

TALON



Talon

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Private First Class Michael Cash works on the SUSV vehicle at Camp Bedrock, Bosnia. (Photo by Sergeant Tim Fischer, see pages 6 and 7).

“We have good corporals and sergeants and some good lieutenants and captains, and those are far more important than good generals” – *General of the Army William T. Sherman, (1820 - 1891).*

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 Dwight J. Brown
Task Force Eagle CSM

As hot and humid temperatures increase in Bosnia, so does your potential of becoming a heat casualty. Given this, it is paramount we assume the responsibility of practicing measures which prevent heat casualties.

According to FM 21-10-1, “The conditions which influence the heat equilibrium of the body and its adjustments are the air temperature; the temperature of surrounding objects; the sun’s radiant heat; the vapor pressure of the water in the air (relative humidity); the air movement; the amount and type of clothing worn; the metabolic heat produced by the body as a result of physical activity.”

Normal thirst does not serve as a true indication of the body’s need for water. It is recommended that during periods of moderate activity, with moderate conditions prevailing, water requirements should be one pint or more per hour for a man or woman.

Several factors should be considered in a hot climate: First, refrain from physical activities in the heat of the day under the piercing rays of the sun. Second, drink lots of water and encourage others to follow suit. The human body is highly dependent on water to cool itself in a hot environment.

By sweating, a person loses water in excess of 1 quart per hour. Third, contact the chain of command, or unit TOC, at base camps to obtain the heat category level for training or other outdoor activities. The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index assists in determining if weather conditions are hazardous to soldiers. If soldiers don body armor or mission oriented protective posture (MOPP), this adds 10 degrees fahrenheit to the measured WBGT and appropriate limits and adjustments should be considered.

The most important resources and assets we have are each other. So let’s all work safe and **“Dare to make a difference.”**



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'Old Ironsides' celebrates 58th birthday

Story and photo by Corporal William Coker
304th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Some people see reaching 58 years as a sign of oncoming retirement. The 1st Armored Division, which turned 58 on July 15, certainly has shown no signs of slowing with its rich history of service. The 58th birthday celebration was held on July 17 at Eagle Base.

Activated on July 15, 1940, the 1st Armored Division earned the nickname "Old Ironsides" due to similarities between the 1st Armored Division and the frigate, the U.S.S. Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides."

In 1942, the 1st Armored Division landed in Algiers and became the first of the Allied troops to meet Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and his Africa Korps. Soon after, Old Ironsides would begin a long, arduous campaign in Italy. After World War II, the 1st Armored Division assumed occupation duties in Germany, only to be deactivated in 1946.

The 1st Armored Division was reactivated in 1951 and began a 20-year presence in Germany that would see significant changes in Europe such as the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany.

Old Ironsides began a desert campaign on Nov. 8, 1990 by joining allied forces in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, in response to Iraqi forces invading Kuwait. Most recently, the 1st Armored Division has been deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Command's (NATO) Implementation Force and, now, Stabilization Force (SFOR).

A punch bowl ceremony was held at the birthday celebration to honor the lineage of past wars and accomplishments. Starting with a bowl of punch, sugar was added to symbolize sand from Algiers, Italian dressing for the Italian campaign during World War II, near beer for 20 years of service in Germany, oil for the attack through the oil fields of Iraq, and royal water in recognition of the Bosnian mission. The mixture was stirred by Command Sergeant Major Dwight Brown, division command sergeant major for the 1st Armored Division. Brown then

sipped the punch.

"Yeah, that's oil, all right!" exclaimed Brown.

Major General Larry Ellis, commander of the 1st Armored Division, followed with remarks about the symbolism of the division's shoulder patch, the lineage of the unit, and its motto, "Dignity and Respect".

"Remember, you are writing the history for those to follow," said Ellis.

Specialist Keith Cruz, tank crewman for the 1st Armored Division for the past two years, said, "It's a great experience to



Major General Larry Ellis and Command Sergeant Major Dwight Brown cut the 1st Armored Division Birthday cake during the celebration held on July 17 at Eagle Base.

be part of this division. Its history is an inspiration."

