

TALON



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A student from Donja Visca Elementary School performs a magic trick for the Bedrock soldiers during a pageant. (Photo by Sergeant Derrick Witherspoon. See next page.)

"The army taught me some great lessons -- to be prepared for catastrophe -- to endure being bored -- and to know that however fine a fellow I thought myself in my usual routine there were other situations in which I was inferior to men that I might have looked down upon had not experience taught me to look up." – *Oliver Wendell Homes, Jr.*

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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 Brigades 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



In CSM Inman's absence, the guest author this week is CSM Leese, 1st Brigade CSM, from Eagle Base.

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy New Year and to thank the total team (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and our civilian force) for a very successful 1998. As we move into 1999, I ask that we continue to focus on the mission, but never forget that the safety of all our soldiers is our foremost priority. We must use all available tools, such as PCI's, PCC and risk assessment and management to ensure that safety is stressed in all missions. I cannot overemphasize that all leaders must know, use and understand the risk assessment and management process. I'm confident that leaders at all levels will do their part to ensure that safety standards are enforced.

While force protection is our priority, keeping our force intact (reenlisting soldiers) is a close second. This may sound easy for some, but we all know that the military is struggling to recruit our young people to serve their country, so our senior leadership is relying on the active component to retain quality soldiers. To help us, our Army's senior leadership has proposed an increase in our pay and improvements to retirement benefits as discussed last week by CSM Inman. Additionally, reenlistment bonuses were announced this week for selected MOSs. I must stress to all leaders and soldiers to use the retention NCOs at all levels for every MOS. I strongly believe that leaders from squad level to Brigade Commanders must do their part to retain outstanding soldiers. The most important link in retaining soldiers is the company chain of command. Finally, to the soldiers who are in the reenlistment window and not sure what you want to do, I ask that you dig deep in your heart and lay out all the facts before deciding what you want to do. For those who are married, your decision is a family matter and you and your spouse must decide what's best for your family. Your chain of command and I are committed to keeping great soldiers and families in the Army. **First Team! Ironhorse!**

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Local school entertains soldiers

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

As the children danced and sang for the soldiers, the joy that radiated from their small bodies suggested a much bigger message. The peacekeeping mission in Multinational Division (North) was more than a success – it's the beginning of a peaceful future for the children of Bosnia.

The Psychological Operations team at Camp Bedrock was recently invited to the Donja Visca Elementary School, along with other Bedrock soldiers, to view a pageant performed by some of the children attending the school. The pageant consisted of children singing, dancing, and acting out different skits. It was organized as a goodwill gesture by the school after the Psychological Operations team invited some of the children to take a tour of Bedrock.

Staff Sergeant Michael J. Thode, 13th Psychological Operations Battalion team leader at Bedrock, said about 35 soldiers participated in the event.

"The school and the children were very thankful that we invited them to visit Bedrock, so this was their way of saying 'Thank you,'" Thode, a New Brighton, Minn. native said.

Thode said showing the children that the Stabilization Force soldiers also care about them could be the turning point in resuming peace in Bosnia, considering children of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

"It must have taken a lot for them to get the pageant together, and although we couldn't understand everything they were saying, we still got the message," said Staff Sergeant Matthew T. Phelps, a master gunner for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. "I have been receiving 'any soldier' mail from children in the states, and I wanted to



A student from Donja Visca Elementary School sings for the Bedrock soldiers.

send them pictures to show them what Bosnia looks like. I took some pictures of the kids at the school to send back to the kids in the states, because the children here are really what Bosnia is all about. I also want children in the states to see that the children here are just like them, but living under different conditions," said the Shreveport, La., native. Phelps said he was glad he could see the pageant.

Staff Sergeant Robin C. Rivera of Springfield, Mass., a vehicle commander for Company A, 2-8 Cavalry, said this was his third time visiting the children at the school.

"You know, it's good taking time out to show these children that we care about them and their town and that we are here to help make things better for them and their children in the future," Rivera said. "This kind of thing, like attending their pageant, sticks with them all their lives. This generation and the next to come will remember all that SFOR has done to help them."

