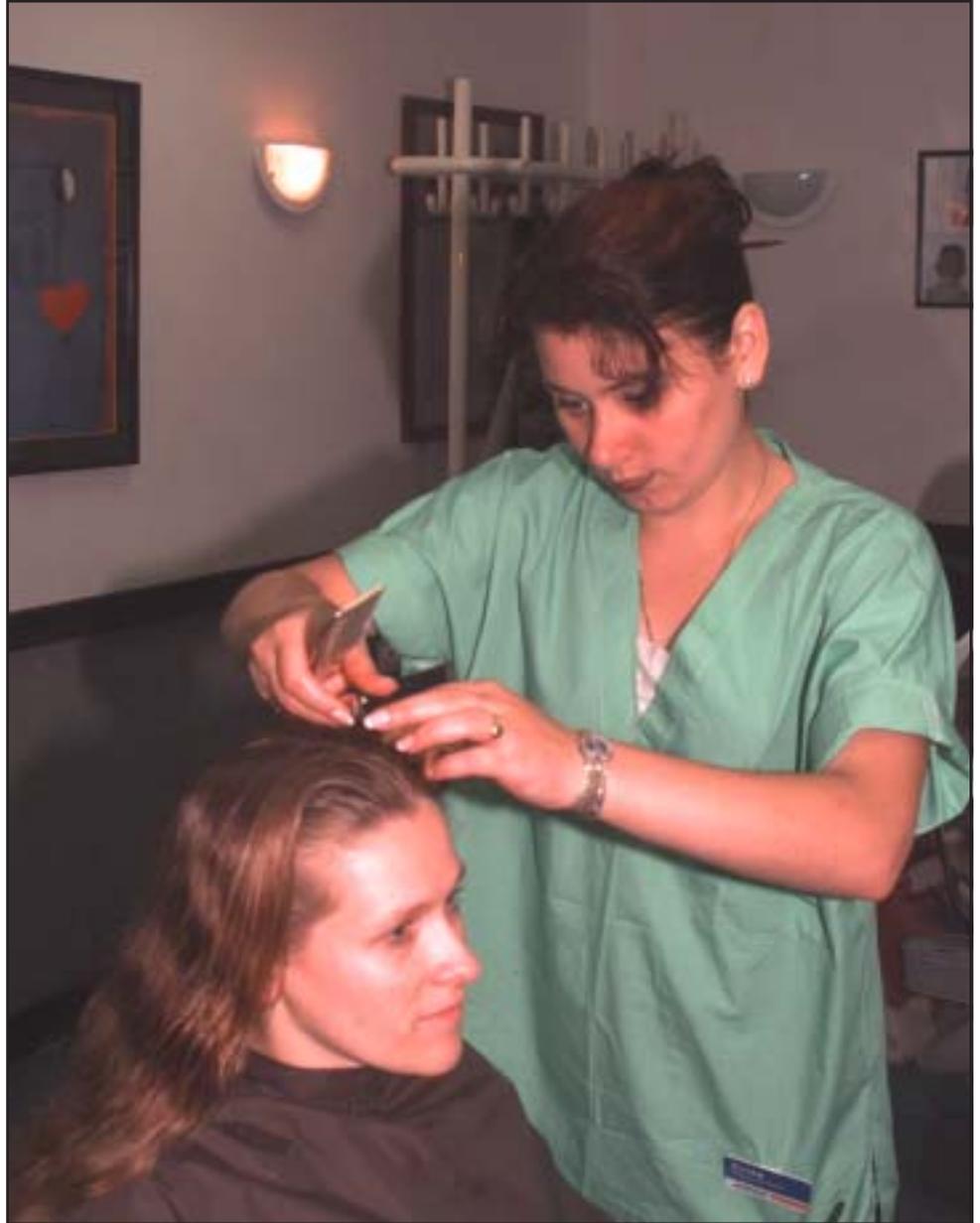
Learning to cut hair for U.S. military personnel, male and female, was an experience for Emina Dedic, also 19, from the local village of Dubrave.

