A photograph of a man in a dark blue jacket hugging a young boy from behind. The boy is wearing a white hoodie with dark spots and has a slightly sad or thoughtful expression. The background is dark and indistinct.

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TALON

Talon Inside



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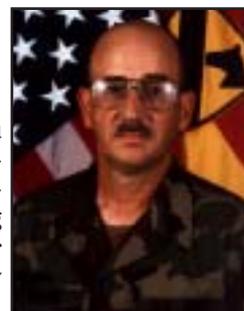
Lieutenant Colonel Kevin McAleese comforts a local boy overcome with emotion. (Photo by Private First Class Phillip E. Breedlove, Jr. See next page.)

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." – Edmund Burke

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 Paul M. Inman
Multinational Division (N) CSM



This week I want to remind you that there is only one more opportunity for SFOR4 soldiers to take advantage of the college classes being offered in Bosnia. The last term for SFOR4 soldiers is 11 January through 5 March, 1999.

Education Center personnel are working to put together the list of classes that will be offered, and when the list is complete, they will get the information out to the camps so you can start working your plan. Everyone of us had to start our college education somewhere, and this is the place you should start or continue yours.

College education, even though not required for an enlisted soldier to get promoted, is still viewed by the promotion boards as soldiers trying to improve themselves personally and improve ability to better execute duties. Please take advantage of this golden opportunity.

This week the camp command sergeants major and I started delivering Christmas packages from the MG William F. Dean Chapter, which is located in California, of the AUSA. The president of this chapter, Mrs. Lucie Titus, contacted me several weeks ago and informed me that her chapter sends 300 packages to deployed soldiers every Christmas, and that they wanted to send them to Bosnia this year. Over 200 of these packages have arrived so far, and the remainder will be distributed soon. There is a letter from Mrs. Titus in each bag. Please write or E-mail her and thank her and the chapter for the kind and generous thing they are doing for the soldiers of Task Force Eagle. She truly loves and cares for soldiers.

Remember the number one thing we do is, **FORCE PROTECTION.**

"STAY SAFE"

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U.S. city donates aid to Brcko

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

It began as a project to get a local child the medical care he needed to treat a life-threatening illness and expanded into a citywide effort to give aid to the impoverished citizens of Brcko. Lieutenant Colonel Kevin J. McAleese, a Norristown, Penn., reserve staff officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 358th Civil Affairs Brigade and a Camp McGovern soldier, believed people are kindhearted by nature, and the citizens of Johnstown, Penn. confirmed this belief.

"It's amazing how generous people can be. All you have to do is ask them and they help," McAleese said.

McAleese said it all started when an International Police Task Force officer came and told him about a local family living in poverty. He wondered if McAleese could possibly lend a hand, since he is the economics advisor in the Brcko Office of the High Representative and is helping the city of Brcko get back on its feet.

Normally McAleese only assists in major efforts to boost Brcko's economy such as persuading people to start businesses, but he felt compelled to investigate this one. "(The IPTF officer) said, 'This is a case I'm working and I wonder if you can do anything about it.' His genuine concern about this particular situation told me right away it must be important," he said.

When McAleese visited the family's home, he was moved by the condition they were living in. The family of five was unemployed and growing vegetables in their kitchen as a primary source of food.

"They didn't have much at all, so anything we could give them was better than anything they had," McAleese said.