The soldiers said they felt the pageant was a big success and look forward to future interaction.



Soldiers from Camp Bedrock look on as children from Donja Visca School perform a traditional dance.

Martial Arts, more than a sport

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

It's more than a way to fight," said Specialist Nathan L. Miller, a desk sergeant with the 1st Platoon, 410th Military Police Company, at Camp McGovern, and a Bakersfield, Calif. native. "Like its name implies, it's an art. People can express themselves when they move, like dancing or any other form of art."

Miller said for him, martial arts is a way of life. It inspires him to be more disciplined and humble, qualities he said makes him a better person. Naturally, when he was deployed to Bosnia, he wanted to continue practicing martial arts to keep his skills sharp, so he talked to McGovern's Morale, Welfare and Recreation representative about getting a group together and possibly teaching a class.

"If I stopped practicing, I knew I would lose speed and technique. I figured there had to be people who were thinking the same thing, so I tried to get them together to train."

Miller said he was advised by the MWR representative to set up a time and place where participants could meet. Then he put out fliers to advertise, and the class was started within a week.

About a month later, the program was going strong with a few members that meet regularly, and a handful that

make it whenever they get the chance.

Miller occasionally finds himself in a unique situation – instructing soldiers that outrank him. Miller said this hasn't been a problem, though, because every soldier he has taught in the past has respected his position as a teacher. As a result, the class runs smoothly and everybody has fun.

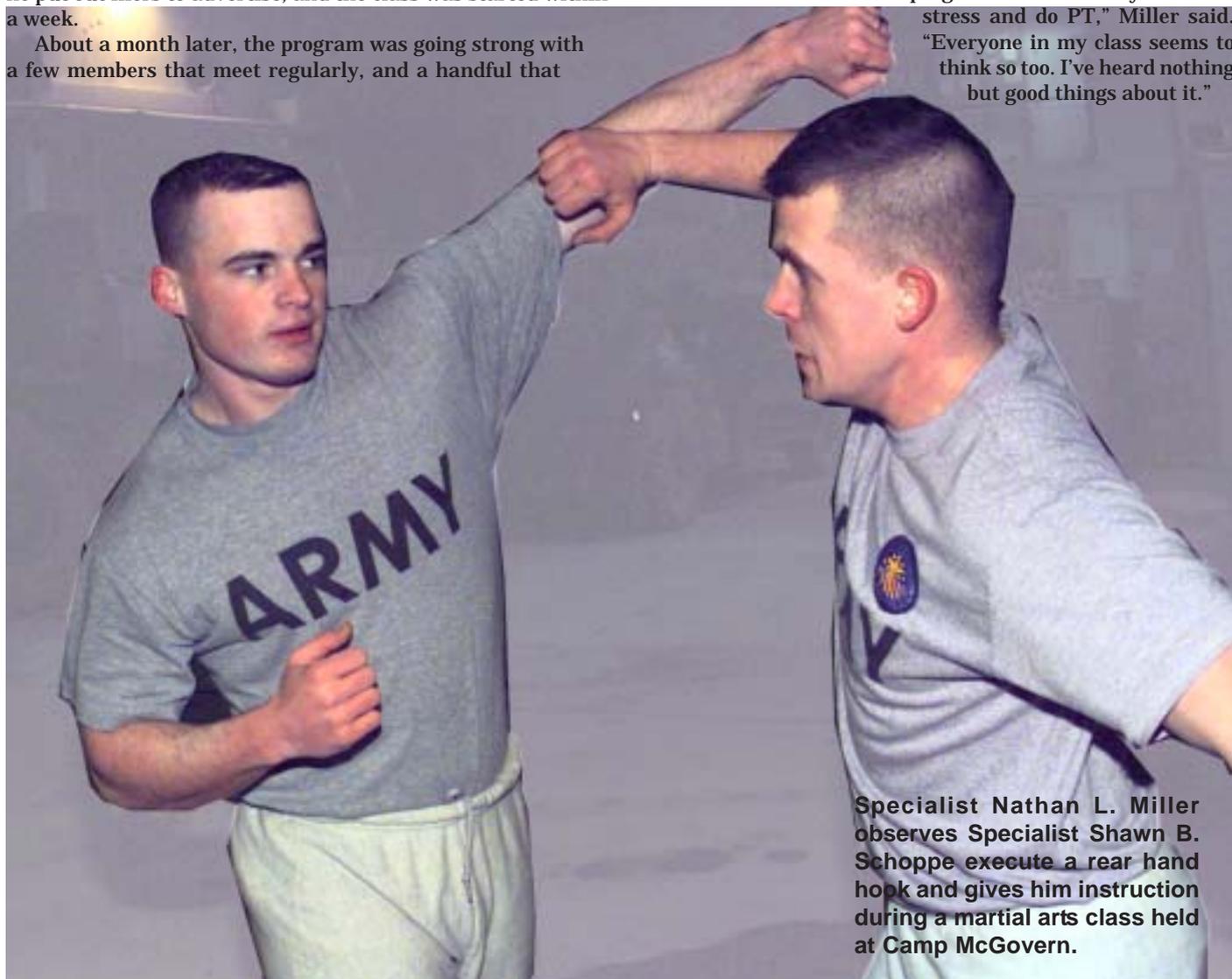
Miller said the class offers the soldiers several advantages, including character traits like self-confidence and self-esteem, and it provides an alternative form of physical training. In fact, Miller said most people who practice martial arts rarely do it to learn to fight.

