

# TALON

Operation Joint Forge

Task Force Eagle

Saturday, June 3, 2000

## ALWAYS READY— TURKISH QRF

Riot!  
MSU Training

Peace Village:  
CPIC staff visits orphanage

Weather Report:  
Air Force Squadron tracks local weather

# A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read beneath the long,  
straggly branches of an old willow tree.  
Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown,  
for the world was intent on dragging me down.

And if that weren't enough to ruin my day,  
a young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play.  
He stood right before me with his head tilted down,  
and said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight,  
with its petals all worn – not enough rain, or too little light.  
Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play,  
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.

But instead of retreating he sat next to my side,  
placed the flower to his nose and declared with overacted surprise.  
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too, and  
that's why I picked it; here, it's for you."

The weed before me was dying or dead,  
not vibrant of colors: orange, yellow or red.  
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave,  
so I reached for the flower, and replied, "just what I need."

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,  
he held it mid-air without reason or plan.  
It was then that I noticed for the very first time,  
that weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.

I heard my voice quiver; tears shone in the sun,  
I thanked him for picking the very best one.  
You're welcome, he smiled, and then took off to play,  
unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he managed to see,  
a self-pitying man beneath an old willow tree.  
How did he know of my self-indulged plight? Perhaps from his heart,  
he'd been blessed with true sight.

Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see,  
the problem was not with the world; the problem was me.  
And for all of those times I myself had been blind,  
I vowed to see the beauty in life and appreciate every second that's mine.  
And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose and breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose,  
and smiled as I watched that young boy, another weed in his hand,  
About to change the life of another unsuspecting old man.  
"When in doubt, LOVE."

-Chaplain (Col.) Charles W. Edwards, Jr.  
Multinational Division-North/Task Force Eagle Chaplain

## THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

TODAY – "One of the greatest gifts we can give others is hope."

SUNDAY – "There is no mistake so great as that of being always right."

MONDAY – "Yesterday is experience, today is reality and tomorrow is hope."

TUESDAY – "If you can give your son only one gift, let it be enthusiasm."

WEDNESDAY – "The person who has accomplished all that he thinks worthwhile has begun to die."

THURSDAY – "Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward."

FRIDAY – "Treasure the love you receive above all. It will survive long after your gold and good health have vanished."

U. S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Keith J. Gardner, 55th Sig. Co. (Combat Camera)

# TALON

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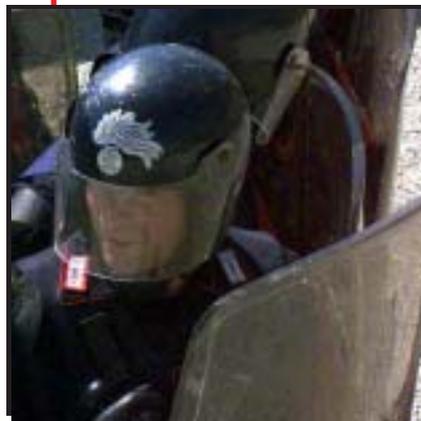
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The Turkish QRF Platoon enjoying some rifle PT at Eagle Base. (U. S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Michael W. Bright, 55th Sig. Co., Combat Camera).



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The Italian Carabinieri practice riot control tactics during a staged demonstration at Camp Dobol.



## PEACEVILLAGE

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# KEEP YOUR GUARD UP

by **Command Sgt. Maj. Bobbie R. Adams**  
**Command Sergeant Major, MND-N**

**T**he Fighter Management Pass Program is a great opportunity to take a break. However, there are some concerns that we must not forget. The main concern is force protection.

Force protection is not just guarding base camp perimeters. It is also the protection of each individual soldier wherever he or she may be.

As a member of the U.S. Army, you may find yourself an easy target for those who do not appreciate our presence. Therefore it is imperative that you be aware of your surroundings at all times. Become familiar with the local population and their customs. You need to know something about what is acceptable behavior and what is not, and especially what behavior will not be tolerated.

For example, it is incredibly offensive to spit on the ground in Hungary. If you chew tobacco, I recommend that you do not do it there.

You should make every attempt to keep a low profile. Do not provoke or argue with anyone who approaches you in a hostile manner, just promptly walk away.

You need to be aware of the various scams that you may fall victim to. There is the taxi scam, where taxi drivers will charge you outrageous fares for services.

