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TALON

Talon Inside



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On the Cover

A UH-60 "Blackhawk" sits in the snow on Eagle Base. (Photo taken by Chief Warrant Officer David Rosenthal.)

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother ... and gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think themselves accurst they were not here; and hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day." – William Shakespeare, Henry V

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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 share with you a little about PFC Jarred H. King. This very young soldier was recently placed in a situation during the apprehension of Republic of Srpska Army General Radislav Krstic, that required very mature thinking and conduct, and PFC King did both with outstanding results. Most of you probably have heard or read about PFC King.

PFC King is a 20-year-old, 82C, Field Artillery Surveyor who has been in the army all of seven months, who probably never pictured himself on a peacekeeping mission forward deployed in Bosnia as the driver for an LNO. His MOS training has little to do with his current job. PFC King went through a vigorous training program prior to his deployment that prepared him for this mission. As I have read and personally heard his story, I keep being reminded of the Seven Army Values as established by General Reimer, and how PFC King is living up to and demonstrated each of them: LOYALTY, DUTY, RESPECT, SELFLESS-SERVICE, HONOR, INTEGRITY and PERSONAL COURAGE. PFC King's courage during this experience stood out in my mind. King kept his head in a situation that required absolute self-control. He continued to assess the situation and had developed a plan in his mind. King openly admitted he was the most scared he had ever been, but I can't think of any person who would not have these same anxieties if placed in the same situation. PFC King's leaders and trainers should feel very proud of themselves for having prepared this young soldier to perform at this very professional level. PFC King's statement that he is in the greatest Army in the world should make each and every one of you confident that our soldiers are trained and have confidence in their leaders. As I travel and watch the soldiers of MND (N), I am convinced that each and every one of you is a "PFC King." As many of you reach the midpoint in your rotation, I ask that you not allow yourself to become complacent. Treat each day as if it is your first day in Bosnia. Remember, the number one thing we do is **FORCE PROTECTION. "STAYSAFE"**

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Force Protection, still top priority

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

Force Protection is the number one priority at each North Atlantic Treaty Organization base camp in Multi-national Division (North). Each camp has strong security that is making sure Force Protection in Bosnia-Herzegovina is maintained inside and outside the wire.

Force Protection is an assessment of hazards, risks and concerns that might affect the mission accomplishment of servicemembers supporting Operation Joint Forge. It allows the Task Force to accomplish missions safely and swiftly while inside and outside the base camps.

First Lieutenant Scott J. Bailey of Baltimore, Md., Camp Bedrock security manager, said Force Protection is comprised of two elements: physical and operational security.

"Physical security is making sure all physical items are maintained and accounted for, like arms room's items, personal weapons and any other sensitive tangibles," Bailey said. "Operational security is making sure to maintain a close guard on any missions that we perform, such as patrolling to areas outside the base camp."

Bailey said servicemembers should remember that the environment here is much different than it is at their home station.

"We are not at Fort Hood anymore, so the level of security is much different," Bailey said. "Soldiers should pay close attention to what is going on around them. The longer you are here the more complacent you might become, and we can't afford to do that. So we need to pay continuous attention to our surroundings."

He added that there is a fine line between protecting soldiers and accomplishing missions.

"We have to be accessible to the local nationals, but at the same time we have to take in consideration the safety of the servicemembers," he said. "This is what makes it a little difficult to get soldiers off the base camp and out into the towns so they can associate with the locals." He also said that although Bosnia has calmed down considerably, there are still a lot of hazards out there.

Chief Warrant Officer Winfred E. Hill, Force Protection team manager, said servicemembers performing missions outside of the base camp should keep their eyes and ears open while on patrol, but also remember to be friendly and courteous to locals they may meet.

"Soldiers should be careful about giving information out to the locals, but there is nothing wrong with having a friendly conversation with them," the Atlanta, Ga. native said. "Soldiers should understand there are three different ethnic groups out there: Bosniacs, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs. They should remember to be a neutral party and greet them all the same."

Maintaining a good relationship with the locals is a key factor in keeping Force Protection strong outside of the base camps. Service members should

maintain awareness, but shouldn't try to be a "Rambo." Just remember to be polite and show kindness.

Bailey said if soldiers see a potential threat to the security force, in or outside of the camp, they should be sure to inform their commander.

Colonel Barry Fowler, commander of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, said Force Protection is the Task Force's number one priority.

"Without force protection we would not be able to accomplish our mission here in Bosnia," Fowler said. "Force Protection brought us into this country safely and I know it will get us back home to our families just the same. I plan on bringing each one of my soldiers back to their families alive and well, and I know Force Protection is an important aid in helping me to accomplish this."

Soldiers are advised to keep a wary eye out for anything suspicious, and keep the rest of NATO forces safe to continue their missions.



Corporal Jesus A. Hernandez of Kerrville, Texas, Quick Reaction Force, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cav, blocks a local civilian from entering a mass casualty exercise site.

PSYOPS "interact with people"



Sergeant First Class Randy L. Coe, team chief of the 13th Psychological Operations Battalion at Camp Dobil, hands out MIRKO magazines to local Bosnian children.

