

TALON

Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, November 18, 2000

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil

**Harvesting Weapons for
Destruction in MND (N)**

**DANCON Road March
Celebrates Teamwork
Comedians Leave Them Laughing in the Aisles**

FIRST IMPRESSIONS— Giving Way To Gratitude

Living in another culture for an extended period of time, perhaps for the first time, brings about many first impressions. When we arrived, the sites reminded us of places we had seen before. For example, the local bakeries and certain sounds triggered memories, and reminded us of other deployments. In our own way, we were making connections and looking for the familiar in the unfamiliar. It is self-preservation, which helps us get beyond home-sickness, which is characterized by the longing for the familiar.

The longer we are in a country, the more our first impressions will give way to the familiar. There will come a day when the destroyed homes and buildings no longer make us blink and wonder how or who. We will simply accept what we see for what it is. By now there is a certain comfort in our living quarters, guard towers, office or Humvee. Routes that once had us wide-eyed as we were looking for the right place to turn are now familiar.

You have probably noticed one of two things happening to you. We either find ourselves becoming bitter, or better. Your SFOR 8 experience will be one of the great moments of your life; or it will be a 6 to 12 month time out. It has the potential to be a great time of growth or a great time of struggle. The one thing that makes the difference here is our perspective. I encourage you to let this experience bring about a sense of gratitude.

Let me suggest a little exercise. Each day take a moment to pause and pray, "Lord, I thank you in all things." In this prayer there is humility, a deep trust in his love, surrender and thanksgiving. It glorifies and pleases the Father. It's nothing more than what Paul asked of the Ephesians in chapter five, verse 20: "*Always and everywhere giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our*

Lord Jesus Christ." As you pray daily in this way, you will sense an inner gratitude and peace growing in your life.

Thoughts For The Day

Saturday: What we call adversity, God calls opportunity.

Sunday: Swallowing your pride seldom leads to indigestion.

Monday: The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice.

Tuesday: Smile! It takes only 13 muscles; a frown takes 64.

Wednesday: One thing you can give and still keep is your word.

Thursday: Anger is one letter short of danger. Lighten up!

Friday: The one who lacks the courage to start has already finished.

By Chaplain (CPT) Ronald Cooper
TF 1-64 Armor Chaplain

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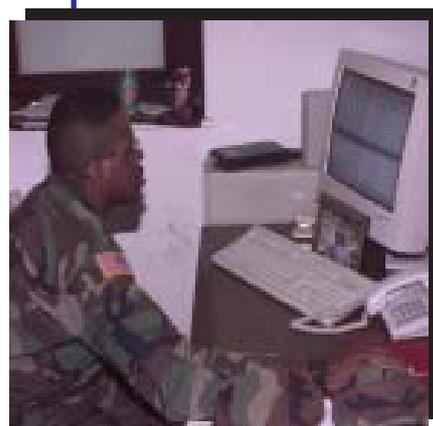
Harvest season begins in MND (N) as weapons are destroyed at Eagle Base. In the foreground a rifle barrel is cut using a acetylene torch, and in the background a homemade RPG is destroyed. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dave Zerbe)



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American and Multinational troops participate in the DANCON Road March. (Photo by 1st Sgt. Gerald T. Peil)



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ON LEADERSHIP: A FEW THOUGHTS (PART TWO)

I would like to continue my discussion on those essential elements I believe are necessary to become an effective leader. This is the second of a three-part series.

As you may recall in my last article, I opened a discussion on leadership in terms of teamwork, treating others with dignity and respect, knowing yourself, being humble and never taking satisfaction in someone else's misfortune. The following builds on that foundation as you continue your personal pursuit of leadership excellence.

Strive for excellence in duty. I think this is an underestimated element that we sometimes pay 'lip-service' to. Excellence cannot simply be measured by a formula that determines whether you are striving for excellence or not. Rather, one can consider it more of a lifestyle encompassing a poised, confident, and competent duty-ethic. Excellence is often not overtly seen but nonetheless expected. It may be achieved in the quiet of the night shift where a shift leader conducts that added research to assure that the intelligence picture is complete.