"I feel very important to be part of the mission to bring peace to the women and children in Bosnia," said Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Clarke, tactical intelligence officer for the 1st Armored Division and a 21-year Army veteran.

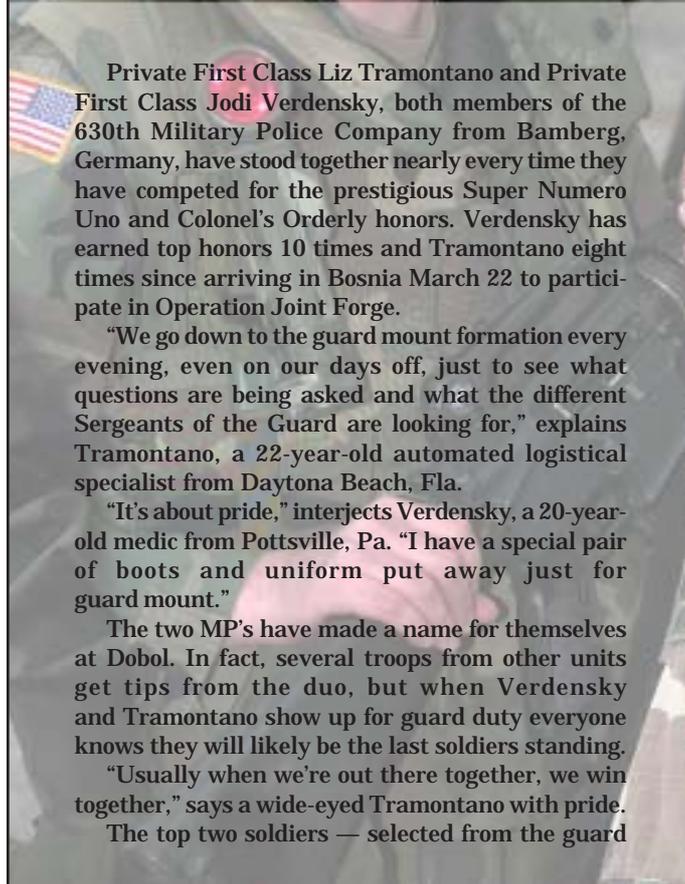
"I'm proud of each soldier that serves in this division because they're part of what makes this division so rich and strong," said Brown.

58 years of dignity and respect is what the 1st Armored Division celebrated on July 17. In his speech, Ellis also called on the soldiers in attendance to heed the challenges of the future and to continue with the pride, dedication and esprit de corps of those that came before them.

'Squared away' MPs win top honors on guard mount

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

They stand at attention, their starched uniforms as rigid as their stances. Their boots appear like mirrors, but they would never know as their eyes stare forward, oblivious to their surroundings. Even though they begin this evening's guard mount formation in different ranks, they will likely end up standing together as the top soldiers.



Private First Class Liz Tramontano peers to her right during "Dress Right! Dress!" of the guard mount inspection formation.

Private First Class Liz Tramontano and Private First Class Jodi Verdensky, both members of the 630th Military Police Company from Bamberg, Germany, have stood together nearly every time they have competed for the prestigious Super Numero Uno and Colonel's Orderly honors. Verdensky has earned top honors 10 times and Tramontano eight times since arriving in Bosnia March 22 to participate in Operation Joint Forge.

"We go down to the guard mount formation every evening, even on our days off, just to see what questions are being asked and what the different Sergeants of the Guard are looking for," explains Tramontano, a 22-year-old automated logistical specialist from Daytona Beach, Fla.

"It's about pride," interjects Verdensky, a 20-year-old medic from Pottsville, Pa. "I have a special pair of boots and uniform put away just for guard mount."

The two MPs have made a name for themselves at Dobil. In fact, several troops from other units get tips from the duo, but when Verdensky and Tramontano show up for guard duty everyone knows they will likely be the last soldiers standing.

"Usually when we're out there together, we win together," says a wide-eyed Tramontano with pride.