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

How can one article detailing the suffering of a little girl and her kitten motivate our hatred against the offender, arouse our sympathy for Armenians, make us enthusiastic for the Red Cross, lead us to give money for a home for cats and declare war on Germany? Such is the power of the pen.

Wartime slogans such as "The Criminal Kaiser," and "Make the World Safe for Democracy" can stimulate emotions in an intended way.

Looking into the war-torn faces and hearts of Bosnian locals, the 13th Psychological Operations Battalion from Arden Hills, Minn., has launched a war against any obstruction to peace and reconstruction of the state as outlined in the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995.

Over the years, psychological operations have changed. Now in a time of peace, they are a vital part of the Stabilization Force. They are the underlying force in SFOR and U.S. political, military, economic and ideological activities to obtain a "desired end" in the reconstruction of Bosnia.

Armed with a friendly smile, engaging conversation, contagious laughter and MIRKO magazine, the PSYOPS team disseminates information to the general population.

Carrying posters with the image of three small, smil-

ing Bosnian children clenching teddy bears under the title, "Peace and Tolerance," Sergeant First Class Randy L. Coe, tactical PSYOPS team chief, approaches a small group of children. They eagerly reach for the posters and the MIRKO.

The MIRKO magazine, which means peace in Serbo-Croatia, is for the "entertainment for the younger crowd," said Staff Sergeant Daniel L. Kobylinski, psychological operations specialist, from Roseville, Minn. "It helps them to see the soldiers here as people. It's more personable."

"Our objective here is to make sure we have the necessary products to disseminate information to the populace," Coe said. "We want to make sure that the common or everyday people of Bosnia understand the purpose and position of SFOR. We want them to be comfortable with our presence here. They need to understand we are here to help

bring peace and economic stability to Bosnia on an international forefront."

On a regular basis, soldiers visit the local communities to disseminate information detailing the latest events shaping the SFOR peacekeeping mission.

"We do not just visit the people, we build strong relationships with them," Coe said. "We live, eat and work with the people. Through interpreters, we learn about their lifestyles and they learn about ours. We are learning about each other's culture."

"We make it a habit to visit certain people, talk with them, drink coffee with them and find out what's going on. We care about what they are thinking and their sentiments concerning Americans and SFOR," said Sergeant Adam C. Bebeau, PSYOPS specialist from Anoka, Minn. "Most (Bosnians) like Americans and most want to recover and get their feet back on the ground."

The best part of my job is "getting to interact with the people." Like Bebeau, many of the PSYOPS team members speak fondly of the people. They are particularly fond of a group of elderly men they often find playing cards. "We try to visit them every two weeks."

Even though a PSYOPS specialist job was changed greatly over the years, they still are responsible for using the power of the pen to learn more about Bosnian people, while getting the word out that SFOR is here to maintain peace in the region.

Test improvement class helps soldiers

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

This class is for every soldier with a (general technical) score less than 110. Many doors will open if soldiers can reach that score," Specialist David E. Irwin, a tanker with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a Tempe, Ariz. native said.

Irwin is one of three instructors teaching Camp McGovern's functional academic skills test classes, a course that helps aspiring soldiers raise their GT score. This is a valuable asset for those desiring to advance in the military, Irwin said.

Specialist Joshua M. Kidwell, a track driver with Camp McGovern's Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, and a Sacramento, Calif., native raised his score from a 103 to a 118 in the FAST class. "This class helped me raise my reading comprehension and vocabulary, and especially my math score. Now I can change my MOS to almost anything I want."

According to Irwin, a score of 110 looks good on a promotion board and aids soldiers desiring to change their military occupational specialty by giving them a wider selection of choices. This allows them to enter Officer Candidate School or the Army Green to Gold program, two gateways to becoming an officer.

Irwin said there are three subjects from the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery exam that make up service members' GT scores: math, reading comprehension and vocabulary. The course works to strengthen soldier's knowledge in these areas, and if soldiers feel they need to improve in these skills, McGovern is definitely the place to do it, Irwin said. "They've really set it up out here for soldiers, and they should take advantage of this opportunity."

Irwin said this is a great opportunity for him. He enjoys teaching and has a bachelor's degree in history and political science, so when he volunteered for the job, the education center welcomed his contribution.

When Irwin began his new job, he said he liked the way the class was organized. To maximize learning, they require these student-soldiers to work independently in a supervised setting, Irwin said. The students are given workbooks, and the instructors provide help when needed.

Irwin said the most important things students get from the class is how to take tests

effectively.

"We teach students to work smart, not hard. That's the biggest thing we try to get across to them in the class. It's those little test-taking tips that will help them succeed," he said.

For example, on the multiple choice vocabulary tests, a sentence with a missing word is given, and soldiers choose which given word fits the sentence best. If test takers are unsure of which word to use, they can eliminate possibilities by knowing which word isn't correct, Irwin explained.

