

TALON

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By Command Sergeant Major
Paul M. Inman
Multinational Division (N) CSM

As the soldiers of Task Force Eagle prepare for Thanksgiving, it is important that we all take some time and think about the things that we, as soldiers from a free nation, should be thankful for: health, family, friends, freedom to participate in any religion of our choice, the right to do almost anything that is legally and morally correct, and the list goes on.



On Thanksgiving Day a lot of you will be out walking the wire or watching from guard towers. Some may be in motorpools repairing vehicles, while others will be in the dining facilities preparing the Thanksgiving meal for soldiers in camps and on hilltops. As you go about your duties on Thanksgiving Day, don't get caught up in the emotion of being away from family and friends, but instead be thankful for all you are doing to keep Bosnia at peace. Each of you is playing a huge role in the peace of this nation, and you can and should be very proud of the fact that you are here and of the outstanding job you are doing. I encourage each of you to try to contact your family sometime during the day. The phone lines most likely will be very busy that day, but keep trying. As you go through the dining facility, don't forget to thank the soldiers and personnel who are serving you. Most of them will have been up all night preparing the Thanksgiving feast. There will also be religious services at each camp and hilltop, and I encourage you to attend.

MG Byrnes is bringing the 1st Cavalry Division band to Bosnia to entertain us during the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays. A schedule will be published soon of when and where the band will be in each area. The band always gives a great performance, so please attend.

I wish each of you a peaceful Thanksgiving Day. Eat lots of turkey, and remember **Force Protection** is the number one thing we do. **"Stay Safe"**

On the Cover

Major Michael A. Buley, commander of the 43rd Medical Det. (Veterinarian Services) and a San Antonio, Texas native, conducts an eye exam on Terra, a member of Eagle Base's K-9 MP unit. (Photo by Captain Randall L. Harris. See story on page 3.)

"There's no time to rest when there is work to be done. Eat on the run, forget about sleep, and change horses often" – *Texas Bix Bender, excerpt for "Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On! A Cowboy's Guide to Life"*

The Task Force Eagle website 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 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 Cavalry 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.sigcmd.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.

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Veterinarians care for dogs, soldiers

Story and photos by Captain Randall L. Harris
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The food soldiers eat may seem to have little in common with dogs. Most soldiers would be happy to learn that dogs have nothing to do with their food, but lucky for the soldiers here in Multinational Division (North), the people who care for our four-legged friends are the watchdogs of the food soldiers eat.

Veterinarian Services, 43rd Medical Detachment, has a twofold mission, and each is very unique.

"The first mission is animal medicine, and that is the care of the military working dogs and ensuring that they are fit for duty," Major Michael A. Buley, the commander of Veterinarian Services, said.

Veterinarian Services consists of a three person team that includes a veterinarian, an animal technician and a food inspector.

A little known fact about the second mission of this detachment is that they inspect the food soldiers of Multinational Division (North) will eat, Buley added. The food inspector checks rations like Meals, Ready to Eat and unit basic loads. Expiration dates are surveyed, and the food is sampled for freshness and a proper seal.

Veterinary health food inspectors maintain a busy schedule. They inspect the dining facility food products used in making meals at Eagle Base and all U.S. MND (N) base camp facilities. "We ensure that the rations served in the dining facilities are from an approved source," Buley, a San Antonio, Texas native

added.

The food inspection team conveys to other base camps to conduct food inspections. "We cover all of Bosnia and parts of Croatia as far as the food inspection of T-rations, MREs and all the food that goes into the dining facilities," Sergeant Corrin D. Johnson, a veterinary health food inspector and Heidelberg, Germany native said.