When you get in any taxi, tell the driver where you are trying to go and negotiate a fare in advance. When you arrive, pay the driver, get a receipt and look at your change to be sure it is in

Hungarian Forint. The driver may attempt to give you change in Romanian currency, which looks similar, but is less valuable.

It is best to phone for a taxi, and it's recommended to use City Taxi whenever possible. If any taxi driver argues with you or tries to suggest a destination other than what you requested, get another taxi.

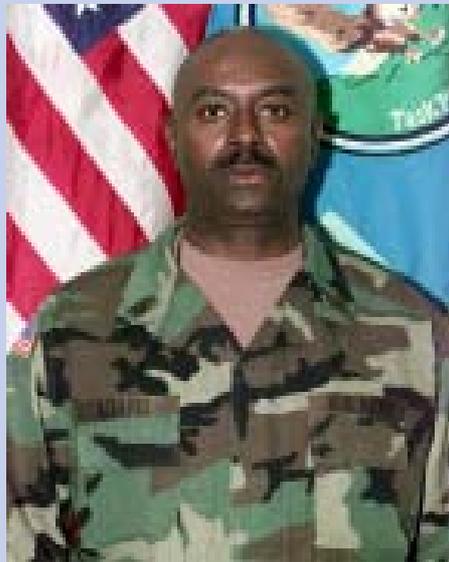
While enjoying your time away, you might decide to patronize a local nightclub or bar. Again, be aware of your surroundings and the reception you receive upon entering an establishment.

Remember your awareness may be lowered by consumption of alcohol as well as fatigue as the night progresses. If you become intoxicated, you are a potential victim for the criminal element. Be aware that the criminal elements tend to frequent nightclubs and bars at very late hours looking for potential victims.

There are locals who will approach you because you are a U.S. service member. They may be friendly and pleasant and show an appreciation for our presence, but others may run scams or use trickery. Do not leave an establishment or agree to meet anyone you do not know. Use the buddy system and try to stay with friends. Make

sure someone knows where you are at all times.

If you exercise common sense, and keep up your situational awareness, which means remaining in control of your senses, you will have a safe and relaxing pass. I want you all to enjoy yourselves, but I need you back here in one piece, and I am obligated to get you home safe this fall. Lone Star!



**Command Sgt. Maj. Bobbie R. Adams**

## MINES: UNSEEN KILLERS

By **CW3 Gary Fink**  
**Safety Office, Eagle Base**

**T**he North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, the United States, and our allies currently have troops deployed in many regions of the world.

Around these regions, there are a total of 64 countries that are known to be mined. It is estimated that there are over 110 million mines in those 64 countries. Some countries where U. S. troops are deployed that are currently known to be mined are Egypt, Kuwait, El Salvador and Bosnia.

In Bosnia alone it is estimated that there are over 3,000,000 mines. That works out to 152 mines per square mile. Each month approximately 800 people are killed by land mines worldwide and thousands more are seriously injured. Most are not the intended victims.

Within the last month several mines were found on Eagle Base in an area that was thought to be cleared. As can be seen in the photo, they are small and appear nonthreatening.

Even if the mine appears to be destroyed or inoperable, there is still the possibility it could explode.

Mines vary in construction, from mass-produced in a factory to homemade.

Mines can vary in appearance, from what is easily recognized as a mine, to something that may resemble a piece of an aircraft.

Mines can be made of almost anything from wood to plastic to metal or any combination.

Regardless of how they were made, or by whom, they all have one purpose—to kill and maim.

Mines can be lying on top of the ground, or only partially visible. Don't assume that they are the only ones. There could be, and probably are, more buried in the same area.

If you see one, then there are probably more, and the best way to avoid a mine strike is to maintain your situational awareness, even in areas that are thought to be cleared.



**FREEZE**—This mine was found in an area of Eagle Base that was thought to be cleared. (U. S. Army photo by Spc. Ben Walker, 710 EOD, Eagle Base)

Here are the steps to take when you encounter a suspected mine:

1. Mark the mine.
2. Retrace your steps out of the area.
3. Notify the Chain-of-Command.
4. Do not re-enter the area, until told it is clear.
5. Never pick it up!

# MSU TRAINS TO REACT TO RIOTS



**EFFECTIVE DETERENTS**—The MSU successfully rushes the crowd during the training exercise.

**Story by Spc. Stephanie Bunting**  
*65th PCH, Eagle Base*

**Photos by Sgt. Kevin Cowan**  
*102nd MPAD, Camp Dobol*

The riots in San Francisco, Seattle and Miami may be remembered with some indignation. Events such as these happen everywhere.