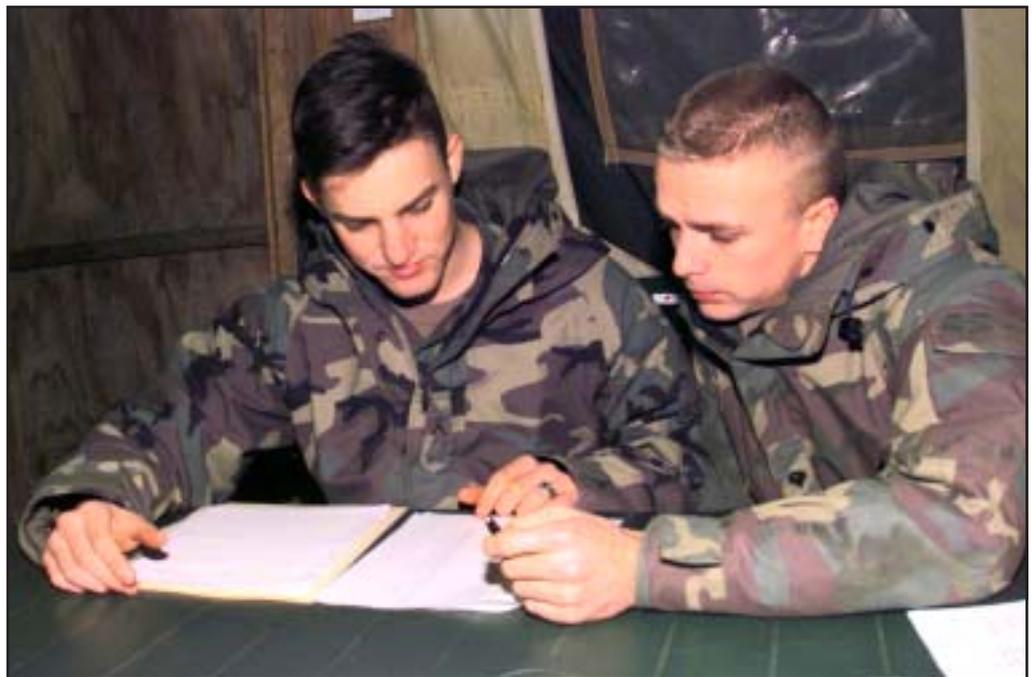
Irwin said the staff also tries to throw their own teaching styles into the class. One example is how they put the students having problems in the same areas at the same table. By doing this, students having trouble with similar questions can be helped at the same time.

"We customize the class to fit certain ability groups. That way if they are weak in one area, they can get the help they need to grasp the material better."

Irwin said anyone wishing to sign up for the course should see their chain of command. He said the leadership often goes out of their way to accommodate soldiers' schedules so they can attend classes.

Irwin said even if soldiers aren't interested in improving their GT score, they should still take some sort of class or do something to better themselves while deployed. "McGovern's education center can make your life better, no matter what you have. Knowledge is power and that is something no one can ever take from you."

A successful education program is a Multinational Division (North) goal, and soldiers like Irwin are helping make that goal reality.



Specialist Irwin helps Private Mike J. Sanchez, a combat medic with Headquarters Platoon, Company B, 20th Engineer Battalion, and a Lake Tahoe, Calif. native, with his vocabulary assignment during Camp McGovern's FAST class in the post library.

Hootie and the Blowfish entertain s

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

Like a stampede they came: running, jumping, screaming, and best of all, smiling. In all, about 2,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, from all the different base camps, filled the Eagle Base Sports Complex to see the show.

Darius Rucker, Dean Felber, "Soni" Sonefeld and Mark Bryan of Hootie and the Blowfish came to visit and play for the troops serving in Operation Joint Forge as a part of their world tour.

"We decided a couple of years ago (to come here) after one show we did in Kaposvar Air Field," Sonefeld said. "It left a really good impression with us because we know how much it meant to the guys who were over there, so we told the

United Service Organization that we'd like to do it again in the future."

The band arrived in Budapest, Turkey on Dec. 9 and flew to Camp McGovern, before doing their show at Eagle.

"At McGovern, I got to drive a tank. That was awesome," Rucker said. "I'm still dirty from that. We had a good time laughing like we usually do, meeting good people."

"There were a lot of firsts today. We rode a C-130, a Blackhawk and a tank," Sonefeld said.

The band was given an aerial tour of some of the destruction caused by the Bosnian War.

"I was in General Byrnes' helicopter and we talked about everything that happened here," Rucker said. "War is such hell, and you don't think about it until you actually fly over a town. It's disheartening and sickening. You quickly realize why Americans are here."



Photo by Sergeant Lisa Ward, Public Affairs Office

Major General Kevin Byrnes, MND (N) commander presents a Cav gift to the band.



Darius Rucker sings to the Honor Guard.

servicemembers at Eagle Base

Most of the band members do have family ties to the military and know first hand how it can separate a family during the holidays.

"My first cousin is on a ship in the Gulf right now. I didn't get to see him while I was there," Bryan said.