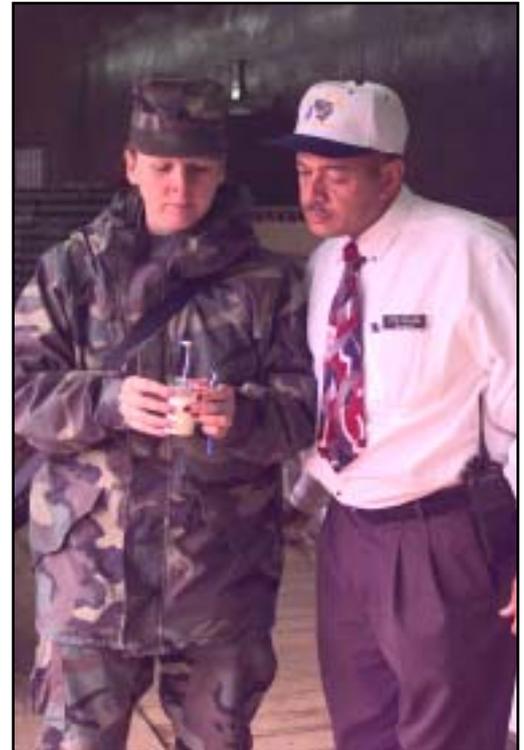
With such a small section, team members must cross train to ensure they can fill each other's shoes.

Buley is the primary animal health provider, with an animal technician as an alternate and assistant. "I assist the veterinarian with anything that has happened with the dogs; like abrasions or minor cuts, and I do most of the wrapping of the bandages," said Sergeant Mitchell A. Logsdon, an animal technician and Leitchfield, Ky. native.

The detachment interacts daily with the Military Police K-9 unit. "We talk with them on a daily basis and ask them how their dogs are doing," Logsdon said.

It is the responsibility of the veterinarian team to schedule routine activities for the working dogs like periodic exams and physicals. The dogs are brought in the clinic on an as needed basis.

This detachment from San Antonio is focused on servicing the animals, but always have the safety of the soldiers of MND (N) in mind.



Sergeant Corrin D. Johnson (above, left), a veterinary food inspector, monitors the temperature of the food with the Longhorn Cafe food service manager Ronald B. Barras, from Killeen, Texas.



More than "Just a bridge"



Private First Class Lamount Carter of Allendale, S.C. and Specialist Greg Case of Austin, Texas, 20th Engineer Battalion, receive instructions from a Hungarian engineer on how to build a Maybey bridge.

Story and photo by Sergeant Derrick Witherspoon
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Building bridges is part of the 20th Engineer Battalion's job, but this time they did more than just build a bridge. They helped reconstruct an infrastructure that brought not only the Americans and locals together, but also other members of the National Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Members of the 1st Platoon, Company C, 20th Engineers recently went to Camp Dobol to aid in a joint effort with Hungarian Army engineers to rebuild the largest bridge in Multinational Division (North).

Second Lieutenant Brian Davis of Garrett, Ind., 1st Platoon leader, said the bridge is estimated to be 157 meters long once completed.

"What we are doing is helping the Hungarians build a 'Maybey Johnson' bridge to help support the SFOR mission and also to help the local authorities start repairing another bridge one mile up the road," Davis said. "This is

a significant event for us because this is the first time we have worked on a bridge this size, but we knew we could handle it."

Davis said they worked primarily on constructing steel and concrete piles. He added that the construction of the bridge was not difficult for his team because the old Army bridge they normally construct, the "Bailey" bridge, is quite similar, just a little smaller.

"This was a good experience for us, because we are used to constructing Bailey bridges, so this gives us a chance to do something new," Staff Sergeant Kyle L. Ball, squad leader in charge of the bridge construction squad said. "The Hungarians started on the bridge and we came in a little later to help them and some other engineers with the far side of the bridge. This is really one big international bridge, because we had different members of NATO helping us build it," said the Rexburg, Idaho native.

Ball said the Finn and Romanian Armies supported them in building the bridge. He also said it was a great learning experience for him and his team to work with other nationalities on a bridge of this stature. "The biggest problem we had was communicating with one another because we come from different countries and speak different languages, but we used sign language, and each group learned a little of each others language

and we 'got across that bridge,'" Ball said with a smile. He also said they would like to work with the Hungarians again because they helped them achieve some significant goals.

"One of our goals was to learn how to build a Maybey Johnson bridge. Since the Baileys aren't being manufactured anymore because they are being replaced by the Maybeys, we need to be proficient when it comes to building these bridges," Ball said.

