

TALON

Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, February 10, 2001

Task Force Eagle
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Bradleys Tour The Countryside

Assessing Base Camp Security

Camp Comanche Couple
Renew Different Set of Vows

MND (N) Law Enforcement Agencies
Crack Down on Crime

BE MY VALENTINE

“Be My Valentine!” From candy hearts to greeting cards, Americans love Valentine’s Day. It’s a day to express our love, especially romantic love. We all want to feel loved. The Bible tells us love comes from God: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God...” (1 John 4:7). The love of God is the one great, overarching love, which permeates everything and which informs and transforms all other, human, loves. Too often, what we call love is flawed, tainted, mixed with other impure ingredients. The love of God purifies.

Romantic love is too easily confused with lust, the selfish desire of our flesh, the longing to possess another. The love of God can make our relationships into opportunities for sacrificial service, and a communion with another person. A Christian marriage is an image of the relationship between Christ and the Church, an incarnation of divine love.

There are other loves as well. Patriotic love, the love of one’s nation, is capable of great good or great evil. This, too, must be purified by the love of God. The patriotism that swells the heart and inspires service must not be the way to the darker side, which swells the ego and inspires hatred.

The love of friends is surely one of the great blessings of God. Everyone needs that person or small group, which shares our interests, our outlook, and our history. But let the love of God take our friendships to a higher level, beyond self-interest. A great friend is a treasure to value for a life-time.

Many of us find ourselves loving things. Here, no comment should be necessary! But who can deny that we have created a popular culture that values the acquisition of material goods above charity, hospitality or moderation? God created the material world for our benefit, to mediate God’s love, kindness and grace to us. Only our sin and spiritual blindness make earthly things an end in themselves. A generous application of the love of God can turn our hearts right again.

On this Valentine’s Day, get to the Source! Let God’s love purify all the affections of your heart. Love boldly: it’s what the world needs now!

Thoughts for the Day

Sunday: Fear is the darkroom where ‘negatives’ are developed.

Monday: ‘Our strength is made perfect in weakness’

Tuesday: Spirit has 50 times the strength and staying-power of brawn and muscle.

Wednesday: Do you wish people to speak well of you? Then never speak well of yourself.

Thursday: Never allow your own sorrow to absorb you, but seek out another to console, and you will find consolation.

Friday: Solitude... A good place to visit, a bad place to stay.

Saturday: God is not greater if you reverence Him, but you are greater if you serve Him.

By Captain (Capt.) Isaiah B. Collins
1-229th Aviation Chaplain

TALON

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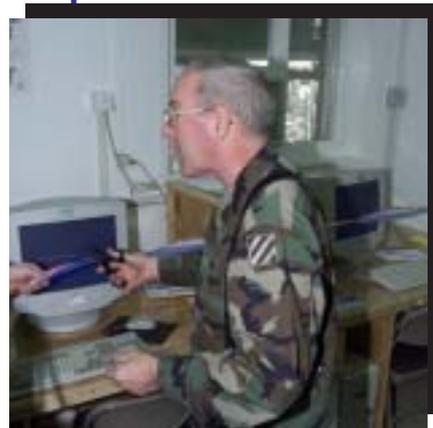
Alpha Company 1st Armor Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) takes their Bradleys out for a road march. (Photo by Sgt. Noreen L. Feeny)



LATIN NIGHT BRINGS MUSIC FROM THE HEART

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The passionate sounds of Latin music can be heard from Eagle Base on Thursday nights. (Photo by Sgt. David Lietz)



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PREPARING FOR THE BOARD

(Part 2 of 2)

By **Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos A. Cueto**

Command Sgt. Maj., Aviation Brigade, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized)

I wanted to continue my discussion concerning board preparation with continuing to focus on those individual responsibilities you need to consider as you prepare for these important career progression milestones. If you remember from the last article, the issue was opened with a discussion about why you should seek attendance to boards and some individual tasks in preparation for local boards.

I would like to build on this topic by discussing some of the important preparatory tasks for service department-level selection boards. I know there are many service unique requirements respective of the many services represented in Multinational Division (North), but I think the following items “span the gap” appropriately.

Build a competitive file early. I would like to think that preparing for higher noncommissioned officer ranks begins the day you enter your service. There are many challenging assignments, professional development programs and schooling opportunities throughout your career. Always seek the tough assignments and excel at every job you are given.

Attend civilian education and take advantage of developing an eclectic perspective on managing and leadership. Pursuing civilian education allows us to think in broader terms and better understand the complexities and methods of analytical thinking. Our officer leadership looks to us as advisers. Through advanced education, we develop sufficient degrees of varied knowledge and wisdom to advise them appropriately and correctly.

