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TALON

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 Nathaniel Roberson, 2-8 Cavalry, from Camp Bedrock.

The Task Force continues to perform all of its critical and day to day missions extremely well here in Bosnia-Herzegovina, due primarily to the great efforts put forth by the officers, noncommissioned officers, and most importantly, the soldiers.

The past few months, especially during the holiday season, have been both busy and challenging for the soldiers of Task Force Eagle. We have come a long way since our Transfer of Authority ceremony, and I am pleased to say that the Task Force is more than ready to execute and accomplish any mission it's given. The self-discipline, hard work, and attention to detail from every member of the Task Force really paid off. One thing is very clear, Task Force Eagle is definitely made up of some of the highest caliber soldiers and families in the nation. They have watched over and taken very good care of each other throughout this deployment. Most importantly, we have accomplished this together as a team.

My experience, and the laudatory comments from the numerous VIPs that have visited the Task Force, tells me that we are doing a tough mission, we are doing it well and we are doing it with the right attitude. We know the sacrifices have been many, especially during the holiday season, for both you and your families, but they have not gone unnoticed by our leaders, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or our grateful nation. The image, pride and total commitment you have shown has truly made a world of difference both at home and abroad.

In closing, many changes still lie ahead of us. As you go about the mission of peacekeeping here in the Balkans, remember to think safety and stay focused on readiness: Ready to deploy, fight and win. **You're the Best! First Team!**



On the Cover

Specialist Dennis A. Short operates the Armor Vehicle Launch Bridge, demonstrating its use to NORDPOL and Russian soldiers. (Photo by Specialist Giovanni Lorente. See page 8.)

"Peerless, fearless, an army's flower
Sterners soldiers the world never saw,
Marching lightly, that summer's hour
To death and failure and fame forever." – Helen Gray Cone

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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.

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"A day to celebrate, not a day off!"

Story by Sergeant First Class Patricia A. Johnson
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Today's Army values were put in perspective with those of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a commemoration ceremony held in his honor at most base camps in Multinational Division (North).

King's theme this year is "A Day to Celebrate, Not A Day Off," and Chaplain (Colonel) Calvin Sydnor of Ft. Monroe, Va., was the guest speaker. Sydnor used bible scriptures, real life situations and today's mission to link yesterday's values with today's.

"Soldiers today are grounded with Army values that are the same values that King marched into battle with; loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage," Sydnor said.

Sydnor discussed how it took courage to march through the streets filled with Ku Klux Klan and listen to all the racial slurs. It took courage and discipline to continue when colleagues were sprayed with fire hoses at unbearable water pressures, like a street sweeper cleaning the streets. He said today's soldiers have to have courage to stand up and fight for what they believe. Selfless service is a value freely given, and King took many racial blows of injustice, to include his final blow of death.

Sydnor gave an example of this love when he talked of TRADOC's Copper Hall that is named after a young Fort Hood soldier who threw himself on a grenade to save his comrades. Honor, duty and integrity are traits King would have been happy to hear we are teaching our soldiers today.

When times got hard, King was there with his followers, encouraging them to not get weary, and to hold out through the storm. Sydnor remarked that our leaders today have the same duty of caring for our soldiers, and to keep them motivated in a country where peace is enforced.

Sydnor remarked that today's Bosnian mission is to keep the peace, which was King's mission – and the fight for equal rights. This respect for others has earned the respect and loyalty of some, and has stirred up dislike from others who don't want to change. "Our soldiers today depend on each other, and when the time comes to depend on one another, these values are there," Sydnor said.

Sydnor explained that King's day of recognition is an affirmation that America is working towards fulfilling its promise of equal rights for all men. King's dream and vision of a diverse nation one day becoming a nation where people are judged for the content of their character, and not the color of their skin, is inherent to a soldier's oath when they join the U.S. military.

"When soldiers raise their right hand and take the oath to serve their country, they are pledging their faith and allegiance to America and its values," Sydnor said. "A symbol of those values is the identification tags we wear and carry with us everyday. King's symbol of faith and ID card was his Bible.