The top two soldiers — selected from the guard

mount formation due to their exceptional military appearance and excellent military knowledge — are rewarded by not having to participate in guard duty.

However, it's not the off-time reward that drives the two competitors. "We work hard to be squared away. I love to be squared away. It's too easy to not spend time on your uniform, boots and weapon," Tramontano reasons.

No one can accuse these two of not paying attention to details. They begin their ritualistic grooming nearly six hours before the initial 6:15 p.m. guard mount formation.

They get off work half the day so they can soak their uniforms in starch, spend nearly an hour cleaning their M-16s and then apply a glistening coat of Kiwi on their boots.

Finally, they reflect on their hours of study time while listening to their favorite music. Tramontano likes the new German techno music while Verdensky listens to Prince or country music star Trace Adkins' "Every Light in the House is On" for motivation.

The ritual continues as they are ordered to "Fall in!" Without hesitation, Tramontano stands erect in the first rank while Verdensky stands tall in the third rank. "That's where we stood when we first won," says Tramontano, revealing her superstition.

She then jingles two coins — a 630th company coin and a 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment coin — together in her bottom BDU jacket pocket.

She keeps them there for good luck!

(At left) Private First Class Jodi Verdensky holds her M-16 at port arms following an inspection.

Marine Corporal works civil affairs issues at Brcko

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

Marine Corporal Thuy Nguyen, 24, of Arlington, Va. is a member of the 4th Civil Affairs Group (4th CAG) based in Washington, D.C. and deployed in Bosnia. Nguyen, a native of Vietnam, came to the U.S. as an infant in 1976. Her father was an Army officer for the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Also, her uncles served in the Air Force for Vietnam.

Nguyen, a civil affairs specialist at Camp McGovern, said the reason for becoming a Marine Corps reservist was largely an extension of her military family and patriotic background. "I became a Marine because my father had been in the Army, my uncles in the Air Force, and I viewed the Marines as the logical place for me because of its tradition as being the toughest as well as an elite force," said Nguyen.

Deployed in February with the 4th CAG, Nguyen has had the opportunity to work in the Multinational Division-(Southwest) and the Multinational Division-(North).

She was initially assigned to the British 9th/12th Lancers based at Banja Luka. In addition to tracking assessment visits and returns of Displaced Persons and Refugees (DPREs), Nguyen also organized the Lancers' information gathering system on proposed economic regeneration projects.

"I view my mission as one that is part of a larger whole that essentially helps to put the country back to a prewar footing capable of sustaining itself," said Nguyen.

Only at McGovern for a short time beginning in late June, Nguyen says that the mission is quite different because the area has not been determined whether it will be in the Federation, or the Republic of Serpska.

"It (the outlying area around Brcko) seems pretty raw to me in that one of the main things that has to be focused on is water and electricity. In other areas, where I have worked, there was running water. So, it was only a matter of repairing pipelines, whereas here, it's a matter of drilling wells," she said.

Nguyen said that in other areas one well typically supplies several houses in a village, but not only that, there were more modern ways to get water. In the Brcko-area communities, there is one well – a pressure well – per family. Once the issue of getting water is resolved, there is still the matter of getting electricity.

These basic issues make it more difficult to address the bigger issue of infrastructure, according to Nguyen. "There's a lot of work that needs to be done here," she said.

Nguyen said that there is a level of formality maintained



Corporal Thuy Nguyen, (center) with the assistance of interpreter Sandra Vakic, meets with cafe worker Mirzeta Zenic whose cafe will move to another location within the market after recently opening.

between the military and the local civilian populace as civil affairs personnel attend scheduled meetings with local municipality officials. However, should residents approach them for assistance, they are willing to point them in the right direction for further assistance.

"Being a liaison between the military and civilian worlds enables me to work with both groups while still being in the military, which I find interesting," she said.