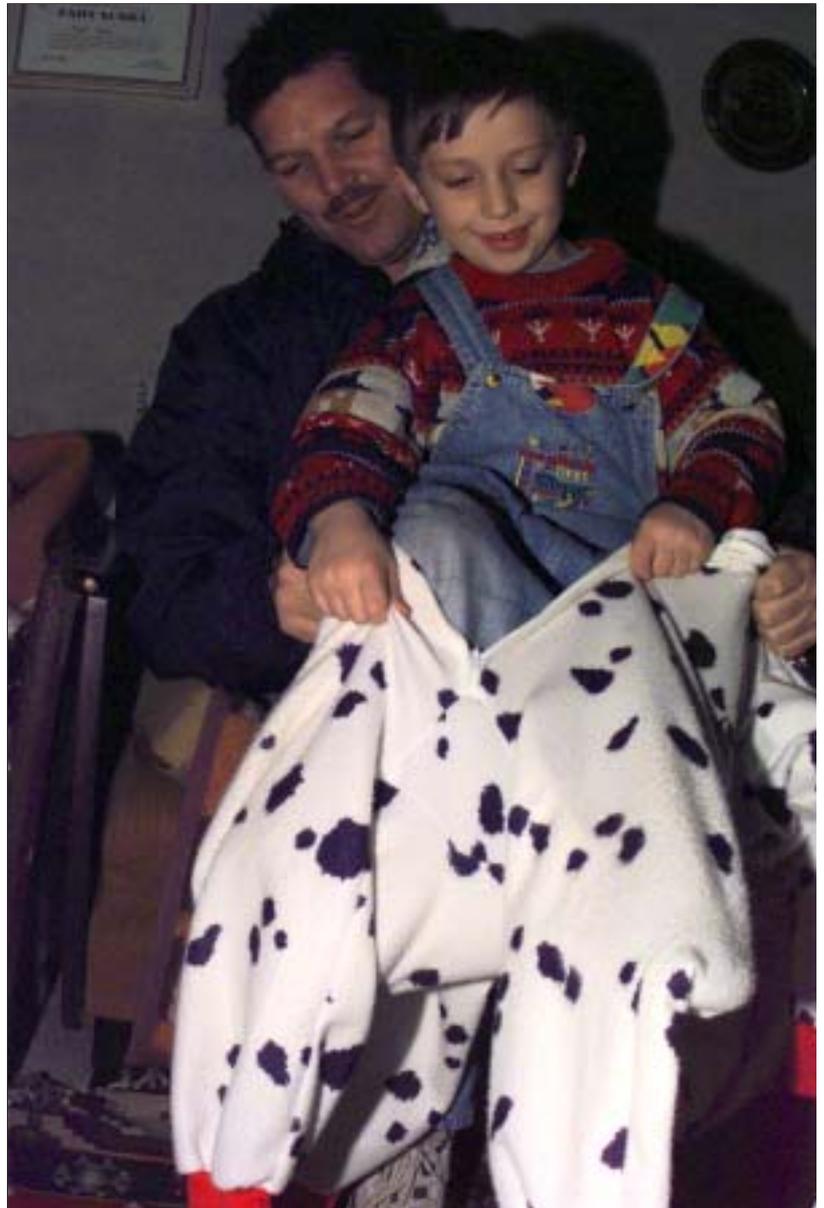
What little money the family had was used for hospital bills. Nebojsa, one of the children in the family, was born with a single kidney, which had been filled with sand from poorly filtered drinking water. A simple kidney transplant could have solved the problem, but the family had little money, so they could not afford to correct the life-threatening illness.

When McAleese returned to his office, he contacted several of his friends and told them about the boy's unfortunate condition and the family's need for warm clothes and other household items. He also told them Brcko had a 90 percent unemployment rate, so many other families were also needy.

One friend, the mayor of Johnstown, Penn., decided to take action.

Two weeks later, McAleese returned to the family's house to deliver a box full of clothes and toys. He also explained to Nebojsa's mother that Johnstown had agreed to fly the child to the United States for an operation and pay all the expenses.

"I was happy to share the information, but it was really Johnstown. I was just a facilitator," McAleese said.



McAleese helps a local boy try on pajamas sent to him by one of his friends in Johnstown, Pa. in an effort to help ease the suffering in Brcko.

The city of Johnstown did not stop there. They wanted to do more than just help Nebojsa's family. They organized a clothing and toy drive to help all unemployed families in Brcko. Johnstown collected enough to fill their city firehouse – and the residents still wanted to give more. The mayor had to put a cut off date on the project because they were running out of room.

McAleese said if there is one thing people should learn from this experience, it's that anyone can make a difference. "If you see something that you are not happy about, you have to say there's something I can do to make this situation better, then do it – you are going to see results."

Meanwhile, Nebojsa and his mother are scheduled to fly to the United States in 1999 for the boy's operation.

1st Cavalry Band opens at Comanche



The 1st Cavalry Division Band opened the holiday season with a concert for the soldiers at Comanche Base.