Sydnor said King was a leader in God's Army, and that our Army today is equipped with strong leaders of varying beliefs and values. King was a leader of the highest order, a



Photo by Sergeant Derrick Witherspoon

Chaplain (Colonel) Kelvin Sydnor III speaks to soldiers at Camp Bedrock about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the military.

leader of a non-violent Army of women, children, ministers and citizens who won civil rights battles. He won his battles with weapons of peace; freedom marches, speeches, letters and peaceful protests. Sydnor said our fight for peace in Bosnia is reminiscent of those same tools of peaceful confrontation King used.

Sydnor concluded his message by saying King would be proud of the soldiers in this land, and seeing his dream of equal rights for all men and women come true in Bosnia.

"We, like his vision, live his dream everyday in our selfless sacrifice to our nation," said Major General Kevin P. Byrnes, Task Force Eagle commander. "And to the countries around the world like the one we are in right now in Bosnia trying to bring his dream, his vision to the people in this troubled land ... we keep his dream alive and continue to improve, and we must continue to improve, and we must push forward because we are not there yet," Byrnes said.

"There is still an awful lot to be done. We've got to reject absolutely, totally reject any notion of inequality or anything that robs any individual the dignity and respect that each human being deserves. That's why we are here in this country, doing what we are doing," Byrnes said.

Bedrock soldiers find refugee camp



A local woman looks through clothing brought to her town by soldiers from D Company, 2-8 Cavalry.

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

Many soldiers have taken part in the ongoing humanitarian aid missions performed regularly around Multinational Division (North), but the mission recently performed by soldiers from Camp Bedrock defined what a humanitarian aid mission is truly all about.

Soldiers from the 2nd Platoon of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, recently visited the town of Tursunovici to provide them with necessities. The significance of this visit was not just the aid they provided, it also is marked as the first time any Stabilization Force soldiers had ever visited the area.

First Lieutenant Robert B. Polston of Louisville, Ky., Company D, 2nd platoon leader, said the mission first began as a tasking to gain information about the area.

"We were originally tasked to go to the town to see what was there, if there were any refugees or anything SFOR might need

to know, but it turned into something bigger," Polston said. "When we first got to the town, we couldn't drive completely to it because it was up a hill, and the road was icy, so we parked in a nearby town and did a dismounted patrol up to the village. Once we got there, we started talking to one of the locals, a 24-year-old female whose husband, father and two brothers were missing from Srebrenica. Once everyone saw we weren't a threat, more started to come around. They were very shocked to see SFOR in their little town, because this is the first time American soldiers have been there, and there isn't very many of them in the town."

Polston said they found the town was made up of about 50 displaced refugees from various cities around Bosnia.

"When they first saw us, they thought we were there to take them back to their homes, but I told them that wasn't our job, but that is partly why we came. To touch bases with them," Polston added.

Polston was told that the town has no running water, electricity or telephones.

The refugees also told the soldiers that there was a big need for winter clothing, since they don't have heat and shoes for the younger children. As he prepared to leave the town, Polston made a promise that he would be back to give them some things.

"We went back to Bedrock and got a couple of boxes together from the chaplain, and we came back a couple of days later to give them the goods," Polston said. "They acted very differently from other refugee sites that we have been to that are used to getting things. If there was something that someone else needed, I actually saw some of the refugees give some of their things to the other person. I think they really appreciated us being there."

Private First Class Steven M. Howell of Yucca Valley, Calif., Company D, 2nd Platoon, said it felt good to know he was playing a major role in the peace-keeping mission.

"This isn't the first refugee town that we have visited, but none of them have been as bad as this one," Howell said. "I'm glad to know we could do this for them.

It makes it worthwhile to see the kids going crazy over the stuff we give them. It brings a little tear to your eye."

Polston said this is one experience they will never forget.