"If a person only wants to learn how to punch and kick, he should take kick boxing. Most people who initially signed up to learn how to fight learn something more important – how not to fight," Miller said.

Specialist Shawn B. Schoppe, a McGovern firefighter with the 463rd Engineer Battalion, Firefighter Detachment, and a Huntsville, Texas native, is one of Miller's regular students. He said he enjoys the PT aspect of the class most. "It offers both cardiovascular and muscular endurance ... all rolled into one. It's some of the best PT I've had here, and it's a lot of fun."

Miller encourages anyone with an interest to come down and at least check out the program. "It's a fun way to relieve

stress and do PT," Miller said. "Everyone in my class seems to think so too. I've heard nothing but good things about it."



Specialist Nathan L. Miller observes Specialist Shawn B. Schoppe execute a rear hand hook and gives him instruction during a martial arts class held at Camp McGovern.

Amidnight reenlistment, promotion



Private First Class Laneitra Dawkins gets promoted and receives her new specialist rank five minutes into the new year.

Story and photos by Sergeant First Class Pat Johnson
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Office

At the stroke of midnight, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry, brought in 1999 with its first New Year's reenlistment and promotion in Bosnia.

Records of all kind will be set in 1999, and Specialist Natacha Vasquez, HHC 1st Brigade, was intent on becoming the first soldier in Bosnia to reenlist in the military. One minute after midnight, Vasquez was shaking hands with Captain Kris Perkins, HHC commander, and renewing her vows to serve in the military for another three years.

"I have the opportunity of working with good NCO leaders. My senior NCOs were my inspiration to reenlist," Vasquez said. "At first I wanted to do my term and get out of the military, but since working with my job and learning the different skills and gaining some experience, I changed my mind. I like my job as a logistician. I like my company and the soldiers. The people I work with are the best part of my job.



thing with my life and I like what I'm doing and the way I feel about myself."

Dawkins, a native of Cesnee, South Carolina, has been in the military for two years and plans to make the military a career. She wants to continue going up the ranks, and hopes to one day become a sergeant major.

"What better way to start the New Year than to retain and promote quality soldiers," said Perkins, a Durant, Okla. native. "This was an opportunity we didn't want to miss. Our aim was to have the first soldier in the military to reenlist and be promoted. We may not have been the first (in the Army) ... I know we're the first for Eagle Base, Tuzla."

Perkins reiterated to his troops observing the ceremony that today's job market is competitive both in the military and in the civilian world, and that reenlisting presents tough decisions.