Story and photo by Sergeant First Class Donald R. Dunn II
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The 1st Cavalry Division Band recently performed at a concert performance for the soldiers at Comanche Base to begin the Christmas season.

This coming out concert was enhanced by the 1st Cavalry Division Honor Guard wearing Stetson hats, denim jeans and swinging swords.

"This is a morale concert. We are the first Continental United States Army Band to appear over here in Bosnia," said Chief Warrant Officer Peter C. Gillies, 1st Cavalry Division Band Master and a resident of Oxford, Mass.

The 1st Cavalry Division Band will be performing in Bosnia for seven weeks. They are scheduled to conduct concerts at every major base camp in the area. This was their first formal concert.

They played for 45 minutes and performed such songs as "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," "Lassus Trombone," and "God Bless the U.S.A."

"We have 39 soldiers in our band and are probably the busiest band in the Army," Gilles said. "Last year this band did over 300 performances and we are scheduled to do 100 while we are here in Bosnia. We try to add a variety of pop tunes, marches and patriotic tunes so all soldiers can enjoy our shows."

"The unique thing about this band is it can break down into seven bands from within. We have two Rock bands, a Jazz band, a Dixie band, a Woodwind quintet, a Brass quintet, a Saxophone and a Brass quartet," said Gillies. "We also draw our singers from the Army, because we don't have a (military occupational speciality) for singers," he added.

Specialist James A. Holland, 1st Cavalry Division Band Singer and a medical supply specialist from Munich, Germany said, "I've been with the band since 1996. I was on leave from my job in United States Army Europe and on leave at Fort Hood. I heard the 1st Cavalry Division Band was looking for a new singer and I auditioned and here I am. This is my 5th overseas tour with the band. I don't play any instruments, I'm more of a front man, I can play the keyboards a little, but I'm really just a singer."

"The most memorable thing that has happened since we've been here is when we played at Camp McGovern. When our concert began there were only ten or 12 soldiers there. Once we started playing it was like "Field of Dreams," we played and they came and filled the maintenance bay with a full house of soldiers," Gillies said.

Staff Sergeant John J. Grindstaff, a clarinet player for the 1st Cavalry Division Band and a resident of Bountiful, Utah, said, "Basically, we are here to entertain the troops and brighten up the Christmas season," he said.

General Projects Team fixes commo

Story and photo by Specialist Natalie D. Haslem
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Someone once said, "Whether we think about it or not, we are communicating all of the time. With our mannerisms, our bodies, our speech, our attitudes and even intuitively, with our minds! And the truth is, we limit our success without effective and engaging communication."

If we limit our success without effective communication, how much more do we limit ourselves if we do not have any communication at all? For several main entities within the war-torn Bosnia, there is little or no communication. Several integral telecommunication sites in Bosnia were destroyed during the war. Since then state-of-the-art equipment has been donated. So if there is equipment, then why is there little or no communication?

The General Projects Team of the Civil Military Cooperation, under the 1st Cavalry Division, is evaluating telecommunication sites to ensure that communication is restored to all the entities within Bosnia and to eradicate all obstructions to the mission.

The General Projects Team is a multinational unit tasked with the restoration of communication in the separate entities in keeping with the Dayton Peace Accord and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This six-member team consists of a telecommunications chief officer, advisor for the Office of the High Representative, German officer and mechanical engineer, British liaison officer and convoy commander.

"Our primary focus here is the complete and unobstructed communication guaranteed by the Dayton Peace Accords," said chief officer of GPT, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen F. Scharf, of the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade, of Norristown, Pa.

According to official records, currently only 20,000 telephone connections and 400 international lines, many in poor conditions, are working in Bosnia. This compares to about 375,000,00 and 4,000, respectively, before the war. The telex and data networks are no longer operative.

Because telecommunications facilities throughout the country were destroyed during the war, "new or relatively new equipment has been donated and set up at 19 sites," said Eric McKinely, advisor for the Office of the High Representative.

The General Projects Team recently visited one of the four sites at Mount Paric assigned in their sector of responsibility. The purpose of the visit according to Scharf was to evaluate the site equipment, level of difficulty getting to the site and problems with suspected intermittent or broken power lines.

