



TALON



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Private First Class Melchor Labrador checks the sight alignment on his Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) in preparation for a convoy. (Photo by Specialist Nancy McMillan, see page 11.)

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it." – *Eleanor Roosevelt*

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.

By Command Sergeant Major Dwight J. Brown
Task Force Eagle CSM



As units have changed out throughout the deployment there have been changes. Everyone must make considerable adjustments. The arrival of the 1st Cavalry Division is no different. We are all one team here in Bosnia, and we must discipline ourselves accordingly during the upcoming change in authority.

I encourage those arriving to consider the boots you are about to fill. The soldiers you are replacing have learned a lot from experiences unique to Bosnia, and they can be extremely helpful during the unit transitions. Take the time to work with and learn from the outgoing unit, and encourage them to share with you lessons learned to assist you in starting off strong.

Soldiers leaving Bosnia should put themselves in the boots of the new arrivals. Help to make their transition as easy as possible while continuing the mission. During your last months here, gather all the good experiences and tips that helped to improve the mission, and prepare detailed continuity books for easy comprehension and transfer. Pass on all the lessons learned that work well, so the same mistakes won't be repeated.

Good or bad, your reputation lingers after you've left. So don't catch short-timers disease and give less than 100 percent. Don't become complacent. That attitude could potentially effect the mission negatively or may even get someone injured.

Strive to set your replacement up for success. The mission in Bosnia will continue to succeed if we share and use our lessons learned. What you do today determines the outcome of the mission tomorrow. Helping the transition go smoothly is an opportunity for you to influence a positive outcome. **"Dare to make a difference."**

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Task Force Eagle Commander	Major General Larry R. Ellis
Editor in Chief	Major Jim Yonts
OIC.....	Captain Randall L. Harris
NCOIC	Sergeant First Class Patricia A. Johnson
Chief Editor	Sergeant Scott Speed
Managing Editor	Private First Class Jason Shepherd
Layout and Design Editor	Private First Class Nicole Alberico
TFE Webmaster	Specialist Stephenie L. Tatum

Bugle notes have deep meaning



“Taps” is played at military funerals to honor the sacrifice of a fallen comrade.

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

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

There are only 24 of them, but they are by far the most recognized musical notes in the Army inventory, and since July, soldiers stationed at Eagle Base have heard them played every evening at 10:00 p.m. The notes are “Taps,” and this particular bugle call, as well as “Reveille,” are emotional songs steeped in military tradition.

Each day at Eagle Base begins at 6:00 a.m. with “Reveille,” which is followed by “God Bless the U.S.A.” performed by Lee Greenwood. According to FM 22-5, soldiers outside during the morning bugle call will stand at attention and render a salute until “Reveille” is finished.

By 10:00 p.m., life around the Eagle Base tent cities has settled down, but the playing of “Taps” is the final reminder for soldiers to either turn off stereos and television sets or put on headphones so as not to disturb others nearby. The time for quiet has arrived.

Standing at attention from the first to the final note is the proper showing of respect for “Taps.”

The origin of “Taps” is unclear. The song may be loosely based on a copied French bugle call, hummed by Civil War Union General Daniel Adams Butterfield to his own bugler, who in turn made minor additions and created “Taps” (although the melody was not officially given this title until 1874). Whatever the beginning, the string of notes called “Taps” is a symbol of peace, tranquility and remembrance of fallen soldiers.

While “Reveille” signals a beginning, “Taps” defines the end

— the end of the day, the end of the battle or even the end of a funeral.

The mental image most commonly associated with “Taps” is a flag-draped coffin closely guarded by soldiers in crisp dress blue uniforms. This remembrance of fallen servicemen and women is a common theme among soldiers when asked what their thoughts are when they hear “Taps.”

“I think about all the soldiers that have died and I give them their respect, because, if it were me, I would want someone to give me the same respect,” said Private First Class Gregory M. Picart, 527th Military Police Company from Utica, N.Y.