Ask for, and attend challenging additional skill identifier (ASI) schools, and prepare for noncommissioned officer education system (NCOES) courses before you attend. Remain current in your military occupational specialty (MOS) specific duties, and seek further knowledge on the new systems, tactics, techniques, and procedures that affect your career field. Become the subject matter expert in your military occupational specialty and share your wisdom with others. The important thing to remember is that you must dedicate yourself now to becoming the most competent and well-rounded senior noncommissioned officer!

You are your own best career manager. I recall hearing these words many years ago and affirm their truth each time I prepare for any selection process. We should keep accurate accounting of what is best for our individual careers and work closely with our branches to ensure we are asking to have those objectives met. You should be the expert of your own personal file. If you are not aware of the status of your file or if you require necessary assignments to be competitive for selection to the next grade or schools, start working resolutions early. Your branch managers can assist you in developing a road map to your goals. Your job is to make sure you stay true to the path that you select.

Make sure your file is accurate and kept current. I suggest



Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos A. Cueto

you get a copy of your microfiche at least six months prior to any selection board. Look at your Personnel Qualification Record (PQR) which consists of your Enlisted Records Brief (ERB) and your DA Form 2-1. Scrutinize every detail of these documents. The board certainly will. Ask yourself a couple of questions during this process: are my awards accounted for; are my noncommissioned officer evaluation reports (NCOER) present and in the correct order; is my personal data and service record correct and so on. The closer you analyze this document the better the opportunity to catch the one item that a board member will for you! Work closely with your soldier support battalion (SSB) who has the expertise to make your file look its best.

Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reports (NCOER). NCOERs are the true measure of duty performance and a significant factor when boards consider the best noncommissioned officers for promotion. Begin building your NCOER file by seeking the tough jobs and always excel at every job you perform. You owe it to your service and your career to put everything into your duty performance!

Take a good photo. The board has very little time to look at each soldier's file, so your photo speaks volumes about you. When you take your photo, make sure all appurtenances are worn properly and your uniform is in serviceable condition. If you do not have a tailored Class A uniform, I highly recommend you consider having one made. A tailored uniform can give you a sharper appearance, which will go a long way with the board members.

When you go to take your photo, carry your uniform with you and change at the photo center. Before you take the photo, ask someone to take one last look at your uniform to see if anything looks out of place.

These are a few items you should remember as you build a competitive file for consideration by higher-level selection boards. The key to any preparation is prior planning, developing an action plan, attention to detail, and remaining vigilant in achieving your objectives. If you do these things as you progress in your military career, I am sure you will be a success as we continue to ensure a secure and stable environment for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Rock of the Marne!

MND (N) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TEAM TOGETHER FOR JOINT JUSTICE

Story by Sgt. David Lietz
318th PCH, Eagle Base
Photos courtesy of CID

A joint investigation between Criminal Investigation Division (CID) agents and the Military Police Investigation (MPI) section, code-named Operation Joint Justice, resulted in the arrest of five local Bosnians. These individuals were offering to sell marijuana and other drugs, stolen alcohol and an AK-47 assault rifle to U.S. soldiers in the Tuzla area. All suspects had previous military experience within the Bosnian Army. One of them was previously assigned to the Bosnian Special Forces.

"CID assumed the investigation from a police tip," said Special Agent Jay Collins, drug suppression team chief, a U.S. Army reservist with the Bosnia Resident Agency's Criminal Investigation Division office. "We started working undercover in January."

Agents and investigators made five drug purchases working in a covert status, and the suspects even offered to sell an AK-47 assault rifle. Because all of the transactions were critical to the investigation, surveillance teams monitored them. At the time of the final bust, five Bosnians were in custody, and authorities seized illegal narcotics, with an estimated street value of \$13,000, according to CID.

The undercover operation was the first of its kind. "This was the first covert drug operation conducted in Bosnia since U.S. forces arrived in 1995," said Special Agent Collins. This case will be closely monitored because it will set precedent for future drug operations and investigations with the Bosnian Police. Currently, the Zivinice police are moving the case to the 'next level' with the Bosnian Federal Police for prosecution.

Assisted by law enforcement officers from the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) Military Police, Provost Marshals Office, 94th Military Police and a K-9 unit, Special Agent Collins said the operation worked perfectly. "This was the best operation I have seen in four years of working drugs in the military and as a civilian law enforcement officer," said Special Agent Collins.