Scharf, an electrical engineer, with 20 years of experience in aerospace communication and seven in networking communication, noted that the equipment at the Mount Paric site was "state-of-the art in comparison to the common utilities expected in developed countries such as the United States and Western Europe."

According to McKinely, "the equipment and cost of installation was paid for by European sources." The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development pledged \$104.6 million for massive technical assistance toward the

telecommunication reconstruction program.

The team concluded that the equipment was properly functioning, access to the site was uninhibited, and there were problems with the backup generator and intermittent power sources. Upon careful inspection of the generator and other equipment, German mechanical engineers found there was no power going into the generator. According to engineer, Corporal Oliver Hoch and German liaison officer First Lieutenant Jens Hoff, of Eutin, Germany, "one of the tasks is to make sure they fix the power line, fix the generator and maintain a backup system in case of emergency. Because it holds only 200 liters of fuel, it must be refueled every 2-3 days. Therefore the generator is only a backup source."

Also access to the site was an issue. "Access to the site was fair considering present road conditions," said convoy commander Sergeant Michael A. McLane, of the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade. McLane, of Torrington, Conn. "As weather conditions worsen with threat of heavy snow, icy roads, and possible sleet for this winter, access to the site located on Mount Paric's peak is threatened. The anticipated road conditions will pose a dangerous risk assessment for the team as well as Postal Telephone Telegraph employees. However, the mission will eventually be carried out. There's a long term commitment here." Access to the site by PTT employees, who repair and manage the equipment, is necessary and permitted with proper identification.

The group all agreed that the most important thing was to get commercial electricity to the site and get the generator functioning properly should an emergency arise. Not only is it important that the site receive power, but that the power is equivalent to that of the site's power unit. This is a problem the GPT team will be addressing.

The team has not given an exact time the project will be completed. However, Scharf firmly stated that the mission would be carried out completely. In the future of the telecommunications project, Scharf would like to implement a wireless digital communication system in areas where there is no phone system as funds are available from donor agencies. This will provide service to "some inner entities or smaller areas that are still without phones" after the 19 systems are properly functioning.

Scharf viewed this as a threat to reaching a "desired end state" of stabilization as outlined in the Dayton Peace Accords and the Stabilization Force mission. "One of our goals is get people talking again with each other. There's a fear or trepidation of not being able to talk to others." Scharf believes the lack of communication handicaps efforts to return refugees back to their homes. Some are afraid. They are reluctant to return until they can contact others in the local area to find out if it's truly safe to return home.

The General Projects Team, a multinational force, will ensure that telecommunication access is restored in Bosnia, despite all obstacles. Reconstruction programs, financially sustained by donor agencies of NATO countries, are underway. The team is set on completing the mission with the understanding that it is a long-term commitment. They agree that telecommunications will be restored to Bosnia by all means. This will hopefully open the doors of communication, the first step in reconciliation and peace.

NCO makes most of soldiers' reenlistment



Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, enter the abandoned castle near Hill 722 to hold a reenlistment ceremony.

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

The wind blows through the hallowed walls of the abandoned castle ruins. As a sergeant from Camp McGovern approaches the foreboding structure, he looks up and reflects upon what he is about to do. His friends' joking demeanor makes him laugh as they head inside. This is not a tactical mission but an important one none the less. As the sergeant and his group enter a room in the castle, they uncover a flag they have been carrying and set it up. A captain joins the sergeant in front of the flag to begin swearing him in: this is the noncommissioned officer's reenlistment.

"Even though we are in Bosnia," said Sergeant Alrico Perkins, Battalion Reenlistment NCO for 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, "there are still some interesting things we can do for a soldier's reenlistment. If a reenlistment request is within reason, we can try it," added the Detroit native.

Some of the options a reenlisting soldier has is to

choose what officer will perform the ceremony and where it will take place. Troops in Bosnia can be a little creative in this respect. Sergeant Ernesto Loera-Zuniga, supply sergeant of Headquarters Platoon, Company B, 1-8 Cavalry, got a suggestion from his commander to reenlist inside of a castle near the signal site at Hill 722.

"My commander told me we could do the ceremony at the castle if I really wanted to," Loera-Zuniga said. "I had never been up there and people told me it was nice with the scenery and everything, so I decided to go for it," he said.