"We have been to other towns that have no refugees and have water and electricity and are better off than these people, but this is the first village that we have been to that the people didn't have all the things we take for granted," Polston said. "To be able to help these people gives us proof that we really are making a difference here. The soldiers may never see these people again for the rest of their lives once they go back home, but for the rest of their lives they will know that they kept some little kid warm at night, or fed a family for a day. We came from the United States to help provide peace, and I no longer think we are doing that, I know we are."

As the local kids played with their new toys, and the adults distributed the clothing and food, an expression of joy and peace came across the faces of the soldiers, because they were seeing firsthand what Operation Joint Forge was all about.

Army family comes together

Story and photo by Specialist Brian Murphy
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office

It's easy to say the Army always takes care of its own, but it's refreshing to actually see it take place. Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, did what they thought had to be done to help a soldier in need.

When Staff Sergeant Johnnie Waters, re-enlistment noncommissioned officer for HHC, 2-5 Cavalry, faced the nightmare of learning his house had caught on fire, he immediately thought the worst. Despite being shaken up, his wife and three children made it out safely. Most of their belongings were destroyed, and very few items survived the blaze. According to Waters, the dryer overheated and ignited.

Waters, who has been deployed to Bosnia since September, received the Red Cross message later that night.

"When I was given the message, I instantly became scared," Waters said. "I was worried about my family's safety. I just wanted to know for sure that everyone was OK."

Fortunately, he was able to come back to Fort Hood within a week.

By that time his family was already moved into a new house. First Lieutenant James Albano, rear-detachment commander for 2-5 Cavalry, was one of the driving forces behind getting help to move the Waters' family into their new home.

"As soon as we received the news, we started to do everything we could to get Staff Sergeant Waters home," he said. "We went to on-post housing. In less than 24 hours, we had a place for them to move into. Then soldiers from our unit helped move their belongings to the new location. The next day we cleaned out the old house."

According to Albano, it was nice to see so many volunteers step up.

"It's great that soldiers from this unit will help out when someone is in a time of need. That says a lot about the people we have here," Albano said.

When Albano was asking for volunteers, one of the first soldiers to step up was Private Danny Ray Arnold, a mechanized infantry soldier from HHC, 2-5 Cavalry.

"I've known Staff Sergeant Waters for a while," he said. "He's helped me out in the past. When I found out he needed help, I did what I could. It was just the right thing to do."

Waters was amazed at how helpful his

unit has been.

"Everyone in the battalion has been extremely supportive. They had already moved my family into the new house by the time I got back to Texas," Waters said. "Everyone has been really helpful. It's nice to know that there are people out there who care, and are there for you when you need it."

Several soldiers from the battalion volunteered to help the Waters' family move the few items that were still intact after the fire. Spouses brought linen, and helped to clean up the mess.

"Hopefully by the time I go back to Bosnia, most of the important stuff will be in order. This really could have been a lot worse. We are thankful for all of the help and support given to us," Waters said. "It makes it a lot easier to do my job in Bosnia knowing that my family is

"This really could have been worse. We are thankful for all of the help and support given us. It makes it a lot easier to do my job in Bosnia knowing that my family is taken care of back home."

Staff Sergeant Johnnie Waters

taken care of back home."

According to Albano, the unit isn't done helping out the Waters yet.

"The soldiers in Bosnia are taking up a collection. The local family readiness groups are gathering donations of clothes to replace all that they lost. They are also taking over meals to the Waters' family. It's nice to see so many people working to help them out," he said.

As long as there are rear detachments and soldiers, like those from HHC, 2-5 Cavalry, in the Army, Waters and other soldiers can focus on accomplishing their mission knowing that their families are taken care of.



A section of the hallway in Water's house, destroyed by the fire.

Uplifting physical training at gym



A Russian soldier conducts a squat during a weightlifting competition at Camp McGovern.

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

The room falls quiet with silent anticipation as a soldier prepares for a difficult task. The soldier carefully leans over, grabs a cool metal bar, and lifts heavy metal weights off the floor in one slow and steady motion. A crowd of spectators watches quietly as hundreds of pounds of metal plates attached to a six-foot iron bar rise from the rubber matting. As he completes a repetition, bystanders applaud his awesome display of strength.