Once the initial contact and drug deals were made with the suspects, the agents began planning for the final bust and takedown operation. The Operations Officer, Special Agent Dave McMullen and Special Agent in Charge, Special Agent Rick Jones organized the team. The training was covered by Master Sgt. David James and Sgt. 1st Class David Hammond, both with the Military Police.

On the day of the bust, the undercover agents and investigators met with four of the suspects and purchased four more bags of marijuana. This time was used to set up for the final buy.

"It's called a 'confidence purchase.' It shows the suspects our intention of purchasing larger amount of drugs. In this case, the intention was to buy one-pound of marijuana later that evening," said Special Agent Collins. The suspects also said they would bring an AK-47 assault rifle to the night meeting for purchase. Adding the element of an AK-47 and the amount of drugs involved created 'a high level of danger' according to Special Agent Collins.

On every drug operation there are several processes that take place such as operational planning, risk assessments and safety briefings.



"We placed on our body armor and conducted weapons checks." Balaclavas (black hoods) were in place and uniforms were sterilized, or covered, so that the officers identity would be unknown during the operation," said Special Agent Collins.

Surveillance team members conducted a final check of still and video cameras and coordinated with medical personnel. Capt. Markus McCuen and Sgt. 1st Class Richard Madison, both of Task Force Med Eagle, were briefed in the event of injury to one of the suspects or officers.

"At that time, the takedown team loaded into the assault vehicles and surveillance teams were set in place," said Special Agent Collins. The 'undercovers' were now in place for the meeting with the drug dealers.

Once it was established that the drugs and weapons were in the area, an undercover agent gave the 'go' signal and the takedown was set into motion. Now was the time the operation was at its most intense and dangerous.

The takedown team pulled up and quickly exited the assault vehicles shouting commands, "Get down! Get down!" in English and Serbo-Croatian. The agents and military police, equipped with specially modified rifles and pistols, moved in with weapons drawn. Meanwhile, the K-9 dog team jumped out, ready to provide help if the subjects were to brandish a weapon or try to flee the area. Collins said the team hit the suspects hard and fast.

"Everyone was taken to the ground," Special Agent Collins said. Three of the suspects froze in shock and were caught totally by surprise. Two more suspects were captured within hours with a substantial amount of drugs and weapons. Following the arrest, the suspects were driven to an undisclosed location, interviewed and interrogated by CID Agents and Zivinice Police Narcotics Agents. They were then turned over to Zivinice Police Headquarters for final processing.

Afterward, the law enforcement officers met for a debriefing. All aspects of the operation were discussed and reviewed. "The atmosphere in the room was one of victory and accomplishment," said Special Agent Collins. "All the agencies came together and worked as one team."

As the CID motto says, "Do what has to be done," these law enforcement professionals went out and accomplished the mission. "They did an outstanding job," Special Agent Collins said.

BAD GUYS BEWARE— Special Agent Collins and a CID agent (below) warn people that crime doesn't pay. Four bags of marijuana (above) that were purchased in the 'confidence buy.'





CLEARING THE COBWEBS—The Bradley Fighting Vehicles (above) hit the road for the first time during the SFOR 8 rotation. At the start of the day (background), a Bradley raises its turret, working out all the kinks from sitting unused.



ROLLING ALONG—Two Bradleys (right) rumble down the less used streets around Camp Dohol to test the engine and overall mechanics of the vehicle. (left) Sgt. Larry Rabideau, driver for Alpha Company, 1-120 AR, pulls the Bradley as far as possible to the right to give local residents plenty of room to get past the convoy.



HOW'S THE GAS?—Bradley driver, Sgt. 1st Class Albert Maready, Alpha Company, 1-120 AR, confers with the vehicle commander, Staff Sgt. Charles Yates, Alpha Company, 1-120 AR about the status of the Bradley just before the start of the road march.

BRADLEYS PREPARE FOR GLAMOC EXERCISE

Story and photos

By Sgt. Noreen L. Feeney

318th PCH, Camp Dabol

The Small Unit Support Vehicles went out several weeks ago. The M1A1 Abrams tanks went out last week. It's the M2 Bradleys' turn now.

Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 120th Armor Regiment, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), took out Bradley Fighting Vehicles Jan. 19 for the rotational road march.

According to Staff Sgt. William Macdonald, Alpha Company 1-120 AR, this was the second group of Bradleys to be road tested since the company arrived in September. The rest will be marched in a week or so.

"We've been working on the engines and turrets all this time. We finally got them to a point where we can take them on the road," Staff Sgt. Macdonald said.