"We talked to (military) people in Hungary, Bosnia and Saudi Arabia. This is what they do," Rucker said. "They are over here protecting our right to do whatever we want to do as Americans. For us, we are away from our family for five weeks. These people are away for a whole year," he said. "This was the least we could do."

Hootie and the Blowfish certainly did not disappoint the enthusiastic crowd that continually chanted "Hootie! Hootie! Hootie!" before the show started. It began with Rucker singing "The Star Spangled Banner," and in typical American fashion the crowd started cheering before the last few verses ended.

The band performed songs from their first two albums, "Cracked Rear View" and "Fairweather Johnson," and some from their newly released "Musical Chairs" album.

They also covered the popular songs "Without Love," "I Go Blind," "Black Magic Woman," "Interstate Love Song," and "Will the Circle Be Unbroken."

"My favorite part of the concert was when they blew a transformer, and they switched gears and went 'Unplugged,'" Specialist Melissa Hoage, a postal clerk with the 15th TF Postal Company, said. "After the show, I waited a long time in the lines to get an autograph," the Menomonie, Wis. native said. "They were so cool. They all took pictures with me and signed autographs. It was a great concert!"

"We've been playing shows for about 13 years," Bryan said. "But these really feel like the most important shows we've ever done. I can honestly say that."



Photo by Specialist Valentine

the Star Spangled Banner while
sings the colors behind him.



Photo by Specialist Valentine

Mark Bryan jams on his guitar during the concert held at the Eagle Base Sports Complex.

Little things remind troops of home

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

The soldier lies down in his cot and listens to the wind howling outside. Every night he thinks the same thoughts: "I'm in Bosnia, I won't be home for awhile, I miss my wife, I miss my kids." As he ponders, the howling winter wind increases its pitch. His thoughts drift like the snow outside on how the holidays will soon arrive. He looks over at his desk searching for something that will put his restless thoughts at ease. There on his desk is the little stuffed bear his wife gave him just before he left. He pulls the teddy bear onto his pillow. The soldier closes his eyes, and soon falls asleep.

"About a week before we left for Bosnia, my wife gave me this little teddy bear for good luck," said Sergeant Mark Hammons, a

tanker with 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Nampa, Idaho native. "She wanted me to have something here so I wouldn't feel alone. All the guys in the platoon adopted him and named him Fozzy."

Hammons is not alone. Next to almost every cot on Camp McGovern is some reminder of home. Most soldiers pin up pictures, while

others display cards sent from home. Some even requires an explanation.

"This is my four-year-old's pillow," said Sergeant Steffen Maron, a mechanized infantryman with Headquarters Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment and Redondo Beach, Calif. native, as he displayed a pink "Space Jam" pillow. "I had to get special permission from her to even bring this out here. It reminds me of my family, and I promised my little girl when she sees it again, daddy will be home."

Some troops, like Private First Class Kevin Gumbs, a tanker with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Trenton, N.J. native are finding special items in Bosnia that they plan to keep with them always.

"This is a singing monkey that I bought out here for a souvenir," Gumbs said. "I was going to send it home to my mom but I liked it so much I decided to keep it for myself. I'll probably end up taking it wherever I go."

Some soldiers just want to hear the sweet sounds of home, and for Private First Class Spencer Orr, an engineer with Headquarters Platoon, Company B, 20th Engineer Battalion, and Los Angeles native, that means settling back in his cot and strumming his old six-string guitar.

"I used to play this guitar for my wife when we were teenagers dating. I would go over to her house and bring it with me and serenade her," Orr said. "I had my wife send it out to me here, and it really just reminds me of her."

Sergeant First Class Steven Daddabbo, a military police officer and platoon sergeant of 1st Platoon, 410th Military Police Company and Virginia Beach, Va. native, receives three packages of homemade beef jerky a month from his wife. He said this tradition actually started the last time he was in Bosnia and hasn't stopped since.

"It makes me feel special because she takes the time to make it and then send it to me," Daddabbo said. "It's something we started doing together a few years ago, making our own beef jerky. So it reminds me of home when I get these packages, even though it goes pretty quick depending on how many people are around."

