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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 Kim Boyink, 2-5 Cavalry CSM, from Camps Demi and Dobol. The Division Task Force has been in country for some time now. For most of us, it's time to prepare for redeployment and the issues that come with it. I want to take this opportunity to share a few thoughts with you on what you've given, and what you've hopefully learned. I'd say the mark that the division has made in the stability of the region is undeniable. **You have made a difference!**

Yes, there is still hate out there, but its on "hold," and probably not as much as when you first arrived. You gave the local population time to breathe and remember what it's like to have some resemblance of a normal life again. They are also talking about rebuilding and resettlement. If you don't believe that you really made a difference in their opinion, think about this: Every time an American patrol goes out the wire its composition is usually very diverse. You see a few soldiers just executing another patrol. When Bosnians see these same people, they see the people of different ethnic backgrounds working together as one. Don't you think they ask themselves how we do it? We have learned that our diversity is our greatest strength, and not a weakness. They have yet to learn that you don't have to necessarily love each other, but you do have to learn to "get along." You are helping Bosnians to learn!

You've learned that soldiering is not always exciting, but challenging and tough; that standards really can keep you alive! Leaders, in general, learned that micromanaging doesn't work, that you have to make checks, and that good leaders always check. Officers learned that their NCOs have met the challenges with pride and professionalism. NCOs have watched their officers work magic in Bosnian communities with their leadership skills. Soldiers really learned that professionalism means doing what was right when nobody else was looking! And finally, you've learned that this mission and experience has not just made you a better soldier or leader, but simply a better American! **First Team! Black Knights!**

On the Cover

Firefighters Specialist Martin Galicia, Specialist Edward Woodall and Private First Class Scott Lanham from the 463rd Engineering Platoon (Firefighters), out of Houston, Texas, practice recovering a "wild hose." (Photo by Specialist Robert Valentine, 319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.)

"Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory." – *General George Patton*

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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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New year of mined earing begins

Story and photo by Camp Bedrock's
Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

An important part of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina outlined in the Dayton Peace Accord concerns mine clearing operations. Entity Armed Forces must report their safety status regarding humanitarian mine-clearing operations year round to Stabilization Forces so their requests for movement and training of forces may be approved.

Engineers of Company C, 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, monitor EAF engineers in their area of responsibility for mine-clearing compliance.

Usually this involves sending SFOR observers to every mine-clearing operation to ensure that the work is done, and done safely. Davis said that the EAF require the same safety standards as the U.S. Army.

However, the duties are different during the winter months. Second Lieutenant Brian Davis, 1st platoon leader of Company C, explained, "We're certifying them during the winter when the ground's too hard to demine."

"All have to go through training to get certified so that they have a safe mine-clearing season," Davis, from Garrett, Ind., added.

Winter certification involves going to EAF training sites and observing classroom and hands-on mine-clearing instruction.

As Davis walked into the classroom at the Bosnian Army Training Facility, 21 engineers of the Bosnian Army's 2nd Corps, 247th Glorious Armored Brigade, sat at desks with a dry-erase board, and an overhead projector, in front of them.

This was a last-minute change of plans for the EAF trainers, because they were supposed to be providing their soldiers with hands-on familiarization of a new mine-clearing machine dubbed "Bozena" by the Bosnian soldiers. However, maintenance crews discovered a short in the electronic ignition system of the Bozena, and it was not operable for the class. Instead, Davis had to improvise yet maintain the integrity of the certification program.

Davis verified that all the students on his roster were in attendance, and then the Bosnian Army instructor took over, explaining the operation and maintenance of the Bozena, the first one donated to the Bosnian Army.

The Bozena instructor used overhead projections of pages from a manual on the Bozena demining system while Sabina Hodza, a U. S. Army contract interpreter, quickly translated the essence of the lecture for Davis. Once or twice she consulted an engineering dictionary to find the proper English term.