"There have been a lot of problems with the engines. We don't know if it was a problem from the last rotation or not, but we're getting all the kinks worked out," Staff Sgt. Macdonald added.

"I'm glad they'll be ready before next month," said Sgt. Larry Rabideau, Bradley driver for Alpha Company 1-120 AR.

The Bradleys will be used in conjunction with the Glamoc exercise scheduled in February, according to Sgt. Rabideau.

The road march traveled the same roads the Abrams tanks took the week before. The purpose was essentially the same; to exercise the vehicles and work out any mechanical problems.

The first half of the march was uneventful. The return trip however, experienced what could have been a serious problem if it wasn't for the quick response by a crewman.

Spc. Marcel Hernandez, a gunner with Alpha Company 1-120 AR, said he thought he smelled smoke during the march but didn't think there was anything to it.

"After I while," said Spc. Hernandez, "my legs (inside the turret) started getting warm and I started to wonder why. When they got hot, I stopped wondering and told the driver to get off the road because we might be on fire."

Due to safety precautions and SFOR regulations, it was several moments before the Bradley could find a suitable spot to pull off the road. The only place they could find was a small parking lot of a local restaurant.

"By the time they got off the road, there was black smoke coming out of the turret," said Sgt. 1st Class Albert Maready, Alpha

Company 1-120 AR and driver of the vehicle behind Spc. Hernandez. "We knew something was on fire."

According to Sgt. 1st Class Maready, as the Bradleys pulled into the restaurant parking lot, a local resident who appeared to be the owner came running out, presumably to tell them not to stop the vehicles there. Once she saw the smoke pouring out the turret of a Bradley that stopped only a few feet from parked cars, she kept on running until she got across the street.

"I guess she was afraid it would blow up," Sgt. 1st Class Maready said.

The potential for an explosion was real as flames came shooting out of the heater when the back door was opened. The entire rear compartment was enveloped by thick black smoke.

The vehicle was equipped with an automatic Halon system that releases the gas when flame, smoke or heat is detected. Halon is a gas that suffocates fire by taking the oxygen out of the air. As is standard procedure, the automatic activation system was switched to manual when the vehicle became occupied with personnel. With the activation switch screened by smoke and flames, manually turning the switch on had gotten increasingly difficult as time went on.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Yates, Alpha Company, 1-120 AR the gunner who had been on the vehicle behind the one on fire, reacted swiftly and reached in and hit the activation switch which released the Halon gas.

"I couldn't see that good, but I knew where it (the switch) was," Staff Sgt. Yates said.

Sgt. 1st Class Yates' extensive knowledge of the Bradley is due to the routine training he has been getting while stationed at Dabol, according to Sgt. 1st Class John Ellis, Alpha 1-120 AR.

"They've been training three to four times a week. Not only to keep the Bradleys up, but to keep their proficiency up too," he said.

It took several minutes for enough smoke to clear to allow the crew back inside. A quick check revealed no serious damage and in accordance with safety guidelines, the Bradleys continued the road march back to camp,

Back in the motor pool, a more extensive inspection discovered the fire had damaged the gas tanks.

"Whew!" said Staff Sgt. Yates. "It's a good thing we march these things!"

MOVE OVER—Staff Sgt. William MacDonald, A Company 1-120 AR, directs a Bradley (right) to pull off the road to wait for the rest of the convoy to catch up. A pair of Humvees (left) from Camp Dabol pass the Bradley convoy while on routine patrol.



LATIN NIGHT BRINGS MUSICAL TALENT

Story and photos
By Sgt. David Lietz
318th PCH, Eagle Base

Amid the clatter of pool balls colliding on the pool table Thursday night at Alma's were the sounds of the beautiful, passionate and sensual music of Latin America performed by some talented soldiers who sing and play the Acoustic guitar, bongos, and Guiro here at Eagle Base.

"It's just like our language. Latin music is very romantic and very sensual," said Sgt. 1st Class Delano Ross, 249th General Hospital Task Force Med Eagle, non-commissioned officer in charge of the outpatient clinic. Sgt. 1st Class Ross, a native of Panama, has been playing the bongos for 20 years.

"Our group has been getting together every Thursday night for the last two or three months," said Sgt. 1st Class Ross. Sgt. 1st Class Ross has been here at Eagle Base since Stabilization Force 7 and is a pioneer in getting the group started. Some of the Latin artists he admires are Marc Anthony and Ruben Blades. Spc. Saulo Encarnacion, a general construction equipment operator with the 92nd Engineer Battalion (Heavy construction), from Fort Stewart, Ga., is a talented vocalist and guiro player. A guiro is a percussion instrument that resembles a silver cheese grater without the holes, which is scraped with a pick that produces a scratchy sound. He also plays the sticks or 'palitos.' He learned the music from his father who learned the music it his father while growing up in Yunque, Puerto Rico.