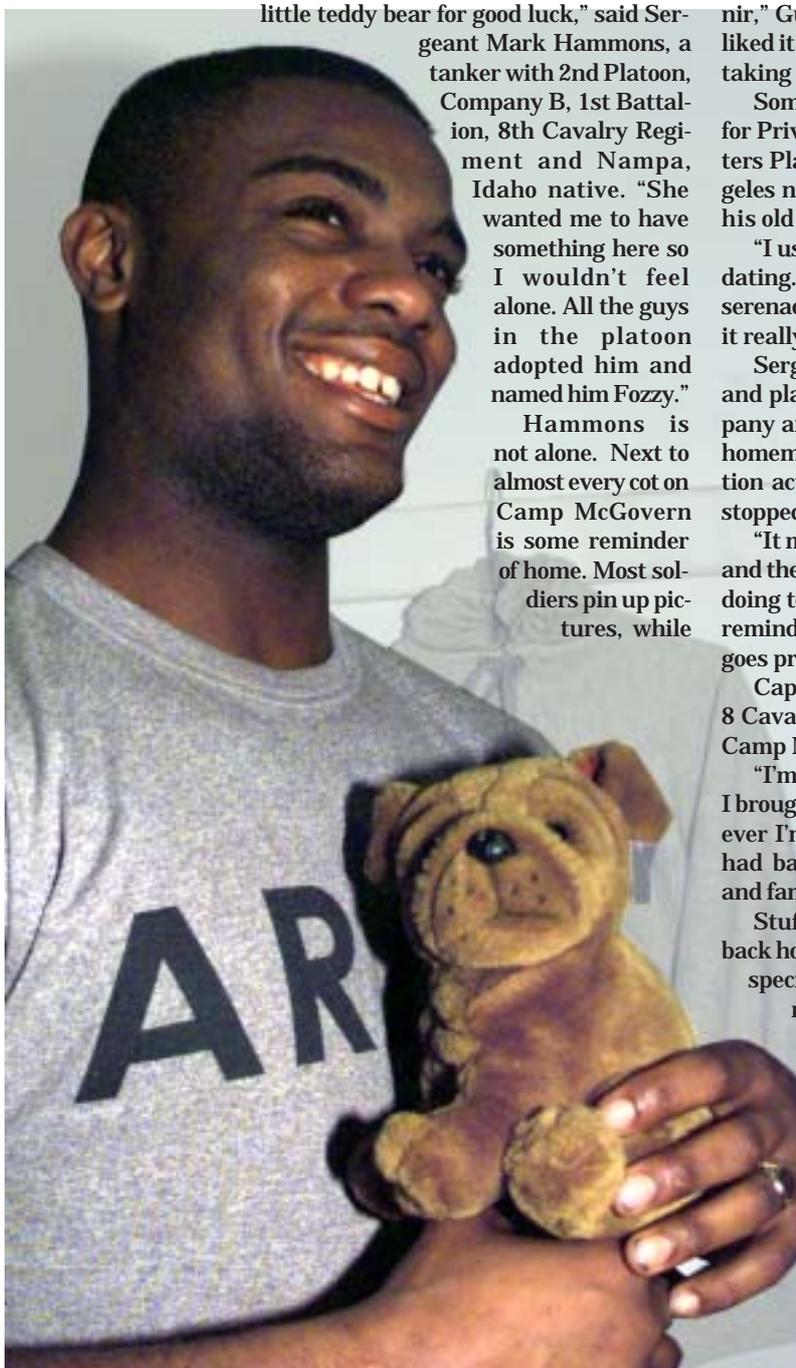
Captain David Lee Sanders III, commander of Company D, 1-8 Cavalry and Helotes, Texas native, can often be heard around Camp McGovern, reminding everyone of what he misses most.

"I'm a big hunter, and since I'm missing duck season this year, I brought my duck calls with me to Bosnia," Sanders said. "Whenever I'm blowing the duck calls it reminds me of all the fun I've had back home on hunting trips. It's my reminder of friends and family."

Stuffed animal toys seem to be the most popular token from back home. Private First Class Defredrick Cole, a communication specialist with Headquarters Platoon, Company B, 20th Engineer Battalion and Talladega, Ala. native, looks at his stuffed toy dog every night to be reminded of his girlfriend back home.

"She gave this to me as good luck to keep me safe while I'm out here," Cole said. "I keep him up on my shelf and look at him every night, because I want to be reminded of the people that care about me back home. It's funny, but I like to think this little guy looks after my stuff when I'm out on a mission."

Even though most McGovern soldiers won't get a chance to make it home for the holidays, sleeping with a stuffed bear or playing guitar helps bring troops just a little closer to home.



Tent City Two becomes Sapper Village

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

Tent City Two has a new name and a new look. Where there were once tents there will now be South East Asian huts for all the soldiers in this area.

A project which started on Nov 15 is scheduled for completion on Dec 15. The new SEA huts will be a warm welcome to those who lived in tents.

"We have been working day and night and we are on schedule to beat the cold weather before it sets in here at Eagle Base," Petty Officer First Class Rob W. Arnold, the project manager from Oxnard, Calif., with the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40, from Port Hueneme, Calif., said.

The Sapper Village project will involve building 16 double SEA huts with a total of 35 builders and construction workers including steel workers, electricians, utility men and equipment operators working directly with Bosnians from Brown and Root.

"There is a lot to do when you tear down a tent and put up a SEA hut," Arnold said. "We do salvage some of the wood, but mostly we make sure we have all the supplies needed to put up a SEA hut before we do anything. This is our third project, but it's been the easiest. We can tear down a tent and work our way up."

"Putting up the roof is our most difficult task," 3rd Class Petty Officer Jeremy W. Rockwell, a builder in the NMCB 40 said. "Nailing down the gable trust on the end of the walls and framing them takes a lot of teamwork. Just getting the spacing right takes time and it has to be accurate."