After more than five weeks of building, Bell said the bridge was becoming a success. "We have about 10 feet to finish pushing the bridge to the middle intermediate support, then we have to add 22 more bays and finish pushing the bridge across. After that the roadway will be added," Ball said. He added that the Hungarians would finish the roadway and the near side of the bridge.

The 20th engineers are doing more than just rebuilding Bosnia's biggest bridge; they are helping make Bosnia a more pleasant place to live, and at the same time are establishing new ties between NATO forces.

Companyt akesDraper Award

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

After months of hard work and dedication, the soldiers of Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division at Camp McGovern, have proven themselves to be the finest company in the division.

For the second year in a row, Company D received the Draper Armor Leadership Award. The Draper Award is given annually to promote, sustain and recognize effective leadership in armor and cavalry units, according to Company D's First Sergeant Jose A. Madera, of Guayama, Puerto Rico.

Along with the award, the company receives the Goodrich Riding Trophy. This trophy is the symbol of the Draper Armor Leadership Award and is presented each year to the best tank company in the division.

"The Draper Award dates back to 1924 where the early armored cavalry was establishing itself," Madera said. Lieutenant Colonel Wickliffe P. Draper established the award as part of a plan to competitively test the leadership abilities of small cavalry units.

The Draper Award evaluates armor and cavalry units over a 12-month period against a set standard, according to First Lieutenant Mark C. Bailey, of Columbus, Ohio, platoon leader for 1st platoon, Company D. These companies are compared to the standards to determine the overall performance of individual soldiers as well as crews and platoons.

Once all the statistics are compiled, the Draper Award Council selects the top unit to receive the award. "We scored the highest company average in tank gunnery for tank platoon qualification in the division," Bailey said.

In order to receive the award, the companies not only have to do well in gunnery, but must achieve high standards in many events. "The award is based on categories such as weapons qualifications, physical fitness and reenlistment as well as tank gunnery," said Specialist Richard D. Rapp, of Seattle, Wash., a tanker with Company D.

Along with their statistics, each company commander must submit an essay describing what each platoon did, what the company accomplished, and why they deserve the award, said Bailey.

"Delta Company is a well rounded company," said



Captain David L. Sanders III, of Helotes, Texas, commander of Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division accepts the Draper Armor Leadership Award on Company D's behalf from Major General Kevin P. Byrnes during the awards ceremony.

Captain David A. Lesperance, of Portland, Ore., the company commander of Company D during the evaluation period.

The company had the opportunity to do some major deployments during 1997. They include the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., as well as being the first tank company to deploy M1A2 tanks to South Korea as part of Operation Foal Eagle. "Because of those deployments and effective leadership at tank commander level, we were able to exceed the standards set forth for the Draper Award," Lesperance said.

The soldiers of Company D, 1-8 Cavalry, are very proud of their achievement. "It's great because it shows all the hard work we did to earn this award, and the late nights that we trained preparing us for the testing," Bailey said.

These soldiers take their training very seriously, whether it's tank gunnery, physical fitness or basic rifle marksmanship. "We go out there to not only just qualify, but to do the best we can," Bailey said.

After receiving the Draper Award, Company D is intent upon sustaining their high standards and sharing what they've gained out of this achievement with others. "We have an excellent team that goes out there and shows that they can accomplish the mission. Everyone collectively put it all together — they went out there and just shined," Madera said.

Int'l competition fo



Photos by Staff Sergeant Michael C. Westerfield, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Specialist Cody Minchow, 1-8 Cav, attempts to kick a goal while being closely guarded by a Turkish player.

Story by Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

With quotes from General Douglas MacArthur and the words of the Psalm writers of the bible ringing in their heads, the Bedrock Mustangs rumbled over bumpy Bosnian roads in the back of a five-ton truck on their way to do battle.

As they sat there in "full battle rattle," they excitedly clutched an assortment of Army rucksacks, helmet carriers and laundry bags which contained new clothes that would be donned before the battle.

They remembered the words Chaplain Captain Sellers had spoken to calm their fears. Psalms 27:3 reads: When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; ... even then I will be confident.

Their experience was varied, and for most it had been quite awhile since they had done this at all. But as Private First Class Steven Casto, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, said, "It was an instant morale booster."