According to Davis, this kind of monitoring would be impossible without an interpreter's help. "She's got a big role and

really does research," said Davis about Hodza's ability to do the technical engineering translations.

The students took one break to go out to a vehicle shed to look at the Bozena, which was under repair. Made in Slovakia, at first glance the Bozena looks like a Bobcat tractor. However, the Bozena has an attachment on the front with chains that flail into the soil and set off mines. It can be operated manually or by remote control. It comes with two chain attachments, an air-conditioned hut for the controller, a remote-control device and a trailer for machine delivery.

Many of the Bosnian Army engineers were reserved in their comments about how well this expensive piece of equipment would do out in the minefields. Soldier Damir Kovecevic, a mine clearer from Gracanica and a member of the Bosnian Army 2nd Corps, said, through translation, "Manual mine clearing is 99% guaranteed, so we pay attention to what we are doing. The equipment is good."

Kovecevic, who has three years experience in clearing mines, added, "But they need both (machine and manual mine clearers)." The Bozena is designed to clear an initial mine-free path that will be followed by the manual mine probers.

Soldier Ribic Azrudin, a medic with the Bosnian Army 2nd Corps from Brcko, said the machine doesn't look bad, but they haven't seen it in a minefield yet. He said that last mine-clearing season, his team had no injuries.

Davis said these engineers recovered 250 mines last year. Their difficult, dangerous work this year will start February. Hopefully with the expertise of the Bosnian Army engineers and the safety monitoring of SFOR soldiers, they will have another injury-free mine-clearing season.



This Slovakian-made mine-clearing "Bozena," the first one donated to the Bosnian Army by the Stabilization Force, need repairs before it will be ready for mine-clearing duty.

Chaplain donates musical talents



Chaplain Albertson plays a song from his compact disk, "To the Believer."

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

Captain Eric J. Albertson, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, and

a Task Force Eagle Catholic Chaplain said he "felt God calling him to do more with the gifts he had been given."

"One night, while on a walking patrol with a medic (while serving) in Haiti, I came across this old man and his daughter," the Arlington, Va. resident said. "The daughter had a severe infection in her arm and it was already gangrene. I asked the medic what we could do for her, and he gave her some antiseptic and Band-Aids. After leaving the old man and his daughter, I asked (the medic) 'how bad is that infection?' He told me she would probably die in two weeks. It was too late, because of lack of ointments and clean water. That's when it hit me, and I knew I had to do something for these people."

"I've been playing the guitar since I was a boy and singing too," Albertson said. "Music composition has always been a hobby of mine. After receiving a number of compliments on my own songs, I felt called to make an album and donate the profits to the poor," Albertson said.

Recognizing the talents of two of his close friends, he called Kassie Bellinger and Mike Matz to help him with his new album. "They both were excited about the idea and the group Emmaus ... was born," he added.

"We began working on the final project in

1997. Kassie assisted with the lyrics, melodies and vocals and Mike with the bass guitar and vocals. With the help of our very talented producer and engineer K. Wesley Prichard and through the powerful assistance of the Holy Ghost, we were able to complete this project," Albertson said.

All of the profits from this album are given to an organization known as "Food for the Poor, Inc." This is a very reputable inter-denominational organization with extremely low operating expenses. Their goal is simply to get food, medicine and assistance into countries of great need, including Haiti," Albertson said. He added that Food for the Poor, Inc. is a non-profit organization, and 92 cents out of every dollar goes to the poor.

"So far we have raised over \$12,000, and we even donated the start up cost," Albertson said. "We take in no profit for our sales. I've also raised \$1,000 since I've been here in Bosnia. I am now waiting for more CD's and cassettes to come here soon. Our compact disks are \$15, and our cassettes are \$10."

"I have only done one concert, and it was standing room only," Albertson said. "We are in the process of doing a follow-up album, but it isn't complete yet. Our album has 14 songs and my favorite is 'Guide Them Home.'"