"It's been a pleasure to work with the Naval builders, I have learned a lot of new carpenter skills from them," said Catic Aboulph, a carpenter from the town of

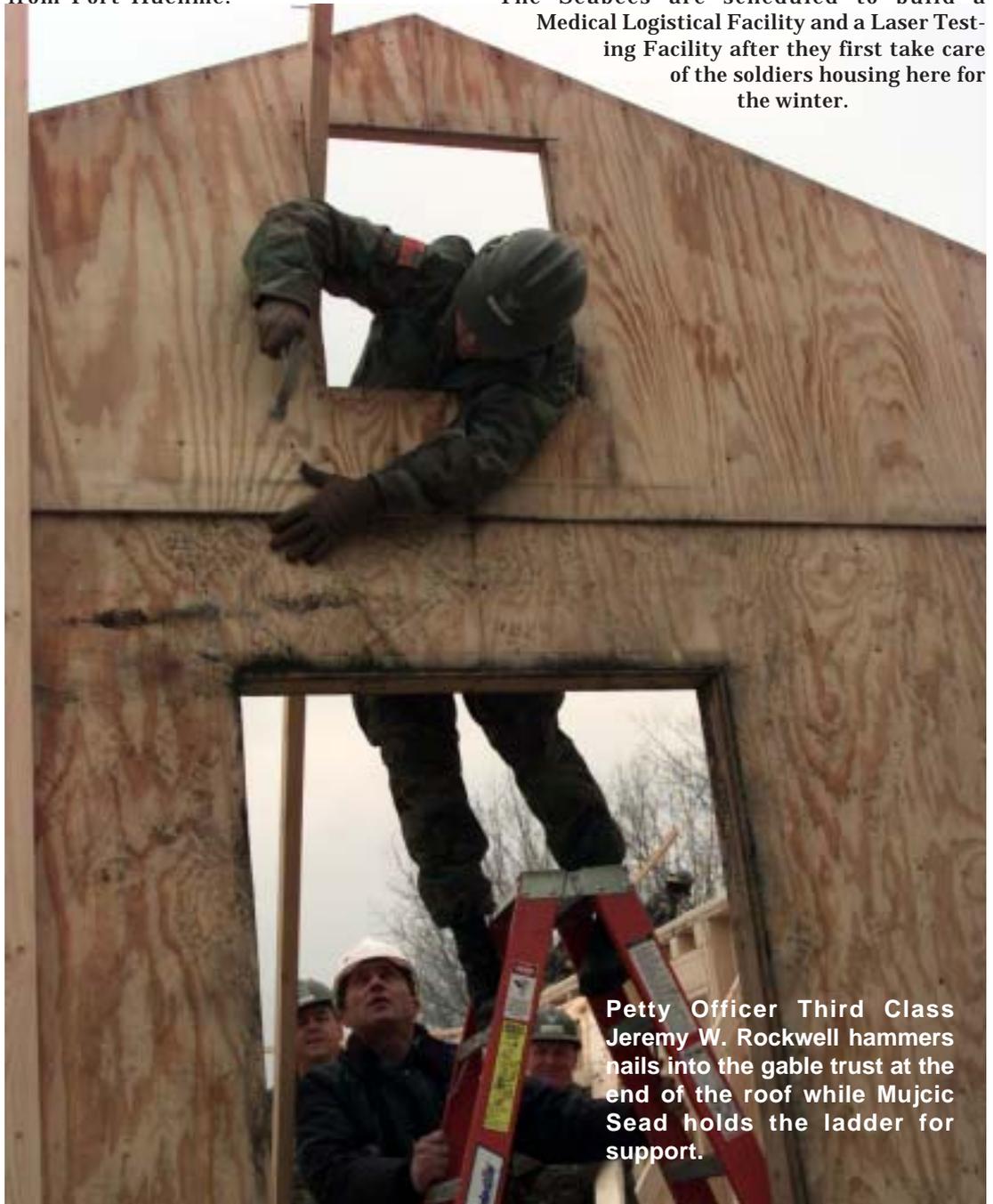
Donje Uvkovije.

"This is different from the concrete buildings we put together here in Bosnia. These wooden buildings are a way for me to learn how to put up different structures," said Avdibasic Sakib, a concrete worker from Kikaci.

The NMBC 40 and their Seabees train at home, but here they put it all together and work long hours to make sure soldiers will have a warm place to sleep for the upcoming winter months.

Seaman Apprentice Lorin T. Asada, a construction apprentice from Honolulu, Hawaii, said, "Here I can learn about a different culture and building style. The people in Tuzla have been really helpful and take pride in what they are building."

The Seabees are scheduled to build a Medical Logistical Facility and a Laser Testing Facility after they first take care of the soldiers housing here for the winter.



Petty Officer Third Class Jeremy W. Rockwell hammers nails into the gable trust at the end of the roof while Mujcic Sead holds the ladder for support.