The heavy-lifting display started when several Camp McGovern soldiers wanted to get together and have a small power lifting competition, according to Sergeant Herbert A. Veness, of Danbury, Conn., a Morale, Welfare and Recreation representative with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. "We also had Russian soldiers who wanted to get involved," Veness said. "It turned into a full-fledged event that everyone participated in."

Veness originally expected about five soldiers to compete, and was surprised when 12 Russian and 21 U.S. soldiers showed up for the competition.

The competition consisted of three events; the dead lift,

squats and bench press. Each soldier had three lifts per match. The heaviest weight lifted from the three attempts was used as their score. Then their total score from all three events was added together, and averaged to determine a winner.

Veness said there were four different weight classes used in the event; lightweight, middleweight, cruiserweight and heavyweight. But what he didn't expect was that the overall winner of the competition wasn't even a heavyweight. He was a cruiserweight.

Sergeant Timothy P. Stepney, of Norfolk, Va., a food service sergeant with HHC, competed in the cruiserweight category and was the overall winner, lifting over 578 pounds in the deadlift, 561 pounds in the squat and 355 pounds in the bench press event during the tournament. Stepney is ranked 54th in the United States for weightlifting competitions. "It was my first competition of the year," he said. "It felt pretty good because now I know where I stand, and what I need to work on."

After the scores were tallied, both Russian and U.S. weightlifters went to the dining facility for an awards dinner. "We presented awards to the Russians and our guys who placed in the competition," said Veness.

After the competition, several Russian soldiers brought Stepney to a chair and had him sit down, said Veness. Then they rolled the weights over to him while everybody gathered around and took a group picture with the champion before leaving.

"Overall, the entire event went better than expected," said Veness. "It was better than outstanding. It was an awesome display of strength."



A Russian soldier performs a deadlift during weightlifting competition.

Step by step fitness beats treadmill

Story and photo by Sergeant First Class Pat Johnson
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Jumping around to loud music, feet moving to heavy base, sweat dripping from glistening bodies twisting and turning with the fast-paced beat, and enjoying the pain of all that hard work – only in an aerobics class.

Good old-fashioned self-induced suffering, and a bizarre yet perfectly acceptable joy that comes from a hard workout, are just some of the goals of the two aerobics instructors at the Eagle Base Fitness Center.

Captain Kay Wiseman, a 1st Brigade Signal officer, and Sergeant First Class Diana Calzada, the communication noncommissioned officer for Company C, 13th Signal Battalion, volunteered to teach the aerobics classes shortly after arriving at Eagle Base. Wiseman teaches the morning classes and Calzada teaches the evening classes.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 a.m., Wiseman cranks up her lively tunes to a full house. The aerobics participants arrive early to get a good spot on the gym's floor, and the late comers join in at the back of the group. Most of the participants come ready and equipped with towels, water and exercising mats. The gym has an ample supply of towels and water for those who didn't bring their own.

There is a limited amount of aerobic-step equipment though, and some of the late participants have to exercise without a step. But, whether or not they have a step, they still join in the class and work on a lower impact cardiovascular exercise.

"My morning classes are full," Wiseman said. "We run out of steps quick. There are steppers all over the gym joining in my class. I've even had (Brigadier General R. Stephen Whitcomb, former Eagle Base assistant division commander) come out and participate in my class. Some of the Air Force personnel and Navy Seabees on base come out and join the class too. It was mandatory at first for the Seabees to be in my class as part of their PT program, but now it's not mandatory anymore, and they come on their own," Wiseman said.

"People are looking forward to my classes, and it's an incentive that gives me something to look forward to that I like doing," Wiseman said.

Aerobics exercise may not be for everyone, but with unpredictable Bosnian weather, aerobics is an alternative to the treadmill. When runners can't get outside and run, and there's a line of runners waiting to use the treadmill, stairstepper or exercise bike, aerobics is a good cardiovascular exercise that can be done inside or out.

Diana Calzada instructs the Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday night classes. Her Sunday night classes are more advanced, and is called the master-blaster night to get participants ready for Monday.