Soldiers provide aid

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

A country recovering from a war is a difficult place to make friends, but the soldiers of Camp McGovern are determined to establish a good relationship with the people of Brcko. Recently, soldiers distributed donations received during the holiday season from all over the United States. Using these gifts as an icebreaker, the soldiers were able to interact with some orphaned children from the Brcko area.

"I love kids," said Sergeant Ronald

E. Cousan, of Atlanta, La., a mechanized infantryman with Company A of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment attached to 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.

The soldiers of Company A, 2-5 Cavalry, with the help of McGovern's Civil Affairs, and the Brcko Social Welfare Department, presented the gifts during the local holiday season. "We primarily focused on giving gifts to the less fortunate," Cousan said.

"Our purpose was to give help to the needy," said 1st

See *Providing* next page



Sergeant Robert L. Trotter, of North Charleston, S.C., a combat medic assigned to Company A, 2-8 Cavalry, helps a boy pick out clothes.

General visits Eagle Base soldiers

Story and photo by Eagle Base's
Sergeant First Class Donald R. Dunn II
319th Public Affairs Det.

Major General Morris J. Boyd, the Deputy Commanding General of the 3rd Armored Corps, Fort Hood, Texas, recently visited soldiers at Eagle Base for the first time.

Boyd visited soldiers in the 15th Personnel Services Battalion,

15th Postal Company and Task Force Medical Eagle Base Hospital.

At each stop, Boyd was briefed, and then greeted soldiers and listened to what they had to say about their jobs, and how to improve conditions while deployed to Bosnia.

While visiting the 15th Postal Company, Boyd expressed his concern for mail security, and was briefed on current operational security for mail handling.

"We look at every package that comes in and out of here, and we have had very little alcohol and contraband shipped in here," said 1st Lieutenant Davina Davis, a postal officer in the 15th Postal Company and a resident of Hampton, Va.

"When a package is suspected of having contraband in it, the first thing we do is call the Military Police. Then we obtain a warrant to open the package to see if there is actually contraband in the package. Next, if there is we let the MP's investigate it. If the package does not have contraband in it, we re-wrap it and explain why it was opened," Davis said.

Next, Boyd visited the Task Force Medical Hospital, which provides combat support to U.S. and NATO forces operating within Task Force Eagle and Multinational Division North.

Private First Class Carrie K. Landmann, an administrative assistant in the 615th Medical Support Battalion, and a resident of Copperas Cove, Texas, said, "I was surprised to see General Boyd. He knows my father. He also knows (my father) owns the newspaper in Copperas Cove, and he remembered meeting him at Fort Hood ... it's good to know he cares."

The last stop on Eagle Base was the Long Horn Cafe, where Boyd ate with the soldiers and talked with them about what he could do to make things better. He then passed out coins, and praised soldiers on their commitment to Operation Joint Forge.



Major General Morris J. Boyd asks 1st Lieutenant Davina Davis of the 15th Postal Company about mailing procedures on Eagle Base.

Providing continued from last page

Lieutenant Marlon T. James, of Oklahoma City, Okla., the executive officer for Company A, 2-5 Cavalry. "These kids are foster children, and it's a great opportunity for soldiers deployed to Bosnia to be able to help them."

According to Cousan, the soldiers gave out all kinds of clothing, gift bags with toys and supplies needed for school. "The look on their faces was definitely heart touching," he said.

When the soldiers first arrived, the children seemed very shy, James said. The soldiers mingled with the children, and after some interaction, they loosened up and had fun. "I think they

all enjoyed themselves, especially after Sergeant Cousan got them all laughing and smiling."

"Once I got the little girl talking to me, the rest of the kids just started to join in," Cousan said.

According to James, many families and different organizations from the United States have been sending donations. Some of his soldiers called or e-mailed back home to ask for aid from their local U.S. communities. Since then, the clothing and school supplies have been coming in by the truckload.