How do organizations prepare for such uprisings?

Here in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Stabilization Force (SFOR) consists of several military units from different countries. SFOR also involves more than just military organizations. Take the Italian Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) from Sarajevo for instance.

The Regimental Carabinieri MSU is a police SWAT team. Interpreter Staff Sgt. Hector Pavon of Genarmeria Nacional Argentina states that the MSU performs a lot of the same actions that he and his unit do in Argentina. The unit may even be called into action during a civil disturbance.

MSU Company Charlie participated in a joint training exercise with the U.S. Army in riot control. For this type of endeavor to

be a success, several things are taken into consideration. The language barrier is one key issue. Transportation to and from the training site was another consideration and then there is the exercise itself.

Training begins with a classroom briefing. This type of atmosphere allows U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jake Mong, Stetson Troop, 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), and Pavon to inform the MSU of what is expected during the exercise. Then it is off to the field.

With transportation vital to the missions success, Mong briefs the MSU team on how the UH-60 Black Hawk comes into play. He instructs the team members on how to board and later unload during the riot exercise. This training is then simulated at Camp Dobol, just a few minutes away by air.

A small group of MSU troops is flown in for support of another team mounted on vehicles that resemble Land Rovers. Each vehicle has an MSU member manning a machine gun. There are additional troops on the sides of the trucks holding semiautomatic weapons.

After landing at Camp Dobol, the support team off-loads and forms a human barrier between themselves and the unruly crowd. If their presence isn't enough to disperse

the group, they begin by beating their nightsticks against their shields, stomping their right foot with each progressive step toward the rioters.

When the crowd of volunteer rioters begin throwing potatoes, the first row of the MSU team kneels down almost digging their shields into the ground. The second and third rows crouch holding their shields at an angle. The last row stands holding their shields just above their heads. While maintaining this stance, the shields make a protective barrier tight enough that nothing gets through. Throughout this display, the mounted team waits in case they need to move in.

If the crowd doesn't back down from this display of force, a signal for the MSU to move out is given by blowing what sounds like a foghorn. As soon as the warning is given, the rioters disperse almost immediately, seeking shelter behind a wall of wire, tarp, sand and rock.

With the obstacle between them and the rioters, the MSU splits off to cover both sides of the wall. Although they are divided, they hold their position. Once the command to stand down is given, the MSU lower their shields and the volunteers return to the open staging area. Each person begins by shaking hands and patting each other on the back. Once the first exercise is over, they move back into position for another run.



**TRIGGER**—Providing security is another important aspect of crowd control as this soldier (above), demonstrates.

**QUICK CURE**—1st Lt. Jay Hardy (right), Squadron Physicians Assistant for 3/3 ACR, administers first aid to a MSU member who was injured during the training exercise.





**COWBOY?—** Preferring to ride a real pony is what's on this boy's mind (above right).

**TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING—** The Rudolf Walter Foundation logo greets visitors to the Peace Village (above).

**This Peace Village kindergartner has quite an appetite (left).**

**M a j . A l l e n Corcoran, Deputy Director of the CPIC, plays basketball on the court of Peace Village (below).**

# ORPHANS: THE FORGOTTEN

## BUT AFTER TWO YEARS OF BUILDING, THE RUDOLF WALTHER FOUNDATION HAS ESTABLISHED A HOME FOR MANY VICTIMS

**Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Richard R. Crepeau**  
*65th PCH, Eagle Base*

Orphans are casualties of war. They are not counted with fatalities or wounded, yet they are still victims who suffer the trauma brought on by an armed conflict.

The Rudolf Walther Foundation established a home for Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) orphans in the village of Turija, located in the municipality of Lukavac. After two years of building, the Peace Village became the home to eighty-seven children on May 22, 1998. The second anniversary ceremony of the opening of Peace Village will take place on June 2, 2000.

According to Osman Pozderovic, manager of the Peace Village, the facility has the capacity for 150 children and 40 adults. Presently, 11 adults reside in the Village. There are 36 employees in the facility, including educators.

Under the protection of one "family", the children grow up with up to nine brothers and sisters with the love of one "mother". Under that protection, the spiritual wounds of the children are being healed.

The children are also provided with a good education. A kindergarten is located in the facility while the other children attend the local school. The children also receive training for their future occupation in order to begin an independent life after they leave the Village.