It may be achieved during a planning session where you undertake a difficult self-identified task because it adds excellence to mission, working conditions, or soldier quality of life. When determining your own level of duty excellence, ask yourself this question: What did I do today to make the Multinational Division (North) a better place in which to serve and live? I applaud your efforts as you seek excellence in the conduct of your duties.

Be a mentor: The American Heritage Dictionary defines mentor as a 'wise and trusted counselor or teacher.' To further explain, in order to be a mentor we must first be competent in our duties and trusted by our leaders, peers, and subordinates. Next, we must relay that competence in a manner by which we develop our subordinates' strengths and build upon their weaknesses. Important to this concept of mentorship is the time set aside to engage in two-way communication. Sharing ideas with each other brings many talents to light and gives many perspectives in solving problems and building teams.

Also, being a mentor means leading by example. Our actions speak far louder than our words. If these are in conflict, it can develop a contentious situation with those we lead. If we continue to 'walk the talk' we become a resounding example of how to be an effective and capable leader for others to emulate.

Personal inner-strength. The United States Army's values encompass many of the following concepts, but I would add a few more that I find essential in your pursuit of leadership excellence.

Discipline. Do what is right regardless of whether someone is watching or not. We all know how challenging this can be, especially with the operational tempo that we maintain. Our mission requires nothing but the highest levels of individual performance and discipline. If we are totally disciplined in our duties and service then we will always do what is right regardless of who is watching!

Courage. Everyday the members the Multinational Division



Maj. Gen. Walter L. Sharp

(North) show incredible amounts of courage. We come from a rich history where individual soldiers and units were faced with insurmountable odds yet achieved their mission because of the selfless courage they possessed. Our personal courage must be unflappable as we continue to chart our individual courses for leadership excellence.

Commitment. Simply stated, be committed to duty and mission in the service to your country. Already each one of you has shown your commitment to duty by deploying here and unselfishly doing your job. We must continually build upon our personal commitment and sustain that commitment in assisting to build a safe and secure environment for the people of this country.

Sacrifice. We have also sacrificed our own comfort to conduct this mission. I am very proud of the fact that everyone in the Multinational Division (North) answered the call to selfless sacrifice in the service to their country. Putting others and mission before ourselves continues to show our resolve in making this country a better place for its people.

Honor Honor is to serve with distinction and integrity. We come from very rich histories of honorable service to our respective nations. I find no greater honor than to answer the call of our nation to conduct this important mission. I want every member of the Multinational Division (North) to know how important you are in achieving our objectives here. I am confident that you will remain committed to your duty while continuing the honorable legacy set forth by those who preceded you.

- Continued in Vol. 6, No. 49

Rock of the Marne!

MINES - THE CROP THIS SEASON FOR FALL HARVEST

Story by Sgt. David Lietz

318th PCH, Eagle Base

Photo by Spc. Christopher Carney

318th PCH, Eagle Base

Fall Harvest 2000 kicked-off at Eagle Base Monday, Nov. 13, with a press conference at Pegasus Hall, hosted by Maj. Gen. Walter L. Sharp, Multi-National Division (North) Commanding General. A weapons destruction demonstration followed at Minue Park.

The purpose of Fall Harvest is to improve the safety of villages and cities throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina by turning in unwanted or illegal weapons and ammunition, and to report any mines or ordnance to the proper authorities for collection.

In an opening statement by Maj. Gen. Sharp to assembled reporters, he complimented the success of this year's harvest and hoped the effort would continue to be successful into the fall.

"Always remember that citizens throughout the year are encouraged to turn in ordnance. Every citizen has the responsibility to make Bosnia-Herzegovina a safer place to live. It's a strong commitment and one that will never be taken lightly," said Maj. Gen. Sharp.

Many of the weapons destroyed at the demonstration were used during the war in the Balkans. Some of the rifles were even used during WWII.