The soldiers' main goal for this mission was to bring a little bit of joy to each child, and help them feel some of the holiday spirit. "We wanted to let them

know that somebody really cares," Cousan said.

The McGovern soldiers were pleased they could give out donations, especially since some of the soldiers get involved in similar projects back home, James said. "It sets a good example for others to follow," he stated. "We want to continue helping them by donating more clothes and school supplies, and let the children know that it's not just for the holidays."

Cousan said the mission helps the younger generation trust the Stabilization Forces. "I just hope that after we depart this country, SFOR will continue this important mission with more programs."

Story and photos by Camp Bedrock's
Sergeant Derrick Witherspoon
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The room was filled with screaming soldiers bouncing up and down, hands raised to the air, dancing to the beat of a drum and the high-pitched tunes of an electric guitar. Minds free of the usual concern for impending missions, U.S. soldiers rocked away the night with Swedish soldiers. They came together to listen to a little "Rock and Roll." If there was a mission statement written for the evening, it would have said to build new friendships and have a great time.

Twenty Soldiers from Camp Bedrock were recently invited to attend a "good neighbor's" concert at Camp Oden by members of the Swedish Battalion. The concert was held in their maintenance bay, and was made up of two Swedish bands. The first band was a conglomeration of staff officers and enlisted personnel from the Swedish Battalion who played some rock and roll music for approximately thirty-five minutes. The main band was a Swedish band by the name of "Rock Company," also known as "R-Coy." It consisted of four males and two females playing a variety of the latest music. Master Sergeant Gary W. Lawrence of Yuma, Ariz., said the band tried to cater to everyone in the audience.

"They played good music that everyone could sing to and the concert was well coordinated and planned. They went out of their way to make us feel at home and to create a nice atmosphere for us," Lawrence said.

He added that the soldiers loved the concert, and they all had a really good time and made a lot of new friends. Most of the soldiers said they did not expect the concert to be as exciting as it was.

Staff Sergeant Greg L. Sutton of Fayetteville, N.C., and a member of 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, said the show was not at all what he expected.

"I thought it was going to be something like the Swedish Battalion Band playing some instruments or something, and we would basically be sitting down and listening to their cultural music, but it wasn't anything like that," Sutton said. "When we first went in there, things were kind of relaxed. The first band, which was the warm-up band, played a little

rock and roll. When the actual band came out, I thought they were going to play some kind of hard rock and roll stuff, but these guys came out and played that kind of rock and roll that everybody knows."

The band played music ranging from rock and roll to rap. Each member of the band, except for the drummer, took turns singing songs by various artists such as Alanis Morissette, Madonna, the Cardigans, Bryan Adams, the Beastie Boys and many more.

Sergeant Michael J. Walther of Wilmington, Del., and a member of the Civil Affairs Battalion, said he liked every song.

"The band played music that everybody liked, and proved that everybody across the world listens to music and can get together and listen to a good rock and roll band that plays a variety of music," Walther said. "It was cool that they played a little bit of everything, because that helped everyone have a really good time. You just felt like dancing the entire time you were there. You wanted to jump up and down and jump off of the stage into the crowd, which I'm proud to say I did. It was an incredible night."

Sutton said the band's interaction with the soldiers was the best part of the show.

"There wasn't a guy out there who wasn't involved in the show, whether you were being sprayed with water, or people were trying to toss you on or off the stage. It seemed like the band members were pointing you out individually and trying to get you into the concert, and the people at the Swedish Battalion are very friendly, and they don't see us as Americans, but as individuals," Sutton said.

Walther agreed that interaction was what truly made the concert a success.

"I liked the way everybody came together and just had fun," Walther said. "We are all in the military and in this thing together in Bosnia, so it's great that we can have a good time with one another. One thing I really noticed is that everyone forgot about what country he or she came from, be it if they were Swedish, American or Danish, it didn't matter. Everyone just had a good time."