Calzada is a native of Greenville, Miss., and is also a certified aerobics instructor who teaches aerobics classes after duty hours back at Fort Hood. She has been in the military for nine years, and has been teaching aerobics for 19 years.

"I got into aerobic after I had my son," Calzada said. "I weighed 180 pounds after my son's pregnancy, and wanted to get back into shape. I tried running and all kinds of exercises, but they



Sergeant First Class Diana Calzada pumps up a soldier during the abdominal portion of her workout.

weren't motivating. One night I went to an aerobics class and I was hooked. It was fun and it was different. It tones and works all parts of your body. Plus you get to meet new people all the time, and have a good time working up a good, healthy sweat."

One of Calzada's aerobics instructors asked her if she wanted to teach aerobics and that was the beginning of her challenging step program.

"You can really get into the fitness habit; without realizing it, with aerobics," Calzada said. "I try to make my step program easy and a lot of fun for beginners, yet energetic and a good workout for the advanced steppers. I include weights, running, dance steps and music with a good beat to keep the steppers moving and enjoying their workout."

"We didn't have aerobics for awhile until Diana and Kay came along," said Ray Romero, Morale, Welfare and Recreation administrator in charge of the activities held at the fitness center. "We supply the sound system, and the instructor comes up with their own music and step programs. The turn outs have been great."

When missions run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, workout time is limited, and aerobics is helping personnel stationed on Eagle Base stay in shape.

Remote control mine destroyers

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

The 20th Engineers of Task Force 2-5 hosted representatives from the NORDPOL Brigade, and some Russian soldiers, in an effort to better understand each others methods of marking, recording and reporting mines.

At a meeting at Camp Dobol, the groups joined in a discussion of their procedures in dealing with mines that they encounter in their respective areas of operation. Minor differences were encountered and addressed, giving everyone a better understanding of each other's procedures.

"The whole purpose was to give them a better understanding on the way we mark, record and report mines," said 1st Lieutenant Ronald Hasz, 20th Engineer executive officer. "And to get a better understanding on how they do it."

After the soldiers took a break for lunch, they were given a brief tour of the camp before going out to the field for some demonstrations of the tools used by the 20th Engineers.

Soldiers demonstrated several vehicles, showing the groups their respective maneuverabilities, and giving them a better idea of how the vehicles are used on a mission.

The Mini-Flail and the Panther Mine Proofing Vehicles



Coalition soldiers look on as Specialist Dennis M. Short operates the Armor Vehicle Launch Bridge during a demonstration for the NORDPOL and Russian soldiers.

were two of the items on display. The Mini-Flail was designed to clear a footpath wide enough for troops to move through a suspected minefield. The M60A3 Panther Mine Proofing Vehicle was designed to clear a wider path to allow vehicles through a suspected minefield. Both vehicles are controlled remotely, which ensures a soldier's safety as they guide the vehicle from a safe distance.

Specialist Dennis M. Short, a combat engineer with Company A, 20th Engineers, operated the Armor Vehicle Launch Bridge, demonstrating the vehicle's capabilities. The soldiers from the NORDPOL Brigade, and the Russian soldiers, stood to the side watching the bridge unfold, and slowly stretch out in front of them.

Before the beginning of each demonstration, the soldiers took some time to pose for the cameras as a reminder of their visit and training at Task Force 2-5.

The last demonstration consisted of a short briefing from 1st Lieutenant Joseph I. Dashiell. He explained how his teams mark the mines, and displayed some of the equipment used.

After the briefing, the engineers showed how they mark a lane that has been cleared.

"We all got a better understanding of each other's way of doing things by exchanging ideas," Hasz explained.

The NORDPOL and Russian soldiers expressed their thanks and hope that the event could be repeated at one of their base camps in the future.



Corporal Joseph A. Kuss Jr. begins his class on the tele-operated Panther Mine Proofing Vehicle for members of the NORDPOL Brigade and some Russian soldiers.

Not your average gas station

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

The Headquarters and Supply Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, ensures there's plenty of fuel, and that it's checked everyday before distribution.

