

Quality of life issue

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TALON

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



In CSM Inman's absence, the guest author this week is CSM Garcia, 1-8 Cavalry CSM, from Camp McGovern.

This week I have the opportunity to share with you a word that is found on many award recommendations, NCOERs and OERs, and which is widely misused or misunderstood. It is one of the four individual values all soldiers (leaders and led) are expected to possess.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines the word as a noun: brilliance, unstained purity, freedom from prejudice or malice: FAIRNESS, unreserved honest or sincere expression; FORTHRIGHTNESS. When I asked soldiers for their personal definition of this word, the answers varied, "Saying what is right," "telling it like it is," "taking care of soldiers by standing up for them" and "speaking up."

You have observed soldiers of all ranks expressing his or her views or disagreeing with supervisors and superiors, and normally this is expressed at the completion of unit formations where soldiers grumble about one thing or another. The following are two situations where most soldiers fail: sergeants attempting to answer soldier's questions (most of which are borderline and short of insubordination) as to why they ended up with the task instead of somebody else, or a meeting running behind schedule and late in the day with someone in the back making a remark about timeliness.

The word is "CANDOR." The military defines candor as being frank, open, honest and sincere with your fellow soldiers, seniors and peers. Many soldiers confuse COURAGE, also one of the four individual values, for CANDOR and in doing so often find themselves in trouble. It is an expression of integrity, and if handled properly, disagreeing with others and presenting your point of view isn't wrong.

The following three points will help you exercise candor. First, select the right time and place to offer your criticism or advice. Often soldiers speak up too soon before considering this point and thereby walk away without fully understanding his or her supervisor or superior. Second, do not criticize a plan without a constructive alternative. If you see a weak point in the plan, then provide a suggestion to strengthen it. If you cannot offer an alternative to the plan, then follow the next point. Third, recognize when a leader has made the final decision. You must end the discussion and support legal and proper orders even if you do not personally agree with them. Many times, soldiers do not support the decision and end up labeled as whiners, malcontents, unmotivated and so on. Support the decision to the best of your ability, and on the day you have an alternative it will be more likely accepted and you will make a difference. So support the decision to it's fullest and learn to know what CANDOR can do for you and your soldiers. Finally don't forget to use TACT when CANDOR must be expressed. **FIRST TEAM! MUSTANGS!**

On the Cover

Mortar platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 2-8 on the last hill of their six-mile rucksack run at Camp Bedrock. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston. See page 8.)

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Eagle opens new Education Center

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

The Army is investing for its future by making education a high priority. Construction of a new education center was completed on Eagle Base, and its doors have officially opened at a ribbon cutting ceremony.

"The best educated armies are the armies that win," Major General Kevin P. Byrnes, commander Multinational Division (North) and the 1st Cavalry Division, said. "History has shown time and time again that the thinking soldier has always been, and will continue to be, victorious on the battlefield."

Last semester, over 1,044 soldiers throughout Bosnia enrolled in college courses available through the University of Maryland and the City College of Chicago. Byrnes said that he would like to see that number double.

"This facility is going to be much better for soldiers," Joyce Jacobs, Operation Joint Forge Army Continuing Education Services officer said. "This will be a place where students can sit down and study after finishing their work," she said.

"Thanks to the command and the engineers, soldiers over here won't have to be in a cold, dark tent. They will have the same learning environment as the sol-



Major General Kevin P. Byrnes, commander of Multinational Division (North), cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of Eagle Base's Education Center.

diers stationed stateside," said the Baumholder, Germany native.

The construction of the education center involved a combined effort of the 20th Engineering Battalion, the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 "Seabees," and Brown and Root. The project took about 30 days, said David Cain, a spokesman for Brown and Root.

The education center's main structure was harvested from the closing of Guardian Base.

"We reconfigured the old dining facility, and made it into the education center," Cain said.

"We fitted walls and partitions to create the separate classrooms and offices," he said. "The existing electrical wiring and air conditioning units were reused."

"This is the second time that this structure has been recycled," Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth F. Fischer, 1st Cavalry Division, chief of the Base Camp Coordinating Agency said. "It was first used at Camp Linda, which was closed a long time ago," the Dedham, Mass. native added.

By recycling this structure, the Army saved a significant amount of money, Fischer said.

"This new facility has doubled our previous capacity and added a new computer lab," Jacobs said. "I think it's wonderful. I am so happy and so thrilled. We are all walking on air."