U.S. soldiers learn how to maintain from Swedes

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

Following in the footsteps of the December 1995 United Nations Charter decision establishing a multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), many NATO countries, including the U.S. and Sweden, went into action. Now, the December 1996 decision for the Stabilization Force (SFOR), which is in place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is performing daily peace-keeping missions throughout Bosnia. With a troop-strength of over 13,000, the Multinational Division-North commitment is to ensure a safe condition for the implementation of the aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords.

Working together as a multination team has become a common occurrence in the Balkan region. For two weeks, the soldiers from the Swedish Battalion have been conducting maintenance training with the U.S. soldiers from Camp Bedrock.

The U.S. military purchased Swedish made Small Unit Support Vehicles (SUSV) for use in extreme weather conditions, such as Alaska and also the Balkans. The Swedish soldiers are teaching the U.S. soldiers at Bedrock the steps to maintain the vehicle. "Having the Swedish soldiers here to teach us about the SUSV has been a huge learning experience," said Private First Class Michael Cash, a 20 year-old Atlanta, Ga., native.

"Working directly with the people who made the vehicles has been great. They have taught us little tricks to maintain the



(Left to right) First Lieutenant Leif Holmgren, a Swedish soldier, shows Sergeant James P. Hastings and Private First Class Michael Cash the way to put the track back on a SUSV vehicle.

Swedish extreme weather vehicle

serviceability of the support vehicle.”

Cash, with the Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment out of Baumholder, Germany, was recently awarded the mechanic of the month at Bedrock. Working together with the Swedish soldiers allows the U.S. soldiers to ask questions about the vehicle itself.

“The language barrier between the two national teams has been tough at times. However we have been able to communicate to them our questions and we have worked our way through it,” stated Cash. “We have two instructors here from the Swedish Battalion, and they are full of knowledge of the vehicle and its limitations.”

Leif Holmgren is a 26-year-old first lieutenant from the

Swedish Battalion located in the U.S. sector in Bosnia. He is a maintenance technical specialist for the Swedish military and is teaching the U.S. soldiers all he knows about the SUSV.

“I have enjoyed working with the Americans,” said Holmgren. “They are anxious to learn all about our vehicle, which make the time we spend together a good learning experience.”

Taking the time to work with other nations while serving the SFOR mission in Bosnia, the soldiers are not only learning new techniques on how to perform their jobs proficiently, they are making new friends along the way.

“I have not only experienced a lot from the Swedish soldiers about the vehicles, I feel like I have made new friends in addition,” concluded Cash.



First Lieutenant Leif Holmgren, a Swedish soldier, shows Private First Class Michael Cash the way to put the track back on a SUSV vehicle.

PSYOPS mission reaches the people

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

Spreading helpful and important information to the local communities is an immense priority of the peacekeeping Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in Bosnia. Nestled in a tranquil section of countryside is the small town of Olovo. Located in the pristine mountainous region, Nisic, Olovo is approximately 10 kilometers away from where the heaviest fighting between the opposing forces took place during the war. Olovo is now just like any other town in Bosnia, trying to put the pieces back together.

The Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) soldiers at Camp Bedrock are doing their part in the peacekeeping process by informing, helping and communicating with the people of Bosnia.

"This is the part of my job I most enjoy, going out and talking to all the children, teenagers, and the adults in our area of operation," said Sergeant Rodney C. Dunham, a 30-year-old Champaign, Ill., native. "I feel like my work is making a difference in the lives of the children here in Bosnia."

Dunham is a PSYOPS noncommissioned officer with 307th Psychological Operations Company reserve unit out of St.

Louis, Mo. He is responsible for the distribution of information, like the Herald of Progress and Mirko. The information inside these publications is geared towards informing the people of Bosnia.

Along with many of the subjects in the magazines, it offers facts on regional news, election news, sports, business and economy, land mine safety and a wide range of useful data for people to read.

"Our team of four soldiers from Bedrock works for the Combined Joint Information Campaign Task Force distributing magazines, and we also go to the local radio stations and offer tapes of American music," stated Dunham. "We cover a large area and I don't mind the drive to Olovo. It takes around one and half hours to get there. However, I love going out and talking to the children; they seem to really enjoy seeing us and I know I enjoy spending time with them."