Incorporating the reenlistment into the day's mission of patrolling near Hill 722, Zuniga's platoon made their way up to the castle to perform the ceremony. When all was done, Loera-Zuniga reflected on the special event.

"It was awesome," added the Dallas native, "I liked it a lot. It is something I will always remember about Bosnia. It was just really cool."

After a recent patrol together, Specialist Brandon Richards, a tanker with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1-8 Cavalry asked Brigadier General R. Steven Whitcomb, 1st Cavalry Division, Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver), to come

Reenlistment at abandoned castle



Sergeant Ernesto Loera-Zuniga stands with his commander as fellow platoon members take some pictures inside the castle near Hill 722 after his reenlistment.

back to McGovern and reenlist him. As the ceremony ended, Richards had the chance to address the attendees and explain how he came about choosing Whitcomb as his reenlistment officer.

"Sir, it is a privilege to have you reenlist me. When I made up my mind to re-up, and we went out on patrol with you, I told my platoon sergeant and platoon leader I wanted you to reenlist me," Richards said. "With all of their help, we made the plan to have you come up and it's been a great honor sir," added the Satellite Beach, Fla. native.

Before soldiers can take their oath, there are many things to consider. Soldiers who wish to make the Army a career or change their military occupational specialty can do a great deal for themselves before even walking into the retention office, said Perkins. Soldiers with a low general technical score can take a class and a test to improve their chances of changing their MOS.

"If they are a first timer, I ask them right off the bat what their GT score is," said Perkins. "That's because the GT score plays an important role. If it's 110 or above you can get every option the Army has to offer," he added.

Unfortunately many troops decide not to reenlist because they are dissatisfied with their current duty station and job, said Perkins. He advises these soldiers to take the initiative and do some research to find out what MOS they would feel more comfortable in.

"Always look at your options," said Perkins. "You may go somewhere else and the Army is totally different, it's not always the same. Don't base reenlisting off your present duty just because you had a bad experience, find an MOS you like and will be comfortable with. A soldier who likes his job will do it better," he added.

If troops wait until their last year in the Army to begin making decisions on their career, it could be too late, said Perkins. "I want to tell soldiers, initial and mid-career, that you can see your reenlistment options 13 months out. That doesn't mean you shouldn't start planning early, but before you make the decision to get out, see what the Army has to offer; you might be surprised."

Technology trains soldiers on Abrams



Sergeant First Class Chris D. Geeding (standing left) trains 3rd platoon, Company C, 2-8 Cavalry Regiment on how to operate the D2T2.

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

Diligent training is the key to success for any military operation, present or future. Soldiers at Camp Bedrock are presently training for future missions that may involve the M1A2 Abrams tank by getting "fired up" on the D2T2.

2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment recently received four of the Digital Display Tabletop Trainers. The D2T2 is a menu trainer that will help tank commanders and crews maintain their skills on the three computers inside the M1A2 while they are deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of Operation Joint Forge.

"The D2T2 will basically help keep soldiers up on how to operate the computers inside the tank and also let them train together as a team," said Sergeant First Class Chris D. Geeding, Task Force 2-8 master gunner. "One of the best things about this equipment is that it uses the same software that the M1A2 uses, which allows the operator to feel like he is actually operating the computers in the tank itself. It also displays each computer like it would appear in the tank," added the Blue Grass, Iowa native.

Geeding added that the D2T2 is helping Task Force 2-8 maintain its skills on the M1A2 computer system so when they redeploy back to Fort Hood and begin to operate the tanks again, they will be knowledgeable about what they are doing.

"Here we are performing peacekeeping missions, but we must also stay knowledgeable on our equipment that's in the rear. Although we are here to keep peace, we must also maintain our M1A2 skills as if we were about to get deployed some place not so peaceful," Geeding said.

He added that combat readiness is a priority to Task Force 2-8 and being the first armored corps to receive the D2T2 will help keep that priority in focus.

Although the M1A2 is new to Task Force 2-8, Geeding said the training they are performing in Multinational Division (North)

will have them just as knowledgeable on the new tank as they are on the M1A1. "Nothing takes the place of actually training on the tank itself, but this new training equipment will sure keep us familiar with the mechanics of it. It's not hard to shoot a tank, but it can be hard to operate one," Gedding said.