Thanks to the commitment of Army leaders and civilian educators, soldiers have the opportunity to make great strides personally and professionally through the Army's continuing education program.



Mr. Adam Nichols, University of Maryland professor, teaches English Composition to a class of soldiers.

“Playrooms” keep soldiers occupied



Specialist Michael S. Kimball of Fort Worth, Texas, Company C, 1-21st Field Artillery, works out in "Bam-Bam's Playroom."

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

Although Camp Bedrock is preparing to close its doors, it is not preparing to close the Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities for soldiers just yet.

Though there are no restructuring plans in place for the recreational facilities at Bedrock, what they have here now is said by soldiers to be more than enough.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment is working to cater to all the soldiers' recreational needs while they are deployed to Multinational Division (North) in support of Operation Joint Forge. Bedrock has a host of facilities for soldiers to escape the day's turmoil.

"Pebbles Studio" is filled with aerobic equipment such as bicycles, stair steppers and boxing bags so soldiers can get a good cardiovascular workout. First Lieutenant Mary Ann Faias of Union, N.J., 115th Forward Support Battal-

ion, said she works out in the studio as much as possible.

"I like to get on the stair stepper and burn off some stress from the day," Faias said. "It's not like the gym back at home, but it serves its purpose. Good equipment is what really matters and we have that, so I'm satisfied."

"Bam-Bam's Playroom" is where most of the soldiers go to get a good workout. It has free weights, sports equipment and strength machines. Specialist Michael S. Kimball of Fort Worth, Texas, and a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, said the gym is his major hangout besides work.

"I come to the gym because this is about the best thing to do to keep your mind off of deployment and being away from your family," Kimball said. "I work with the protection force, which is a 24 hour operation, so between coming to the gym and going to work there really isn't much to do that interests me, but I do love to workout."

Sergeant Aaron E. Weed of Kerrville, Texas, Company B, 115th Forward Support Battalion, said that he not only goes to the gym to get a good workout, but to also pick up a good movie.

"I not only relax by working out in the gym, but also by getting a good movie from there," Weed said. "It's good that we can get free movies here, and the fact that they are free is even better."

"Wilma's Reading Room" is a quiet environment where soldiers can pick up a free book and do a little reading. They can also call home on the Morale, Welfare and Recreation telephones that reside there. Specialist Rodney C. Delacruz of Seattle, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry, said he uses the room as a quiet place to write letters to his family.

"It can get a little loud in the tents sometimes, so I go to the reading room to get a little peace and quite," Delacruz said.

"Fred and Barney's Lounge" is full of games for soldiers to participate in. Specialist William A. Sessoms of Hertford County, N.C., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry, said the lounge is a great place to get a good game of pool started.

"Me and some of my friends I work with come here to play pool or Ping-Pong. It's a break from the norm. Everyone does about the same thing here," Sessoms said.

At "Betty's Education Center," many soldiers take college classes in one of two medium-sized rooms. Specialist Travis B. Gunn of Columbus, Ga., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry, said he enjoys continuing his education at the center.

"I never thought I could come to Bosnia and go to college, but I'm doing it," Gunn said. "The education center here is great, and the instructors are even better. I'm glad I have a place to continue my education here in Bosnia."

The Bedrock facilities have been improved over time, and have served the soldiers of Operation Joint Forge well over the years.

Changes make camp unrecognizable

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

Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment at Camp Dobol have been witnesses to major changes during the past four months. When the first soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division arrived at Dobol, all they saw were tents; tents to live in, tents to work in, tents to shop in and tents to workout in.

Anybody stationed at Dobol in the past would be amazed at the changes. Soldiers are no longer freezing while they sleep because they reside in well-heated Southeast Asia huts. "It feels good to be able to sleep at night without freezing and waking in the middle of the night seeing your breath because it's so cold. I can actually sleep without any covers at night," said Private First Class Carman Cox, a Dallas, Texas native, and an MP with the 410th Military Police Company.

"The SEA hut has a lot more space than the tent. We can actually walk down the center of the room without bumping our knees on each other's beds," Cox laughed.