Nevertheless, they had practiced long hours together in the Bedrock "mud pit" honing their now collective skills, and felt prepared to meet their opponent on the field of battle.

Soon their individual skills and teamwork would be tested. No one belittled the seriousness of the event. Soon, the soccer game would commence.

Afterall, MacArthur said this about sports competition:

On the fields of friendly strife
Are sown the seeds
That on other days and other fields
Will sow the fruits of victory.

More to the point, the Task Force 2-8 commander, Colonel Barry J. Fowler, from Overland Park, Kan., told the soldiers before they

left to be professional and have a good time. He also reminded them that last rotation's score was U.S. 1, Bonavici 14. If ever there had been an uphill battle, this was it.

Soon the most well armed-soccer team in the world arrived at the Bonavici indoor sports facility.

After securing their weapons and personal armor with the convoy guards, they strode into the building. Out they came onto the hardwood court dressed in grey physical training shorts and black t-shirts with a First Cavalry patch on the front and a U.S. flag proudly displayed on the sleeve. A couple of the team members wore brand-new soccer shoes that had been hurriedly sent to Bosnia by families in the States, but most had on basketball or running shoes that had seen better days.

Both teams warmed up while the Task Force 2-8 commander and the Zivinici Chief of Police and a few spectators looked on.

The first game was the Mustangs against the Bonavici Police. The fast footwork of the Bosnian players put them on the scoreboard first, but Lieutenant Scott Bailey, commander of the Bedrock Quick Reaction Force, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry and Mustang coach, managed to sneak in two goals during the second half. Final score was Bonavici Police 7, Mustangs 2.

The Mustangs took a well-earned breather as Bonavici took on the Zivinici Police team. Mustangs watched intently as the skillful teams sped the ball up and down the court.

Final score was Bonavici 3, Zivinici 2.

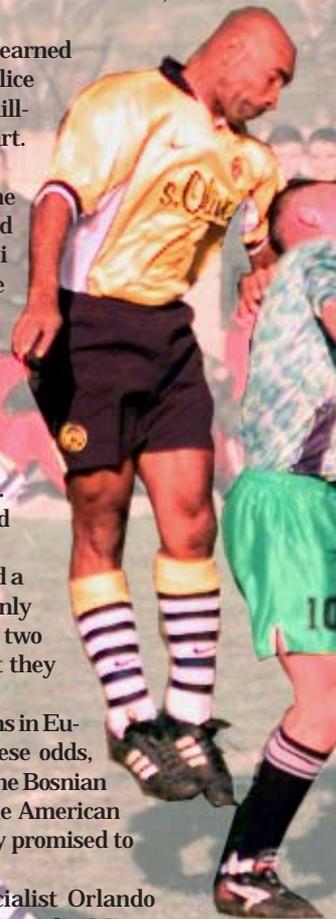
Then it was the Mustangs turn to play the Zivinici Police Team. A new strategy had evolved during the Bonavici and Zivinici game. Hernandez was tasked as goalie for the entire game. His reckless lunges stopped several Zivinici points. Mustangs staked out territory on the court and played positions better than during the first game. The First Cavalry players worked together to get the ball into scoring position. This worked three times, with goals by Casto, Phariss and West.

Hernandez's excellent defensive work held Zivinici to five goals.

The Mustangs had only six weeks to build a soccer team from twelve players, whose only qualification was that they came to one of two weekly practice sessions regularly and that they could kick the ball.

They played against well-established teams in Europe, where soccer is king, and despite these odds, scored twice as well as last rotation's team. The Bosnian teams seemed shocked at the prowess of the American team, and demanded a rematch, where they promised to win overwhelmingly.

Private First Class Joseph West, Specialist Orlando Miranda, Private First Class Rocco Morano, Specialist Minnor Ballesteros, Captain Ray Phariss, Private First Class Steve Casto, Lieutenant Scott Bailey and American interpreter, Tony Marusic, climb back into the five-ton truck for the ride back to camp. Are they disappointed? No, just wait till the next game.