The D2T2 is capable of allowing a platoon or tank crew to train as a team, which allows for more realistic training.

First Lieutenant William E. Mullee of Huntington Beach, Calif., 3rd platoon leader, Company C, 2-8 Cavalry said the D2T2 is just what they need to keep them prepared for any upcoming missions.

"This is a great opportunity for us to train on our gunnery skills while we are deployed here. We don't have a great deal of experience on the M1A2, so this is great training for me and my platoon," Mullee said. "The thing that's great about this is that it's not just focused on the tank commander, but also on the driver and gunner. By training on the D2T2 we will be able to refresh our skills, because there are a few things about the M1A2 that, if you don't continuously practice, you will forget," Mullee added.

He also said his platoon couldn't ask for more in a situation like this. "We never thought we would get training like this over here. We appreciate everything the Task Force is doing to keep soldiers trained and combat ready," Mullee said.

Geeding said the Task Force would also be training on the Advance Gunnery Training System, which teaches soldiers how to engage targets and destroy them. "This equipment will allow us to train and make mistakes without actually tearing up the tank. You got to love it," Gedding said.

So as Task Force 2-8 diligently trains for any military operations that may be awaiting them, they know that the D2T2 will keep them combat ready and fired up about their new firepower: The M1A2 Abrams tank.



A M1A1 Abrams tank parked at Camp Bedrock.

Children brighten soldiers' day



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

The friendly smile of a child can brighten up even the gloomiest day, said Specialist Craig S. Barringer, a Camp McGovern tanker with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, and a Modesto, Calif. native. Likewise, the site of a kindhearted soldier has a positive impact on kids, letting them know soldiers care what happens to them, he said. 2nd Platoon had this in mind when they began visiting Gornih Rahic Refugee Camp.

The camp was created for refugees who had no place to go to when their homes were destroyed during the Bosnian Civil War, Barringer continued. There are approximately 2,000 residents in Gornih Rahic, 90 percent of which lived in Brcko before the war, most waiting to some day return to their former homes.

2nd platoon has been patrolling the camp for several months now after coming across it during one of their earlier patrols in Bosnia.

"We were patrolling near it when we saw all these kids come up to our vehicle, so we decided to check it out and see where they were coming from," Barringer said.

As the convoy rounded the corner to the camp, it was greeted by a swarm of enthusiastic children asking the soldiers for candy and pens.

Barringer said the people at the camp appeared to be taken care of. "Now they have a warm place to stay with running water and electricity. They seemed to be pretty well off."

After a few minutes of warm welcomes, it was time to hit the road again. When the soldiers left the camp that day, Barringer was sure they would return to visit their new, young friends while building good relations between soldiers and locals. They would also come back to ask the camp's residents if they have any issues, such as people having problems paying bills.

"It lets them know we're not bad guys. When the kids grow up, they'll remember that," Barringer said.

The visits benefit soldiers by giving them a chance to see up close how the people of Bosnia live. It also brightens their day to see the smiling children.

Barringer said the kids make the job worthwhile. "No matter where you're at, the kids are always the best part of the job."

The platoon now visits the site about once a week or whenever they get the chance. They bring candy and Polaroid cameras to take pictures for the kids. Occasionally, the soldiers play soccer with the youngsters.

Barringer said he could tell the Stabilization Force is doing a good job keeping Bosnia peaceful because of the expression on the children's faces and the fact that they eagerly greet the platoon's convoys. "The kids are happy we're there. They are always excited to see us, so we must be doing something right."

Mechanics keep vehicles ready

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

The primary mission of the soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and all Stabilization Force soldiers, is to ensure the following of the Dayton Peace Accords and help the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina rebuild peace in their country. None of this would be achieved if it weren't for the ability of people to work as a team.

In order to pave the road toward the success of the mission, soldiers are going out daily on patrols into the different towns in their areas. Some are simply patrolling the area making sure that there are no disturbances that would disrupt the mission. Others go into town and interact with the locals to get a feeling of how things are going and how the people feel about the progress of things. Knowing what the people themselves need and how they feel about the whole process is very valuable to the mission.

For this, one of the most important means for SFOR soldiers to be able to complete their missions are vehicles.