"I didn't take any extra classes to learn American styles. Most of what I have learned I picked up on the job, working with other stylists and looking at pictures of what soldiers bring in for examples."

Dedic has worked at Eagle Base for one month, but before that, worked at Comanche Base.

Both Husanovic and Dedic state that not a lot of female soldiers come into the shop and that may be because the women aren't sure of how experienced the stylists are. Specialist Lisa R. Elizondo, from the 345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, was one of those soldiers. But after a haircut, she was convinced that the local women are as good as American stylists.

"I'm happy with my haircut. I was skeptical at the beginning, but Emina was very professional and she did a nice job," said Elizondo, who hails from San Antonio, Texas.



Staff Sergeant Melissa A. Judkins, Task Force 90, 90th Personnel Services Battalion, gets a haircut from Enisa Memisevic at the Beauty Shop.

"The shop had the feeling of a regular salon, with the matching uniforms and the fern motifs in the mirrors," she said.

The Barber/Beauty Shop is part of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and is open Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Haircut prices vary from \$2 to \$5, depending on what the soldier requests. And male soldiers can find the traditional high and tights, flattops and 'just a little off the top' styles as well.

So, if you're looking for a simple trim or a drastic change, check out the Beauty Shop on Eagle Base. There, you'll find experienced and talented stylists who just might sing you a song, if you ask.

Versatility required for Quick Reaction Force missions

Story and photos by
First Lieutenant Lillian Sydenstricker
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The call comes quickly over the radio - the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) is needed. The soldiers of first platoon fourth squad race toward their vehicles and quickly don their battle equipment. They go to their destination; complete the mission and then wait for higher headquarters to release them. This is a drill that the 630th Military Police unit from Bamberg, Germany, is quite used to. It is part of their mission while in Bosnia, and is vital to the peacekeeping effort of Operation Joint Forge.

"We can respond anywhere in the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry area that we are needed," explained Corporal Dave Mclean, 23, of South Gate, Mich.

Every scenario changes with each QRF drill and various MOS skills are used. Squad leader, Sergeant Scott Hadfield, 23, of Tombstone, Ariz., said that if their mission requires them to deal with unexploded ordnance (UXO), they do whatever is required to successfully complete the mission.

The 630th MPs have QRF two to three times a week. The mission gets rotated between platoons.

"Every time we go out we learn something new," commented Hadfield.

Meanwhile, they use skills that are often not used, such as their investigative skills. The QRF is used to ensure safety at the camp but also to react to anything that arises during the



Private First Class Nicki Bennett dons her equipment during the quick reaction force drill.



Private First Class Michael Huback studies the surrounding area while his squad accomplish their mission during QRF.

24-hour shift.

Members also use a variety of non-MP related skills during quick reaction force such as infantry and engineering skills.

"This is great training in emergency situations; to see how fast we can react," noted Private First Class Nicki Bennett, 22, of Seattle, Wash.

After the exercise is complete and the soldiers head back to camp, Corporal Shawn Oye, 23, of Victorville, Calif., explains, "We can go anywhere, sometimes the secondary roads are a little rough, but we get to where we are needed."

Besides doing QRF, the MPs also perform their other missions such as presence patrols, guard duty and escorts.

"We have regular missions that we do every day. We do our Bosnia Mission," commented Hadfield.

"This is a real-world mission; not MP doctrine, but Bosnia doctrine," concludes Mclean.

The 630th is attached to the 1-1 Cav from Buedingen, Germany.

MWR activities fill off duty hours

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

During World War II, the U.S. military recognized the need for soldiers to relax and combat boredom, the need for recreation during their tour away from home was crucial. This has not changed through the course of military history to include today's peace keeping missions in Bosnia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sinai and wherever our military troops deploy.