"The soldiers here have an opportunity to be a part of history. They are finding out for themselves that the Army isn't just about money," Perkins said. "It's something that they can do, day to day, and take pride in, and be a part of as they grow in experience and knowledge. The key to our future is a strong, quality Army, and keeping outstanding soldiers in the military is our job as leaders."

Specialist Natacha Vasquez (left) becomes the first soldier in Bosnia to reenlist in 1999 during the ceremony performed by Captain Kris Perkins.

American, Russian engineers blow away

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

Two days before Christmas, soldiers from 2nd Platoon of Company C, 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, were giving and receiving a special kind of gift. It was the gift of knowledge.

Company C engineers, along with 10 eager volunteers from the Scout Platoon of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, participated in a joint demolition range exercise with Russian airborne engineers from Camp Priboj at the Camp Demi Demolition Range in Bosnia.

Soldiers who get the opportunity to train with Russian soldiers in Multinational Division (North) realize the unique advantages of training in Bosnia. They see different kinds of equipment, tactics and techniques. They improve their ability to teach and train any foreign soldier. They improve their leadership and planning skills and they gain intangible assets that come with working side by side with Russian soldiers.

The American engineering soldiers kicked-off the training by giving classes on concrete-breaching charges, timber-cutting charges, steel-cutting charges and field-fortification charges.

Groups of Russian soldiers walked in the eight-inch snow from one station to the next as the Company C noncommissioned officers explained how to calculate the amount and placement of the C-4 explosive needed to destroy the targets.

After their classes, the Russian soldiers, officers and Scouts were taken to five trees where they calculated the amount of C-4 needed for their particular tree, and then placed the charges.

Russian and American soldiers worked together. Some American soldiers used calculators while some of the Russian soldiers produced books to convert inches to centimeters to make their calculations. Sergeant Eric Lee Carrier, a Bethel, Maine native, was the instructor for the timber-cutting charge class. Carrier said that he learned the Russian engineer technique for this type of demolition. "They showed us their formulas and the way they do it." Carrier said the Russian formula included a variable for tree hardness in addition to the radius figures used in the U. S. Army formula.

The soldiers drove away from the site and the targets were blown. Following the explosions, they returned to survey the damage. Steel I-beam cutting instructor, Staff Sergeant Lenard Thomas, of Amory, Miss., and a squad leader with Company C, said that he was told by the Russian engineers, "Nice cut on your steel."

The next day Russian airborne officers started off their training day by showing the American soldiers their demolition gear.

Colonel Douglas L. Horn, Engineer Brigade commander, 1st Cavalry Division, was impressed with the Russian equipment display. "They were willing to show us everything they had, describe it, and discuss the attributes of it," the Jefferson, Texas native said.

Seeing the Russian equipment in action during their minefield-breaching drill was even more exciting for the American engineers. "The line charge that they did to clear the footpath -- that was tremendous," said Sergeant Mitchell J. Valero of Company C. The Roswell, New Mexico native squad leader said that he would like to have the same kind of equipment.

Captain Robert Sobeski, Company C commander, explained that the man-pack line charge carried by the Russian airborne engineers to clear a footpath through a minefield is a new concept. "I'm told that our light engineers have man-pack line charges also, but my mechanized soldiers haven't had a chance to see that," said the Pittston, Pa. engineer. Sobeski's soldiers use the mine clearing line charge (MICLIC), towed by a track, to breach a lane wide enough for a vehicle. Although very convenient, the Russian man-carried line



A Russian airborne engineer shows Russian soldiers the demolition gear.



Specialist Mark Costa, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 20th Engineers, measures spacing for charges for detonation of a two-man fighting position with overhead cover.

barriers during mine awareness class

charge breaches a lane only 40 centimeters wide.

They detonated line charges, foxhole charges and mines during their battle drill. "Seeing their tactics, how they approach the mine field, how they use their man-pack line charges, go through the mine field, place fox-holes on the opposite side to provide suppressive fire for the assault force to come through, that's all fantastic information," said Sobeski. "It's surprising that our training back home at Fort Hood is very similar to what they showed us," he added. Other soldiers agreed that they appreciated this opportunity to give as well as receive information about their combat tactics.