A latrine was built between buildings for easy access. This puts an end to all the long walks that some soldiers had to take to get to the showers. "When we stayed in tents, my tent was located at the front of the base camp, and the showers were located all the way by the (Post Exchange)," said Specialist Sondra Joiner, a Grand Rapids, Mich. native, and light-wheel mechanic with the 115th Forward Support Battalion. "The walk from the tent to the shower seemed to last forever. The showers in the SEA hut are much more convenient for everyone."

The perimeter of the building is surrounded by a walkway that helps soldiers keep off the muddy ground.

A new festivity tent will allow the camp to bring large varieties of entertainment to its soldiers. Soldiers will be able to play basketball, indoor soccer, or any other type of indoor sport, which also allows them to keep up with their fitness and compete against each other.

"It's good to be able to play basketball again. It kind of makes me feel like I'm back home again. Sometimes in the afternoon, I just go and play ball by myself," said Specialist Michael Hilton, a

Bronx, N.Y. native and mechanic with the 115th Forward Support Battalion.

The improvements made to Dobol focus on making the soldiers' stay in Bosnia a little more comfortable. "I appreciate all the command support in making all these things happen. I remember when I first arrived to Camp Dobol," said Corporal Kathy Belle, a Barbados native and noncommissioned officer in charge of the 15th Personnel Services Battalion. "There was mud everywhere and tents everywhere. Now, I barely recognize the place, and that's a good thing."

A new chapel is in its last stages of construction, thanks to the hard work of Company A, 52nd Engineers out of Fort Carson, Colo.

"With the new chapel up, this will provide more room for Sunday services and more room for the choir to practice," said Specialist Claudious Hall, a Brooklyn, N.Y. native, and chaplain's assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-5 Cavalry.

At the same time, a new PX is being put together that will offer soldiers a better shopping experience.

"It is amazing how much and how fast the camp has changed," recalled Sergeant Jimmy E. Harrison, a combat medic with Company B, 2-8 Cavalry. "The engineers and Brown and Root have done a terrific job building all the new SEA huts and everything else."

"I remember when I first got here. There was mud everywhere and tents everywhere. Now I barely recognize the place, and that's a good thing."

Corporal Kathy Belle



The construction of a new PX and food court due to be ready by the end of the month.

Misconceptions about morale calls



Photo by Specialist Robert Valentine, 319th MPAD

Sergeant Paul D. Fowie with Battery A, 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, calls his father in Stafford, Va. inside the AT&T Phone tent at Comanche Base

Story by Specialist Jason Shepherd
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Priate Joe Snuffy has had a terrible day. He's a little under the weather and his unit just completed a huge operation. He needs to hear the soothing voice of his loved ones at home so he picks up the morale phone and attempts his weekly call to his wife and son at Fort Hood. When he dials the operator in Germany, the operator asks; "Where are you calling from?"

"Eagle Base, Bosnia," the soldier says.

"What is your name and rank?"

"Private Joe Snuffy."

"When is the last time you called."

"Last week, sir"

"Sorry, you are only authorized to call once every two weeks. Thank you." Click.

Snuffy is stunned. He has never had this problem before and now he can't call home and talk to his family. His morale is even lower now and his job performance may suffer because he is unsure of what's going on back home.

This has been a recurring problem for many Multinational Division (North) soldiers while deployed here in support of Operation Joint Forge. Troops have had problems with operators in Germany who say that only one call every two weeks is authorized. Soldiers are also being cut off after five minutes.

Major General Kevin B. Byrnes, commander of MND (N), said he feels that staying in contact with family members is very important.

"We have to make this happen for our soldiers," he said. "They need frequent e-mail, morale phone calls, robust AT&T lines and video conferencing."

Part of the problem is, soldiers are not educated on the phone

system in place in Bosnia. When 1st Armored Division was here, they called their families in Germany. When the 1st Cavalry Division got in theater, 1st AD showed them how to dial the Defense Subscriber Network to talk to loved ones in Fort Hood. Some 1st AD soldiers told 1st Cavalry soldiers that in order to call home, they first had to call the DSN in Germany and the operator would connect to a DSN operator in the United States.

This simply isn't true. Every company has at least one phone with direct worldwide DSN access, according to Lieutenant Colonel Alan R. Lynn, 13th Signal Battalion commander. These phones can call any DSN in the world. Soldiers only need to dial "98-312," then the seven-digit DSN number. On the Mobile Subscriber Network, dial "312," then the DSN number.