For Dunham, this is not his first experience at being deployed. During the Persian Gulf War, he was assigned to the elite 82nd Airborne Division. He spent eight months there and he compares the two assignments as totally different.

"I have much more involvement with the people of this country, and I feel like we are making it a better place for the children to grow up," said Dunham. "I truly think the U.S. military is making a difference."



Sergeant Rodney C. Dunham gives eight year-old Ajla Zajkovic a copy of the magazine Mjрко' in the town of Olovo, Bosnia.



Sergeant Rodney C. Dunham and Amira Miainic, a director at the radio station, put together some cassettes for the radio station in the town of Olovo, Bosnia.

DACOWITS – Not for Women Only

Story by Staff Sergeant Lillian Falco

345th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Photo by Sergeant First Class Sherry L. Claus

196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Task Force Eagle soldiers participated in various focus groups conducted by the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) committee members during a recent visit to Eagle Base. The focus groups involved enlisted and officer, male and female soldiers.

"Although we are here to make recommendations and give advice on matters dealing specifically with women, we are finding more and more that many of the issues we hear about in the focus groups are not gender specific issues," explained DACOWITS 1998 Chairperson, Elizabeth T. Bilby. "They're just soldier issues. Not women soldiers' issues. Not men soldiers' issues. We really feel it's important that we talk to men, too and find out what they feel."

Soldiers and committee members discussed issues concerning Bosnia, and matters military wide. The committee usually breaks down issues into three categories: Quality of Life, Force Development and Equality Management.

However, Bilby explained, "The basic bottom line of what we do is to listen without agenda to the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen to find out what they think, what is on their minds and see if there is an issue out there."

When issues arise, the committee meets and because the committee members are civilians, if need be they turn to the military liaisons and representatives for guidance into background data. Once it is determined a recommendation it going to be made, it goes directly through the chain of command to the Secretary of Defense.

The Secretary of Defense appoints committee members and the members work directly for the Secretary. Women and men are nominated by the Services, Congress, the Department of Defense and also by the President. There are 34 members currently serving on the committee, and they represent various geographic areas, ethnicity and career fields. All members are civilians and are leaders in their communities and the fields in which they work. The members serve for three years. The Chairperson is a third year member and is appointed by the Secretary.

Previous members have been retired general officers. Currently, Ginger L. Simpson, a retired master chief petty

officer from the Navy, is serving on the committee. At the end of her 26 years of service she was the director of the Senior Enlisted Academy for the Navy.

In existence since 1951, DACOWITS boasts many successes, but the two foremost are the equal medical and commissary benefits for the spouses of service women and working to afford the opportunity for women to attend our service academies.

Bilby noted, "The long term goal of DACOWITS is to support our military's demand for excellence in ensuring our nation's freedom and we really seek the ability for our daughters to have the same opportunity to serve their country as our sons."

Perhaps that goal is not too far away, as the committee members walked around Eagle Base, men and women of all services – Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force – Reserve and Guard, were working side-by-side. Bilby said, "this is working," and the "impression is a very positive one."



Members of the DACOWITS committee, accompanied by Brigadier General Anthony R. Jones (right), Assistant Division Commander (FWD), 1st Armored Division, tour Brcko.

"I was very fortunate that of the people I talked to they've identified themselves as a reservist, because if they don't there is no way to tell," added Bilby.

Bilby also commented on the positive interaction of all the services and soldiers. She said she was hearing soldiers' relaying their feelings of pride because here, on a day-to-day basis, they are successfully accomplishing the missions they were trained to do.

Russians and Americans together in 'Partnership for Peace' program

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

Thirty-five Russian soldiers from Ugljevik, Priboj and Simin Han rode into Guardian Base with an important mission in mind...to discover how the American soldiers handle supply and maintenance. Through a program called "Partnership for Peace," the Russian logistics officers were invited to tour the facilities of the 47th (Forward) Support Battalion located at Guardian Base.

The purpose of this program, according to Lieutenant Colonel Christopher R. Paparone, the 43-year-old commander of the 47th FSB, is to establish a good rapport between the two countries.