Fun may have been their mission while attending this "Rock" concert, but as any soldier who was there could tell you, everlasting friendships and peace prevailed that night. The soldiers appeared to have enjoyed themselves after bouncing around and screaming along with their new Swedish friends.



ession



Soldiers
Remember

Peace and Freedom



Story and photo by Camp Bedrock's
Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The narrow streets around the old town in the center of Tuzla were crowded because it was such a warm, beautiful night. Over 300 young people were enjoying each other's company at the discos, cafes and bars. Some had been cautioned by their parents to stay at home, but they were young and wanted to get out and see each other, said Entaz Suljetovic, an interpreter for the U.S. Army at Camp Bedrock, and a victim of the Kapija massacre.

Suljetovic, 17 years old on May 25, 1995, said, "We were just standing around (on the corner of the square) talking with girls and it was like 8:55 p.m. when the grenade just suddenly fell down." Suljetovic was only five to 10 yards from the blast. The shrapnel in his arm was removed, but he still has pieces of metal in his back. After a month in the hospital, he went home. But many of his friends were not so lucky. "A lot of my friends unfortunately died, but a few of them stayed alive," Suljetovic said quietly.

A single mortar had been fired into Tuzla, a supposed United Nation's safe-haven city, from Mount Majejica, east of Tuzla, in retaliation for the NATO bombing of an ammunition depot near Pale.

The NATO bombing had been carried out because of the Serbian attacks against Sarajevo.

The war had suddenly escalated into the crowded Tuzla Square filled with teenagers and young adults.

Because of the density of unprotected people in that small area, the damage was horrendous. Seventy-one people were killed, and over a hundred were injured.

Tuzla Mayor Selim Beslagic's May 25 speech to the United Nations Security Council riveted the attention of the Council as the radio and television descriptions of the massacre appalled people worldwide.

The end of Beslagic's speech was a cry for action from the United Nations. "You declared Tuzla and other besieged cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina safe areas. You have worn out all diplomatic means. Innocent children and people are being killed continuously. For the sake of the God and Humanity use the force finally."

Kapija was the turning point for many who said that America should stay out of Bosnia.

On January 14, 1999, an American soldier stands at attention in front of the Kapija Memorial in Tuzla. He holds up his right hand and vows to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Specialist Kenneth Micah Nation, promotions and awards clerk for Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, chose this site for his second reenlistment in the U. S. Army.

Nation got the idea to choose the Kapija Memorial from Sergeant First Class Michael J. Thode, 13th Psychological Operations Battalion team leader. Thode said that he was surprised that an American soldier had not done this before since this site is so important to understanding why American soldiers are here with the stabilization force.

Nation, a 24-year-old Commerce, Ga. native, said that some soldiers didn't understand why he wanted to go to a foreign war memorial for an American reenlistment ceremony, and that maybe Bosnians watching the ceremony would be offended.

Nation didn't agree with that. He was sure that this was a proper thing to do. He wanted to reenlist in a place that would reflect the meaning of why he was here, which he reasons is "to prevent things like this from happening again."

Nation asked Lieutenant Colonel Barry Fowler if it was possible for him to go to the Tuzla memorial for his reenlistment ceremony. Fowler said, "I think it's exciting because that's why we're here."

Fowler told Nation that he would get an extra vehicle to take him to Tuzla when he went there for an appointment. They would leave early so that Fowler could also attend the ceremony.

The small group of soldiers stood solemnly as Nation repeated his reenlistment oath in front of the memorial, proclaiming his dedication to freedom and peace. The soldiers congratulated Nation following the ceremony, and then walked as a group around the small square until they stopped and stood pensively in front of the marker at "ground zero" for the blast. A large plaque opposite the memorial showed pictures of the 71 people killed in the massacre.

Nation was pleased with his decision to choose the Kapija Memorial. His only disappointment was that he couldn't find some flowers in the marketplace to place before the memorial before he left.

Back at Bedrock, interpreter Suljetovic said he approved of one of Bedrock's soldiers reenlisting at the Kapija Memorial.