Story by Specialist Robert B. Valentine
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Brigade hosted a Multi-national Division (North) soccer tournament to promote international friendship and mutual understanding.

Four teams participated in the tournament representing their Stabilization Force brigade: the American, NORDPOL, Russian, and Turkish teams.

"This tournament has gained more significance through your participation and contribution," Colonel Orhan Akbas, commander of the Turkish Brigade said. "I thank you very much for this. Your presence today will greatly enhance the friendly relations and mutual understanding among MND (N) units."

"We are very happy to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, and host other countries for this tournament. It is very important to strengthen our friendships," First Lieutenant Ismoil Satici, a platoon leader in the Turkish mechanized battalion, said.

The American team was comprised of soldiers from all base camps. "This is the US Brigade team. We have players from Eagle, Dobol, Bedrock, Comanche, Demi, and McGovern," said the Fairfield, Calif. native, Captain Marcus Reinhart, a liaison officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and team coach.

"We owe a big thanks to Morale, Welfare and Recreation and G-1 for providing the team's uniforms," said the Odessa, Fla. native.

"Participating in this international tournament promotes cooperation among our allies. It helps us to get to know each other in the spirit of friendly competition," said Command Sergeant Major John M. Leese of HHC 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

The overall winner of the event was the Nordpol Brigade, which is made up of soldiers from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland and Sweden. The second place team was the Russian Brigade. The Turkish Brigade came in third, and the American team came in fourth. Players from all teams said they felt that the tournament was a success because of the esprit de corps the games fostered and the underlying theme: to have fun playing games with our international comrades. On this day, there were no losers.

Plans are in the works for future international games such as basketball, tennis, volleyball, and American football, Orhan said.

Sergeant Danny G. Servant, a supply sergeant with HHC 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and a Saint Joseph, Dominica native said, "I think that games like this will definitely increase good relationships between Stabilization Force peacekeepers."

"It is such a good idea to bring together the world armies. Nothing could be better than for all of us to do this again," First Lieutenant Cohit Arslan, an officer in the Turkish mechanized infantry said. "It was a perfect feeling."

Senior Sergeant Alex Diakanov, a Russian artil-

lery platoon leader said, "This was a good game. In Tuzla, we played basketball with an American team. There should be more such competitions."

"It was a lot of fun. I would like to play in more tournaments like this," Sergeant First Class Mattias Lundberg, a Swedish infantry squad leader said.

There are 48 countries participating in the SFOR peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia. The various countries working together have brought different armies of the world together in this region for a common goal. Now, SFOR allies are getting to know each other better by playing together, building stronger bonds through friendly competition.



Private First Class Keithly Watts (left), of the 410th MP Company, and Captain Marcus R. Reinehart (right), with HHC 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, swarm a Turkish player to defend his advance with the ball.

Crew aims to keep Apaches in the air

Story and Photo by Specialist Robert B. Valentine
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

In order to win a stock car race, not only do you need a fast, well-tuned machine, and a capable driver, but also a quick, efficient pit crew.

Company A of the 3rd Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment from Fort Bragg, N.C., is the flight line Apaches' "pit crew" at Comanche Base.

The Army's Apache attack helicopter is an invaluable tool as a "show of combat aviation force, capable of rapidly deploying anywhere in theater to maintain peacekeeping efforts," Captain Jeff F. Litvin, the personnel adjutant for 3rd Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, said.

The flight line crew's mission is to sustain the overall maintenance readiness level of the Apache helicopter. They perform scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, inspections, maintain records and coordinate work orders with other shops.

"These guys are focused and motivated to accomplish the mission here," Litvin, a Milwaukee, Wis. native said.

"We have good support people working with us. Everyone works very hard and the tempo is very high," Chief Warrant Officer Art Gribensk, a maintenance test pilot with the 3-229th and a Durham, N.C. native said. "It helps to have what we call a 'captive audience.' On this deployment, unlike in garrison, there are few distractions from the mission."

"The Apache is a very system-heavy helicopter that requires a lot of attention. It takes a lot of man hours to maintain our current readiness level," Gribensk said.