"When we play, we play from the bottom of our hearts. That's why Latin music is so sweet and so easy to dance to," said Spc. Encarnacion. He derives musical inspiration from the artists Jerry Rivera, Eddie Santiago, Jimmy El Leon and the legendary Tito Puente.

"Latin music is like the beat of your heart!" said Spc. Johnny Vazquez, Combat Camera, Fort Meade Maryland. "It's something that is in your blood and comes from your soul. It's like when you walk from the inside of a building and walk outside and you get that chill. That's the feeling you get from the music," said the Miami Beach, Fla., native who is of Columbian heritage. Spc. Vazquez started getting into Latin music with his friends during high school. "Latin music takes me back home.

Division, Fort Drum, N.Y., who works in the Property Book Office. He is learning two Latin songs, 'Querube' and 'En Mi Viejo San Juan,' and looks forward to singing to his wife, Maribel, when he returns home.

"I love it. I'm from the old school. I like to play the slow romantic songs," said Sgt. 1st Class Marengo. He remembers teasing the girls in high school with his friends as they sang and played bongo drums in his native Puerto Rico. Then over the years, he started to play salsa music because of its popularity, especially in the larger cities of Puerto Rico.

"We enjoy the music. We dance to it and we love it," said Sgt. 1st Class Marengo. Salsa is a mix of music from Cuba and Puerto Rico. One of his favorite singers is Gilberto Santa Rosa. "He's my favorite salsa singer. He is known as the salsa romantic singer. And one of my favorite songs is Sin Ella," Sgt. 1st Class Marengo said.

In the countryside of Puerto Rico, musicians play country or jibaro music that's characterized by songs using improvised rhyme. One singer starts improvising on a theme, for example a bottle, and throughout the song the singer has to create

verse and make the last line of the song end with a verse using the word bottle. Sgt. 1st Class Marengo also likes the music of legendary Latin artist Tito Puente.

"He was the master. There was nobody close to him. I saw him perform in person. He was a very humble man," Sgt. 1st Class Marengo said.

And he enjoys the music of blind singer and guitar player Jose Feliciano who is known for writing and performing the song 'Feliz Navidad' or the Christmas song.

As the evening of music and laughter ended around 11:00 pm, the group joined in a final song to make old and new friends feel happy and welcome until next Thursday when they will sing and laugh again. They finished the evening by playing a popular commercial jingle that is played on Puerto Rican TV. It's sung at the end of the show 'El Show De Las Doce' or 'The Noon Show,' a variety program with singers, dancers and comedians. "Buenas noches y muchas gracias por su atencion. Les desea las galletas de su predilecion," is one verse of the songs lyrics. "Good evening and thank you for your attention. Sultana cookies wishes you the cookies of your choice. La, la, la, la, la, la Sultana!"



GROUP—The whole group enjoys playing Spanish music every Thursday night at Almas.

As soon as I hear the music I can hear the ocean, see the sand, palm trees swaying and taste the margaritas!"

In addition to performing 'plenas' (songs from the countryside of Puerto Rico), the soldiers enjoy playing dominoes and briscas, a Spanish card game. But on this Thursday night it was all music, smiles, happiness and good-natured joking between the group members as the rhythm and passion of Latin music was played loud and strong. One of the group members, Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Marengo, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, Disbursing NCOIC and guitar player for 20 years, is teaching the basics of Spanish guitar to Chief Warrant Officer Jose Domenech, 10th Mountain

PLAY ON—Capt. Dennis Salcedo, Division engineers, plays plenas (left) Spc Joel Machado, 94th Military Police Company, sings (middle standing) and Spc Saulo Encarnacion, 92nd Engineer BN (right) also plays the plenas. Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Marengo, 3rd SSB (seated) plays the spanish guitar Thursday night.



BCAT—ASSURING OUR SAFETY

Story by Sgt. David Lietz

318th PCH, Eagle Base

Photos by Sgt. Noreen L. Feeney

318th PCH, Camp Dobol

The Base Camp Assessment Team (BCAT) is the eyes and ears of the Chief of Staff who look out for the health, welfare and morale of soldiers here in Multinational Division (North).