Although soldiers commented on the similarity of material demolition techniques and minefield-breaching drill tactics, there were two differences pointed out by Sobeski. "The first day my NCOs gave the classes, which is a stark contrast from what the Russians did. Their officers gave all the classes."

Eleven American soldiers taking part in this exercise were ecstatic about learning demolition tactics from the 20th Engineers. The Scout platoon leader, First Lieutenant Kelvin Demetris Brown said, "Demolition is something that Scouts are taught in the Scout platoon leader's course and also in 19D training, but do to a lack of resources, we never get the opportunity to do it ourselves." Brown said that most of his soldiers have never had

hands-on demolition training like what they got at the range with the Russian engineers. He hopes that they get another opportunity to get this training before they leave Bosnia, or when they get back to Fort Hood.

The exercise impacted on leadership capabilities of participating soldiers. Maravich said that teaching Russian engineers here in Bosnia improved the leadership abilities of his NCOs.

Sobeski, who has never done joint-demolition training with foreign soldiers before his Bosnia deployment, explains the effect on his knowledge. "It puts me in a very unique situation with a very small group of captains who have actually seen Russian techniques being employed by Russian engineers. I think I have a better understanding for how the Russian engineers operate and what their capabilities are from this exercise," Sobeski said. "I hope that their image of us is just as positive as ours of them."

The intangible benefits of this demolition exercise between the Americans and Russian engineers are sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious. Sergeant Darrel J. Malik, Company C squad leader, enjoyed the feeling of camaraderie with the Russian soldiers. Other soldiers echoed this sentiment.

Command Sergeant Major Thomas P. Fejeran, 20th Engineer Battalion CSM, said that it was good training between our soldiers and the Russian engineers. "I learned something today; 27 years and I learned something today," said Fejeran. "This is what it's all about."

Sobeski said Colonel Leonid Usik, Russian airborne engineer, told him that we're not politicians, we're engineers. We can look at each other's methods, teaching procedures, tactics and learn from one another. "And I think that's what happened (at our demolition exercise)," Sobeski said.



neer shows American and covered line-charge system.



Lieutenant Colonel Leonid Usik, commander of the Russian airborne engineers, shows a charge used to create hasty fighting positions to Colonel Douglas L. Horn, Engineer Brigade commander, 1st Cavalry Division, and Lieutenant Colonel William H. Haight III, 20th Engineer Battalion commander, 1st Cavalry Division.

Smoking cessation class helps kick habit



First Lieutenant Miguel Ortiz distributes nicotine patches to a soldier after attending a smoking cessation class.

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

My new year's resolution is to quit smoking altogether," said Sergeant First Class Kris M. Kearns, of High Point, N.C., the platoon sergeant for the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. "That way I can show my troops it can be done."

As many habitual smokers have realized, quitting smoking is no easy mission. Kearns realized he needed assistance in order to quit.

He received this help by attending a smoking cessation class held at Camp McGovern on Thursday evenings by First Lieutenant Miguel Ortiz, of Cayey, Puerto Rico, a physician's assistant for Task Force 1-8.

Soldiers are first and foremost taught there are many

methods they can use to help them stop smoking, and if need be, they could use "the patch," a nicotine adhesive that releases nicotine into the body. "We always recommend to quit without using the patch, but it's very difficult for the soldiers that have been smoking for years," Ortiz said. "If they cannot do it on their own, we try to give them a hand by providing them with nicotine patches."

The patch offers the advantage of delivering a dosage of nicotine through the skin without the harmful side effects caused by smoking, Ortiz said.

The nicotine patch program comes in three different phases, and how much you smoke depends on the dosage you are given, according to Ortiz. People who smoke heavily are given the larger dose at first, and then work toward reducing their intake to the middle and then low-dose patch.

Ortiz said it is possible to quit if you really want to without even using the patch, but it sometimes helps people who are having a hard time with the cravings. "But quitting cold turkey is even better because you don't have to use nicotine at all," he added.