Each flightline crewmember is assigned a specific Apache, but everyone works together during aircraft inspections and repairs. They check for cracked or defective components, system wiring, the play of moving parts and fluid levels. The line crews and maintenance crews correct most problems on the flight line. When the repair is an in-depth requirement, first they prepare the section for the task, and tow the Apache into the hanger for repairs.

When "wing walking," or towing, an Apache to its designated area on the flight line or to the hanger, it takes four line crewmembers working together. One person drives the tractor that pulls the helicopter, two people ensure that the rotor blades do not strike parked Apaches and one person inside the moving Apache mans the brakes in order to quickly stop the helicopter.

"Every 10 flight hours we perform what is called a preventive maintenance service," Sergeant Mark T. Schaefer, a flight line su-

pervisor with Company A, 3-229th AR said. "We check the aircraft from nose to tail. It takes two people about two hours to complete it," the Piedmont, N.C. native said. "Apaches receive a more in depth maintenance inspection at the 50, 100, and 125 flight hour intervals."

"This is an interesting, real world mission. We are all getting valuable experience over here," Schaefer said.

"On my first deployment here, I was in a maintenance crew," said Specialist Scott Devarnne, a flight line crew chief with Company A, 3-229th AR. "In a maintenance crew, I had more steady work because the procedures took a lot time to complete. In a line crew, the work comes in bursts to keep Apaches in the air," the Scotia, N.Y. native said.

It takes teamwork, and the hard work of all Stabilization Force units to maintain peace in the Balkans. With the formidable air power provided by the Apache helicopter, ensuring that they are ready 24 hours a day, at a moment's notice, makes Company A's role in the peacekeeping mission vital.



Specialist Scott Devarnne, a crew chief with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, tightens a panel that houses the tail rotor engine on an Apache helicopter.

Weapons' storage site inspections

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Over one third of the 650 plus soldiers at Camp Bedrock have one thing in common. They are all involved in weapons' storage site inspections.

Every 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment platoon, including the Scouts, is assigned three to seven of the Task Force 2-8 sector's weapons' storage sites. The number of sites assigned depends on the site's size.

Company D has the three largest sites. Their soldiers must make sure that the weapons and ammunition are inventoried and that they don't move without proper permission. The site commanders must be in full compliance with the general framework agreement for peace. At some of the sites, which are active training facilities, weapons may be used for training purposes only, and this must be verified. It's a complicated procedure.

The training the soldiers received at Fort Hood and at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, has prepared them well for their duty in Bosnia.

The scenarios played out in "the box" at JRTC portrayed the worst possible events in Bosnia, according to 2nd Lieutenant Timothy Todd Kemp, 1st Platoon leader, Company D, 2-8 Cavalry. He's very proud of how well his soldiers learned their lessons. "All my soldiers, down to our privates, can tell you exactly what they're supposed to have, how they're supposed to have it, and when they can move weapons, and how much approval and when they need approval," Kemp said. The Georgetown, Texas officer added, "They'll blow you away with what they know, and it's great."

The right-seat-ride training Company D received from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment was particularly helpful because Company D was assigned the largest and most complex sites.

Captain Robert Urquhart, commander of Company C, 2-5 Cavalry, reminded the Company D soldiers that their interpreters know the sites and will help them work with the Federation Army soldiers, as well as guide them throughout the sprawling complex of the largest weapons' inspection site.

This site has a variety of weapons; everything from tanks to mortars to rifles to mines. Some of the weapons were captured during the war, so it's not unusual to find exotic pieces of armament in neatly labeled crates in storage bunkers. There are even nitroglycerin grenade launchers. Large sites like this one are inspected every thirty days, while smaller sites, with no heavy weapons, are inspected every 60 days.

Accuracy is the most difficult part of the mission according to Kemp. It requires skill and concentration.

Along with ensuring GFAP compliance, an overriding requirement is that inspections are done safely. Force protection is always the number one priority, from the preplanning to execution of site inspection, according to Kemp.

When an inspection convoy arrives at a site, security is established. Inspectors go in teams and they have security around them. "We've got at least three to five individuals that are around us giving us 360 degree security at all times," Kemp said.