Specialist Elis C. Chavez, Delta Company, 440th Signal Battalion, adds a similar sentiment. “When I hear ‘Taps,’ I think of military funerals of all the soldiers that served before me and gave their lives for their country, independence, liberty, defending our Constitution and the civil and human rights of other countries.”

“Taps” can also be a very personal song, triggering a memory of a particular soldier who can no longer serve.

“‘Taps’ is a time when I pay tribute to Staff Sergeant Angela Knox,” says Sergeant First Class Clarence Fedrick, Jr., 90th Personnel Services Battalion, from Akron, Ohio. “She was my platoon sergeant who volunteered to serve in Bosnia, but was killed before she could deploy.” For Fedrick, “Taps” also reminds him of the Buffalo Soldiers and how they served their country so many years ago.

For over one hundred years, the United States Army has relied on bugle calls to communicate commands, and this tradition will continue for many years to come. However, “Reveille” or “Taps” affects a soldier, respect and honor underlies both melodies.

Elections encourage growth in Bosnia

Story by Sergeant First Class Sherry L. Claus

Photo by Sergeant Tim Fischer

196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Democracy: something many Americans may take for granted and, hopefully, take advantage of each year by visiting the voting polls and casting their ballots for their favorite candidates. In contrast, the people of the new state of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) are still adjusting to the concept of choosing their own leaders.

General elections covering federal and lower echelons will be held throughout the country on September 12 and 13. These elections differ from those in the U.S. in several ways. The 1995 Dayton Peace Accord describes the political structure of BiH.

Instead of one president, there is a tri-partite presidency that include a Bosniac, a Croat and a Serb in addition to a Council of the Ministers. These two groups govern the day-to-day business of the country and take initiative to further the development and rebuilding of the nation.

Lawmaking is done by the Parliament, which is divided into a House of Representatives and the House of Peoples.

BiH is divided into two geographical localities, similar to states in the United States. The Bosniac-Croat dominated Federation and the Serb dominated Republica Srpska (RS). These groups will also have elections.

This relatively new process is not as smooth as the long-established democratic system in the United States. But, with the help of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Stabilization Forces (SFOR), any problems arising before, during or after the elections will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

As BiH takes steps toward democracy, the possibility of riots, demonstrations or other violence must be considered and planned for in advance.

According to Major Michael Lollesgaard, Chief of the G3 Election Cell at Eagle Base, the responsibilities of the international organizations outside of BiH have been greatly reduced since NATO forces first arrived in 1996.

"This year we are handing over more and more responsi-

bility to local authorities in regards to the elections," explained the 37-year-old Copenhagen, Denmark native. "Last year, SFOR soldiers stored all voting materials prior to the election in addition to escorting all ballots to and from the voting polls."

There were almost no internal authorities such as local assemblies or police forces during the past elections since the end of the war. Now that the law enforcement agencies are in place, BiH will need less assistance from SFOR soldiers.

"Basically, we (SFOR) are standing by in case of emergency and ready to help. Although the local police are basically responsible for security, we will still be present for the overall security of polling places," said Lollesgaard.

"Afterwards, we will escort the absentee ballots to Sarajevo for counting by OSCE. The idea is to phase out the military involvement completely. The elections are a civil matter."

SFOR soldiers play a vital role prior to the elections by training OSCE supervisors in mine awareness, map reading and radio communications -- skills they will need to travel throughout the country during election time.

Another key mission for the soldiers is distributing PSYOP pamphlets and fliers that explain voting rights, rules and procedures. This is done throughout the country at least a month in advance of opening the voting polls.

"Our job is to educate the voter so that they can make an informed decision on issues that will impact their way of life for years to come," commented Sergeant James R. Gray, a 307th PSYOPs soldier, as he passed out voting information to local shopkeepers.

This may seem a minor role when compared withen forcing

peace, but to some soldiers involved with this facet of the elections, this is a very meaningful job.