The soldiers are required to attend one class in order to obtain information on the patch. "They have to make sure the soldiers understand that they have to want to quit," Kearns said.

According to Ortiz, when the classes first started, they had a success rate of about 50 percent, but now since the cigarette prices have gone up, the success rate has gone up to about 60 percent. "Cigarettes are getting too expensive, so they want to save money," he said.

A lot of soldiers have many reasons why they want to quit smoking such as their health, kids or spouse. The most common reason, according to Ortiz, is because of economic reasons. "No matter what the reason is, I'm glad to help them quit because cigarette smoking is a very bad habit and harmful to your health," he said.

According to Kearns, since attending the class and receiving the patch, he has greatly reduced his need to smoke. Although he does get the urge to smoke now and then, it's not enough for him to go out and buy a pack. "What the patches did was reduce my physical need to smoke, and once you get past the physical need, it's all in your head. The mental need is what I'm fighting with now," he said.

According to Ortiz, the soldier has to make the sacrifice and feel positive about it. "If they really want to quit, they have to be serious about it," he said. "That's the first step."

With rising cigarette prices, soldiers have more reason than ever before to "quit the habit."

Maintenance keeps 1st Team moving

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

Company C, 2-5 Cavalry Maintenance Team, is a highly mobile crew that ensures vehicles keep running for 1st Team at Comanche Base.

The 2-5 Cavalry Maintenance Team has moved wherever it's been needed, and is scheduled to move to Camp Dobil.

Sergeant Frankey J. Meals of Company C, 2-5 Cavalry Maintenance Team and a shop foreman, said, "We work on six different kinds of vehicles here. The XM-1114 Armor high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle HMMWVs, M-2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle, M-113 Armor Personnel Carrier, M-998 HMMWV, M-88 Recovery Vehicle and five-ton trucks.

"The first thing we do before we look at any vehicle is make sure the preventive maintenance check and services list is completed. We want to know exactly what went wrong with the vehicle before we start working on it," the Lawton, Okla. native said.

The 2-5 Maintenance Team works on over 40 vehicles a day and uses the Unit Level Logistics System Ground System. ULLS-G is the Army's new computer system used to assist maintenance shops with ordering parts and keeping records on vehicle maintenance.

Specialist Terrel L. Hood, an automation logistical specialist on the Maintenance Team, and a resident of Columbia, S.C., said, "The ULLS-G system also helps us complete the Army's Oil Analysis Program. We first sample the oil to see if it needs changing in a vehicle. This method saves the Army money over the old way of changing the oil every two thousand miles. Now we know when the oil is bad in a vehicle."

"The biggest problem we've had here besides packing up and moving to different locations is Power Control Boxes going bad in vehicles. This box controls the ability of a vehicle to start," Meals said. "We also have seen a lot of bad batteries come in and out of here during the cold weather too."

"Water can freeze up in a vehicle with low fluids. The more fluids, the less water condensation has a chance of building up and freezing," Hood said.

"We offer a variety of maintenance on vehicles. We can maintain anything from a starter to a radiator," Meals said. "Most of the time we can fix a vehicle and have it out on the road the same day. We are also able to get parts on demand, especially

when it comes to keeping the vehicles running, while doing the Stabilization Force protection mission here."

The 2-5 Maintenance Team can even do a little bodywork, depending on the damage. "We once had a M-998 HMMWV in here with a wrecked right front quarter panel and we were able to get the holes lined up and fix it. I guess you could say we do a little body work when we can," said Private First Class Ryan C. Harder, a Bradley hull mechanic from St. Clair, Mich.

The team cross trains its mechanics whenever possible. Private Jeffery D. Zerweck, a turret mechanic in 2-5 maintenance and a resident of Arlington, Texas said, "I do a little of everything. I like working with the M-2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle, but its been challenging and rewarding learning how to work on other vehicles when I can."

The 2-5 Maintenance Team continues to work on vehicles, and even recovers vehicles that are down, when needed here in support of Operation Joint Forge.



Private Jeffery D. Zerweck works on the brakes of a 5-ton truck.