"We are responsible for all the helicopter's fuel and vehicle fuel here and at Eagle Base. We also supply 4th Brigade with bulk fuel, and we test all the fuel we receive from Bosnia and Hungary," said 1st Lieutenant Jose E. Martinez, a platoon leader for the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, and a resident of Raymondville, Texas.

The fuel site receives commercial deliveries several times a week from various tankers. The petroleum laboratory setup on the site has a laboratory technician who takes samples of the fuel, and then tests the fuel to make sure it's pure.

"With the cold weather, we look to make sure the fuel has a Fuel System



Private First Class Ben L. Andruss, a fuel handling specialist, refuels a HMMWV with diesel fuel. He refuels 15-20 vehicles a day.



Sergeant Booker R. Burden, a petroleum laboratory specialist takes a fuel sample while checking it for water and dirt.

Icing Inhibitor in it. The temperature on the ground may be above freezing, but when a helicopter goes up, the temperature drops below freezing. This inhibitor keeps the fuel from freezing up," said Sergeant Booker R. Burden, a petroleum laboratory specialist with the 115th Headquarters, Alpha Forward Support, 1st Cavalry Division, and a resident of Orlando, Fla.

"This is also why we keep the fuel in these big fuel bags, because it keeps the temperatures down and makes it easier for storage and issue," Burden said. "For safety and quality, we have to be sure all the fuel received here meets the government standards. We also check the additives and cleaning solutions in each fuel tanker we receive here. I can sample any kerosene fuel base fuel here, but we deal in diesel and jet proportion fuel. I always check the flash points in the fuel, because we need to know what temperature a fuel will ignite too."

"This is a real-world situation," Booker said. "When we are back in garrison, most of these labs are run by civilians, but over here we have to do it, and this mission depends on our fuel."

The 615th Aviation has four huge storage bags for fuel, and constantly circulates the fuel through fuel filters connected to each bag. This ensures the fuel is clean, and separates the water condensation from it due to various temperature changes that occur here daily.

"Every morning we double check the water amounts in the fuel before we issue any fuel to the helicopters, because 4th Brigade does 'hot refueling.' This is where the engines are running when they are refueling," Martinez said.

In a few weeks, the 615th will be responsible for line hauling fuel to Camp Demi, Camp Dobil and Camp McGovern, as part of their ongoing mission here during Operation Joint Forge.

Emergency medical training pays off



Specialist Terrence Elliott goes through test procedures during his Emergency Medical Technician exam.

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

Thanks to the efforts of Camp Bedrock's dedicated medical aid station staff, Bedrock soldiers have a better chance of surviving an emergency.

Second Lieutenant Brian E. Burk, a physician's assistant with 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, organized and taught a course in emergency medical technology for 34 soldiers at Bedrock, effectively quadrupling the number of EMTs at the camp from eight to 42.

The course was the only EMT basic course taught by the 1st Cavalry Division in Bosnia. It was especially unique because about half the class had no prior medical training.

The soldiers took the course for a variety of reasons, according to Burk, an Austin, Texas native. He said a couple of soldiers want to work for fire departments, while others are interested in law enforcement. Some soldiers said this was a stepping stone for more advanced medical training. Burk said that two noncommissioned officers were taking the course for promotion points.

EMT is also good for college credit; in fact, the University of Maryland offers six credits to its EMT certified students.

While reasons for taking the course varied considerably, stu-

dents said they found it equally challenging. The course required 124 hours of classroom instruction, five to 10 hours in the aid station getting experience seeing patients, many hours of laboratory work, and according to several of the students, one to two hours outside studying per classroom hour taken. All the classes had quizzes, and there were two 50-question exams, a 100-question exam and one 150-question final exam taken only after passing the hands-on exam administered by a University of Maryland doctor from Germany.

Two of the course graduates have already put their new skills to use.

Sergeants Mitchell Valero of Roswell, N.M., and Darrell Malik of Gonzales, Texas, both members of Company C, 20th Engineers, had only completed the course a couple of days prior to going to the field to work on the Priboj Bridge.