"Through visits like this one today, we are facilitating an understanding of each other's logistics and furthering military-to-military relations," said the Melbourne, Fla., native.

Members of various elements of the 47th FSB were more than eager to share knowledge with their foreign counterparts as they explained processes such as the different levels of maintenance and ordering and receiving parts and equipment.

There were a few surprises for both countries during the day. The Russians were amazed at some of the procedures used by the Americans from Baumholder, Germany.

"The use of automation in the supply system was most impressive," said Colonel Gennady Poltavsky, the Russian Deputy Chief of Staff of Logistics from Omsk, Siberia. "Also, how fast the supply system works and how quickly you can get a part from the factory to the user is very good."

Chief Warrant Officer Ponsuk P. Popun, a 38-year-old member of Company B, 47th FSB, found there to be a difference in how the two countries train their soldiers. "The Russians are very specialized – one element works on track vehicles, one on engines, another on electronics," explained the Marysville, Calif., native. "We, on the other hand, are more 'task oriented' which allows each soldier to work on many different systems."

Altogether, the two groups of soldiers with such diverse backgrounds seemed easily able to find a common language in the logistics field they share. Through the use of interpreters, questions were asked and answered and a better understanding was gained by both sides involved.

The "Partnership for Peace" event was such a success, in fact, that Poltavsky intends to reciprocate in kind to the 47th FSB soldiers.

"We have invited the soldiers of this unit to come visit us very soon," said the Russian officer. "They will have a chance to look over our system and we can compare the two and determine the advantages and disadvantages of both systems."

Senior Warrant Officer Vadim Vurkevskiy is from Stavropol



Sergeant First Class Elias R. Encisco explains maintenance procedures on a 5-ton truck to a delegation of logistics officers from the Russian Brigade during a tour of the 47th Forward Support Battalion at Guardian Base.

in the Caucasus Mountains. He perhaps summed up the feelings of both countries best when he said, "Today's events have helped our two nations and peoples better understand each other both as partners and as friends."

If these sentiments are anything to judge by, it seems the "Partnership for Peace" program between the Russian logistics officers and the 47th FSB could be a long and fruitful one.

Vehicles under pressure at Eagle Base washrack

Story and photo by Master Sergeant Robert Jennings
196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Before concluding each mission, Private First Class Robin Pollard dons protective gear, secures her rubber gloves and clutches the trigger mechanism on the power gun. Meanwhile, her colleague and close friend, Private First Class Stephanie Sherman, also suits up to do battle with a potential enemy.

No, the two soldiers aren't preparing for chemical warfare, but are participating in a vehicle ritual: preventive maintenance at the Eagle Base washrack. "Our unit SOP is to clean the vehicles after each mission," Sherman said. The 19-year-old Ann Arbor, Mich., native points out how dirt and debris are the hidden adversary. "When mud gets into the rotors of the Humvee, it can make it hard to stop and that could pose a threat to our lives and mission accomplishment," she said.

Both Pollard and Sherman are members of the 121st

Military Police Company from Fort Bragg, N.C., and have been stationed in this war-torn region of Bosnia-Herzegovina since early March. "Our first sergeant always makes sure that we maintain our vehicles properly," said Pollard, 19, of Strasburg, Va. "Besides, keeping your vehicle clean, displays pride in your unit and promotes esprit de corps," added the young airborne trooper.

According to the unit's top NCO, First Sergeant Vincent Crosby, this after operation service is done for the obvious purpose of cleaning the vehicles, but also allows for overall unit readiness. "Military police vehicles cover a lot of territory running security missions throughout the Balkans," said the 34-year-old Fayetteville, N.C., native. "It is essential that we maintain them in the best possible condition."

Brown and Root Services Corporation operates the Tuzla-based washrack 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Vehicles are cleaned on a 5-foot ramp with center walk-space, which allows soldiers to reach the undercarriage of their vehicles. Vigilant BRSC attendants work around the clock to keep water pressure constant by fueling and maintaining a fleet of 5-horsepower power-wash engines.

