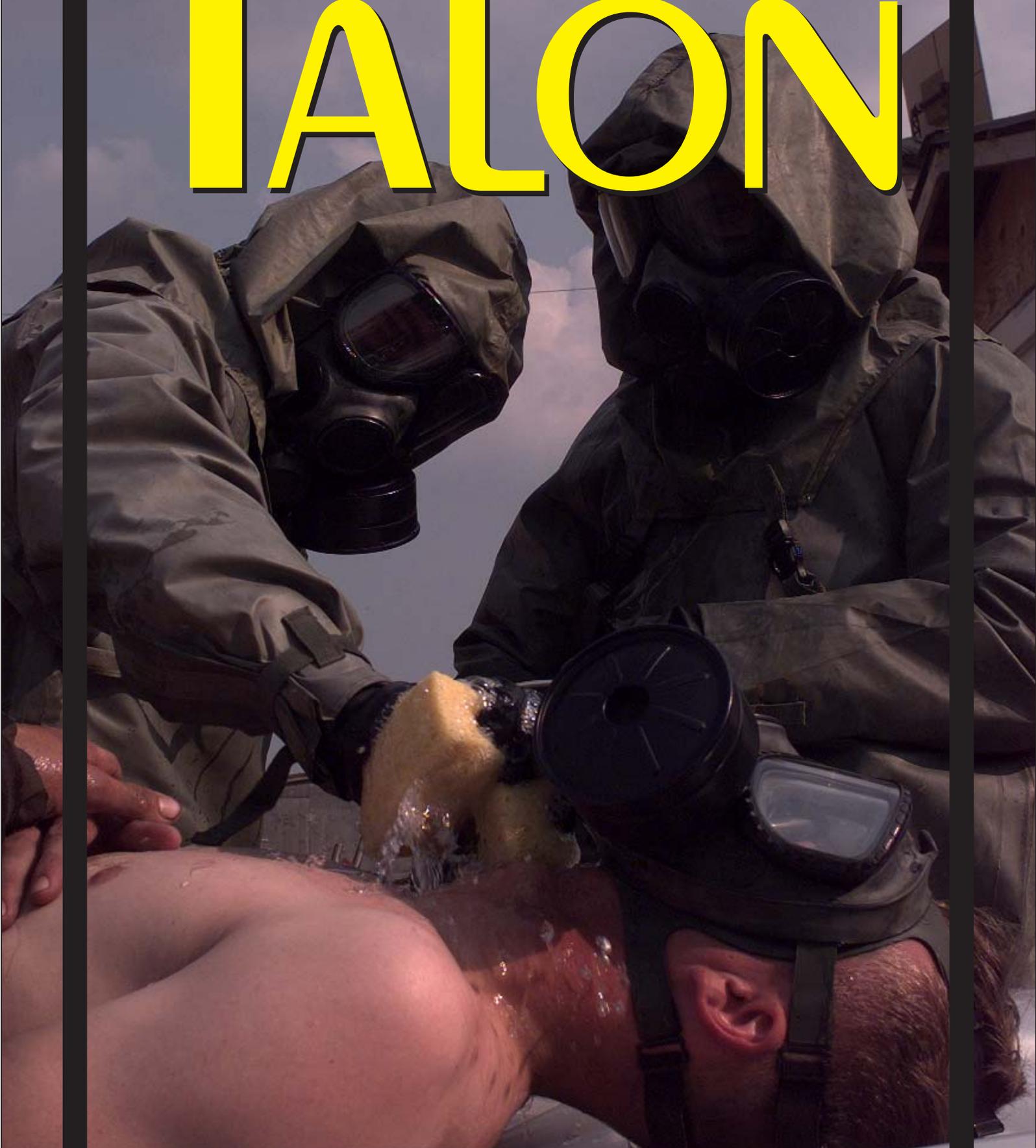


TALON





“TF Six-shooters” 5 **Mass Casualty Exercise 8** **Inspector General 11**
Apaches arrive at Comanche **McGovern prepares for worst case** **Army IG visits camps**

Contents

Up Front

Up Front 2
Maintaining discipline
Removing Mines 3
U.S. and Serbs de-mine
Tankers Compete 4
Dobol holds ‘Outlaw Stakes’
MOPP Heat Casualty Training 6-7
Bedrock’s Combat Medics in NBC exercise
Martial Arts Classes 9
Army Sergeant trains troops in karate
Renovations 10
Comanche face-lift
Marine Civil Affairs 12
Dobol’s community liaisons

On the Cover

(Left to right) Private First Class Pete A. White and Private First Class Xavier M. Vega decontaminate a fellow soldier during Combat Medic NBC training at Camp Bedrock. (Photo by Sergeant Tim Fischer, see pages 6 and 7).

“Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don’t interfere.”
 – Ronald Reagan

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 I travel throughout the base camps, I can see the high degree of discipline shown in the actions and behavior of the soldiers going about their daily routines, or in the performance of their missions.

Units with disciplined soldiers take pride in the maintenance and appearance of their vehicles. They also adhere to traffic signs, use ground guides and wear their kevlar while in vehicles. Another indication of a disciplined unit here is the gunner maintaining the proper position in the hatch of a Humvee while in a convoy. That may seem to be an inconsequential example of discipline, but if it’s seen at that level, then it will be seen throughout the command.

I can provide very few instances where I’ve seen actions contrary to a well disciplined unit here in Task Force Eagle. I want to point out that these few isolated violations of TFE policy I’ve seen, do not indicate an overall deficiency of the unit, but just individual acts of carelessness.

Extra precaution should be given in observing the signs posted throughout the base camps. They are placed where they are because of safety purposes—practice safety daily.

I have faith in the noncommissioned officers and soldiers of Task Force Eagle and their ability to accomplish the peace-keeping mission here in Multinational Division (North) because of this show of discipline. Despite the daily dust, or mud when it rains, TFE soldiers are doing an excellent job of keeping the Humvees and other vehicles clean.

I drive by the wash rack and it is in constant use daily. I see soldiers taking pride. Continue to maintain your equipment while keeping yourselves on the cutting edge, and **“Dare to make a difference.”**

THE TALON is produced in the interest of the servicemembers of Task Force Eagle. THE TALON is an Army-funded newspaper authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas, under the provision of AR 360-81. Contents of THE TALON are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle.

THE TALON is published weekly by the 1st Armored Division (Task Force Eagle) Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina APO AE 09789, Telephone MSE 551-5230, Sprint 762-5233.

E-mail: talon@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. Visit the Talon and other Bosnia-Herzegovina related items from the TFE homepage: www.tfeagle.army.mil. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 5,500.

Task Force Eagle Commander Major General Larry R. Ellis
Editor in Chief Major Jim Yonts
OIC First Lieutenant Jacqueline E. Abbar
Managing Editor Sergeant First Class Frank Casares
NCOIC Sergeant First Class Buddy Ferguson
Layout and Design Editor Corporal Martha Louise Reyna
Assistant Editor and Photo Editor Sergeant Robert R. Ramon
TFE Webmaster Specialist Stephenie L. Tatum

Army of the Republic of Srpska soldiers remove mines

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

Nestled in the hills overlooking the small town of Luclici, Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion supervises the Army of the Republic of Srpska (VRS), team 2, of Sekovici on de-mining a small mine field. This is a grim reminder of the civil war that ravaged their land not so long ago.

The nine-man VRS team, trained and skilled at de-mining, works an average of four hours a day. Representatives from the CRS attended the de-mining academy, then trained the rest of the platoon.

"We observe to see if they are following the de-mining procedures correctly and that they know the new standards," explained the platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class Kevin Magoon, 32, of Ticonderoga, N.Y.

Once it is thought that the field is without mines, the de-mining team has to prove it. The international standard dictates that the minefield is to be 99.6 percent clear of all mines. When the field is determined cleared, then the team files a clearance report and the soldiers move on to another site.

The VRS team uses mine detectors and the probing sticks. They have a diagram of where the mines are located, but all of the area gets checked.

"They probe the area," said Magoon. "If they find a mine, they try to defuse it and then it goes back to the demo area where it is blown. If they can't remove it, then it is blown in place."

Meanwhile, the engineers are there to ensure safety and accountability. "We supervise the team to make sure they are doing it to standards, to verify that when a mine is removed it is accounted for and that all the mines are destroyed at the end of the day," added the platoon leader, Zaheer Malik, 23, of Homewood, Ill.