"By being part of the dissemination process, I get to see first hand the reactions of the people. I not only see their desire to participate in the elections, but also the pride and confidence in their country's future in their faces," said the grinning 29-year-old St. Louis native.

If all goes as planned for this developing democratic country, their future will be one without military involvement in the 1999 elections.



Sergeant James R. Gray, 29, of Caseyville, IL., discusses voting with a local merchant. Gray is with the 307th PSYOP Battalion from St. Louis.

Face-to-face communication helps drive message home



Staff Sergeant Clinton Merritte attempts to console a crying Bosnian child.

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

Many soldiers deployed to this war-torn region in support of Operation Joint Forge rarely have the opportunity to see what lies beyond the perimeter of their base camps.

There are a few soldiers, such as Staff Sergeant Clinton Merritte of the 307th Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) Company from St. Louis, that spend eight to ten hours a day driving throughout the countryside doing their part to maintain peace.

The main goal for Merritte and his three man team is to inform the locals by circulating information concerning SFOR's role in Bosnia. They achieve this goal through the use of face-to-face communication and printed, audio and audiovisual mediums.

"There are several ways of disseminating information to the populous," explains Merritte. "Personally, I feel that

face-to-face is the most productive way to communicate the SFOR messages with the people."

After delivering prerecorded messages to places such as radio and television stations, he and his team take time to talk with people on the street.

"When meeting people up-close, you get a sense of honesty, and people tend to be more open about how they feel about various issues. This also gives us an opportunity to see if the message is reaching the people," said Merritte.

Positive and negative feedback from the audience is passed up to the Brigade PSYOPS Support Element to improve future products.

"When we return to an area, we always receive a warm reception, which is an indication that we are putting out a positive image, but seeing the smiles on these peoples faces, after losing so much, is very rewarding," said Merritte.

While many units here in Bosnia stand by with high-tech weaponry and ammunition in case of conflict, PSYOPS uses information as a weapon to avert hostilities.

245th Air Traffic Services takes

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

Photo by Private Louis Sardinha
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Comanche Base, this is Six-shooter-six, over.”
“Six-shooter-six, this is Comanche, over.”
“Comanche, we are currently at Stroud headed your way. What’s the weather, over?”

“Six-shooter six, this is Comanche. Weather warning alpha-two is in effect for severe thunderstorms and lightning within five miles of Comanche. Currently winds are 320 at 15 gusting to 35, altimeter is estimated at 30.14, over.”

“Comanche, what direction is the storm heading, over?”

“Six-shooter six, it seems to be headed east to west, over.”

“Comanche, this is Six-shooter-six, we will reroute. Thanks, out.”

This is just one of the real world scenarios at the Air Traffic Control tower at Comanche Base by members of Echo Company, 245th Air Traffic Services (ATS), an Army National Guard (ARNG) unit from Lexington, Okla.

Actually, the 245th ATS consists of members of ARNG

units from Okla., and four other states that were used to fill in for 245th soldiers who had already served a deployment in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This combined unit holds the distinction of being the first ARNG ATS unit to serve in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is a matter of pride for the commander, Captain Michael P. Koval, a 30-year-old Moore, Okla. native.

“There was much concern and discussion regarding bringing a National Guard unit here as opposed to an Active Army unit. You know, the ‘part-time soldier’ thing,” said Koval. “Then they looked at our qualifications, training records, P.T. (physical training) scores, MOSQ (Military Occupational Skills Qualification), etc., and, well, here we are!”

The 245th’s mission here is very important. The safety of aircraft and pilots depend on the 245th’s ability to communicate and coordinate immediate airspace information.

“We look at this deployment as an opportunity to excel each and every day. We pride ourselves in making things happen,” said Koval. “Our motto is ‘move out and control traffic,’ and that is exactly what we’re doing.”