One of the 20th Engineer soldiers fell from the bridge. Malik reached the soldier first and manually stabilized the soldier's head, while he and Valero tried to keep the soldier conscious. "We did a rapid trauma assessment to make sure that he had his motor sensory skills, and we assessed the injuries that we could see," Valero said.

Malik said the trauma assessment procedures were automatic, and went just as he'd practiced so often in class. He said that he was more nervous doing the hands-on testing for the EMT exam than he was actually doing it for one of his soldiers.

Russian doctors arrived quickly, and Malik and Valero assisted them in putting the soldier on a stretcher. Medevac was already on the way by the time the soldier was undergoing x-rays at the Russian clinic. The medevac helicopter arrived with Swedish and American doctors, and a Swedish registered nurse. Malik again assisted these physicians by immobilizing the soldier's head while the patient was given an IV and checked by the flight doctors.

Malik assisted in the transfer of the soldier from the original stretcher to a stretcher with a Kendrick's extraction device. "I knew how to put it on and tighten it up because we were using it in a lab," Malik said.

Malik was very proud that he and Valero could help one of their own soldiers with what they learned in the EMT course. He laughed, though, when the soldier on the stretcher said, "I bet you never thought you'd use your EMT skills this early did you?" The soldier went on to Eagle Base, where it was determined that he had suffered nothing more serious than bruises.

The soldiers, who are in medical military occupational specialties, were surprised at how quickly many of the non-medical MOS soldiers were learning the medical curriculum.

"I think a lot of it had to do with the way Lieutenant Burk taught it," said Sergeant Michael Wright, the EMT Honor Graduate, and member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry. The Tampa, Fla. native said, "I've taken this three times, and his lesson plan and training schedule is the most complete and thorough that I've ever done and probably will ever do."

Task Force 2-8 soldiers attending the course received their certificates of graduation from Lieutenant Colonel Barry Fowler. During the EMT graduation ceremony, Fowler recognized Malik and Valero, and said this was a fine example of how valuable the EMT training was to the whole task force.

Taking it to the top of Hill 722

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

Now capped mountains loom in the background as the morning frost gives way to a chilling breeze in the air. A group of soldiers slowly ascend a road toward the top of an enormous hill. Beads of sweat glisten on their determined faces as they climb to the summit. Their heavy rucksacks weigh them down with every step.

These Camp McGovern soldiers are scouts with Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. The goal was to simply make it to the top of Hill 722. Why?

"Because it's there," said Specialist Michael S. Olson, of California City, Calif.

The scouts ruck-marched from the bottom of Hill 722 in Srebrenik carrying 30-pound rucks, and hiked the steep 722 meters to the top, Olson said. "We wanted to do something challenging that we hadn't done before," he said.

The ruck-march up the hill poses a formidable task due to its steep incline, which runs about five miles from top to bottom. "It was a great way to get the guys motivated, and afterward they could say they accomplished their goal," said 1st Lieutenant Roger M. Maynulet, of Chicago, Ill., the scout platoon leader also with HHC.

Maynulet originally organized the ruck-march as something fun for the soldiers to do, but it also gave them a great training opportunity. Typically, in a war-fighting mission, it's essential for scouts to dismount their HMMWVs and march on foot or "ground pound" to their objective to collect information.

"If you stay in your trucks, you're going to give off too much of a signal," Maynulet said. "You have to rely on your feet eventually."

By conducting this ruck march, the scouts learned how to distribute the weight inside the ruck. They learned that heavier equipment could be carried across their shoulders, which took pressure off their backs, said Maynulet. They also learned they have to take care of their feet by wearing the proper socks as well as getting into a rhythm while they march.

Maynulet said he thinks the scouts got a good workout, and a sense of fulfillment, because they've gone up the hill many times in HMMWVs, and everyone's joked about how it would be really difficult to climb on foot. "It's a good way for the guys to gauge themselves as to what kind of shape they're in," Maynulet said. "I think they got a sense of accomplishment, and a

little bit of pride from the experience because it was a tough march."