"We go to every base, hilltop, and FOB (Forward Observation Base) in MND (N)," explained Lt. Rhonda St. Peters, BCAT chief. Base camp assessments were started four years ago to address safety and security issues as the various bases and camps were built up.

The team, which includes active duty and national guard personnel, DoD civilians and a Brown and Root civilian who is the Eagle Base Fire Chief, perform monthly inspections at all the base camps. They also perform the assessments at the Nordic-Polish Barracks in Doboj, the Russian base camp at Ugljevik, and the Turkish base camp at Zenica, where U.S. soldiers live and work. The team makes sure U.S. soldiers are included in the contingency plans in case the base gets attacked or intruders enter the base.

The BCAT falls under the Base Camp Coordinating Agency (BCCA), which is part of the division engineers. There are two types of inspections, an assistance visit and an assessment visit.

During an assistance visit, the team meets with the mayor of the base and explains what the team found during their inspection.

"We are here to help and not to hurt anybody. We are out here for the safety and morale of the soldiers," said Sgt. Andrew Johnson, safety NCO, Task Force Eagle Safety. An assessment visit is more intensive. "It's the actual assessment of the base for force protection issues which includes all eight areas," said Lt. St. Peters.

The team performs inspections in the following areas; safety, physical security, force protection, ammunition storage (serviceability of the ammo), fire prevention, environmental compliance, preventive medicine and mayors cell operations.

"We look at the base camp's safety programs. Each unit at a base camp must have their own safety program," said Sgt. Johnson. Then the team inspects physical security and force protection.

Things like key control, construction and the placement of bunkers, guard towers and clear fields of view from the guard

towers are checked. The team even makes sure the ammunition is clean, dry and stored correctly.

"Units should have a program to inspect ammunition that the soldiers carry. It should be clean, dry and not dented," said St. Peters. Fire prevention is another inspection area.

"The inspection at Dobil went very well. Generally, the bases were in good shape. They're making improvements. All the bases are being very proactive in all aspects of the inspections," said 1st Lt. St. Peters.

Physical security involves the overall force protection posture of the installation.

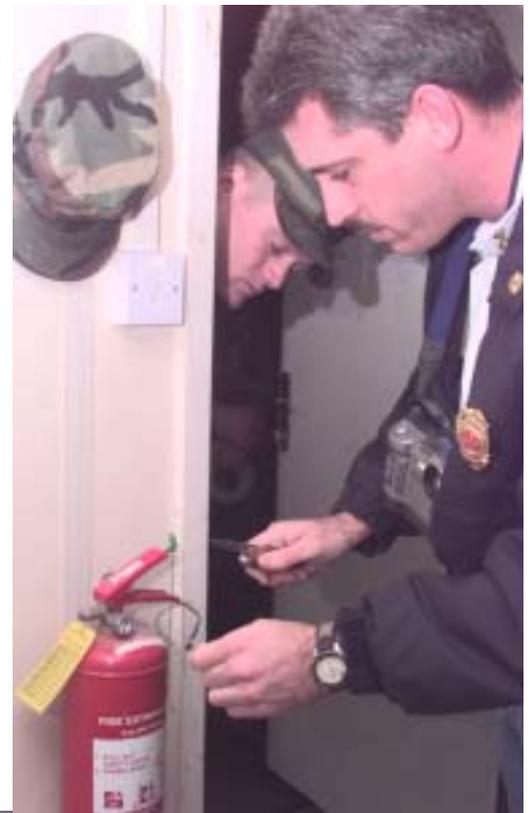
"We are there to make sure the chain of command is addressing and putting force protection measures in place to keep the soldiers safe," said Staff Sgt. Greg Odden, physical security inspector, provost marshal's office. With a military police background, Sgt. Odden goes out and maintains accountability of sensitive items, ensures accountability of key control and ensures compliance with proper physical security of the arms rooms. "I make sure that we are implementing the right measures to protect soldiers and government property," he said.

If an area is not in compliance, a report is sent up through the chain of command and that area is reinspected at a later date.

"Everybody is pretty good about doing their parts. The units that are here have done their part in maintaining security," said Odden.

"If everybody does their part, we will all go home safely."

SAFETY— Mr. Patnode (top) finds a nylon tie around the fire extinguisher in an officer's room. The problem was minor and Mr. Patnode kindly corrected the violation himself. (bottom) On the left is Mr. Ron Huffman, the Eagle Base Station Manager for the Red Cross. On the right is Sgt. Phillip Puleo, TFE Safety Officer. Both were part of the Base Camp Assessment Team inspecting the camps.