The majority of soldiers in Echo Company are at Comanche, with a few at Eagle Base and Camp McGovern working the towers. They also have a special Tactical Air Control Team that works with everything from close air support to temporary landing



Command of the friendly skies

and pickup zones.

Back home at Muldrow Army Airfield, Sergeant First Class Douglas C. Riggs serves as the full time Readiness NCO for the unit. At Comanche, he is an Air Traffic Controller providing terminal and en-route monitoring of the helicopters going in and out of the airfield.

"We basically sequence helicopters in and out of Forward Army Refueling Points and back into air traffic," explained the 37-year-old from Norman, Okla. "We're just like the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) without the billions of dollars — we run very basic operations."

Those "basic operations" haven't always been so basic since the unit arrived in Bosnia. Such as when Echo Company, 245th ATS was required to move an entire airfield from Colt to McGovern.

"We moved an entire heliport and all of its equipment to include two radar sets, a tower, and the Air Force Weather Section from one base camp to another," Koval explained. "We were able to maintain aircraft flight following at Colt while simultaneously bringing McGovern on line. Once in place there, we shut down Colt and switched completely to McGovern. It was such a smooth transition that the pilots were shocked — they didn't even know there was a change until it was a done deal!"

This type of training will be very beneficial to all soldiers here

with the 245th. Sergeant First Class Ricky S. Trayah is a "filler" from Sheldon, VT.

"This deployment is paying incredible benefits to us all in regards to experience," said Trayah, of First Detachment, Echo Company, 111th Aviation Air Traffic Services. "We see 3,000 to 4,000 (aircraft) movements per month here. We could never see that kind of movement during Annual Training!"

Currently, there are only eight such ARNG units in the entire United States, and being "part-time" soldiers is a challenge. These citizen soldiers must not only keep up with their civilian job skills, but they also have to stay current on both FAA and Army regulations. Add to that equation the operator level maintenance required on equipment and vehicles and you have some very busy soldiers.

Captain Koval said he's extremely proud of his unit and the job they are doing here. "I think we're doing our part to show that the National Guard is a vital part of the 'One Army Concept.' We have either met or exceeded Active Army standards and that's a great feeling."

"You know you're doing well when soldiers come up and say 'Sir, you've got a squared-away unit' and they don't add 'for a National Guard unit' — it kinda' gets you right here," Koval said, tapping his chest.



Guardpost sleepwatch on the wire

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

With an increased terrorist threat against peacekeepers of Operation Joint Forge, soldiers here are taking on extra responsibility in perhaps their single most important mission — guard duty.

“With the heightened terrorist threat, you always have to assume the worst,” explained Private First Class Israel Ham, 23, of Pensacola Beach, Fla. “We have to make sure no one gets through these wires.”

On a cool, sunny Thursday morning, Ham and Private First Class Jason Boyce, 21, of Gilmanton, N.H., manned Guard Tower No. 3 along Camp Dobol’s southern perimeter. Both are members of 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry from Baumholder, Germany.

The two infantrymen realize their mission atop the three-story-high guard tower hasn’t changed due to increased force protection measures implemented following the United States’ retaliation bombings of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan and terrorist training sites in Afghanistan the week before.

“This continues to be the most important mission on camp. Our job is to protect everyone inside the wire,” said Boyce as he scanned his sector for potential threats.

While in the guard tower, Boyce and Ham are armed with their weapons, binoculars, and nightvision goggles — all the necessities to monitor and defend their section of Dobol’s sprawling perimeter.

“Nothing’s changed here in the guard towers. They just stress more and more not to get complacent,” added Ham as he peered through the sights of his SAW while scanning the many fields that surround this fortress in the heart of the Zone of Separation.

Boyce reflected on his six months of peacekeeping duties since arriving in the Balkans in mid-February.



Private First Class Jason Boyce peers to the left of Guard Tower No. 3 near the southern perimeter of Camp Dobol.

In addition to pulling guard duty, the infantrymen have conducted bridge reconnaissance, weapons storage site inspections, mass gravesite security patrols and countless escort details.