Basketball livers up Bratunac

Story and photo by Camp Dobol's Specialist Kimmanda Collins
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The soldiers of Company D of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, had their first taste of international basketball when Dobol soldiers took on the players of the Bratunac High School Center.

The forty-minute game was filled with excitement from the beginning right down to the very end. The soldiers started out in the lead, but the players of Bratunac came back and took over with an overwhelming lead.

The Bratunac team was made up of high school students, as well as professional players from around Bratunac. The soldiers really had to hustle if they wanted to defeat their opponents. "These guys can really play," said Raquell Gray, a Calhoun County, Georgia native and infantryman with Company D. "They gave us a serious run for our money, but I had fun throughout the whole game because that's all it was — a game."

As the players ran up and down the court, others stood on the sideline to drink water and think up a new strategy.

"If we want to win we're going have to play harder and concentrate more," Gray said. "We've been missing easy shots and free throws, and I know we can do better. We just have to hustle and relax at the same time and remember that it's just a game."

At one point in the game, the Bratunac players gained a 20-

point lead over the soldiers. This made the soldiers play even harder, and strive for victory in the end.

"This is our first game on Bratunac. As a matter of fact, this is our very first game against the citizens of Bosnia," said Staff Sergeant Walter Meeks, a New Orleans, La. native and infantryman with Company D.

The spectators' eyes raced back and forth as they watched the soldiers and players run up and down the court. Even though the spectators from Bratunac were rooting for their own team, they were generous with applause when the U.S. soldiers made baskets. "The people in the bleachers cheered for us, but I know deep down inside they really wanted their team to win," Gray said. "And that's OK, because we were just here to have fun and interact with the citizens."

The Bratunac players said they thought the soldiers were very competitive players, but friendly at the same time. "The Americans play well and they get very involved in the game," said Vedran Banduka, high school student and a player on the Bratunac team. "This is my second time playing with them, and it has been fun and interesting all together. At the end of the game, they shake our hands and pat all the players on the back."

The soldiers organized their basketball team at Dobol, and practice there often to get ready for upcoming games. "The name of the basketball team is The Nasty Boys," Gray said. "We've been playing together for a while, and I think we make a good team. If

one of the players is having a 'bad basketball day,' we try to encourage them and help them out in their weak areas. Overall, it's fun and a good way to pass the time while we're here."

The soldiers ran and jumped and made shot after shot, but they still could not surpass the overwhelming lead their opponents had achieved. With very little time left in the game, the soldiers decided that winning was now impossible; however, they still continued to play as if the scores were tied.

The Dobol soldiers showed their good sportsmanship, and that they would play hard until the very end. The soldiers didn't win the basketball game, but they were victorious.



A soldier from the Dobol basketball team tries to steal the ball from a Bratunac basketball player. Soldiers ended up losing to the more experienced Bosnian team.

Medics perform night casualty training

Story and photo by Camp Bedrock's Staff Sergeant Pat Johnston
319th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

It was either the seventh or eighth mass casualty exercise staged by soldiers at Bedrock's Aid Station, but two things made it stand out from all the others. This simulated artillery attack would occur at night, and medical aid would come from an unexpected source.

The exercise began at 7:00 p.m., when a "mortar hit" the Tactical Operations Center for Company A of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. Immediately, a "survivor" reported the bombardment to the TOC. Sergeant First Class Gregory Harvey of Jacksonville, Fla., and Task Force 2-8 medical platoon sergeant, monitored the TOC calls for speed and completeness.

Meanwhile, back at the mass casualty scene, six casualties, four outside and two inside the mascot tent, were thrashing and moaning as three passersby came to the aid of the wounded. They were basic emergency medical technicians who had just graduated from Emergency Medical Technician class at Camp Bedrock. They didn't know about the exercise, but responded the way any well-trained EMT should. By the time the ambulances arrived, the EMTs — a 1st Sergeant and a couple of fellow soldiers — had stopped the bleeding, immobilized heads and spines, and had set up a basic triage for the casualties.