Yet, some of the soldiers are being turned away from the Sprint phones in the company because of ongoing operations. If soldiers can't get to a DSN worldwide access phone, they can dial "0" and the local operator will connect to the local DSN number. All soldiers have to do is tell the local operator that it is a morale call and they won't ask any questions.

According to the Memorandum "Use of Government Communications Equipment for Personal Purposes," soldiers are authorized two DSN moral calls twice a week for 15 minutes each. The authorized calling times are between 5:01 p.m. and 6:59 a.m. Soldiers also are allowed two DSN business calls per pay period for the purpose of verifying account status, or conducting other financial business.

"This is a very good program," Byrnes said. "This is the best deployment I have ever seen for the soldiers to be able to get in contact with family members."

Some DSN operators are stopping morale calls at five minutes. This is because they don't know about MND (N)'s special policy. The leadership is working on drafting messages for the Department of Army to let DSN operators know of Operation Joint Forge's special status.

AT&T officials say there is no restriction on calls. If a soldier has the money, they can talk as much as they want. Some soldiers are having trouble finding phones to call home on because some base camps are without phone centers. Commanders throughout MND (N) are working on setting up a building, connex or tent to house the upcoming centers.

"By the end of SFOR4, we will have computer centers and phone centers," Byrnes said. "Soldiers have to have these because this is what matters to them."

It is also important that soldiers adhere to the two calls per week policy. This frees up the lines so every soldier has time to talk to their loved ones back home.

"We really need commanders to enforce the two calls per week policy so that everyone has a chance to call without waiting a long time in queue for an operator," Lynn said.

If soldiers call on worldwide Sprint phones, or dial the local operator and ask for the DSN to home station, they will find calling home much easier. Limiting calls to twice a week will ensure everyone has a chance to contact family and friends. In Snuffy's case, this could mean a happier, more focused soldier that will give 100 percent to the job at hand, instead of having to worry about conditions back home.

MWR strives for improved quality of life

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

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center has increased the quality of life for soldiers here on Eagle Base, and is making plans for further improvements. Two new facilities should be completed for soldiers by the end of January 1999.

The new Sports Complex is completed except for minor indoor construction, and has already been used for major concerts — Hootie and the Blowfish and Paul Overstreet, Ricky Skaggs — and a host of others.

“We have since then, with the help of the Army Air Force Exchange Services, put in a movie theater which can hold over 700 soldiers. The theater is complete, with a huge screen and two popcorn machines,” said Sergeant First Class Mark B. Hanna, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division Fitness Center noncommissioned officer in charge, and a resident of Alice, Texas.

“We have been showing first-run movies to include Saving Private Ryan, Soldier, and Enemy of the State, just to name a few,” Hanna added. “The best part is, right now all the shows are free, and we show movies everyday. A new movie theater is being built which will be completed sometime in April, but there will be a (small fee) when it opens, because it will be run by AAFES.”

The Sports Complex is also used for basketball and vol-



Servicemembers enjoy the new exercise equipment at the Eagle Fitness Center.

leyball tournaments. Recently, its been used for guest speakers and dignitaries. The Eagle Base Halloween, Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve parties were held there too.

The new Eagle Base Fitness Center, formerly known as Club 21, is being renovated. The new weight room is due for completion sometime in January, and the building now has a new heating and air conditioning system. “We have received funding from MWR and U.S. Army Europe to upgrade this facility,” said Ray S. Romero, the MWR facility manager for Eagle Base, and a resident of Tooele, Utah. “We are supposed to have this project completed by the end of January 1999,” he added.

The center will also be divided into three sections — a weight room, a cardiovascular room with resistance machines and a basketball court to compliment the one used in the Sports Complex. There also will be a new club in the Fitness center where soldiers can get together and drink near-beer and listen to the latest music.

The Eagle Base Fitness Center is open 24 hours daily, and once completed will even have a communications center complete with DSN phones and Internet access. “We are currently working on a video check-out counter for the center too,” Romero said. Other projects for the future of Eagle Base include a softball field near the Long Horn Café and a multi-purpose field for all outdoor sports complete with a running track.



Brown & Root workers continue renovation of the weight room.

Million-dollar view from the "Rock"

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

Camp Bedrock is barely three years old, but in that time the infrastructure has vastly improved. With the construction of a 100-seat dining facility, a laundry turn-in building, an education office and classroom, connex latrines and shower units, Bedrock soldiers have seen many improvements. Soldiers still sleep, work, exercise and worship in tents with kerosene heaters, since the camp is destined for closure — there are no paved roads, no vegetation (except for a couple of small trees planted by soldiers), or permanent structures. Nevertheless, Bedrock is a place of beauty.