"Earthmovers" make repairs in Brcko



Specialist Joseph T. Zeigler, a heavy equipment operator with the Earthmovers Platoon, Company A, 52nd Engineer Battalion, and an Omaha, Neb. native, breaks the asphalt on Route Kiwi, a road near Camp McGovern, with a BOMAG

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

The morning sun casts long shadows as huge bulldozers begin shredding the damaged road. A child stares open-mouthed at the awesome machines just a few feet from his home. An elderly man smiles and waves at laboring soldiers.

The soldiers look up long enough to return the friendly gesture, then continue working. Another day has begun for Company A, 52nd Engineer Battalion, Earthmovers Platoon at Camp McGovern.

According to Specialist Kevin S. Diekmann, a light equipment and construction operator with the Earthmovers, and a Lake Havasucity, Ariz. native, his job is one of the best in the military. "It's what I like to do. Haven't you ever wanted to get on a dozer and plow dirt? It's fun."

It's also a lot of work too, Diekmann continued. The platoon usually works from sunup to sundown using over 500 tons of equipment to rebuild parking lots, roads and whatever the mission requires, without complaint. Diekmann said the unit loves it. "We're equipment operators. We want to get on the equipment and operate. It's just what we like to do."

The unit always gets their work done either on time or ahead of schedule, said Specialist Sean E. Collins, a heavy equipment operator also with the Earthmovers and a Monticello, N.Y. native.

Because of their efficiency, the unit is usually the first called upon to perform this specialized task of handling earth, Diekmann said – just don't call them combat engineers. "We are not combat engineers, but people mistake us for them all the time. We specialize in construction, they specialize in destruction."

The platoon's latest endeavor is a four-mile section of Route Kiwi, a road leading through the town of Brcko just outside McGovern, Diekmann said. They were chosen because their specialized training was required to handle this task.

The project is estimated to take under two months, and consists of breaking up the asphalt into small chunks, throwing gravel down and mixing the two together, then compacting it

to form a new, surfaced gravel road. It also involves clearing drainage ditches to keep the water level down during storms and prevent washouts.

According to Diekmann, the potholes and other defects along Route Kiwi cause problems to vehicles, such as loosened bolts and alignment problems. Fixing the road will not only improve conditions for the McGovern vehicles, but also help locals commute from place to place.

This project is also a great opportunity to gain experience and teach new soldiers the ropes, Diekmann continued. "They're learning how to resurface a road, and basically what makes a road work and continue to work."

Though the unit specializes in groundwork, they are not limited to it, Collins said. The platoon was required to become lumberjacks when they built a parking lot and a small group of trees were in the way. "We are what the mission dictates," he added.

According to Diekmann, there was one time when the mission dictated him to be a good Samaritan. The engineer observed an elderly man clearing tiles, bricks and other forms of debris out of a ditch and decided to help, using a small equipment excavator, a machine used to scoop and handle dirt.

Diekmann said he wasn't doing anything at the time and the man needed help. "It makes you feel good to help these people out."

For Diekmann, seeing the job finished and the people happy is a reward. "When you're done at the end of the day and you achieve what you set out to accomplish, you feel good; and when you wake up in the morning, you know you're going to achieve something again."

Soldiers keep in touch with video

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

Being deployed during Operation Joint Forge can bring hardship to soldiers and their family members. The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment is going above and beyond to help eliminate some of the difficulties and stress that may arise during deployment by working to maintain family cohesion.

Task Force 2-8 Cavalry is helping soldiers stay in touch with their family members in many ways, such as free telephone calls and e-mail, but they are taking communicating to a new level with the help of video teleconferencing.

Video teleconferencing is a means of communicating via the Internet using the telephone and computer screen for visual support.

Captain Mike Farley of London, Ky., Mayor of Camp Bedrock, said video teleconferencing is used to help the commander exchange information with the rear detachment, but is also used as a morale booster for the soldiers deployed to Multinational Division (North) and their families.

"Video teleconferencing is like sharing information with someone over the phone, but you can also see them," Farley said. "You can see everything they do as they do it. It's like being in the same room with the person you are communicating with. Allowing soldiers to use this equipment enhances their morale, because they get the chance to see that their family members are being taken care of, and it also does the same for the spouses, because they get to see that their husband or wife is doing fine here. We have soldiers (wives) who have had births during this deployment, and they get the chance to see their child for the first time."