When the VRS team first started doing this work, they had nothing but a meager paycheck. Now they receive some insurance for their dangerous work.

"They are Serbs and this is a Serb mine field. Most of the mines have been moved around, but these teams know where the majority of these mines are at," commented Staff Sergeant Chris McKinney, 30, of Pleasant, Mo.

The VRS team works in rotation of one man in the field, while another waits his turn. They rest in the break area, which is located 50 meters to the rear. The engineer units that rotate through Bosnia are quite used to this supervision, they have been doing this since 1995.



The team leader for the Sekovici de-mining team lays down the engineer tape for the de-mining process.

"This is an ongoing mission that SFOR or IFOR has had with us, to help remove the mines and destroy them as part of the Dayton Agreement. We do our job and they do theirs," added the team leader for the VRS.

"If the U.S. had to clear these fields, we could do it, but the Serbs know where the majority of these mines are located at," said Malik. "We provide security and ensure mines are taken care of, and they clear their fields."

On this day, there were no mines located. With the vegetation grown up around the mines it was difficult work. So as the day drew to a close and the team packed up its gear, there is a gentle quietness in the hills. "Hopefully one day this will be a place where people will come back to live," concluded Malik.

Tankers competition in 'Outlaw Stakes' tests strength and stamina

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

The pain was etched in his grimacing face as he helped pull the M113 armored personnel carrier. His large frame leaned forward as his bare hands gripped the large rope that intertwined the 12-member squad like the reins that lead a group of powerful Clydesdales.

Slowly, but steadily, the 13-ton medical evacuation track vehicle rolled 30 meters in just over 30 seconds. "That was tough," said an exhausted Sergeant Shaun Harper, a 24-year-old mechanic with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Brigade, from Baumholder, Germany. "But it was fun!"

That's exactly the kind of response Captain Bruce Griggs, company commander, was looking for when he scheduled the inaugural Outlaw Stakes. The non-MOS-specific competition was held Friday, July 24, at a sun-drenched Camp Dobil.

"Hopefully this will help break the monotony of our mission here," said Griggs. "I want to build crew integrity; try to bring the unit back together before we return to Germany in September."

The tankers arrived in Bosnia in February to participate in Operation Joint Guard and Forge. Their mission has primarily been limited to performing presence patrols, pulling guard duty and providing a Quick Reaction Force.

The Outlaw Stakes featured five events; the tank obstacle, the M113 pull, tanker bar throw, M113 road wheel toss and litter crew evacuation carry shuttle. The four-hour event tested both strength and stamina.

Staff Sergeant Warren Cardwell, 35, of Grand Junction, Colo., said the competition provided a good stress outlet for the tankers. "This is a good way to relieve the stress — builds esprit de corps," said Cardwell after low crawling under an M-1 Abrams tank and manually traversing the turret 180 degrees.

Private First Class Broderick Moses, 21, of Columbus, Ga., added, "This provides a little motivation. We should have been doing this since day one."

First Lieutenant Michael Thomas, 25, of Canton, Ohio, praised the tankers for their involvement in the Outlaw Stakes. In fact, the executive officer said he would schedule another competition prior to the company's departure from the war-torn Balkans.

"We might change it up a bit," he said. "But I think it was well-received by the soldiers. We will also be having a barbecue each month while we are here."

Captain Griggs, meanwhile, said he realized during the Gulf War that troops hit a lull in enthusiasm after 90 days in the field. The Outlaw Stakes helped revive the redeployment excitement, he noted.

Also, the competition provided an avenue to reintroduce members of 3rd Platoon to the cohesive company. Those troops had been deployed to Camp Colt during their first five months in Bosnia.

For Harper, an Anniston, Ala., native, the Outlaw Stakes was a success. "We're all pretty much wore out," he said, as he delicately inspected his blistered hand. "But it was worth it. We are all closer now."



Sergeant First Class Noel Rodriguez carries a pair of 50-pound tank wheels during the inaugural Outlaw Stakes team competition held at Camp Dobil.

Six-shooters and their Apaches arrive at Comanche

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

There may not be a new sheriff in town but the “Six-shooters” have arrived armed with some pretty big guns!