CONSTRUCTION ON BASE CAMP BEGINS

Story and photos
By Spc. Matt Burrell
318th PCH, Eagle Base

Construction began on a new base camp in Multinational Division (North) last week, and officials expect the Forward Base Camp to be fully operational sometime in March 2001.

The land is 78 kilometers from Camp Dobol just outside of Srebrenica, and Division Engineers are in the process of demining the area with armored bulldozers and Panthers, a heavy combat engineer vehicle used for demining.

When completed, the camp will be self-sufficient with latrines, chow hall and most of what other base camps get. The camp is expected to hold a company sized element with 100 to 150 personnel total. The size of the camp depends on the total area that is cleared of mines. The site is just 2.5 km from a major mine site, but according to 1st Lt. Timothy Donoghue, 1st Platoon leader, A Company, 10th Engineer Battalion, no mines have been found yet.

"We've talked to the locals, and they've said that this was not a heavily mined area during the war," said 1st Lt. Donoghue. Even so, Brown and Root safety personnel will be coming out to inspect the site.



PLOW—Spc. Brad Giddings, 92nd Engineer Battalion attached to the division engineers, takes a break from his armored bulldozer and demining the camp site.

1st Lt. Donoghue also mentioned that the locals were surprised at the construction of the new camp.

"It was a little bit of a surprise, they weren't expecting this. Overall though, it's been very good," said 1st Lt. Donoghue.

The engineers have been out here for four days straight, and they were returning to Camp Dobol to shower and clean up.

"Our goal is to get this done as quickly and safely as possible," said 1st Lt. Donoghue.

GRAND OPENING OF THE TAX CENTER

Story by Capt. Ruth Semonian
Chief of Tax Center
Photo by Spc. Matt Burrell
318th PCH, Eagle Base

Last year, the Tax Assistance Centers, run by Staff Judge Advocate offices saved soldiers, retirees and family members who took advantage of the program over \$16.4

GRAND OPENING—Col. Barry Fowler, 3d ID (M) Chief of Staff, thanks Capt. Ruth Semonian by giving her a 3d ID (M) coin.



million in tax preparation and filing fees. During last year's tax filing season, 193,183 Federal and 77,395 state income tax returns were processed, and more than 77 percent of the returns were filed electronically.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the military is the third largest electronic filer of Federal income tax returns. Within the military, the Army is the largest electronic filer, accounting for approximately 30 percent of all Federal returns filed by the military. Electronic filing puts money in taxpayers' pockets faster, allows for direct deposit into a soldier's checking or savings account and reduces computational errors on tax returns. Where electronically filed returns have an error rate of less than one percent, paper returns have a 21 percent error rate.

The Eagle Base Tax Center will opened on Feb. 5 and will be located in Building four. Electronic filing will be done using the Universal Tax Systems tax preparation software, TaxWise. Soldiers from Eagle Base and Camp Comanche will staff the Tax Center and Unit Tax Advisors (UTAs) will be available at the units and base camps to assist soldiers with filing their taxes and answering tax questions. A Judge Advocate will oversee and manage the program.

Remember to take advantage of the Tax Assistance Program. Assistance with tax preparation and filing is one of your military benefits.

CAMP COMANCHE COUPLE RENEWS A DIFFERENT SET OF VOWS

Story and photos

By Spc. Christopher Carney

318th PCH, Eagle Base

A rare event took place Jan. 31 when Sgts. Jimmie and Tasha Jones, husband and wife with 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, both raised their hand and re-enlisted in the Army in a ceremony held at Camp Comanche.

Although many husbands and wives have been stationed together in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a married couple re-enlisting together is rare. According to the retention office on Camp Comanche a married couple re-enlisting together has not happened on this or the prior rotation. If it has happened at all, it is not on record.

The sergeants didn't just re-enlist together to be the first though. They did it for a genuine love of the Army.

"The Army is a part of our lives now. It is a good thing for us. We really enjoy it," they said.

Between the two of them they have 13 years of service in the Army. Sgt. J. Jones has had six years in the service and Sgt. T. Jones has had seven.

Serving together is not something new to them. They met each other at Fort Campbell, Ky., have both served in Korea together and are now stationed in Fort Bragg, N.C.

"We've been married for over a year. Our anniversary was the day we came over to Bosnia," said Sgt. T. Jones.

Being a married couple in Bosnia-Herzegovina helps them to cope with any situation they said.

ON DISPLAY— As a husband and wife they deployed to Camp Comanche. Showing their certificates of re-enlistment, the Sergeant's Jones stand proud after the ceremony.