Through the years due to budget controls, constraints and cut backs, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) has transitioned from the Red Cross service to military employees. In today's economy, it has been passed to volunteers like retired Army Sergeant First Class Frank P. Batteford. Batteford is a 56 year-old Leesville, La., native. Batteford is a veteran of the three rotations with the 5th Special Forces Group during the Vietnam War, and is now an MWR coordinator.

"I volunteered to come here to Bosnia, I remember how important it was for me to have the MWR activities available to me during my deployment in Vietnam," said Batteford. "I truly feel like I can make a difference in the day-to-day lives of the soldiers here at Camp Bedrock."

The MWR activities at Bedrock run seven days a week for the men and women deployed. Many of the weekly activities for the military service members are geared to relax and entertain people on the off hours of the day. At the "Rock" they have weekly tournaments like pool, Ping-Pong, chess, volleyball,



Private First Class Mike J. Greve shoots a game of pool in the MWR tent after a hard day of work.



Frank P. Batteford prepares for the next round during a pool tournament at the MWR tent.

horse shoes, spades, dominos and basketball tournaments. Along with the sports, the MWR tent loans out movies to the troops free of charge, and they show nightly movies in a movie tent for all to come, and enjoy fresh popcorn.

At any given time, you can walk into the MWR tent and find troops relaxing with their friends.

"I like to come into the MWR tent and play pool with my friends," said Private First Class Mike J. Greve, a 21 year-old Omaha, Neb., native. "It helps to take our minds off being deployed here in Bosnia."

Greve is with the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment out of Baumholder, Germany and utilizes the MWR facilities regularly.

Working directly with the camp commander, Batteford prepares all the recreational activities for each day. This means working 12 to 14 hours each day to ensure the MWR mission goes smoothly.

"What most people don't understand is the logistics of preparing for some of the MWR activities," stated Batteford. "A good example of this is when an entertainer arrives at Bedrock, it is my job to find housing for them and to arrange for necessary equipment needed for them to perform."

Pulling guard, going out on daily missions, and performing their daily soldiering jobs is a daily activity for soldiers at Bedrock. However, preparing for their time off falls on the MWR coordinator.

"I'm here for the troops," said Batteford.

K-9 and soldier teamwork key to security at Lukavac

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

Nestled to the west of Tuzla, Bosnia is the placid suburban town of Lukavac. It is the site of a key railhead for deploying and re-deploying of many U.S. military vehicles. The depot spans a radius of five kilometers, functioning 24 hours a day. The security and safety of the vehicles and equipment descend on the skill and teamwork of the Centurions of the Night.

Working side by side with the 2nd Platoon of Bravo Company from Camp Bedrock in the security of the rail head is Sergeant Chad M. Benansky, a 30 year-old from Copake, New York and his K-9 partner Condora, a seven-year-old, Belgium Malinois. Benansky and Condora are with Headquarters Company, 104th Area Support Group in Hanau, Germany.

"We are the guardians of the night, here at the railhead," stated Benansky. "With such a large area to cover I need assistance in seeing and hearing things from a distance and my dog has the ability to hear, smell and see things up to seven to ten times better than humans."

With many of the units here in Bosnia rotating through the Lukavac railhead, it is a busy place. Although it is not always

in operation the need for security never changes and the K-9 team is always there.

"When we are walking the perimeter, it is so dark, at times I use night vision goggles, however, Condora still spots things I miss," said Benansky. "One Night I was walking out on patrol when she stopped dead in her tracks, this is a sign of danger, and if she had not stopped me I would have fallen in a deep ditch."

The over all mission of the K-9 team at the railhead is to detect, deter and to perform dismounted patrols. Conducting these types of task at night takes a good working relationship between handler and dog.

"I trust her with my life and she trusts me with her life," added Benansky. "We are continuously working through the night and I can always count on her performing her job flawlessly."

This trusting relationship carries over into their daily lives. Living together in the same tent, training, playing and in some way conversing allows them to execute their peace keeping mission here in Bosnia.