The 6th Squadron, 6th U.S. Cavalry, 11th Aviation Regiment, reformed as “Task Force Six-shooter” at Comanche Base, is making its presence known throughout the Tuzla Valley and areas beyond.

Normally, TF Six-shooter is comprised of one half of the Task Force 11 Aviation Regiment based in Illesheim, Germany, but now includes members of the 6-6 CAV with AH64 Apache helicopters, D Troop, 158th Aviation Company from 12th Brigade with UH60 Blackhawks and a Dutch detachment. The Dutch are currently leasing two AH64 Apache helicopters from the U.S. until their own are delivered.

Captain Vincent Torza is the 28-year-old S-3 for TF Six-shooter. The Hartford, Conn. native explained that aside from the routine reconnaissance, surveillance, personnel movement and VIP transport missions, TF Six-shooter is also maintaining high intensity conflict proficiency.

“Due to keeping up with proficiency training during the entire deployment, we hope to take only one or two months to regain our ‘war status’ once we return to our home station, as opposed to the six months it has usually taken other aviation units,” said Torza.

Attaining this lofty goal the Six-shooters have set for themselves is not an easy task, nor can it be reached single-handedly.

“The key to success in such a high OPTEMPO (operating tempo) is not only very proficient pilots, but also top level aircraft maintainers, refuelers, ammo specialists and flight operations personnel, as well as the rest of the ground staff involved,” explained Torza. “For a helicopter unit to sustain itself, it is truly a team effort.”

Thanks to the outstanding teamwork behind the aircraft, which operates 24/7, the Six-shooters have trained and executed missions throughout all of Bosnia-Herzegovina to include Multi-national Division-Southwest and Multinational Division-Southeast sectors, too.



Sergeant Michael S. Barker inspects a tail rotor temperature sensor on an AH64 Apache helicopter during a routine 125-hour inspection.

“The combat power of an aviation unit can cover a ground unit’s eight hour mission in about an hour here in the Bosnian terrain,” Torza said. “That’s one reason aviation units are great combat multipliers but our capabilities also enhance this peacekeeping mission.”

With the arrival of these particular big guns in town, the population can rest easy knowing that the Six-shooters aim to keep peace. But should they be “called out,” they are more than ready for the challenge!

Medics at Bedrock train for Nuclear, B

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

Wearing suffocating Mission-Oriented Protection Posture (MOPP) is the last thing soldiers want to do when the temperature is soaring near 100 degrees and the humidity is ranging from 50 to 60 percent.

But that's exactly what combat medics with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry from Baumholder, Germany, did recently at Camp Bedrock, formerly a rock quarry. Despite a heat category V, these training enthusiasts conducted a mock exercise in treating casualties affected by Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) agents.

"Although the heat at times was unbearable, it gives me a realistic view of what it would be like to treat casualties effected by NBC agents," said Private First Class Pete A. White, a 20-year-old medical specialist from Scranton, Pa.

Indeed, Operation Joint Forge provides the backdrop for such real-life exercises, he noted. The combat medics performed training in each MOPP category.

"I had no idea it was so hard to work on a patient in MOPP-4. The heat just added to the difficulty of the task," added an exhausted White as he impatiently removed his M40 protective mask after receiving the "All clear" sign.

Meanwhile, members of the Bedrock aid station set up two realistic training stations. The scenarios included removing the garments of a chemically contaminated casualty and moving the patient to a safe environment for further treatment.

While wearing the uncomfortable MOPP suit and protective mask may have been a hindrance, the combat medics performed the lifesaving techniques with skill and enthusiasm.

"NBC training is an important aspect of today's Army," added Staff Sergeant John Stephen, the noncommissioned officer in charge. "Even though the temperature is hot today,

the medics here need to feel what it is like in a real-life situation."

They were quick to realize that extra time is needed to successfully treat casualties in an NBC environment. Excessive heat and humidity causes the inside of the

"Although the heat at times was unbearable, it gives me a realistic view of what it would be like to treat casualties effected by NBC agents,"

Private First Class Pete A. White

protective mask to fill with perspiration, causing the lenses to fog over. Also, the bulky MOPP suit eliminates the ability to move freely and the gloves greatly reduce the sense of touch. "One thing that stands out in my mind working with the NBC casualties is the time it takes to do my job correctly," said White. "I only hope and pray that I will not have to do this in real life."