Usually, ruck-marches are timed events, but Maynulet said it was enough of a challenge just to make it up the steep incline, because no one from McGovern had done it before. "I really had no idea how long it was going to take, but shortly into the march I realized it was going to be enough of an accomplishment just to make it to the top," he stated.

The weather the scouts endured also influenced their performance, according to Olson. The scouts experienced fair weather at the beginning of their march. Near the end, they trekked through heavy snow and rain. "I'd prefer better weather next time, but I'd do it again," he said confidently.

Maynulet's objective was to boost the confidence of his scouts by giving them a challenge, and a chance to succeed. According to Maynulet, they did an outstanding job.



Specialist Bradley C. Hulse, a scout with Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, ruck-marches up Hill 722 as part of the Scout's Challenge.

Respect helps relationships grow



A Russian soldier fires the M-16A2 while receiving instructions from a U.S. soldier.

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

The two soldiers, both in camouflaged battle dress uniform, slowly lowered themselves to the muddy ground. As one soldier positioned himself behind the loaded crew-served weapon, the other gazed at the target that was about to be engaged. Although these two soldiers worked well together, there was one small problem. Neither one could speak the other's language, but that didn't stop the Russian and American soldiers from having a good time on the joint-combined range.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, recently participated in their second joint-combined weapons range with soldiers from the Russian Separate Airborne Brigade. Soldiers from the Scout Platoon and 3rd Platoon, Company C, went to the Lazarevica Range, northeast of Camp Ugljevik, where they operated Russian weapons, and in return the Russians operated some of theirs.

Sergeant First Class Christopher D. Geeding of Blue Grass, Iowa, 2-8 Cavalry's Master Gunner, said the range went much smoother this time.

"We were a little better this time than we were the first time because we know each other a little better now," Geeding said. "The first time we did a joint range, the soldiers were not used to working with each other, but this time they were a little more at ease with one another. So the relationship between the American and Russian soldiers is becoming a lot smoother."

Geeding added that the soldiers adjusted well to working together side-by-side.

"All the soldiers liked operating each other's weapons. Many of the young American soldiers have never worked with Russian soldiers before, and have only seen them on TV," Geeding said. "During this mission, they came to find out that they are just like us. They are soldiers also. I was around Russians quite a bit when I was stationed in Berlin, before the wall came down. So, it's different now actually being next to them instead of looking across the Berlin wall at them."

Geeding also said they are beginning to work more with the Russians, to continue to build a better relationship with each other. He said since the Cold War is over, joint missions like this one help unify the American and Russian soldiers, so they know more about each other and what they do.

"Being that we are here in Bosnia to help keep the peace under NATO and Joint Forge, and the Russians are a part of this along with us, we might as well know who is here with us and get to know them better," Geeding said.

That is just what the two forces did as they trained, learned a little about each other, and had some fun on the range.

Specialist Garrett W. Bean of Manteno, Ill., Company C, Third Platoon, said the joint range was a really good experience for him.

"Training with the Russian soldiers gave us a chance to show them that no matter what we do, we are always going to be friends," Bean said.

"Although I am qualified to fire the M-203 grenade launcher, this was my first time going to a range in Bosnia to fire it. It wasn't my first time working with Russians though, because I lived at Camp Ugljevik for two months, where I communicated with the Russian soldiers on a daily basis. I would definitely like to train with them again," Bean added.

The Russian soldiers said they were just as excited to train and learn from the American soldiers.

First Lieutenant Alex Kriukoff of the Russian Separate Airborne Brigade, from Camp Ugljevik, said he trained with the Americans during the first joint combined range.

"I get a lot of experience from firing the American weapons," Kriukoff said. "The quality and reliability of their weapons is good, and I have much respect for them and their weapons. I really enjoyed firing the M-60 machine gun. It's like 'catching an ox by the horns,'" Kriukoff added, smiling.

Geeding said he wasn't sure if 2-8 Cavalry would participate in another joint range before they redeploy back to Fort Hood, but the chance is always there.