The vehicles are of great importance to the success of SFOR's mission, because there is a crew who always, no matter what the time of day or weather conditions are, are constantly at work keeping the wheels of the military rolling.

Here at Camp Dobol the mechanics are put to the test every day, and every day they keep the vehicles rolling out the gate.

"We do not get many chances to get out, but we don't mind because mission comes first," explained Private First Class Gregory A. Rowe, a turret mechanic with Company B, 2-8 Cavalry Regiment, and native from San Jose, Calif. "This is what we came here for."

Rowe and his fellow mechanics



Specialist Erwin J. Luna, from Apopka, Fla., loosens parts to pull out the engine and service it.

spend their entire days checking out the vehicles to make them mission capable and repairing any which need maintenance work. Not only are they responsible for keeping the fleet of HMMWVs in good shape but they are also responsible for making sure that the M1A1 Abrams are always ready to move without delay.

These mechanics are the ones who work behind the scenes to keep the vehicle rolling and in good shape to make sure that all missions get accomplished.



A team of mechanics work together to load a frame which will be hooked up onto the engine of the tank.

Playing basketball for culture

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

For four hours, a bus load of soldiers from Camp Bedrock didn't think about guard duty, formations, cold tents at 5:00 a.m. or missing their families. They were too busy having fun.

As part of a planned cultural exchange between the high schools in Zivinice, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Copperas Cove, Texas, soldiers visited Zivinice High School November 28th to play basketball and chess with students and teachers.

1st Lieutenant Kelvin Demetris Brown, Scout platoon leader for 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, volunteered to set up the unique link between the two schools. "I'm from a small town in Georgia," said the Bartow native. "Now I'm over here in Bosnia." Brown loves to meet people from different places and he loves sports. The opportunity to get involved in the high-school exchange program was a perfect fit.

Zivinice High School is in the middle of town. It's one of the largest high schools in Bosnia with over 1,600 students and 77 teachers who instruct 49 classes instead of the typical 20 classes that are held in most Bosnian high schools.

Brown says that an English class at Zivinice wants to write and E-mail students in a class at Copperas Cove High School. He hopes that early next year the students who are then acquainted, will be able to see each other through a video teleconference set up at Camp Bedrock.

When he met some of the students at their Bosnian Independence Day ceremony, Brown said, "They want to know a lot about Americans."

The American soldiers were invited to come to the high school for the basketball and chess competitions as part of the cultural exchange.

The Bedrock Mustang basketball team of about 15 players were looking forward to meeting the Zivinice team and getting to play indoors. Once the threat level had been lowered, Bedrock hoopsters ran to the outdoor court every chance they got. Since the snow started falling though, they can't play.

After securing gear with guards, the teams were escorted inside the high school.

Basketball players filed into the locker room to change. Chess players were led into the teacher's lounge. It would be an interesting experience for all.

After a short discussion on the rules and procedures for the chess games through the Army interpreters, the four Bedrock chess players sat at individual tables to face their opponents. The young soldiers would play five Zivinice teachers of mathematics, engineering technology and computer science. All players would play each other round robin. Strong Bosnian coffee, orange juice and soda was served and play was underway.

Nearby, the preliminaries were almost completed by the Zivinice coach, Chaplain Captain Zan Sellers, Task Force 2-8 Cavalry chaplain and sports referee.

When the basketball team had arrived, Chaplain Sellers asked to speak to the Zivinice referee. "We don't have one, may we use yours?" was their reply. Looking slightly crestfallen, Sellers quickly recovered and said, he'd do it, but he needed to get together with someone to discuss game rules.

They discussed keeping time. A clock from the chess competition would do. The Zivinice coach wanted to play four 10-

minute quarters with a halftime break. What was out of bounds in the small gym? How many time outs, and can you save them from period to period? There were some differences in play between the two countries said Sellers; such as playing three people on lane during free throws instead of four. The lack of a visible clock and score board was also different.

Sellers said that he basically used the high school rules he was used to using at home. He knows the importance of understanding the rules ahead of play. "All you need is a basketball, two hoops and 10 or less players and hopefully someone who can keep it from turning into a free-for-all," said Sellers. He certainly was the person who did that for the team. Once play began, Sellers' whistle was getting used a lot.