A new beginning for soldiers in Bosnia



Private First Class Brandon L. Schroeder of Houston, Texas, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry, said he plans on spending a lot of time relaxing and having fun next year.

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

As the hands on the clock slowly made their way to the top, the count down began. "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. Happy New Year!" screamed the Camp Bedrock soldiers as they celebrated the arrival of a new year filled with new goals and plans that will carry them into a new millennium.

As the Multinational Division (North) soldiers continue to focus on the peacekeeping mission, they also concentrate on deploying back to their families, and on their New Year's goals.

Corporal Dennis A. Houston of Burlington, N.J., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, said although he knows the mission here is worthwhile, he can't wait to get home and spend the year reuniting

with his family.

"I really want to get back and spend as much of the year with my son as I can," Houston said. "Playing football and tossing the baseball around. To a kid, it's the little things that count a lot." Houston added that he is looking forward to spending time with his wife, who is pregnant and due in April.

Specialist Jonquil N. Livingston of Tallahassee, Fla., 351st Postal Company, said she also wants to spend time with her son in the new year.

"I want to spend a lot of quality time with my son in 1999. This is the first time I have been away from him for this long, so it's hard on the both of us. As a reservist, you have to be ready for missions like Operation Joint Forge, and all that goes along with it, including leaving your family for a little while," Livingston said.

Private Dana A. Descenes of Caribou, Maine, Company C, 2-8 Cavalry, said he plans to spend next year reuniting with his family, and also getting them settled in at Fort Hood.

"I recently moved to Fort Hood before I got deployed to Bosnia, so me and my wife decided it would be better if she stayed in Maine until I got back," Descenes said. He added that he is also looking forward to being promoted to the rank of specialist. "I will be working pretty hard next year to make sure I qualify to be promoted to specialist by the new millennium," Descenes said.

Many of the soldiers may have lots of work on their hands next year as they deploy back to Fort Hood and begin to prepare for the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif. Although this might be a big challenge for them, a majority of the soldiers said that obtaining a good education would be just as

important to them this year.

Private First Class Abel Mesa of Miami, Fla., Company C, 2-8 Cavalry, said he plans to make education a priority in his life this year. "I plan on going back to school once I leave Bosnia, and this deployment has helped me to prepare myself for this," Mesa said. "The money that I am earning over here will help me pay for my college courses."

Staff Sergeant John S. Constance of Lexington, Ohio, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Support Team, said he has the same educational goals as Mesa this year.

"I have already started taking classes here with the University of Maryland and I plan to continue doing this once I get back. A good education is something that every good leader really needs to have," Constance said.

For most Bedrock soldiers, 1999 heralds the beginning of a year filled with great opportunities and equally great challenges.

Soldiers take charge of entertainment

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

When it comes to creating Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs, whom better to be in charge of it than the soldiers it serves. "We have a better understanding of what we want," said Sergeant Herbert A. Veness, of Danbury, Conn., the MWR representative from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.

The strength of McGovern MWR is that the soldiers direct the program, giving it continuity, and they understand the need for flexibility. "Soldiers are running the programs to support and help other soldiers to enjoy themselves," said Captain David A. Lesperance, of Portland, Ore., the HHC commander and base camp mayor.

According to Veness, an MWR representative from Tuzla comes down at least once a week to make sure everything is running smoothly while allowing the soldiers to continue managing the programs. "They've been very supportive. If we need something, we just give them a call."

Soldiers take the initiative to create and manage a variety of new programs and regularly scheduled tournaments like pool, volleyball, Ping-Pong, spades, dominoes and cribbage as well as aerobics and martial arts, said Veness. "Things are going great. We've got a lot of different events going on," he said.

Many soldiers find the time in their schedule to vol-

unteer their services to support the MWR programs, and they have a variety of reasons to help out. Staff Sergeant Marque R. Nelson, of Dallas, Texas, a radio intercept specialist assigned to Company A, 312th Military Intelligence Battalion, and also a volunteer disc jockey for Karaoke and other musical entertainment, said, "I enjoy music, and being that I enjoy it so much, why not share that with other people."