The weapons included anti-personnel mines, rifles, automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades that were originally confiscated or turned into local police.

Police then assigned an identification number to each weapon and other munitions and housed them in weapon storage facilities until they get destroyed.

Oxygen-acetylene torches were used to cut the weapons in half, making them non-functional. Crushing or using explosives are other methods commonly used to destroy these items.

The harvest effort involves cooperation between the Entity Armed Forces and the local authorities. Maj. Gen. Sharp also complemented the International Police Task Force and Stabilization Forces.

"Local police have helped to maintain a stable environment. International investors are looking for peaceful, stable areas to invest in," said Maj. Gen. Sharp. He added that the people of Bosnia have made great strides in the last year politically, economically and socially.

Each weapon that is turned over to the authorities is evidence the program is succeeding.

Since January 2000, over 3,000 weapons and over 2 million rounds of ammunition have been collected in the MND (N) area of operations. In addition, 1,000 landmines have been identified and neutralized, over 10,000 hand and rocket propelled grenades were turned in and over 4,200 kilograms of explosives were disabled or destroyed.

But there is still much more work to do in identifying, reporting and neutralizing landmines and other munitions to make Bosnia-Herzegovina a safer place to live.

In recent news reports for October and November, several local residents were severely injured or killed as a result of detonating mines.

In one incident, a woman returning home on Oct. 26 near Bratunac stepped 50 meters off a path and detonated an anti-personnel mine, and lost her foot as a result. In another incident near Lukavic on Nov. 5, a woman was killed while cutting grass with hand-held clippers near a path after stepping on a mine. Both mine strikes

occurred near known minefields.

Citizens throughout Bosnia have been encouraged to turn in weapons and ammunition. They also need to report the location of mines and explosives to the proper authorities. When unexploded ordnance is located, members of the 363rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal respond to provide assistance.

"We get tasked when there is unstable ordnance or items that are questionable," said Capt. Russell Payne, the commander of the 363rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal National Guard unit, from Casa Grande, Arizona.

Maj. Gen. Sharp concluded his remarks at Pegasus Hall with these comments.

"SFOR's mission continues to be to maintain a secure, safe environment here in Bosnia-Herzegovina. More progress needs to be done. We will continue to do that. Every weapon or munitions that is turned in may save a life."

FIRE IT UP— While paying close attention to his white-hot oxygen-acetylene torch, Staff Sgt. James Jensen cuts through the barrel of a rifle during this year's Fall Harvest.





MND (N) SOLDIERS CONQUER DANCON ROAD MARCH

PRIDE — After all 39 soldiers finished the march, they took a rest to catch their breath while posing.



PREPARATION—Friendly socializing took place just before the beginning of the march (above), which included posing for mom (below).



Story and Photos

By 1st Sgt. Gerald T. Peil

3-15 Infantry, Camp Dobol

Recently, 39 soldiers from Task Force Eagle 1-64 Armor, Camp Dobol, Bosnia-Herzegovina, participated in the DANCON road march, a treacherous 30-kilometer road march encompassing steep mountain roads and rocky trails around Camp Dannevirke, Bosnia.

Taking part in the unique event were soldiers from diverse nationalities, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Italian. Considering the circumstances - 30 kilometers and about 40 pounds of gear, infantry would seem most suited for the challenge. Yet a variety of medics, communication specialists, mechanics, intelligence specialists, and tankers would not be a victim of one-upmanship. So, they discarded their various skills to meet the gritty challenge.

The course was a spontaneous event that had not been specifically trained for, but the soldiers were physically ready to complete the march nonetheless.

When asked what he had done to prepare for the event, Spc. Brett Stadler, B Company, 3-15 Infantry, said, "Nothing, really. I focused mainly on the mental aspects since I knew this would be different than the weekly marches we did back at Fort Stewart. There are no hills there."

The course was a labyrinth of hills and mountain slopes that could not be conjured by imagination. One trail winding up a steep mountain slope was four kilometers and left exhausted soldiers with nothing left.