Looking over the towering one-ton tires that ring the camp, soldiers can see the green, rolling hills of the Tuzla Valley dotted with neat farm houses, grazing cows, and trees that can be autumn hued or coated with white depending on the season.

At dawn and dusk, Bedrock soldiers are treated to spectacular pink, glowing skies as the sun rises and falls. It's an anomaly of Bedrock that soldiers gaze at a million-dollar view from the steps of their drab, Army tents.

Bedrock soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment are accomplishing their Stabilization Force mission with great enthusiasm, professionalism and comradeship.

The three tent gyms aren't fancy, but they have the necessary equipment and, according to Task Force 2-8 commander, Lieutenant Colonel Barry Fowler, are utilized around the clock.

The education center is small, but so far no soldier has been turned away; even though education counselor's aid, Michael James Gooden, said that a 40-soldier class last term was a tight squeeze. Bedrock has consistently registered more soldiers for college courses than any other camp in spite of its smaller number of soldiers.

Soldiers study in their tents and at the dining facility. Staff Sergeant John Constance, Company C, Task Force 2-8, from Lexington, Ky., said his tentmates didn't mind him studying. They are on the same schedule, so that makes it easier.

When Constance and other soldiers met in the dining facility to study, they went at the end of chow time and chose a quiet corner on a non-football TV night.

The support that soldiers get from their noncommissioned officers and commanders helps them to meet education goals in spite of their deployment responsibilities. Constance said that his commander was more than supportive, and some of his fellow students had their shifts moved around to allow them class and study time.

Fowler is proud of the way his soldiers have met their challenge to excel in spite of the conditions. "The soldiers at Bedrock typify the ingenuity of the American GI," Fowler said.

Bedrock soldiers run around the nearly one-mile pe-



Photo by Sergeant Derrick Witherspoon, 319th MPAD

Soldiers overlook the Tuzla Valley while standing guard in a tower at Camp Bedrock.

rimeter rock road whenever their schedules permit, but Monday mornings the Stallion Stampede Battalion run gets everyone together at 6:00 a.m. for a three to five mile run.

The run has been canceled twice due to ice, but rain, cold and mud hasn't been a deterrent.

Bedrock will close in March. Fancy it isn't, but the 1st Cavalry soldiers who are the last to live and work there are proud of what they did together to keep the peace in the Tuzla Valley.



Task Force 2-8 completes a lap of the weekly "Stallion Stampede" run.

Camp MUD-Govern no longer

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

Soon the Camp McGovern Post Exchange will have to put away all its "Camp MUD-Govern" tee shirts, especially now that there's added emphasis on correcting McGovern's road conditions.

"We're laying heavier gravel on all the high traffic areas throughout the base camp to keep the mud down and make sure the soldiers are walking on gravel rather than mud," said Specialist Shawn P. Moorhouse, of South Sioux City, Neb., a heavy construction equipment operator with the "Earth Movers" Platoon, Company A, Combat Heavy 52nd Engineer Battalion.

The roads on McGovern were becoming a major concern for McGovern's leaders, so the roads-upgrade project was established to make the roads more suitable for the soldiers, according to First Lieutenant Bill D. Lash of Fort Hood, Texas. "The project is being worked at higher levels to ensure we have a better quality of life," added Lash, who is the executive officer for Company B, 20th Engineer Battalion.

The soldiers welcome McGovern's road reconstruction



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

Heavy gravel is used to improve the road condition on Camp McGovern.

with great enthusiasm. "It's great now. Before, I had to clean my boots off at least four times a day," said Staff Sergeant Jon A. Savage, of Boulder, Colo., a squad leader with the Earth Movers Platoon. "I'm tired of getting my feet wet."

A squad of Earth Mover soldiers from McGovern completed 38 percent of the roads on base over a two-week period, stated Lash. All the main roads, as well as a few walkways, now have a coat of gravel. "We're still waiting for a large shipment of rocks to come in," he said. "Once the rocks come in, we should have all the interior roads completely covered."

The Earth Movers are using three different types of stone to pave the roads. Large rocks are used to fill in the heavily mudded areas, according to Moorhouse. Then a second coat of slightly smaller stones is used to pack it down a little tighter. Even smaller rocks were used to seal the road to keep vehicles from ripping it up.