But perhaps the most exciting incident occurred while Boyce pulled guard in Tower No. 3. “We heard a burst from an automatic weapon from over there,” he said as he pointed to a heavily wooded area in the middle of the Tuzla Valley approximately 2,000 meters away. “We’ve heard celebratory fire before, but this was an automatic weapon. The civilians here are not supposed to have automatic weapons. Of course, we reported the incident. It was a

stressful time.”

After countless hours in Dobol’s guard towers, the two are ready to go home. Charlie 2-6 is scheduled to redeploy to Germany by the end of September. But the duo will not let thoughts of home take their minds off the mission at hand. They’ve been taught to live by one motto — “always assume the worst,” a fitting phrase for their soldiers’ most important mission.

“(The Guard Tower) continues to be the most important mission on camp. Our job is to protect everyone inside the wire.”

— Private First Class Jason Boyce

Demolition company protects locals



Soldiers of Camp McGovern's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team set off unexploded ordnance from a safe distance. The ordnance was found at nearby demolition range.

Story and photo by Sergeant Jim Guzior
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

An unexploded bomb sits menacingly in the backyard of a civilian home just five minutes from Camp McGovern. Children play nearby as the 764th Demolition Company's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team from Fort Carson, Colo., arrives to clear the device. It's just another day for EOD, who respond to three or more calls a day.

"We got a report that there was an unexploded ordnance out here by an old SFOR (Stabilization Force) route behind a house," said Staff Sergeant Arturo Corpuz, of Jacksonville, Fla., the EOD team's platoon sergeant. "We showed up on the site and talked to a guy, and it was actually in the trunk of his car. It's not the preferred way of doing business, but sometimes this happens out here."

Corpuz has been disposing of unexploded ordnance for eight years and has been at Camp McGovern for four months. Put simply, his mission is to make the environment safer for soldiers and civilians by removing deadly bombs, grenades or mines.

"Basically what we're doing is not only protecting the SFOR troops, but we're also helping by protecting the local

population from unexploded ordnance or anything they might find," said Corpuz.

After the day's newfound ordnance is identified, Corpuz and his crew move to destroy the ordnance. According to Corpuz, they were lucky. If the ordnance was in too sensitive a condition, it would be blown in place. Today, they could pick it up and take it to the demolition range.

"We identified this one right off the bat. It hadn't been fired but it was damaged," said Corpuz. "We're going to go ahead and take it out of the area and destroy it," he added.

As soon as the convoy returned from its mission, another call came in for ordnance disposal. According to Corpuz, the type of device they will encounter and the location is never quite definite. Talking with locals and looking for markers is the usual way EOD gets things done in the field.

"This is the tough part of the job," said Corpuz. "When you have to start looking around every house on the block, you know it's going to be a long day," he added.

When the obscure ordnance was located and finally blown, the team headed back to McGovern again, pleased with the job they had done.

"Every ordnance we get rid of is one less for a child to find out there, which means if we even find one, it's been a good day for us," said Corpuz, smiling.

Demining hazardous, rewarding work

Story and photo by Private Louis Sardinha
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Since mine awareness is one of the most important aspects of force protection, it's imperative that mines are disposed of properly when discovered. There are still more than 1.2 million mines are still hidden in Bosnia. That's why the 2nd Platoon of Charlie Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, stationed out of Strassburg, Germany, works so hard detonating unexploded ordinance.

Members of the 40th Engineer Battalion have been working in conjunction with soldiers of the Army of Republica Srpska (VRS), Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina Army (BiH), and the Croatian Defense Council (HVO) to clear minefields in the Camp McGovern area.

"Our main purpose here is supervising the deminers," said Sergeant First Class Douglas S. Sarte, the combat engineers' platoon sergeant, of Oahu, Hawaii. "We make sure that they're in the right uniform and are doing the right thing as far as using the correct equipment and tools."