While it is likely that U.S. peacekeepers will never face NBC agents during their Bosnia deployment, the Bedrock medics apparently live by one philosophy – better safe than sorry.

Biological and Chemical disaster



Combat medics move a patient to a safe environment for further treatment during a mock exercise in treating casualties affected by Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) agents.

Combat medical platoon tests skills during exercise

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

Preparing for the worst case scenario, members of the Combat Medical Platoon and the 47th Support Battalion, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Brigade, based at Baumholder, Germany, and deployed at Camp McGovern, participated in a mass casualty exercise at McGovern.

This exercise was in conjunction with Force Protection Day at the camp and designed to familiarize soldiers with procedures in the event of hostile or threatening activity the camp may encounter.

Twenty soldiers were evaluated on the following criteria: timeliness of moving the patient from the point of injury to the aid station, the patient sustenance and stability, and the evacuation of the patient.

"The platoon performed well; they received extensive training through our Army Training Evaluation Program in Baumholder. Mainly, I wanted them to go

through this process in a different setting than they are used to," said Second Lieutenant Randolph S. Harrison, the medical platoon leader responsible for planning mass casualty exercises for the platoon.

According to Harrison, a mass casualty in Bosnia would be more than two patients in an accident at one time. Six minutes after the alarm sounded on the base camp, Humvees rolled into camp with a slew of patients to be treated.

They were subsequently triaged into delayed, immediate, minimal and expectant categories. After the patients stabilized, they were put into categories of evacuation; urgent, routine and priority. The effect of making the combat medical specialists work in a heightened state is not lost on the soldiers.

"I was concerned with treating patients in an expedient manner and being safe about it. Also, this realistic exercise enabled me to test how I would react under stress," said Private First Class Heath A. Coleman, 20, of Camp Hill, Pa., with the combat medical platoon.



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Brigade carry a fellow soldier simulating injury during a mass casualty exercise.

Dedication to training is key to Okinawan Martial Arts

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

At five-feet 11-inches tall and 235 pounds, this balding 32-year-old may not look intimidating in his U.S. Army battle dress uniform, but when he dons his Gi Obi (karate suit), black belt and removes his shoes, Sergeant Kip Bradley means business.

The medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry is sharing his expertise in the Okinawan martial arts form of Ryuei Ryu Karate Kabudo Ryuho Kai with other troops here. He instructs the disciplined hand-to-hand combat and self-defense strategies to a handful of male and female Army and Marine troops four nights a week.

"The whole reason I got started in martial arts was the technique and discipline it taught. The Okinawan people want this proud part of their culture passed on to other people. I find a lot of joy in teaching it," said Bradley, a second-degree black belt in the Ryuei and Shito versions of the Okinawan martial arts form.

The six-year active Army veteran has nearly 16 years of karate experience. "I started in high school, just to be doing something different," added the Mt. Dora, Fla., native. He earned free lessons by cleaning the DoJo, or training hall, at nearby Leesburg, Fla.

His passion for karate skyrocketed after his initial lessons. In fact, after falling asleep once in a front split position, Bradley's father had to pick him up and pull his legs downward. His Dobil pupils just stare in amazement when Bradley reveals his flexibility during stretching exercises.

According to the 1985 Traves High School graduate, anyone who has the "heart and determination" can learn the Okinawan karate form. "You must dedicate yourself to this training," said Bradley — beads of sweat rolling from his bare forehead as he performed a dual punching technique, his rock-hard fists precisely snapping to within an inch of Staff Sergeant Duane McCallister's head.



Sergeant Kip Bradley leads the karate class in stretching and warm-up exercise before starting class.

"That was close," said a relieved McCallister, a mortar platoon sergeant with Bravo Troop, 1-1 Cav. The 31-year-old Lakeview, Mich., native is taking karate classes to get his mind off work. "It's something to do other than lift weights," he said.

Specialist Tamico Witherspoon, a 21-year-old light-wheeled vehicle mechanic with HHT, 1-1 Cav, echoed those sentiments, "It relieves stress. I want to learn how to defend myself and others."