Small sections of road were closed off just long enough to enable a truck to dump the gravel, grade it down, and then roll over and pack it. "Each area is shut down for a short period of time, so it hasn't really affected many people." Closing sections allowed the engineers to complete the paving of high traffic areas and walkways without impeding soldiers.

Lash said he is surprised by the amount of work the single squad of Earth Movers accomplished. "I think they're doing very well," he said. "It's a lot of work, and they've made a 100 percent improvement on the roads."

Savage said he is proud of his squad and the outstanding job they have done on upgrading the quality of roads for the soldiers. "They're making the improvements happen and seeing the benefits of what it does for the soldiers," he said.



Photo by Sergeant Walter J. Jawors, HHC 2-8 Cavalry

A soldier levels-out gravel during a road improvement project.

CampDemi, as good as it gets



Soldiers use new equipment in remodeled gym at Camp Demi.

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

Just because soldiers are deployed to Bosnia doesn't mean they can't enjoy the "finer things in life." Base camps all over Multinational Division (North) have been making improvements. From the building of Southeast Asia huts to sports arenas and entertainment centers, the soldiers have benefited from great strides in quality of life. Camp Demi's soldiers have enjoyed the benefits.

"I think Camp Demi is the Taj Mahal of all the base camps," said Private First Class Michael Yohey, an Albany, N.Y. native and a dismount infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment. "The quality of life and living conditions are outstanding. I couldn't ask for anything more, because to me, everything is great the way it is."

The soldiers at Camp Demi feel their camp is nearly beyond improvement, and making it that way took a lot of hard work – and the work continues. "Right now, Demi is

undergoing a lot of construction," said First Lieutenant Eric Johnson of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery. "Basically, everything that was a tent is being turned into a SEA hut. TOA is coming up soon, and we are doing everything we can to ensure we have additional space when the new units arrive," the Port Huron, Mich. native said.

One of the many improvements to the base camp is the expansion of the gym.

"When the new gym is complete, we will have a SEA hut for aerobic workouts only," Yohey said. "The expansion of the gym will definitely be appreciated by the soldiers when the replacing units arrive. I'm glad they're rebuilding the gym because it would get so crowded sometimes. It will be more roomy than it was when it was in a tent."

For some of the soldiers, the gym is a favorite pastime. "I go to the gym at least twice a day, sometimes three," said Private Damion Brewer, a dismount infantryman with Company B, 2-5 Cavalry. "Now that the gym has more weight equipment, I can add to my workout routine. I like to workout, and that's about

the only thing that makes the time go by for me. It's a real stress reliever because when you've had a very stressful day, you need to release some tension, and that's what the gym does for me," the Atlantic City, New Jersey native said.

"I like to go to the gym to hang out with my friends," said Private First Class Ramon Coscolluela, a dismount infantryman with Company B, 2-5 Cavalry. "The new gym has heat, so I won't have to be cold anymore when my friends and I are working out," the Newark, N.J. native said.

"We are currently expanding the food court also," Johnson said. "We are adding a Baskin Robbins and an Anthony's Pizza and a sandwich shop. That should be complete some time in February."

While improvements are constantly being made to the base camp, the soldiers are still pretty much content with their entire way of living. "I like Demi because it is small," Yohey said. "Every-

body knows everybody, and it's quieter than most base camps. I've been to every base camp in MND (N), and I think Demi is the best by far. Maybe that's just because I live here," Yohey laughed.

"I think Camp Demi is the Taj Mahal of all base camps. The quality of life and living conditions are outstanding. I couldn't ask for anything more, because to me, everything is great the way it is."

Private First Class Michael Yohey

Tents to SEA huts; soldiers like change

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

Soldiers at Camp McGovern are sleeping peacefully these days. No longer can they criticize sleeping in tents. When the soldiers of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment first arrived at McGovern, there were a scant 16 Davidson-style Southeast Asia huts. Now there are a total of 36.

"All the soldiers on the camp that were living in tents are now in SEA huts and have been so since December 15, 1998," said Captain David A. Lesperance, of Portland, Ore., the Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander and base camp mayor.

The soldiers' living, working and recreation areas that were originally in tents have been moved into existing structures or new buildings. The only facility remaining in a tent is the education center. "The new education center should be completed in about two weeks," Lesperance said.