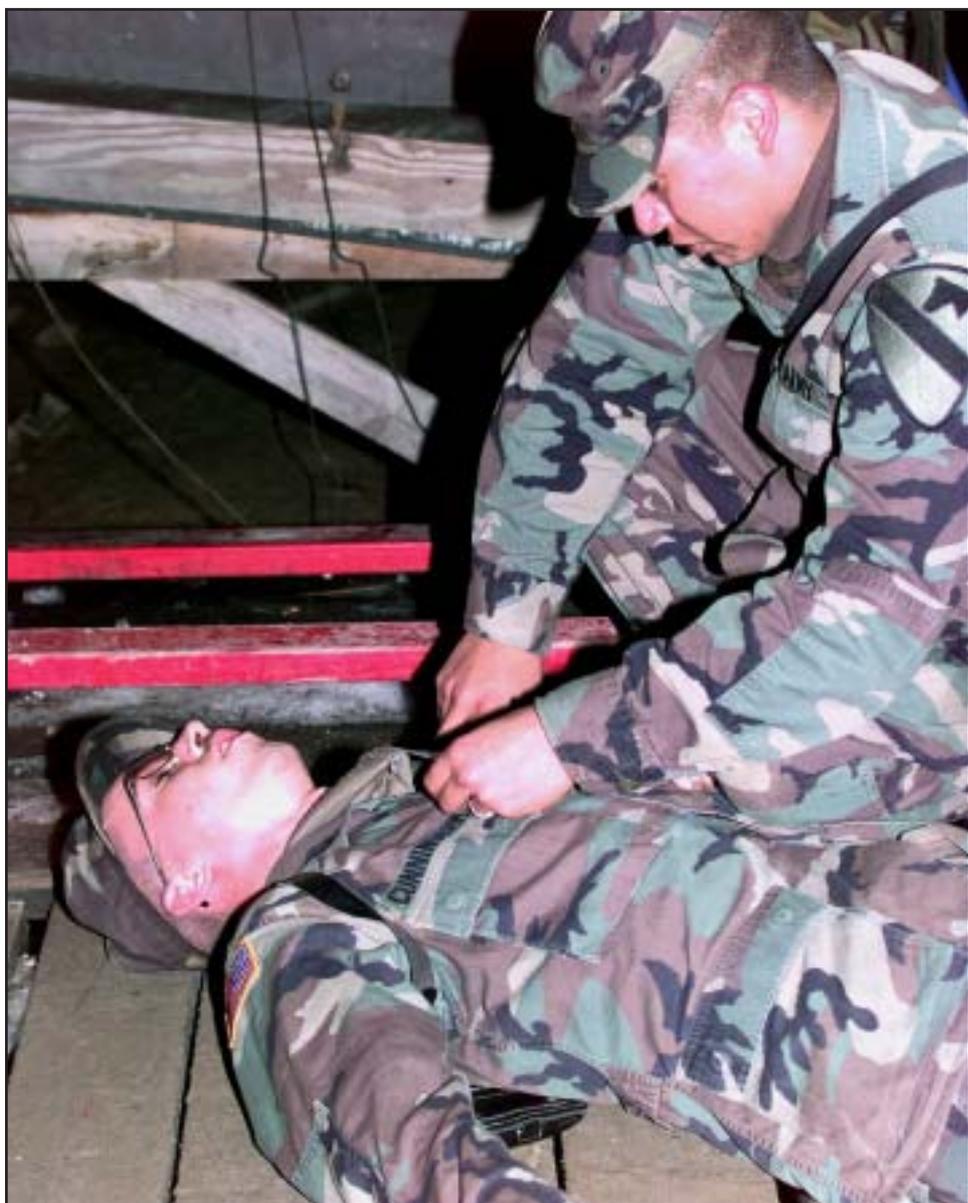
When the regular mascot participants showed up, Sergeant Cornell Fontenot, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Battalion Aid Station noncommissioned officer in charge, and a Houston, Texas native, jumped from the ambulance and began checking the patients. He consulted with the EMTs about injuries, then directed the triage setup.