SETTING AN EXAMPLE—The Sergeant's Jones show their dedication to service by re-enlisting together at Camp Comanche.

"It can get hard out here with the mission that everyone does. When times get hard at least I have someone to go through it with, someone to talk too and someone to talk to me. It keeps the stress level down," said Sgt. J. Jones.

Sgt. J. Jones, an avionics mechanic in the Army, from Mayo, Fla., had second thoughts about re-enlisting at first but after discussing it with his wife they decided that it would be the best thing for both of them right now. He also said that married life has been good to him so far and that he can't complain.

"Married life is OK. It's nice to be with my wife instead of her being over in the States like most of these guys over here. She takes care of me and she keeps me in line," Sgt. J. Jones said.

Sgt. T. Jones, who is from Columbia S.C., and is a chemical equipment repair specialist at the Joint Visitors Bureau at Comanche, agrees with her husband that it is nice to have company here.

Summing up her feelings she said, "he's always there for me."

She said that she has enjoyed the time she has spent in the Army and she looks forward to the time she will spend in it with her husband.

For the present they will continue to do their job here at Camp Comanche and enjoy the time they have together in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Then it's back to Fort Bragg where they will "continue the mission," as Sgt. J. Jones said.

But if you ask them both what they are going to do after returning home you might get different answers.

"He's going to take me on a cruise to the Bahamas. I just haven't told him yet," Sgt. T. Jones said.

TURKISH SOLDIER REFLECTS ON TIME AT EAGLE BASE

SOLDIER'S SPOTLIGHT



Photo by Spc. Stephanie Bunting, 65th PCH

Story by Spc. Christopher Carney
318th PCH, Eagle Base

After being at Eagle Base, Bosnia-Herzegovina, for almost 12 months, Cpl. Volkan Ok, a member of the Turkish Force Protection Team (TFPT) here, says that his time spent here has been more than OK.

Cpl. Ok (known as Cpl. Volkan on his uniform) is a driver and a translator for the TFPT, whose duties include being the only translator of the local language for the TFPT. His knowledge of languages is impressive with fluency in Serbo-Croatian and English, plus an understanding for Bulgarian.

"I was born in Istanbul, Turkey, but a lot of people speak Balkan languages in my vicinity," he said, explaining his knowledge of the local language.

"I spoke some Serbo-Croatian before coming here, but not well. I can speak a lot better now after using it," Cpl. Volkan said.

His knowledge of the local language helps the TFPT perform their mission wherever they may go.

"Turkey has a good relationship with Bosnia. There is a similar culture in Bosnia and many things are just the same as in Turkey," Cpl. Volkan said.

This fact makes interaction with the local population more enjoyable because people tend to be friendly and helpful with the Turkish soldiers, Cpl. Volkan said.

"I have made a lot of friends with Bosnians and have had many good relationships that I will miss," he said.

Cpl. Volkan has served his compulsory 18 months in the Turkish Army and is preparing to return to his home country to start a life outside of the Army.

He entered service in August of 1999 and was trained in the infantry. He has been in Bosnia since February of last year and at

Eagle Base since March.

During his first month here he had to get used to many things that were different from his own country, he said.

"The roads are not that good and it took a while to get used to that," Cpl. Volkan said.

He got the hang of it though and he estimates that he drove around 50,000 kilometers during his time here.

Being at Eagle Base has allowed him to learn quite a bit about the American Army and Americans in general.

"I have a lot of memories here on Eagle Base. I am happy to be able to work with different countries. I had a lot of opportunities to learn about different cultures. I like American soldiers, they are smart like me," he said.

He feels that his presence on base has allowed American soldiers to learn something about his own country as well.

"American soldiers don't know much about Turkey but they can learn here. I have been told by American soldiers that they have learned a lot by us being here. They say that we trust your army in Bosnia. I think they like the Turkish Army," Cpl. Volkan said.

Although dedicated to his job he still found time to make many friendships and to enjoy the recreational opportunities on Eagle Base.

"I enjoyed PT at the gym and playing sports. I am a good football (soccer) player," he said.

Looking back at his time here, Cpl. Volkan said that he is proud of his mission here and that he feels he has made a difference.

"I am helping out the locals. I am proud to be on duty as a peacekeeper," he said.

Cpl. Volkan said that he has grown accustomed to life here in Bosnia, but that he is looking forward to the future.



A BREIF CHAT— Cpl. Volkan Ok, performs one of his many tasks by talking to a local child on the street during a patrol. (Photo courtesy of the Turkish Force Protection Team)