According to Lesperance, not being in tents is a major morale raising issue. "The living conditions in the SEA huts are far better than in tents," he stated.

One of the major advantages of living in buildings is that during harsh weather conditions soldiers have a stable place to go. In addition, the tents sometimes leaked when it rained. The soldiers' new SEA huts display no such problems. "They provide better shelter from the elements and



Contractors work hard to take down the old tents to build new Southeast Asia huts on Camp McGovern.

allow the soldiers to feel more at home," Lesperance added.

Living in the SEA huts has made a big difference to the soldiers during the cold winter season, according to Lesperance. When soldiers lived in tents, their only source of heat were kerosene heaters, which couldn't be left running without the presence of a fireguard. "In the SEA huts, you have electric heaters, which does not require a fireguard, and you're able to control the environment much better," he said.

Along with the living quarters, many other facilities were upgraded and improved, said Lesperance. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility moved from seven tents to an existing structure on the camp that is much warmer and dryer. "The obvious benefit is that it provides a much better environment for the soldiers to enjoy their off time, whether they want to play video games, Ping-Pong, pool or watch movies," he said.

However, one facility has gone from a preexisting building to a tent. The fitness center was moved from its small quarters into a large Fest Tent. "This gives the soldiers a heated and dry place where they can play sports in an all-purpose area, as well as exercise in an expanded weight room," Lesperance said.

Overall, the soldiers are pleased with the living environment at McGovern, Lesperance said. There are constant improvements made daily to make their deployment in Bosnia more livable. "It's a complete turnaround from our first day here," he added.



Soldiers walk down the numerous rows of new SEA huts filling the interior of the base camp as the facilities continue to be upgraded.

Good facilities raise spirits at Comanche



Specialist Tonya Ferdinand, an ammo specialist with HHC 3-229th Aviation Regiment, searches the shelves for the new movie "Blade."

Story and photos by
Specialist Robert B. Valentine
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Soldier quality of life remains a major concern for the Army leadership, especially for soldiers on deployments. Leaders at Comanche Base have ensured they have the amenities soldiers appreciate and use during their deployment, as part of the Army's quality of life initiative.

Major Kent Chugg, with the 96th Regional Support Command, is the Brigade Commandant for Comanche. "We see new facilities opening everyday. We are constantly trying to improve the standards for our soldiers," the Ogden, Utah native said.

"Recently, there have been efforts with Sprint to correct the shortage of phone lines at Comanche Base," Kent said. "Fort Hood soldiers now have access to Video Telephone Conferencing. It is important for families to say 'hi' to their dad or mom over here."

Soldiers at Comanche have facilities such as the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Festival Tent, five fitness tents, an AT&T phone center, a computer lab for e-mail, an improved Post Exchange and a new Army Post Office.

The MWR tent has a variety of recreational activities so soldiers can relax and have fun. Within the tent are billiards, books, Ping-Pong tables, two big-screen televisions, snack machines, video games and free videotapes for soldiers to borrow overnight.

"Cordine Jordy came to us after the camp at Slov-Brod closed down," Kent said. "She has tripled our video selection. We now have over 1300 movies for soldiers."

"The increase in movie selection was a big improvement," Specialist Nigel Dunn, an administrative specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, said. "Watching movies helps make the

time go by faster. It lets you feel like you are back home in the States," the Galveston, Texas native said.

"Communication with my family back home is not a problem over here," Specialist Tonya Ferdinand, an ammo specialist also with HHC 3-229th Aviation Regiment, said. "I have been able to use phones, e-mail, and the VTC. The VTC is much better than a regular phone call, because you can see your family," the Pittsburgh native said.

"The quality of life over here is much better than what I first expected on my deployment," said Specialist Lance Boone, an aircraft structural repair technician with the 615th Aviation Support Battalion. "I like to play video games over here to pass the time," the Conroe, Texas native said.

"The improvements in the PX was a big morale booster," Private First Class Fayline Bass, a Blackhawk mechanic with the 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, said. "The new APO (Army Post Office) tent now allows soldiers to mail packages six times a week with longer hours," the Daytona Beach, Fla. native said.

The facilities in place at Comanche help soldiers pass the time, and keep their spirits high while deployed far from home.



Specialist Lance Boone, an aircraft structural repair technician with Company A, 615th Aviation Support Brigade, passes his free time by cruising in an arcade game.