There are comparatively few orphanages, otherwise referred to as "children's homes," in BiH. There are six in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and one orphanage in the Republika Srpska.

Not all of the children in these homes are true orphans in the sense of having lost both parents. For example, 24 of the children in the Peace Village are from parents who are unable to care for them at home while 63 were left without parents due to the war.





## TEN CASUALTIES OF WAR

### THE RUDOLF WALTHER FOUNDATION'S "PEACE VILLAGE" HERE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH)

The governments of both entities try to support foster home care by providing monthly allowances to non-biological families who care for the children. Placing a child in an orphanage is the last resort.

To date, there are approximately 1,000 orphans in the Tuzla Canton. There are 3,000 children without parents and nearly 14,000 children in the Federation with one parent, mostly from the Podrinje Region, which includes Srebrenica and Zvornik.

In Sarajevo, most of the orphan children there have gone to foster families that took them in, preferring a home to the lone orphanage on a hill overlooking the city, stated city official Mirsada Poturkovic. In many cases, families took in children from different ethnic groups, defying the division that fueled the war. Poturkovic went on to say that the need to replace missing loved ones—or the need to help—was stronger than ethnic hatred.

Foreign adoption is a particularly sensitive subject to Bosnian authorities and to the people of BiH. Having lost so many lives in the recent war, Bosnians have strong feelings against permitting Bosnian children to be removed from their homeland.

The book "Natasha's Story" depicts the story of a nine-year-old girl who was smuggled by ITN correspondent Michael Nicholson to Britain.

Overwhelmed by the young girl's plight, Nicholson's original intention was to shelter the Bosnian youngster until the war was over. In the end, Natasha's mother, who had seen her daughter three times in eight years after leaving her in the orphanage, agreed to an adoption by Nicholson and his wife Diana.

The book was the inspiration for the film "Welcome to Sarajevo."

The Rudolf Walther Foundation's Peace Village is just that. The children live in peace and harmony and also with a sense of hope that their future will never again be scarred by the horror of war. "Without SFOR," said a poised Pozderovic, "there would be no peace."



**UP! UP! AND AWAY!** - Peace Village youths see how high they can go on a six-sided swing set (top).

**GOOD TO THE LAST DROP** - This young boy's smile says it all, desert is the best part of any meal and ice cream is the best treat (above).

**HOW ABOUT A GAME OF 'DOUBLE-DUTCH'?** - Maj. Allen Corcoran of the Eagle Base CPIC tries his hand at jump rope with some eager children (below).





# TIME FOR TEE



**Story by Sgt. Kevin Cowan**

*102nd MPAD, Camp Dobil*

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Keith Gardner  
*55th Sig. Co. Combat Camera*

**P**ebble Beach, St. Andrew's, Peterson Air Force Base, Camp Dobil.

Camp Dobil? Yes, there is golf at Camp Dobil. The course may not be here just yet, but at least for now there is a practice facility. In a recent ribbon cutting ceremony, the Harry Albright Golf Facility opened to the delight of many soldiers living here.

"I think it's great that it opened," says Cpl. Heiddy Veloz of Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3/3 ACR). "It will help me keep up with my swing."

Great is also a word that describes Harry Albright. According to Command Sgt. Maj. Lonnie Hardy, of the 3/3 ACR, "We think the world of him. We met him last June and became very fond of him just during that one little visit. He, for all intents and purposes, built this place (Camp Dobil)."

Harry Albright, Camp Manager, spent the last 20 years working for Brown and Root and has been all over the world supporting soldiers. His job has taken him to places such as Somalia, Rwanda, Kuwait, and Hungary. He has been in this theatre, which includes Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1995.

When the old Camp Bedrock closed its doors a little over a year ago, he moved to Camp Dobil. With his help and coordination of base camp Mayors like Cpt. William Linder, the camp has grown a lot.

Albright says with a smile, "We're here to make the soldier's life easier. That's what we're here for. We're here to please you guys."

And that he has done. With that frame of mind and desire to help others, it is easy to see why the new facility was named the Harry Albright Golf Facility.

"This was the biggest shock to me that they named this facility after me, I thought

it was very nice of them," says Albright, who retires at the end of May.

According to Linder, "It was only appropriate that we name it after him for all that he's done for soldiers. He makes things happen because he wants to, not because he's told to do it."