"The regulations state that U.S. soldiers are not permitted to probe for mines, unless a situation arises where we find ourselves in a minefield," said Second Lieutenant Richard Wulff, 2nd Platoon Leader of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "Today we'll be working with the VRS soldiers."

According to Wulff, the VRS soldiers take turns probing for mines. They send in two soldiers at a time into the minefield at a safe distance apart.

The deminers go through the minefield using a mine detector. If the mine detector goes off they stop, put down the detector, and switch over to a prober. Then they probe the area till they find what set off the detector. Most of the time, the only thing they find is shrapnel; however, every once in a while they find a mine. This entire procedure is long and tiring, said Wulff.

If a mine is found, the first step is to dig it up, Wulff said.

If successful, they take the mine to a designated location where they defuse it by separating the fuse from the mine. After defusing it, they separate the blasting cap from the block of TNT. Once this is done, they place each component in a separate pit to avoid any contact with each other.

"In this minefield, there's supposed to be a PMA1A, which is basically just a little box with a fuse that if you step on it, it sets off the TNT," he said. "These mines have the capability to blow off your legs.

"If they find something different than what is on the minefield record, which is possible, then they try to safely defuse it. If they can't, or they think that they don't want to mess with it, then we'll just go ahead and blow it where it sits," Wulff said.

"When the VRS soldiers find a mine, they notify their commander, Lieutenant Duric Drasko with the VRS demining team. He then comes to tell us. At that point, I call for my demo team," Sarte said.

"Then, we take over from there," said Private Two James A. Checchia of Los Angeles, a combat engineer in 2nd squad. "Once we get the mines, we place them in another pit so we can blow them up.

"To blow the mines, we place a block of C-4 connected to some detonation cord and put it on top of the TNT blocks, along with any other left over pieces of ordinance. Once that's done, we attach a time fuse connected to a blasting cap. Finally, we fix a fuse igniter to the end of the time fuse. Then, we wait for the demolition window (a designated time to detonate or-

dinance) and our job is done," he said.

With 1.2 million mines still remaining in country, the VRS, BiH, HVO and 40th Engineer Battalion will continue their vigilant search for potentially deadly unexploded ordinance, working everyday toward a safer Bosnia. The deminers have their work cut out for them.



Private James A. Checchia, of Los Angeles, a combat engineer with the 40th Engineer Battalion, ignites a time fuse attached to a block of C-4 to detonate some unexploded ordinance during a mine clearing operation.

10th Mountain 'trains like it fights'



(Left to Right) — Private Eric Gwiazada, Sergeant Jose Villanueva, Sergeant Maurice Campbell and Private Shawn Clark listen as Lieutenant Edward Ciura describes the convoy route.

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

Some may say the infantry is hard-core beyond extreme. Soldiers of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division (Light) Infantry know they are.

"Infantry is the Army's and President's police — the ground force in the military," said First Sergeant Jose Colon. "We have to be tough."

According to Captain Robert Underwood, the company commander, the mission of the 10th Mountain Division soldiers is maintaining the division's ground reserve.

"We have the ability to put more troops on any mission, anywhere because of our flexibility," Underwood said. "We are a bigger platoon force than a mechanized infantry battalion."

Controlling riots in civil disturbances, maintaining weapon's storage site accountability, and securing landing zones are examples of this pliable force.

"We have very strict standards that accompany our flexibility," Underwood said. "The main reason is to immediately execute an order when told with no questions asked. Our soldiers adhere to the strict rules to save lives," said Underwood.

Individuals go through 15 weeks of rugged One Station Unit Training (OSUT), basic training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT), at Fort Benning, Ga., according to Underwood.

"The light infantry are loaded down with approximately 116 pounds of gear - a 60-pound rucksack, 26-pound flak (body armor) and 30 pounds of Load Bearing Equipment (LBE)," Colon

said. "And that's the everyday wear of gear."

According to Underwood, that's nothing for the unit's soldiers, stationed out of Fort Drum, N.Y.