"It was a fun game; we found out that their team was very physical at first, so we had to adjust," said Mustang player, Sergeant First Class Paul Shirlee, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 2-8, logistics noncommissioned officer in charge.

Shirlee said, "In the second half the Mustangs took control of the game with a lot of outside shooting and went ahead and closed it in on them."

The Zivinice Team, which included their coach and a couple of teachers, had height and enthusiasm. But they were outnumbered and outplayed by the Mustangs with a final score of 61-49.

Meanwhile, the chess players were not so fortunate. Players with two to ten years experience, playing once in awhile, were playing men who'd played daily for four or more decades. The chess team was shut out 25-0.

Private First Class Travis Rentz, Company C, 20th Engineers, has been playing since high school. The Hollidaysburg, Pa. infantryman was surprised at the speed of play. But he said, "The main thing was that we all had fun."

When all competitions were over, the school hosted the teams, referee, coaches and interpreters for lunch. The school principal congratulated all the participants, presenting a case of soda to the victorious Mustangs. Task Force 2-8 Command Sergeant Major Nathaniel Roberson, presented the principal with a plaque. Brown presented the school coach with a bag full of basketballs and school supplies for the students.

Zivinice High School basketball player, Hadzic Adnan (18) has been playing basketball for six years. He wants to major in electronics technology. He said, through an interpreter, "I would like to thank the U. S. Army and the people who were here today with us and I hope we will have much more events like this one."

Habibovic Jasel (20) is studying economics. The towering basketball player proudly says that he will try to answer questions in English. "It was a very nice game, we like it, but we didn't play well done, next time," said Jasel. When asked about the program with Copperas Cove High School, Jasel said, "Very nice, I think we learn about people. I think I learn English better then."

The Zivinice student watches American basketball. His favorite basketball player is Michael Jordan. When asked if he wanted to add anything, he turns to the interpreter and says in Bosnian, "I would like you to come much more often to have more events like this one, maybe volleyball as well as basketball."

The soldiers say goodbye. For some of them it was their first trip out of Camp Bedrock. They hope not the last.

McGovern soldiers conquer Hill 722

Story and photo by Specialist Bryan D. Cox
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A solitary soldier stands in the snow on a distant mountaintop. As vehicles trudge up the frozen path towards him he checks their credentials and swings open an iron gate, allowing them to enter this highland fortress. It's not a glamorous job but an important duty Camp McGovern soldiers fulfill guarding Hill 722.

"If we weren't here somebody could come up and attack the hill. We make sure that doesn't happen and all the soldiers up here are safe," said Specialist Mecolus S. McDaniel, a tanker with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a Delzona, Miss. native.

In addition to their normal duties, McGovern troops rotate through Hill 722 guard shifts to provide security for Stabilization Force peacekeepers and equipment on top of the mountain. McGovern soldiers are tasked with this important mission because of their close proximity to the hill.

Although the small site has limited facilities, most soldiers enjoy the Hill 722 mission because it's a change of pace from the daily workload at McGovern, said Private Joaquin Paredes, also of 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1-8 Cavalry Regiment and a Los Angeles native.

"We pull guard back at McGovern too but it's nice to come up here and see something different," Paredes said.

According to McDaniel, soldiers safeguarding Hill 722 don't just pull guard duty while on the hill though, they also continue to improve force protection. Leaders use time off to reinforce basic soldier skills through classes and group exercises which maximize soldier training while on the hill.

"We do platoon level classes on various subjects," McDaniel said. "It's a good opportunity to stay current on our basic tasks and keep ready for various missions."

It's also a good way to bring units closer together because the isolation of pulling guard on the hill reinforces working together to accomplish the mission, said Captain Christopher R. Norrie, Company C commander, 1-8 Cavalry and Winamac, Ind. native.

"Any opportunity to build the team can't be wasted and extra training while up at the hill is an outstanding way to do that," Norrie said.

The snow, cold and isolation all combine to challenge each unit tasked with guarding their fellow Stabilization Force soldiers on Hill 722. When these guard shifts end, Norrie said the benefits soldiers gain from their time on the hill are carried with them, even after the torch is passed to the next unit. This experience helps ensure they're well prepared for any future situation after weathering guard duty on Hill 722.