Soldiers do not go anywhere alone at inspection sites, not even



Company D, 2-8 Cavalry Regiment soldiers inspect boxes of rifles at a weapon storage site.

to the latrine. As the team moves through the site, they are in constant communication with a quick reaction force.

Before Company D's soldiers even enter a building or bunker, it has been cleared by explosive ordinance disposal specialists. "At many of the sites there's mines; it's the weapon of choice in Bosnia," Kemp said.

In addition to improperly stored mines, EOD checks for other explosives, such as C-4 and dynamite. If any explosive ordinance needs to be moved, EOD specialists will be on hand to make sure it's done safely.

So far, Kemp says that he hasn't experienced any unpleasant surprises at the inspection sites. JRTC was a lot more exciting with exploding trucks ramming gates. Kemp hopes that weapons' inspection site duties stay that uneventful, but he's not letting down his guard. "We always continue to know that force protection is the number one issue," Kemp said.

Weapons storage site inspections are a continuing effort to keep Bosnia safe, and Camp Bedrock plays a key peace-keeping role.

There are many like it, but this one is mine



Specialist David L. Rodriguez, a supply specialist with Headquarters Platoon, HHC, 1-8 Cav, inspects a 50 caliber machine gun during McGovern's annual technical inspection.

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

Compared to mighty M-1 tanks and artillery cannons, a soldier's personal weapon may seem small – yet its portable size makes it important because it gives individual soldiers a way to defend themselves if necessary, according to Specialist Lee B. Nelson, a tank turret repairer with the armament section in Company B, 115th Forward Area Support Team, and an Arlington, Texas native. This makes small arms

an essential part of nearly any military mission. What if a weapon didn't work when its bearer needs it most?

Nelson said maintaining these weapons will prevent soldiers from having to face this situation. Sometimes the routine cleaning required by the weapon's operator isn't enough to prevent the wear and tear of use the weapons go through. That is where Camp McGovern's small arms and artillery section comes in.

Nelson said the section's nine armorers fix broken parts and worn metal during quarterly inspections, and annual technical inspections, before these imperfections become serious problems.

"Weapons don't break down because we catch problems before they have a chance to develop, so the operator has the best weapon we can provide for him," Nelson continued.

Specialist Thomas O. Gresham, a weapons' mechanic, also with the armaments section, and a Shreveport, La. native, said soldiers are required to turn their weapons in once every four months for a unit level inspection, which consists of checking areas where problems are likely to occur.

According to Specialist David L. Rodriguez, a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, and a Bayamon, Puerto Rico native, and a member of the arms and artillery section, the annual technical inspection is a more intense survey of the equipment. The section checks everything from how tight the site assembly is to how easy it is to squeeze the trigger.

Rodriguez said the most important inspection occurs when the section is brought a malfunctioning weapon. If the problem isn't discovered and corrected early, it could develop into something worse, so he encourages soldiers experiencing problems with their weapon to bring it to the nearest armorer as soon as possible.

He recalled one soldier who brought the unit an M-16 rifle with a loose butt stock. This seemingly harmless dilemma could have put the weapon out of commission because several key parts contained in the stock, such as the spring that pushes the trigger forward, could have been damaged or lost. The problem was caught in time, though, and all Rodriguez had to do was tighten a screw.

Gresham said when it comes to fixing weapons, prevention is half the battle. This important task lies in the hands of the weapon's user. He recommended users clean their weapons as often as possible and avoid dry firing, or pulling the trigger without a round in the chamber. Soldiers can examine their weapons by performing a functions check.

"Treat your weapon as if it were your baby. If something happens, it's what is gonna save your life and your buddy's life," Rodriguez said.

Traveling doc makes house calls

Story and Photo by Specialist Giovanni Lorente
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

A soldier's health and hygiene are key facets to his or her success in the field. Dental hygiene effects a soldier's overall health, and is therefore an important part of the mission. Captain Donald Dong, a dentist with the 115th Forward Support Battalion from Long Beach, Ca., spends his time taking care of soldiers and their teeth.

Having to cover both Camp Dobol and Camp Demi, he travels back and forth providing soldiers with his services. "I will be spending two weeks at a time at each camp, providing the soldiers with dental treatment," Dong explained.