After ground guiding a Humvee up the concrete ramp, Memic Enber, a local national employed by BRSC, expressed with pride his washrack duties. "We guide the vehicles up and down the ramp, start, refuel and repair the machines, place safety blocks around the tires and maintain an orderly traffic flow," Enber said.

According to BRSC officials, the facility's mission is to provide convenient service for the troops while assisting in overall unit efficiency. On average, nearly 70 vehicles pass through the facility each day with peak hours from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. A spokesman for BRSC suggested that units needing special times can reserve the facility but must give at least 12 to 24 hours advance notice.

Users of the washrack are required to wear rubber gloves and facemask or goggles. Wet weather suit is optional, but strongly encouraged. Although BRSC employees must explain the safety equipment requirements to soldiers, and signs are posted throughout as a constant reminder, it is a unit's command that is ultimately responsible to ensure soldiers adhere to the standards.

"We place emphasis on washrack safety," said Crosby. "From the platoon sergeants, to the squad leaders, on down to the vehicle drivers, everyone is briefed and expected to comply," he said.

Finally, as Pollard exits the washrack she offers her technique for power-washing a Humvee. "Start with the undercarriage, so you can stay relatively dry. Then spray the engine compartment and don't forget the wheel wells."

Mission complete.



Private First Class Robin Pollard reaches hidden dirt with the washrack power sprayer on Eagle Base.

Concertina wire puts a sharp edge on Force Protection

Corporal Marvin Tomayo hoists concertina wire over his head to place it atop a three-tier perimeter at Camp Dobol.

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

There's much more to force protection than checking Stabilization Force identification cards, peering through binoculars from a guard tower, clearing weapons and filling sandbags.

Just ask members of Alpha Company, 40th Engineer Battalion from Baumholder, Germany. They spent much of a sun-drenched Tuesday, July 7, replacing up to 500 meters of Camp Dobol's concertina-wire perimeter.

"It's critical," exclaimed Sergeant First Class Kevin Magoon, 32, of Ticonderoga, N.Y., as his men — donned in flack vests and kevlar — laboriously strengthened the camp's first line of security. "If we can't protect ourselves, we can't accomplish our mission down here."

That is especially true for troops at Dobol, which is located in the heart of the Zone of Separation (ZOS). The ZOS is a four-kilometer-wide strip of real estate that separates primarily Muslims and Croats in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serbs in the Republika Srpska. The three religious factions fought bitterly during a four-year-long civil war that ended in November 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord.

According to Magoon, much of the rusted, weed-infested concertina wire was replaced while a third tier was added for heightened security around the U.S. base camp.

"I would 'guesstimate' that we will use at least 100 bundles of concertina wire just in our section of this perimeter improvement project today," he said.

His men didn't mind hoisting the 40-pound rolls of razor-sharp wire and securing it in place with strips of barbed wire. They realized the importance of an unbreachable perimeter.

"Since we arrived, we knew this was something that needed to be done," said Corporal Bradley Siegrist, 24, of Union Hill, Ala. "We need to make sure everything is up to snuff."

Corporal Marvin Tamayo, 21, of Sonoma, Calif., interjected, "Force protection is a must. This concertina wire keeps everyone inside the gate safe and those we don't want in, outside!"

In all, nearly half of Dobol's perimeter concertina wire was replaced during Force Protection Day. The decaying condition of Dobol's perimeter was an initial concern of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J.J. Smith, commander of 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry. He ordered the worn concertina wire replaced during a battle update brief the week before.

In fact, force protection has apparently been Smith's top priority since his squadron occupied Dobol last month. "I would like for our guards to realize their jobs are the most important mission in Bosnia. They are responsible for the lives of their fellow soldiers inside the wire," Smith told his troop commanders during the briefing.

Perhaps Specialist Michael Whittaker, 24, of Lancaster, Calif., summed it up the best as he and his fellow combat engineers fastened another strand of concertina wire. "It's absolutely necessary to protect the force; it's like protecting your home and your family," he reasoned.