"There was a time when, to keep going, I had to push down on my thighs, giving them that, oh, so needed boost. Stopping was out of the question, since I knew my legs would cramp up and that just might have been it for me," said Spc. Greg Gravitte, HHC 1-64 Armor.

Feet may have been burning and muscles cramping, but that didn't stop all 39 soldiers from completing the march. The participants were given 8 hours to complete the 30 kilometer course. The minimum weight needed to participate was just over 22 pounds. This may have been the standard, but not typical for the Marine soldier, who bore the brunt of a load nearly twice what required.

"Although it wasn't mandatory for the other soldiers to wear everything we wore, I felt proud to have completed the march in full battle rattle," said Sgt. William Starr of A Company, 1-120 Infantry. The 38 soldiers of Task Force 1-64 went together, finished together, and following the march, triumphantly limped together, certificates in hand, with heads held high.

Following the march, those who participated were recognized with Certificates of Achievement during an awards ceremony held at Camp Dobol.

KEEP GOING—
Spc. Jevon Calle, HHC 1-64 AR, and Spc. Clifford Cunningham, 103 MI, find themselves alone on a sunny stretch of road during the DANCON Road March.



THEY'RE OFF—The 39 soldiers begin their trek on a cool foggy October morning. A test of fortitude lay ahead of them in the form of mountain slopes and twisting paths through hills.



TECHNICAL EXPERTISE— Spc. Eddie O. Landis (above) and Staff Sgt. Dawn D. Bell (below) gather information from their computers.



DIGITAL ARMY—The 3rd SSB's electronic wizards make tracking and processing deployed soldiers easy, ensuring a smooth transition.

3RD SSB KEY TO SMOOTH AND FUNCTIONAL DEPLOYMENT

Story and photos by Sgt. Shanon B. Woods
69th PCH, Eagle Base

Tracking, locating, paying and processing soldiers has been made easier thanks to a few troops with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Leroy R. Dunlap, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets had been used before to track soldiers. These were not very accurate or effective. To remedy this, prior to deployment for SFOR 8, Staff Sgt. James K. Jackson, Staff Sgt. Dawn D. Bell, Sgt. Derrick E. Oliver and Spc. Eddie O. Landis, began devising a way to improve methods of gaining and maintaining accountability of soldiers, regardless of where they are located in the box.

Using the Tactical Personnel System (TPS) extensively, the SSB begins accountability and inprocessing from the information on the manifest. From there, they create a database. Previously, it would take 2-3 hours to manifest personnel. Now the SSB can process 500 personnel

in 25 minutes, said Command Sgt. Maj. Dunlap.

Staff Sgt. Dawn D. Bell is responsible for starting entitlements and pay for all SFOR soldiers.

With the back up database, called 'Superman', she was able to extract information from the TPS and import it to Superman. Using this method, she was able to start entitlements for 99.5% of the deployed soldiers by September 20th.

"It was a challenge, but we got this system to work through trial and error and long hours," said Staff Sgt. Bell.

Spc. Eddie O. Landis and Staff Sgt. James K. Jackson work together to constantly update and maintain the TPS, which is the database of all the soldiers deployed to SFOR 8. Many agencies benefit from this database.

Until recently, the Red Cross had to spend a lot of time finding soldiers who needed messages delivered to them. However, Staff Sgt. Jackson and Sgt. Oliver were able to place the soldier data on a server that the Red Cross could access, making it easier to find soldiers. For their actions, Staff Sgt. Jackson and Sgt. Oliver were awarded certificates from the Red Cross

president. Now a Red Cross representative can find a soldier with minimal information.

The system is set up so soldiers can be found by base camp, social security number or name. "Sometimes families in the rear do not have complete information. That made it difficult to find the soldiers," said Sharron Gilkey, station manager of the Eagle Base Red Cross.

"We recently sent a birth announcement to a soldier in a matter of minutes where it used to be much more difficult to locate the soldiers," said Paul McClelland, assistant station manager of the Eagle Base Red Cross.