Benansky explains, "I have to watch the way she moves, the sound of her breathing, the wagging of her tail, and some other things that are sensed but not really seen. That's what allows us to perform the job of Centurions of the Night."



Sergeant Chad M. Benansky conducts dismounted foot patrols at the Lukavac railhead with his partner Condora.

Coping with the Heat

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

Welcome to Bosnia! That's what Mother Nature is telling members of the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry via severe thunderstorms by night and extremely hot and humid conditions by day.

"We just deal with it," says Specialist Justin Crow, 22, of Longmont, Colo., as he fills a cooler with water and ice prior to his workday as a peacekeeper during Operation Joint Forge. "We find shade and a breeze anytime we can."

But that is a difficult task for Crow and other track mechanics with Alpha Company, 40th Engineer Battalion who must work on the track line — where shade is at a minimum. Temperatures have soared to near 100 degrees Fahrenheit at Camp Dobol.

"We try to get an early start on our work, but we drink a lot of water to get hydrated before we hit the track line," explains Sergeant Ron Grider, 28, of Kansas City, Mo., Grider is the NCOIC of the five-man mechanic team.

"After a day's work we could take our shirts off and wring them out into at least two of these bottles. Thank goodness there's a free laundry service here," states Grider as he holds

one of the popular 16-ounce Norda water bottles. "We go through at least nine cases of these things a day."

"Yeah, we drink a lot of water; at least 15 bottles a day," adds Private First Class Nick Gucwa, a 21-year-old Bad Axe, Mich., native.

Soldiers throughout the Tuzla Valley have been dealing with the muggy conditions in their own unique way since the uncomfortable conditions returned in late June and early July. Blackened, sweat-soaked BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms) are commonplace at Dobol and nearby U.S. base camps such as Eagle Base, Guardian, Camanche and Bedrock.

One way to combat the added stress of escalating temperatures is to monitor a Globe Temperature Index Calculator, or better known as a "Wet Bulb." Medics at the Dobol Aid Station monitor the Wet Bulb hourly to calculate the Heat Index.

There are five heat categories, which determine the level of activity and training for U.S. troops. "The Wet Bulb is used as a safety measure during the hot, summer months. The higher the Wet Bulb readings, the higher the heat category, which dictates the work/rest cycle," explains Sergeant Sean Hinton, 26, of Sacramento, Calif.

"You never can be too cautious when soldiers are working in extreme conditions," adds Hinton, the evacuation NCO for the Medical Platoon. "The Wet Bulb may seem to be a simple device, but it can actually save your life."

The "Wet Bulb" calculates the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) by combining the dry temperature and the wet temperature. The WBGT is then used to determine the heat category.

According to the U.S. Army's Heat Injury Prevention Plan, heat categories 1 and 2 are considered low risk with a Wet Bulb Heat Index ranging from 78-84.9. Under category 3, which ranges from 85-87.9 on the heat index, soldiers are required to drink at least one quart of water and rest for 15 minutes every hour. Category 4 ranges from 88-89.9 and calls for 1.5 quarts of water and 30 minutes of rest each hour. Category 5, the most severe heat condition, calls for two quarts of water and 40 minutes of rest every hour.

That's exactly what Mother Nature dealt troops throughout the Tuzla Valley from June 29-July 2. In fact, the U.S. Air Force weather department in Tuzla issued a severe heat warning on July 2.

Meanwhile, once on the track line, the mechanics are at the mercy of Mother Nature. "We tend to fend for ourselves," says Grider, who encourages his men to be creative in the ways they beat the heat. While some dump water over their heads, others find shade beneath such iron behemoths as the Combat Engineer Vehicle, or CEV.

But Crow has a few words of advice for those who waste water by taking an impromptu shower, "I'd rather drink it than dump it over my head."



Specialist Justin Crow places water and ice in a cooler that he will later take on the track line.