The facility has a two-person driving range, a sand trap, a practice pitching area and a very large putting green.

"I'm glad to see them (soldiers) use this facility. I don't play golf, but I did go hit a few balls. I shanked them," he says laughingly.

**FORE!—Soldiers take time out to practice their technique at the new Harry Albright Golf Facility on Camp Dobil.**



# 401ST EXPEDITIONARY WEATHER SQUADRON: KEEPING TROOPS INFORMED

Story and photos  
by Spc. Destiny C. Smith  
102<sup>nd</sup> MPAD, Eagle Base

It's hot in the summer months, maybe 95 degrees. It's raining almost every other day. Thunderstorms are prevalent. Fog seems everlasting. In the winter it even snows.

The weather is fickle in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the 401<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Weather Squadron researches it, prepares troops for it and provides forecasts for ongoing and upcoming missions.

"The 401<sup>st</sup> provides all weather support for Multinational Division-North (MND-N)," said Air Force Capt. Shannon Klug staff weather officer for the 401<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Weather Squadron here at Eagle Base.

She added that she briefs the command staff on the weather two times a day at the Battle Update Briefings (BUB) in the White House.

This weather information is important because helicopter and airplane missions are the most vital modes of transportation here, and these missions are dependent upon the cooperation of the weather.

The squadron also issues weather warnings for MND-N, such as thunderstorms, heavy rain, extreme heat and cold, strong winds and lightning.

The information comes mostly from the internet; but the remote miniature weather system, a small machine on the roof of the white house, provides valuable information also.

This tiny machine measures temperature, air pressure, visibility, wind speed and wind direction, sends the information up to a satellite, then beams it back to earth to be e-mailed back to the office, said Klug.

The weather station located on the airfield contains various equipment for measuring characteristics of the atmosphere.

For example, there is a laser beam ceilometer, which measures cloud height over the airfield, and a barometer, which measures atmospheric pressure.

Also present are instruments which measure wind direction and speed. These instruments are important for the safe landing of fixed-wing aircraft, which need to land into the wind. A transmissometer, which measures horizontal visibility on the runway, is also used.

This information is critical to have on mornings when the visibility is low due to fog. It also has a thermometer, which no weather station would be complete without.

Also, right next to the runway, there is another little weather observation station. Found here in a white bird house is a sling psychrometer, which measures the outside temperature and dewpoint, which is checked on an hourly basis. There is also a rain gauge, which collects precipitation in a funnel to be measured. Measurements are collected every six hours when it is raining or snowing. In addition, the Army recently issued them a wet bulb, which measures the heat category.

These observations are important to the force whenever a mission is to be completed. Resource protection is most important, because weather warnings are to protect people and equipment. "Weather can definitely affect operations," Klug said. They sometimes support the army troops in the field by



**HOW HOT IS IT?—Senior Airman Tami Azeltine swings the sling psychrometer, an instrument used to measure the outside temperature. The instrument is kept in the white structure (birdhouse) in order to keep the area shady. Extra heat may influence the temperature.**

setting up mobile weather stations to provide observations specific to that area.

A direct way that weather affects the troops is extreme heat or cold and precipitation. Heat and cold are obvious, because it affects the way soldiers can carry out their duties. Water and proper clothing are important here, Klug said. Precipitation is another danger. Aside from preventing soldiers from carrying out their duties, precipitation poses a danger to unexploded ordnances (UXO) and mines, said Air Force Maj. Ed Bensman, Commander of the 401<sup>st</sup>. "The excess precipitation can cause previously marked mines to move from these marked areas into 'cleared' areas," he said. "This is a problem for deminers."

Bensman and Klug compared the weather here to the upper Ohio valley.

According to the climatology studies done here in the past, highs in the 70s and lows in the 60s are expected in the summer. However, during the four years that the 401<sup>st</sup> has been here, they have experienced a lot of changes in weather.

Summertime highs have gotten up to 110 degrees, and temperatures in the 90s are frequent in June, July and August, according to Bensman. Thunderstorms are also more frequent now. Based on these current observations, past observations and future forecasts, Klug also puts together training aids in order to help the future force.

"It may seem like I have a very small part, but it's my part in helping to work toward stabilization," said Klug, smiling. "I'll do my part and I am proud."