Sgt. Oliver was able to mirror the TPS so that various agencies can extract the information they need easily. The mayor's cell, for example, is able to use the system to track where soldiers are housed and fulfill housing needs.

The Task Force Med Eagle also uses the system to track a soldier's trip to sick call. This information can then be combined with the soldiers' permanent medical records that are still at home station.

For the first time in theater, the Personnel Asset Inventory included 100% of the person-

nel in theater and has been connected directly to the rear.

"Now the tracking process here in theater is no different than home station accounting," said Staff Sgt. Jackson. "Everyone on the ground, to include Sarajevo and Tazsar are tracked from here," he said.

Sgt. Oliver and Staff Sgt. Jackson agree that it was a lot of work, and that sometimes they had to stay up to two or three a.m. to get the improved tracking system operational.

"We had an idea of what we were trying to get established. If we had any problems, concerns or dilemmas, we could count on Chief (Warrant Officer Jason M.) Wray to help keep things flowing," said Sgt. Oliver.

A key morale builder for deployed soldiers is mail. Using the tracking system, the postal unit is able to get redirect mail processed much faster, as a postal locator has been mirrored from the TPS.

The SSB troops agree that the long hours and preparation involved in improving the personnel tracking system was well worth the effort. Prior planning has made for a smoother running and more functional deployment.

COMEDIANS ENTERTAIN TROOPS AT CAMP MCGOVERN

Story and Photos

By Spc. Jodie M. Moore

318th PCH, Camp McGovern

A chorus of laughter echoed throughout the night Nov. 7th when the ALCOR Comedy tour came to a stop here at Camp McGovern. Comedians Joe C. Carroll and Jim W. McCue, from Boston and New York respectively, arrived here to provide comic relief to the hard-working soldiers in the Balkans.

The comedians, in their second tour to the Balkans, tried to keep the material fresh and relative to the soldiers in the audience. Interacting with the audience throughout the night, McCue and Carroll shared experiences from home that all soldiers could relate to.

The soldiers in attendance appreciated the comic relief the comedians provided. The show provided them with a chance to relax after a day of work. "I really enjoyed the comedians that appeared on the MWR show. It was very uplifting and it made me feel like I was at home again," said Spc. David B. Combs, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-15 Infantry. Spc. Roderick D. Mack, HHC 3-15 Infantry Joint Visitors Bureau, said he too enjoyed the comics on Tuesday.

"Very talented," said Spc. Mack, "I think they really enjoy doing their job. You can tell by their desire to keep the audience

laughing."

Much of the comic material referred to the vast differences in lifestyle the soldiers must adjust to while being in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Carroll marveled at the fact that not only do the soldiers give up all things familiar by being here, but they do it without complaints.

"It's a novelty to us, to almost see what it's like to be in the military for a couple of weeks," said Carroll.

According to the comedians, time spent in the Balkans is time well spent. Both comics freely give up time in the United States to spend two weeks a year on tour in the Balkans. "It's a privilege to come over here. We're like military cheerleaders. It's an important job you do over here. You guys do the hard stuff. We do the easy part. You give kids here a chance to reach sixteen," said Carroll, referring to the job the soldiers do.

He added that as long as the soldiers were here, he would continue to sign up for the tour. "I'll be glad to come over as long as you're here," he said.

The comics say time spent here also makes them aware of everyday things taken for granted by them back in the States.

"It really struck me last year how good we got it at home," said Carroll. He said it's easy to give up two weeks from their lives knowing that soldiers are here from any-



A COMEDIC NIGHT—Comedian Joe C. Carroll, from Boston, jokes leave the soldiers at Camp McGovern roaring with laughter.

where between six months to a year. This makes their job even easier he said. They get to see first hand the sacrifices that all soldiers make in this peacekeeping mission, McCue added.

McCue went on to say that they have privileges over people back at home. He said they find themselves in a unique situation. "This is a great experience for us. We get to see things most civilians don't get to see. That makes us even more thankful for the services over here doing their job," he said.