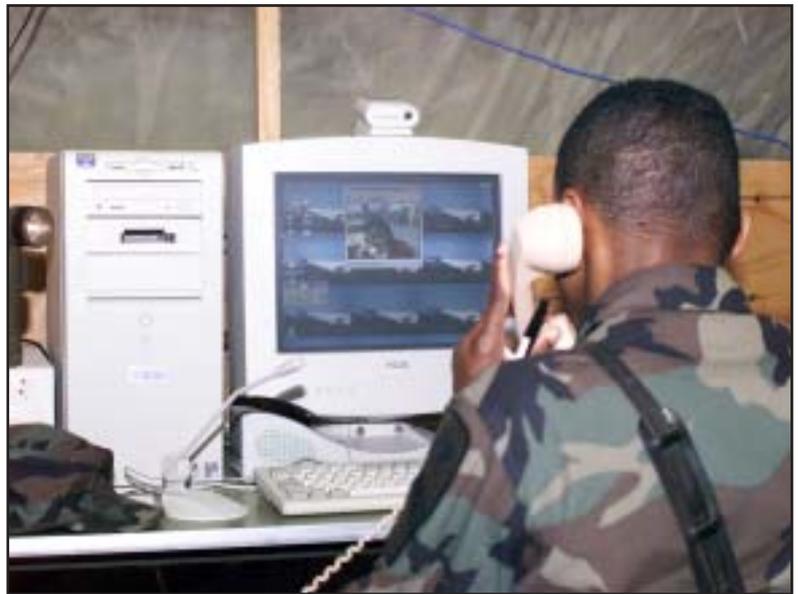


Moore speaks to his wife and son during the video teleconference held on Camp Bedrock.

child for the first time."

Lieutenant Colonel Barry Fowler of Fort Hood, Texas, Task Force 2-8 Cavalry Commander, said he remembers when they first began using video teleconferencing as a form of communication between family members.

"When we first started this, everyone was a little hesitant to use it because it wasn't the normal way of communicating, but now everyone is at ease and want to use it more," Fowler said. "Although Force Protection is our number one priority, families will always be a priority to Task Force 2-



Sergeant First Class Cedric B. Moore of Huntsville, Ala., Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, communicates with his wife via video teleconference.

8. The first thing to understand is that families must communicate or problems will arise, and I think the video teleconferencing is helping us get over that mountain."

Judi Thiele, Fowler's wife and family support group coordinator, said the wives and children are thrilled to see their loved ones on the computer monitor.

"The video teleconferences help us keep in touch with our husbands and fills us in on what they are doing there. Seeing them on the computer screen is like being in a candy store and not being able to touch the candy. It makes you a little sad you can't give them a big hug, but it's comforting to see them," Thiele said. "Although we would rather have them here with us, we are proud of what they are doing to help the people of Bosnia. They're not just keeping peace in Bosnia, but they are working to maintain peace in America for us and our children."

Thiele said video teleconferencing is somewhat like a double-edge sword. "Communicating over the Internet helps the family members stay in contact with each other, but sometimes family members talk about things that could be frustrating to their spouse, like rumors or problems that they can solve on their own. Family members should try to concentrate on the positive things and only focus on the problems they can't solve themselves," Thiele added.

Family members wanting to talk to their spouse via video teleconference should first try to coordinate with their spouse followed by a visit to their local family readiness center. They should talk to one of the representatives there about their plans. The doors are open 24 hours a day and seven days a week for soldiers to visit.

By keeping soldiers in touch with their families, Task Force 2-8 Cavalry is helping troops keep up their morale. Although it's not like being there, video teleconferencing can take a soldier a little closer to home.

The Balkan Challenge

Story and photo by Specialist Kimmanda Collins
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In the Army, there are a million ways to test one soldier's physical endurance. The most common test used is the physical training test, but sometimes the Army finds a way to make physical training fun.

The soldiers of the 410th Military Police Company teamed up with the Russian Brigade to participate in the Balkan Challenge at Camp Dobil. The competition consisted of a number of events that focused on not only physical stamina, but also the ability to work together as a team. Many of the events really put the mind to work as well as the body.

"The first obstacle we had to overcome was communication with the Russian soldiers. We didn't have an interpreter to work with, but we got through the language barrier pretty well. Some tasks were more difficult than others, but overall I think we did a good job," said Specialist Troy Peck, a Springfield, Va. native and MP with the 410th. Each event was worth so many points and at the end of each event, evaluators tallied up the scores from all the events to determine an overall winner.

"We worked well as a team to cover each others weakness in each event," said Sergeant Scott Milne, a Floral City, Fla. native and MP with the 410th. "We had a number of soldiers display individual excellency during the competition, but it was all about teamwork. Sometimes we didn't get the scores we wanted, but we had fun working

with the Russians." Of course, the Russian Brigade trains differently from the U.S. Army, but when it came down to certain events, the Russian soldiers were able to give a helping hand.

"One of the Russian soldiers was in his sixth month of surgeon school," said Private First Class James Wise, an Alexander, La. native and MP with the 410th. He really helped out during the event where we had to apply a field dressing to a simulated casualty. Later we had to transport the casualty to the aid station using a six man litter carry, so he really helped us out.

The Russians were only going to be on Camp Dobil for one day. So a competition that should have lasted for two days turned into one lengthy and rigorous day for the MP's.

"Although we had a limited amount of time to prepare for the competition, I was extremely pleased with the squad's overall performance," said Staff Sergeant Gerard Fuller of the 410th MP and a Buffalo, N.Y. native. "I was especially pleased with the abundance of teamwork used between the American and Russian soldiers."

"This was an experience you can only receive in the Army," said Private First Class DeRal Ralph, a Pittsburgh, Penn. native and MP with the 410th. I look forward to working with the Russians again or any other army for that matter. The real challenge doesn't come from the events. I believe it's an overall test of how well we work with others as a team and if that's the case, then everybody is a winner."