**MEASURING THE WEATHER—Senior Airman Tami Azeltine observes the rain gauge outside of the Tuzla Tower.**



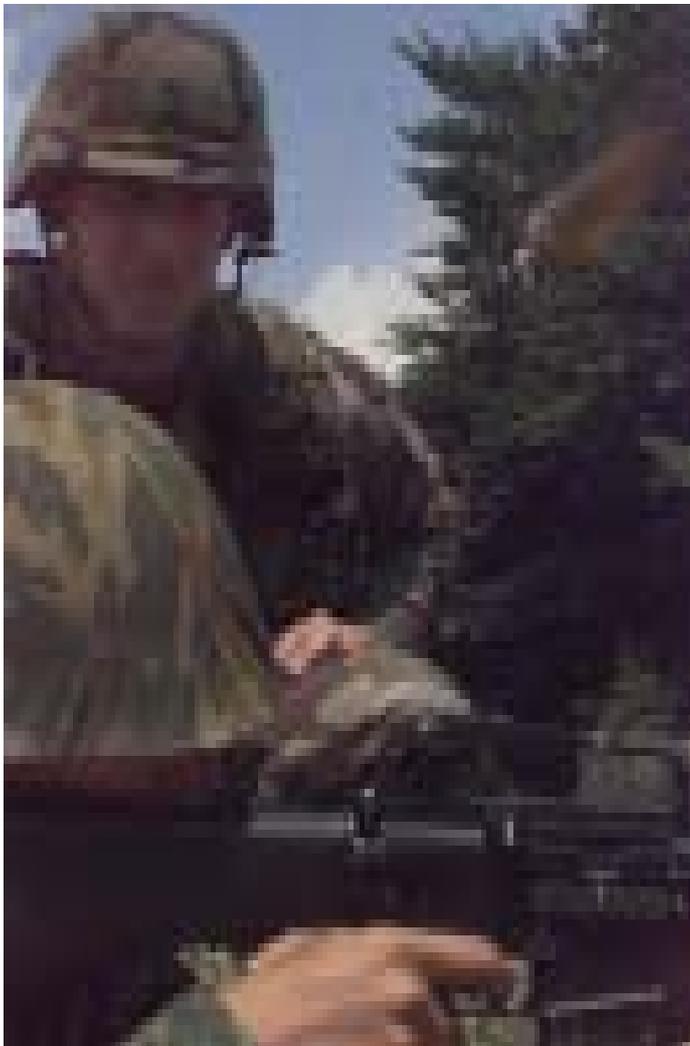
# MULTINATIONAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATION

## Story and Photos

by Sgt. Kevin Cowan

102<sup>nd</sup> MPAD, Camp Dobol

On the far side of the small open field, the Russian soldiers stood poised and ready. Beside them stood the American soldiers. Each soldier held his weapon with a bit of anxiety.



Forces from the 1st Peacekeeping Russian Separate Airborne Brigade (1st PRSAB) and the 3rd Squadron, 3 Armored Cavalry Regiment (3/3 ACR) joined to conduct a small-arms demonstration recently near Ugljevic. This multinational training exercise allowed soldiers from different countries to train together as a team and familiarize themselves with unfamiliar weapons.

"I got to fire the AK-47, the grenade launcher and the sniper rifle. It was very fun and a learning experience," said Pvt. Edward Ortiz of Lightning Troop, 3/3 ACR.

Although the emphasis was put on the live-fire exercise with the various weapons, what most of the American soldiers took back was a sense of camaraderie.

"I was surprised how friendly the Russians were," said Pfc. James VanSickle, also from Lightning Troop, 3/3 ACR. "It hasn't been too long since the Cold War, so I was surprised and pleased. They are just regular 'Joe's' just like us. They put their pants on one leg at a time, just like everybody."

Getting to know who you are working with is an integral part of any multinational task force, and training exercises help promote the effort.

"It's easier to rely upon and work with people that you have met before," said VanSickle. "It tells me that we are working together a lot better with the other countries within SFOR, and that's a good thing. If we get in trouble, we can feel free to call on them and they can feel free to call on us. We're learning how to work together a lot better."

Ortiz agrees, "Training like this should happen more often, not only with the Russians, but with the Swedish or Italians, to see what kinds of weapons they use and to see how they work (as a team)."

Teamwork is vital to accomplish the mission. Although there are many players from many countries, we are one team with one mission. The Stabilization Force is here to maintain peace in the Balkans.

VanSickle sums it up. "We're learning how to work with them and they are learning how to work with us."

If we can do that, then we will be able to accomplish this mission and anything else that may come our way.