The fact they knowingly give their time away from home to show their appreciation is a fact not overlooked by soldiers.

"I hold the comedians in high regard because they could be at home doing the same thing. But, they come over here so soldiers can have a gift from home," said Spc. Mack. The appreciation is twofold. The soldiers and the performers appreciate the sacrifices each must make.

Carroll, always the comedian, said with a laugh, "Thank you for being in the military, if not they might draft me to come over here. Seriously, I appreciate the job and the people doing it," he added.

ENJOYING THE SHOW—Soldiers at Camp McGovern sit back and laugh away the stress of a hard day's work at the comedy show.





BOOK 'EM— Sharron Gilkey and Paul McClelland go through some of the daily books. Gilkey has to keep tabs on everything from what movies they have to how much popcorn they used last month.

American Red Cross Supports Soldiers All Around the World

Story and Photo
By Sgt. Dave Lietz
318th PCH, Eagle Base

Communicating bad news, describing the illness or death of a loved one, is one of the hardest messages a command must deliver to a soldier. Sometimes, however, messages are joyous, such as a birth announcement. No matter what though, the information probably came from the Red Cross.

The American Red Cross' main mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to provide emergency communication commands and soldiers.

In an emergency situation, a message would be sent to a nearby Red Cross chapter. It would then have to be verified. For example, a death or serious illness would be verified by a doctor.

"The unit needs a verified message so they can make an informed decision on the leave of the soldier," said Vicky

Wisnom, a Red Cross volunteer, who is on her second assignment to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"Our messages all come from an emergency communications center at Falls Church, Virginia," commented Sharron Gilkey, Team 17 leader. "We pass the message to the chain of command, then we ask for direct contact with the soldier

American Red Cross volunteers like Wisnom and Gilkey are normally assigned to a permanent station for one to three years, and deployments for them, like this, last four months.

"Wherever there are military members stationed there is a Red Cross station that serves that area," said Wisnom.

"We have a 24-hour video

"One soldier's mother had died. We gave the soldier hugs and support, and were there for him. He said he didn't realize what the Red Cross did until then."

to confirm the message receipt."

Besides being the carriers of the good and bad news, the group is here for support, also.

"One soldier's mother had died," Gilkey said. "We gave the soldier hugs and support, and were there for him. He said he didn't realize what the Red Cross did until then."

library, free popcorn, and book library. These are all donated to the Red cross by the American people," added Wisnom

Wisnom works for the Armed forces emergency services branch of the Red Cross. "We are the only red cross organization in the world

that has armed forces emergency services," she said.

The American Red Cross here at Eagle Base has touched the lives of many soldiers here at Eagle Base.

Gilkey leads a team of four people, consisting of Wisnom, Paul McClelland and Ronald Huffman.

The American Red Cross offers more than emergency services to troops, they also offer a little piece of home.

"We receive holiday greeting cards and big goodie boxes," Gilkey said. "You can always get a fresh cup of coffee."

You can always find a touch of home, a friend and a good neighbor at the Red Cross office.

"When we leave here we make relationships that last a lifetime. We never say goodbye because we know our paths will cross again we just say we will see you later," said Gilkey. "We are truly family."

WINTER SAFETY TIPS FOR DRIVING IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Story and photos by

Mr. John Turnmire

TF Eagle Safety Director

Winter Drivers Training is being conducted by units in the MND (N) Area of responsibility to familiarize and prepare soldiers for the road conditions that exist during harsh winter months in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Driving behavior patterns differ between each soldier. Some may have grown up in the northern states where snow, sleet and icy roads are common, and, therefore, are experienced in driving during these conditions. Others may have grown up in areas where they don't have extreme cold weather and are not familiar with driving in that type of weather.

Bad weather affects all roads. No matter how good the road is, driving in Bosnia during the winter months is inherently dangerous, especially when there is sleet, snow or ice on the roadway. When road conditions are adverse, drivers must look farther ahead so they can anticipate emergencies and avoid the need for sudden maneuvers. Most skids are caused by last-second stops and turns on slippery roads.