Nelson devotes almost 20 hours a week to MWR by offering his services as a DJ. He said the people on camp appreciate the time he puts into the programs, and he enjoys his work. "I've had numerous soldiers approach me and say thanks for making time go faster for us," he added.

Another reason Nelson does it is because soldiers need something to do to keep them entertained. "It keeps the soldiers occupied while they're here because otherwise, it could be a long deployment," Nelson said.

MWR programs contribute greatly to the morale of the soldiers at McGovern. It provides them the opportunity for entertainment 24 hours a day. "It gets them involved with other soldiers on the camp, and it makes time go by faster," Lesperance said.

According to Nelson, the programs seem to be doing quite well. There are many soldiers who are willing to volunteer their services to make their deployment to Bosnia more enjoyable. "Don't be afraid to get involved. If you're bored here, it's your own fault," he said.



CampBedrockpreparesford osure

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

The fortress that lies upon a pinnacle of rock known as Camp Bedrock has given many soldiers a safe and secure place to perform the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, but this is slowly coming to an end as Bedrock prepares to become a fond memory.

Bedrock is located in a rock quarry near the town of Zivinice. The camp was added as a site for members of the Stabilization Force during the force buildup in Bosnia, but is scheduled to be closed by March 17. The closure is based on a long-term plan for force reduction.

Major Kenneth H. Riddle of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, said they are trying to reduce the presence that SFOR presently has in the area.

"(The closure) just means the consolidation of resources and relocation of assets from which the units will operate," Riddle, a Leesburg, Va. native, said. "Since we have a lot of room at the other base camps, it makes sense to consolidate everyone at those camps for efficiency reasons."

The Division, Brigade and Battalion Staffs conducted much of the planning for the closure in December, he added.

Riddle said Brown and Root has the primary responsibility of actually disassembling the base camp, but Task force 2-8 will be responsible for all the organizational property such as radios, antennas, vehicles and any other organizational property that was here when they arrived, or that they brought with them.

"Brown and root will begin tearing down tents and buildings, removing electrical wire, and disposing of any hazardous material that is identified around the base camp no later than February 17," Riddle said.

Although Riddle said that the base closure does not play a major role in the force reduction in Bosnia, many of the civilian workers may disagree.

Alma Fazlic, a local civilian and Bedrock cappuccino shop manager, said she wishes the camp wasn't closing. "I like working at Camp Bedrock. The soldiers are

nice and they say coming to the cappuccino shop makes them feel like they are at home. I hope I will be able to work at another camp, but I will miss Bedrock," Fazlic said.

Command Sergeant Major Nathaniel Roberson, Task Force 2-8 command sergeant major, said Bedrock will be missed. "We are all saddened by Bedrock closing because this has become our home. We take a lot of pride in our camp, and we have had a lot of success here. We have become closer as a unit and as a Task Force, and that is shown in the missions that we do everyday. It is also shown in the discipline of the soldiers here," Roberson said.

Riddle said the soldiers will not be affected by the closure and that they are looking forward to going home and being reunited with their families and loved ones.

Lieutenant Colonel Barry Fowler, Overland Park, Kan., Task force 2-8 commander, said he is proud of what the Task Force has been able to accomplish from Bedrock.

"Camp Bedrock has provided a place for us to come together as a team. The Task Force came from different locations in the continental United States. Active duty, and a lot of reservists, are here at Camp Bedrock, and we have been able to come together as a team," Fowler said. "One of the reasons we are here is not to establish a long term presence, but to accomplish the peacekeeping mission. Once the mission is done, we are going to turn the peacekeeping responsibility, and responsibilities of maintaining law and order, back over to the local community and government officials," Fowler said.

He added that closing the base camp and moving the Task Force following them to a different location signifies to the people of Bosnia that the United States does take it's presence here very seriously, and SFOR is allocating its resources where they need to go.

So, as Bedrock becomes a fond memory, and the fortress comes down, one thing will never be forgotten — that Bedrock was home to many a soldier and civilian, and though it may be going away physically, it will always be in their hearts.