**WHERE CAN I GET ONE OF THESE?—Soldiers from the 1st Peacekeeping Russian Separate Airborne Brigade (1st PRSAB) and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3/3 ACR) share small arms training near Ugljevic.**

## SARAJEVO BASE SUPPORT BATTALION (BSB) MOVES FROM ILIDZA TO BUTMIR

### Story and photos

by Spc. Meghan A. Wood

49th Armored Division, Eagle Base

The Sarajevo Base Support Battalion (BSB) moved recently from its former home at Ilidza to its new location at Butmir, in advance of the anticipated closing of Ilidza, and movement of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) Headquarters to Butmir in Sarajevo.

BSB Commander Lt. Col. Rick Sims explained the reason behind the move. "They are consolidating land, moving everything to one place. There's plenty of room to consolidate," he said.

Sims said the goal is to have SFOR off of Ilidza by the end of June.

The land that is currently base camp Ilidza will be returned to the community.

Sims stated that the move doesn't nec-

essarily reflect a reduction in SFOR presence in Sarajevo, rather it is logistically more practical. "It's easier to support from one base camp, it's easier to maintain from one base camp, and it's cheaper," he said.

Sims said the BSB is moving well ahead of the headquarters in order to be situated to receive the command group at Butmir when they relocate. "We're trying to posture ourselves a little early over there to be able to support them. Since we are a support battalion, we can't support them if we're moving while they're moving," he added.

Sims' BSB is responsible for fulfilling the support requirements for any American soldier working for the U.S. military in Sarajevo. There are American service-members in Sarajevo who work for NATO, but they are cared for by another BSB.

"We provide all classes of supply that the soldier needs to do his mission. We coordinate for TDY's, we coordinate for his chow. While that may sound superficial, it's much broader than that. NCOER's, OER's, boards, finance, postal, spiritual fitness, those kinds of things," he said.



**Lt. Col. Rick Sims in his office at Camp Ilidza.**

# TURKISH THUNDER

Story by Sgt. Joseph C. DeCaro

65th PCH, Eagle Base

Photos by Staff Sgt. Michael W. Bright,

55th Sig. Co., Combat Camera

The Turkish "Thunder" Platoon can strike like lightning at a moments notice when trouble erupts anywhere over Multinational Division-North (MND-N).

"We are ready to respond to any situation, any threat to Eagle Base or any other base camp," said 1st Lt. Serkan Sever, officer-in-charge of the Simsek (Turkish for Thunder) unit that currently serves as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for MND-N.

Simsek Platoon is composed of one officer, four noncommissioned officers and 30 enlisted soldiers from the Turkish Battalion that operates out of Zenica, Bosnia. Responsible for the security of Eagle Base 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they are armed with G3 semi-automatic rifles and MG3 machine guns.

"We know it's hard work and a big responsibility," said Sever. "(But) we brace ourselves for every situation with physical training, public demonstrations and other training."

Simsek is divided into three squads of 10 soldiers each, one of which always remains on Eagle Base, said Sever.

And though they sometimes frequent Triggers, Simsek soldiers are never alone and never without radio communication to their headquarters at Sapper Point, according to Sever.

"Because of our situation here, we have to act like a group," he said.



**CLOSE DRILL**—Simsek Platoon routinely drills and trains here on Eagle Base.

Sever said this lack of privacy doesn't bother his soldiers because of the importance of the mission they must perform.

"It's nice to help people by maintaining a peaceful environment here," he said.

Sever said that working here also gave his unit the chance to better know their American counterparts.

"It was a chance to meet you (Americans) and to know each other," he said. "Here we felt at home. We were impressed by the hospitality shown to us. It's a good thing."

Sever said that he heard Americans were friendly, but here on Eagle he has seen that friendship from Staff Sgt. Aaron E. Ortiz, G3 day operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

"He helps us with everything," said Sever.

Since they are the first non-U.S. QRF here, Ortiz has had to coordinate all their food requests – no pork or pork products as they are devout Muslims – and sign for all their equipment.

"I'm not really thrilled about (signing) the hand-receipt," said Ortiz. "But I know where all there stuff is."

Ortiz said the mission of the QRF is to provide the division commander with a flexible force able to move on 30 minutes notice 24/7, to reinforce the base camps, logistic facilities or provide support for freedom of movement and a stable environment in MND-N.