Extra care must be taken on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop in case the roadway isn't clear ahead. On a downgrade, both loss

of traction and gravity are working against you.

Use caution if you drive around or through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The same conditions that caused their trouble may still be there when you arrive. When there is no room to get through, you must be prepared to stop.

During the winter months, snow- and ice-covered roadways are prevalent in all parts of Bosnia. Good drivers will allow more clearance between their vehicle, other vehicles and fixed objects when maneuvering on bad surfaces. A pile of snow or an ice rut may throw vehicles off just enough to cause them to strike a stationary object if not enough clearance has been allowed.

Awareness of the vehicle's limitations is essential; pre-trip checklists and inspections will familiarize you with the vehicle and point out things that might need attention. As a defensive driver, you must operate your vehicle in a manner to avoid contributing to an accident.

After all precautions are taken and good practices are followed, there still will be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Always check the posted force protection road conditions prior to any movement during adverse weather.

**DO IT THE WAY YOU HAVE
BEEN TRAINED-FOLLOW
ALL SPECIFIC SAFETY
RULES...**



PUNCHING AND KICKING INTO FITNESS

SOLDIER'S SPOTLIGHT



Story by Pfc. Marc Marin

318th PCH, Eagle Base

Photos by Spc. Christopher Carney

318th PCH, Eagle Base

On a recent Wednesday morning Staff Sgt. Olivia C. Branch held the 'cardio kick' class at the Fitness Center here, putting her students through a 45-minute series of punches, kicks and other stationary movements.

After the class, an exhausted Staff Sgt. Branch stated the obvious.

"It's a good cardio workout," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "It burns a lot of calories. In the first 10-15 minutes, you're already getting a good sweat. So if anything, even if you don't do all the movements you will burn calories from sweating."

Staff Sgt. Branch, the noncommissioned officer in charge of officer evaluations and records of Bravo Company, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, holds her class Monday and Wednesday mornings at 0600 and Friday evenings at 1800.

"There was a young lady who did (cardio-workout classes) the previous rotation. I went to a couple of her classes and they said they were looking for someone to give the aerobics class. So I told her I was willing to take over," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "MWR helped me put together a tape, and the rest is history."

She got her start in high-speed aerobics a few years ago after one of her soldiers turned her onto it.

"He was always saying 'you have to see it Sgt. Branch! You have to see it!' Then he showed me and I was like, 'oh, okay, that's pretty good,'" Staff Sgt. Branch re-

members she got a tape and started doing cardio-kick at home, and her young daughter joined in with her.

Thanks largely in part to recommendations from her original class members, Staff Sgt. Branch has seen her class catch on with soldiers here.

"It started with just my unit, which was about eight people, but each day the class seems to increase in size," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "Now I get close to 30 soldiers each day."

"It's word of mouth," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "People hear the music in the gym and people start talking about how sore they are the next day. It's a good workout, you need to come out!"

While Staff Sgt. Branch can rattle off the benefits of her class, she also knows it's not for everyone.

PUT UP YOUR DUKES— Using a series of punches and kicks, Staff Sgt. Branch is helping lead the way to fitness for the soldiers at Eagle Base.



"It helps with your cardio endurance as well as muscle toning: abs, thigh muscles, calf muscles, triceps, biceps," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "But I think it's intense enough for someone to see a doctor before they come to the class, with all the kicks and constant movements that we do."

Staff Sgt. Branch, a minister's wife and mother of two daughters, ages five years and nine months, is active in the church and teaches the Women's Fellowship Bible Study on Mondays.

"I'm very busy here," Staff Sgt. Branch said. "I'm used to being this active, I just don't have any kids to take my time."

During her latest pregnancy, Staff Sgt. Branch showed just how devoted she is to her aerobics.

Aerobics can be for everyone, all the time.

"I just had the baby in January, and I was doing (aerobics training) even when I was pregnant," said Staff Sgt. Branch.