Every two weeks Dong packs up his equipment; an x-ray machine, generator for the compressor, chair and the rest of his dental tools, and travels to the next camp to continue providing soldiers with excellent dental treatment. Aside from the plywood walls and cramped space Dong is capable of providing at-home dental care.

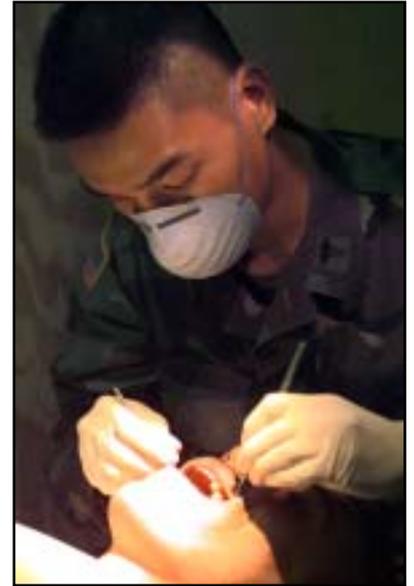
"I'm completely honest with the soldiers," Dong said. "I let them know everything that I am doing. I also keep in constant communication with them, asking them if they feel any discomfort as I work on them," Dong said. With all the training the soldier is required to complete, when being deployed, it is really hard to get the proper dental exam or work done.

When ever needed, Dong uses anesthetic for the comfort of the patient. Most treatments required by Dong's patients are "regular

cleaning, and cavities that didn't get a chance to get treated back at home before deployment," Dong explained. "My job here is to provide treatment to the soldiers while they are here, and that way they don't have to wait until they get back home to take care of it and risk having the problem get worse."

"This is why I'm here," Dong said, "to do the kind of work that they couldn't get done back at home. It is a team effort."

Dong had no prior aspirations of becoming a dentist. "I just happened to fall into the field. It is hard being away from home, but I'm here to do a job and that is to take care of the soldiers."



A soldier at Camp Dobol gets his teeth examined by Captain Donald Dong of the 115th Forward Support Battalion.

Tankers take to the sky

Story by Photo by
Specialist Kimmanda Collins
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Sometimes routine training may seem boring. It can be repetitive, and that runs the risk of causing complacency. Now and then, trainers find it helpful to "shake things up."

Soldiers from Company B of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment at Camp Dobol performed their first Air Mobility drill. "As tankers, we don't have the chance to go up in helicopters and participate in air drills," said Private Yu So, a tanker with Company B and a Los Angeles native. He said most of their training was spent in tanks or HMWWVs.

"It was good training and at the same time it was fun and exciting because it was my first time in a helicopter," So said.

Sergeant Philip Hernandez, a tanker with Company B, said the purpose of the drill involved contingency training in the event that ground transportation is impossible. "This way is quicker and it's good training. In a worst case scenario, one fourth our soldiers will know how to load and unload a helicopter properly in a timely manner," said the Colorado Springs, Colo. native.

"I think I benefited from the training," said Specialist James Whitten, a tanker with



Company B soldiers conduct air mobility training as they board the helicopter.

Company B and a Stillwater, Okla. native. "It was fun and it was also my first time participating in this kind of drill. I feel that if a time comes and we're not able to use our vehicles, we will be able to fly in and com-

plete our mission."

Cross and contingency training is part of an ongoing effort to keep soldiers prepared for a wide variety of combat scenarios.

New LOBO commander takes charge



Photo by Specialist Valentine

The 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, known as the "LOBO Battalion," bid farewell to Lieutenant Colonel Christine B. Knighton, and welcomed their new commander, Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. MacWillie, during a change of command ceremony on November 13. In August 1998, the LOBO battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Knighton, deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina with the 4th Brigade (Warriors) and the 1st Cavalry Division in support of Operation Joint Forge. The LOBO battalion provides superior aviation support to both Multinational Division (North) and Stabilization Forces, maintaining exacting compliance to the Dayton Peace Agreement among former warring factions.

— Specialist Robert R. Valentine, 319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.