"They (QRF) are sent out to hot spots to generate sufficient force to contain the situation until reinforced or relieved," said Ortiz.

Ortiz said the Simsek platoon is the most rapid QRF MND-N has had to date.

"They are a very, very professional group of soldiers," he said. "Without a doubt, they are fully capable."

**HAND-TO-HAND**—The Turkish Thunder (Simsek) Platoon is the fastest QRF to date in MND(N). To maintain readiness, they frequently practice close combat drills.



# SOLDIER'S SPOTLIGHT



## A LITTLE MONEY FOR A LITTLE LIVING: ONE SOLDIER'S SACRIFICE FOR A LAST HURRAH

Story and photos  
by Pfc. Jessica E. Revell  
102<sup>nd</sup> MPAD

Who would give up \$47,000 dollars to come to Bosnia? Sergeant Benito Reyes Jr. would, and did. His story begins back in 1993. Reyes was part of the Texas National Guard as a mechanic in the 3/141<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion. In the civilian world he was a physical therapy technician at the McAllen Medical Center.

"I didn't feel like I was going anywhere," said Reyes.

Reyes felt he would be happier in law enforcement and could find a future there. It was at that time a Chief Warrant Officer in his unit told him about Active Duty Special Work (ADSW). This counter-drug program moved him a step closer to what he desired to do most. For the next four years he worked in "the Valley" in his hometown of Edinburg, Texas, and assisted customs as a task

protected the interest and commerce of the U.S. by confiscating illegal drugs, black-market CDs and cassette tapes, and making sure merchandise that was brought through complied with the trademark regulations.

"I was pretty much a security guard with a badge and a gun," admits Reyes. "Once an individual pulled a gun on us and it took about 30 to 40 minutes to get him to draw down. He was scared because he had 158 pounds of marijuana in his car. We then seized the vehicle and he was arrested and sent to jail," said Reyes.

On Feb. 7, the 149<sup>th</sup> MP Company was called up to come to Bosnia. The day before activation, they were cut off due to lack of funding. "We weren't supposed to be here in Bosnia. The engineers still needed personnel and asked for volunteers to go. We got attached to the engineers, and now are part of the Guard Force. We are no longer MPs. They took that job away from us," said Reyes.

Deployed as a member of the Guard Force, SGT Reyes was chosen as the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the West Gate. "I really didn't mind it much. I came to Bosnia because this is my last hurrah. I have a total of 15 years in the service now," he said.

"I wanted to come to Bosnia so I could do something for a change. If I was an engineer, a cook, or a plumber, it didn't matter. I just wanted to get here."

It was rather disappointing for Reyes not to assume the responsibilities of an MP and enjoy the perks. "We can't go out on patrols and see the countryside," said Reyes. "On the bright side, working the West Gate you meet everyone that arrives and leaves Eagle Base by vehicle. About 600 to 1000 vehicles pass through a day," said Reyes.

"Just meeting all kinds of different people makes it worth it. General Halverson and some of the colonels have been out here to talk to us. There are all kinds of people that come out and tell us what a good job we are doing. The civilians even come out and say 'America is good'... The only place I've ever seen a Russian Officer is on television. Now they see us, shake our hands, it's great," said Reyes.

As NCOIC, his job is to maintain the West Gate's line of communication. He is also responsible for all the soldiers that work the gate during his shift. Because the job is so monotonous, it's important that Reyes keeps his soldiers motivated. "When the 'roach coach' comes by, I buy Gatorade and pizza for the guys. I also tell them everyday what an outstanding job they're doing and recommend as many as possible for awards," he said.

Along with responsibilities comes sacrifices. Making sacrifices is just something that coincides with being deployed. For Reyes, it was a significant pay cut. With full benefits, his civilian job at the McAllen Sector alone would have paid \$47,000 more than what he is paid here. He says that all the people he meets makes it worth while. "The difference here...is what I get out there."



**INSPECTION—Sgt. Reyes checks the HMMWV Dispatch Form before letting the vehicle through the gate.**

force guardian at the Hildago Port of Entry. His main duty was to search vehicles, which were mostly tractor-trailer rigs. He was searching for drugs and to insure that no modifications had been made on the vehicles.

In 1994, he transferred to the 149<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion to become a military policeman. He also became a United States Customs Inspector with McAllen Sector on the Texas/Mexico border near Brownsville. Insuring that the people that entered the United States complied with the laws and regulations set by the Department of Treasury was a major part of his job. He also