For Specialist Jeanne Boatwright, 23, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., karate is challenging. "It gives me an opportunity to stay in shape. I've always been interested in taking a martial arts class just to see if I could do it," said the HHT, 1-1 Cav troop.

On the other hand, Sergeant Michael Grant, a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, likes the discipline aspect of karate. "This helps me maintain my skills," said the 23-year-old infantry mechanic from Columbus, Ga.

Whatever the reason, Bradley is willing to share his love for karate. "Teaching it gives me an opportunity to give something back to a martial art form that has given so much to me," he concluded.

'Comanche 2000' renovation project to transform base camp

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

The biggest little base camp in Bosnia may soon be the gem of the Balkans. Comanche Base, located in Tuzla Valley just a stones throw southwest of Eagle Base, is currently undergoing a complete facelift. The soldier at the center of this massive construction is Comanche mayor and 27-year army veteran Master Sergeant Richard Dahlin, from Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 11th Aviation Regiment, out of Illesheim, Germany.

The renovation, coined "Comanche 2000," is an aggressive and determined effort by Task Force 11 commander, Colonel Oliver H. Hunter, IV, to transform this overshadowed base into a highly functional site which also addresses the quality of life issues of its soldiers. "When we took over in June from 4th Brigade, the colonel laid down the task, conditions and standards for the base camp makeover," said Dahlin, 45, of Port Charlotte, Fla. "He told us there would be sacrifices but the end result would be worth it."

Sketches of the master plan hang prominently on the walls of the mayor's cell. Dahlin points out, as he scrolls across the scaled drawings, that the completed project calls for the creation of a new food court, Post Exchange complex and sporting areas for volleyball, softball and soccer. Also in the works is a new dining facility (DFAC), education center and maintenance facilities.

But what could make Comanche the busiest location in the Multinational Division-North area of operation, is the plan to develop a rail spur at the site. "Currently, Lukavac is the closest railhead in the area," Dahlin said. "The development of the proposed rail spur would allow deploying and re-deploying units closer access to their area of operation. In fact, we have already constructed a new wash-rack which will allow units quicker turn-around time."

Like many base camps in the U.S.-run sectors, tent cities are being replaced by the amenities of the South East Asia Huts (SEA Huts). The permanent housing area will have SEA Hut clusters," Dahlin explained. Clusters contain 20 SEA Huts and 4 latrines.

With minimal disruption to the natural landscape, these clusters will be situated amidst a tree-lined area of the base

camp to preserve the areas natural beauty. "For trees that are uprooted, a local national has a contract to haul away the lumber for use in construction and as firewood," explained Dahlin.

According to Dahlin, the base camp commander has set a timeline for completion of the living areas for November 1. However, Dahlin states, the entire project will run into the year 2000.

Working 16-18 hours a day, Dahlin and his deputy mayor, Sergeant First Class Michael Kelley, assigned to the 1st Armor Division, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, modestly see their roles as supporting the soldiers through liaison efforts between Comanche troops and Brown and Root Services Corporation. "What I love the most, is that Comanche is a place



Construction workers erect a temporary living area to house Comanche soldiers while the more permanent structures are being built.

where you can brag about the soldiers and the job they're doing," Said Dahlin with a smile. "This is all for them."

One of those soldiers affected by the change is Specialist Paul Bruce from Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 6th Squadron, 6th U.S. Cavalry. Bruce currently travels to Eagle Base to take a statistics class twice a week through the University of Maryland. "It will be great to have an Ed center right here and not have to travel to Eagle," said the 24-year-old Houston, Texas, native. "Overall, though, I love it out here."

The enthusiasm Dahlin has for Comanche 2000 is tempered only by the reality of the mission. He said it's good the renovation is taking place, because it will enhance the quality of life, and give a big boost to the morale at the base.



Inspector General visits base camps in Multinational Division-North

Lieutenant General Larry R. Jordan, the Inspector General of the Army (far right), talks to soldiers in a guard post during his visit to Task Force Eagle.

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

Lieutenant General Larry R. Jordan, the Inspector General of the Army, visited Eagle Base, Camp McGovern, Camp Dobol, Guardian Base and the Blue Factory medical facilities, and took the opportunity to find out what the Army can do for its soldiers.

During a question and answer session following his "State of the Army" briefing to senior officers and enlisted personnel, Jordan stressed the need to constantly look at all areas of the Army to see what can be improved.