"Light infantry has no creature comforts like vehicles," noted Underwood. "We carry a rucksack, march out to the field, eat Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs) and don't use shelter halves and sleeping bags," he said. "That's the way we train, because that's reality during wartime."

Whether in combat or on a peace-keeping mission, discipline is the key to the unity of the 10th Mountain Division.

"Discipline is the key to good order in the military — without it, we would not be able to function in time of a crisis," Underwood said. "And we instill individual discipline, responsibility and fortitude in this battalion."

The discipline builds teamwork and "Esprit de Corps," according to Colon, which is reflective in the number of soldiers striving for the Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB).

The EIB is the highest non-combat individual achievement badge an infantryman can achieve, according to Specialist William Chabot. The soldier must be in a combat 11-series Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), qualify as an expert on the M16A2 rifle, ruck-march 12 miles in three hours or less, pass the Physical Training (P.T.) test with a minimum of 80 percent and pass a multitude of hands-on Infantry tasks.

"The battalion had 286 soldiers going through the round-robin-style testing this year and 36 passed. It's something to be proud of," Colon said. "We call it the 'right of passage' or the 'mark of the man.'"

The EIB is a fitting reward for soldiers that, as Chabot puts it, are "smart, adaptable and hardcore."

Living conditions improve at Camp McGovern

Story and photo by
Private First Class Phillip E. Breedlove Jr.
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The 133rd Naval Mobile Construction Battalion has been at Camp McGovern building South East Asia (SEA) huts since April. The goal is to get everyone at McGovern in SEA huts by December. The 133rd has done its job well, but now it's time to pass the torch on, along with the deadline, to the Brown and Root Service Company.

The 133rd got off the bus on March 12, explained Petty Officer First Class Patricia A. Sledd. Since April, the 133rd has been bulldozing, sawing and hammering away at the project. With four months to go and six phases left to complete, Brown and Root has their work cut out for them. But Sledd, the Paducah, Ky. native, is optimistic. "They'll succeed," she said.

Sledd said she was motivated to get the job done fast. "Our only regret is that we didn't get more people in SEA huts before we left. We've lived in the tents and we know what it's like."

There were about 40 "Seabees" working at Camp McGovern, 35 of which moved on to Eagle Base August 25 to aide in constructing SEA huts. A seven-person crew stayed behind to begin construction on phase four, the next addition to the SEA hut metropolis. They will follow their Tuzla-bound comrades in early September. The 133rd is scheduled to go home to Gulfport, Miss., some time in October.

According to Sledd, the 35-person crew that left August 25 did the vertical construction, actually putting the SEA huts together. The seven-person crew

that remains specializes in horizontal construction, or laying the foundation, which is exactly what they'll be doing in phase four.

The unit partly owes its efficiency to the new Davison-style SEA hut design, continued Sledd. Like the original SEA hut, each individual room still holds 12 soldiers, but five SEA huts are combined in an apartment-style unit with a bathroom between the third and fourth rooms.

Besides this difference, Davison-style SEA huts have the same conveniences as their counterpart. Each room is given six 220-watt dual electrical outlets and a front and back door. It comes with conveniences such as a trash can outside the front door, a small, waist-high shelf for storage and a little welcome mat to wipe the mud off your boots as you come home.

Petty Officer Frederick A. E. Cox, 33, another equipment operator with the 133rd and a Decatur, Ill. native, said they've had several other missions since getting here. Some of the construction included: building the front gate for civilians at McGovern, several bridges in Bosnia, the rifle range at McGovern and the railhead in Brcko. In spite of all this, the unit has never missed a completion date.

Both Cox and Sledd say they will miss McGovern. "The laundry facility is the best out of all the camps," said Sledd.

"The thing I'll miss the most is the work," said Cox. "We're going to be sitting idle for the next seven months."

Cox is anxious to leave, "It's time to go home. Let someone else take over the ranch for a while."