Lights inside the ambulance were set up around it, providing outside light, but back in the area with the patients, medics were limited to their flashlights. Medics overcame the handicap of darkness using different colored chemlights on their helmets. Red chemlights were for medics treating the most seriously injured patients while blue chemlights identified medics treating priority patients.

When the patients were stable, they were carefully loaded on the ambulances for evacuation.

Major Thomas Hammer, Task Force 2-8 surgeon, compliments his team on their treatment procedures. According to the After Action Review, turning the ambulances around to load the casualties could have improved efficiency — aside from that, the exercise went off without a hitch.

Second Lieutenant Kevin Leland of Sidney, Mont., said the participant's enthusiasm was great. He thought it was probably the best mascot so far at Bedrock. Leland and Fontenot were impressed with the number of volunteer caregivers who pitched in to help.



Sergeant Mitchell Valero of Company C, 20th Engineer Battalion, a recent EMT graduate, runs to one of the "mock" casualties and begins life saving procedures.

Operation Joint Gender

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

As more male and female soldiers deploy together to various military operations, issues of gender become increasingly challenging. The Gender Integrated Training Commission is working proactively to overcome gender issues before they become a problem.

Members of the GITC recently visited Camp Bedrock to talk to soldiers about issues such as basic training and gender integration during a deployment. The commission was started by Congress in 1998 to tackle several serious issues involving male and female soldiers in each of the services.

Anita K. Blair, a member of the commission, said there are three major areas that they are looking into.

"One is adultery and fraternization. Second is gender integration and the third is basic training," Blair said. "We have looked at the basic training programs of each of the services, and we have looked at gender integration at some stateside operational bases. We felt that so much effort and energy and attention is directed towards deployments back in the United States that it was important to get a look at a deployment. So, that is what brings us to Camp Bedrock."

"We are covering all the services, and when you visit any base you find there are people who have been deployed or preparing to deploy," Blair said. "So, deployments are a big deal for the military today. It's kind of a new thing. It's been going on for a few years, but it's not how the military used to be. So, what we want to know is, does basic training provide people the right kind of foundation for soldiers to be able to go out and do the kinds of things they are asked to do, and also, are there any problems between males and females during deployments?"

Private First Class Abigail D. Cox of Bath, N.H., and a member of Company B, 115th Forward Support Battalion, said the training she received in basic training is helping her perform her mission in Bosnia, and helping her deal with a force that is predominately male.

"We have a really good working environment here at the 'Rock.' There's only a handful of females here, but we get treated just as equally as the males," Cox said.

Specialist Yolanda M. Walker of Newport News, Va., and a member of Company B, 115th Forward Support Battalion, is a prime example of gender equality. She recently won soldier of the month, and her competitors were all males.

"The females here are treated as equal as the males. We have no problems with the males and they don't have a problem with us. Actually, they kind of treat us like their little sisters. We can do about anything the males can. It's just up to the individual to stand strong and go after what she wants," Walker said.

Anthony M. Dillard of Wichita, Kan., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, said there is no such thing as male or female soldier at Bedrock. There are simply soldiers.

"Everyone carries their own load. Soldiers look at each other as part of the team because they know they are in this together, and I credit that to basic training," Dillard said.

"I think we have come a long way in the military to establish that there is no difference in male or female soldiers in the military, as long as they accomplish their jobs," Dillard added.

As the GITC works to catch any problems that may arise for soldiers before becoming a challenge, their job may get a helping hand from the soldiers themselves, as they become a stronger team and continue to stay a team in the military.



Specialist Tina L. Brown and Private First Class Dwain P. Degraffe of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cavalry, off-load a High Mobility, Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle tire.