"Ninety-five to ninety-six percent of what I see is great, hard working, dedicated leaders," said the Kansas City native. "The bottom line is, we are the most admired Army in the entire world. That's why you have all these visitors coming here to Bosnia to see what they can learn from us."

More than thirty years of military service has given the

Armor officer plenty of time to see many changes in the Army during the last few decades.

Some major concerns of Jordan's are that several current conditions such as the structure of the Army versus the commitments we face, a high Operations Tempo and Operations Pace, selected personnel shortages and even more stress on the soldiers' families. Jordan said that these points are all causing new situations that must be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

"The fabric of the institution is being stretched, and as leaders, we need to make sure it doesn't rip," explained Jordan. "And we don't fix anything by denying problems."

In spite of the changing times and challenges facing the Army today, the general is optimistic about our future.

"All of us together solve the Army's problems," Jordan told the leaders gathered at Ironsides Hall. "The Army's doing great stuff - otherwise we couldn't do this type of mission here in Bosnia."



Marine Corporal Lynne Blanke returns a salute from nine-year-old Samir during a recent visit to the Kalesija Market.

Marine civil affairs specialists work liaison missions with Army CA teams

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

We've all seen the Marine Corps promotional commercial where a young man, who navigates pitfalls in a castle before finally earning his knighthood, is transformed into a sharp-dressed Marine complete with his traditional, razor-sharp sword.

While the peacekeeping mission here in the Balkans may not qualify for a notch in the Marine Corps' prestigious combat history like victories at Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Guadalcanal and Khe Shan, a trio of Marines are making a difference in their nontraditional roles as civil affairs specialists.

Instead of a double-edged saber, these Corps reservists arm themselves with international aid applications, promotional flyers and a smile as they visit Multinational Division-(North) opstina, or municipalities. Their mission is to serve as liaisons between Operation Joint Forge peacekeepers and the civilian communities.

"I've always been in Armor. After 18 years, I wanted a change," says Gunnery Sergeant Stephen Holliday, 40, of James City County, Va. "I started shopping around and found civil affairs. The nature of the job is attractive, it provides real-world missions for reservists."

While not wearing Marine green, the citizen-soldier is a law-enforcement officer with the Newport News, Va., bike patrol. "I like civil affairs. You're using your civilian experience and military experience," adds Holliday, a support team leader at Dobil and a member of the 4th Civil Affairs Group from Washington, D.C.

Fellow 12-year Marine Corps veteran Staff Sergeant Tam Cragg, 31, of Prince George County, Md., also switched from a combat arms environment to civil affairs. "Now I get to the softer side of the military. It's a learning experience," states the Prince George police officer.

Meanwhile, Corporal Lynne Blanke, a 26-year-old paralegal with the U.S. Patent law firm in the district, has taken a different path to civil affairs. In fact, the six-year reservist was one of the first Marines to specialize in civil affairs when it was adopted by the traditionally combat-oriented service earlier this decade.

"The real reason I joined this unit is because it does much more than just two weeks (of training) a summer. It focuses primarily on humanitarian missions like this one in Bosnia," explains the Clinton, Md., native.

So why not join the Army, which has a longer history of civil affairs work? "My daddy was a Marine who served in Vietnam," she responds proudly with a smile.

Even though Blanke enjoys her work here, she realizes it's not going to be easy helping a war-torn country rebound economically from four years of civil war. "I don't think there will be much of a change for a long time. But if I can make a little difference with children, it's well worth the effort," reasons Blanke after offering a salute to a child during a visit to the Kalesija Market, July 16.

In the meantime, Blanke, Cragg and Holliday continue making strides in civil affairs work while serving alongside their U.S. Army counterparts.

"I'm very impressed," says U.S. Army Captain Steven Amrom, 40, of Philadelphia, who serves as another civil affairs team leader at Dobil.

"They immediately melted in as a team. They can operate on their own. I can relax when I'm not with them, knowing they will accomplish the mission," adds Amrom, a detective with the Temple University Police Department.

Perhaps Major William Wright, civil affairs officer for the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry at Dobil, summarizes the arrival of the Marine trio the best when he quips, "We all wear green, it doesn't matter that they roll their sleeves up funny."