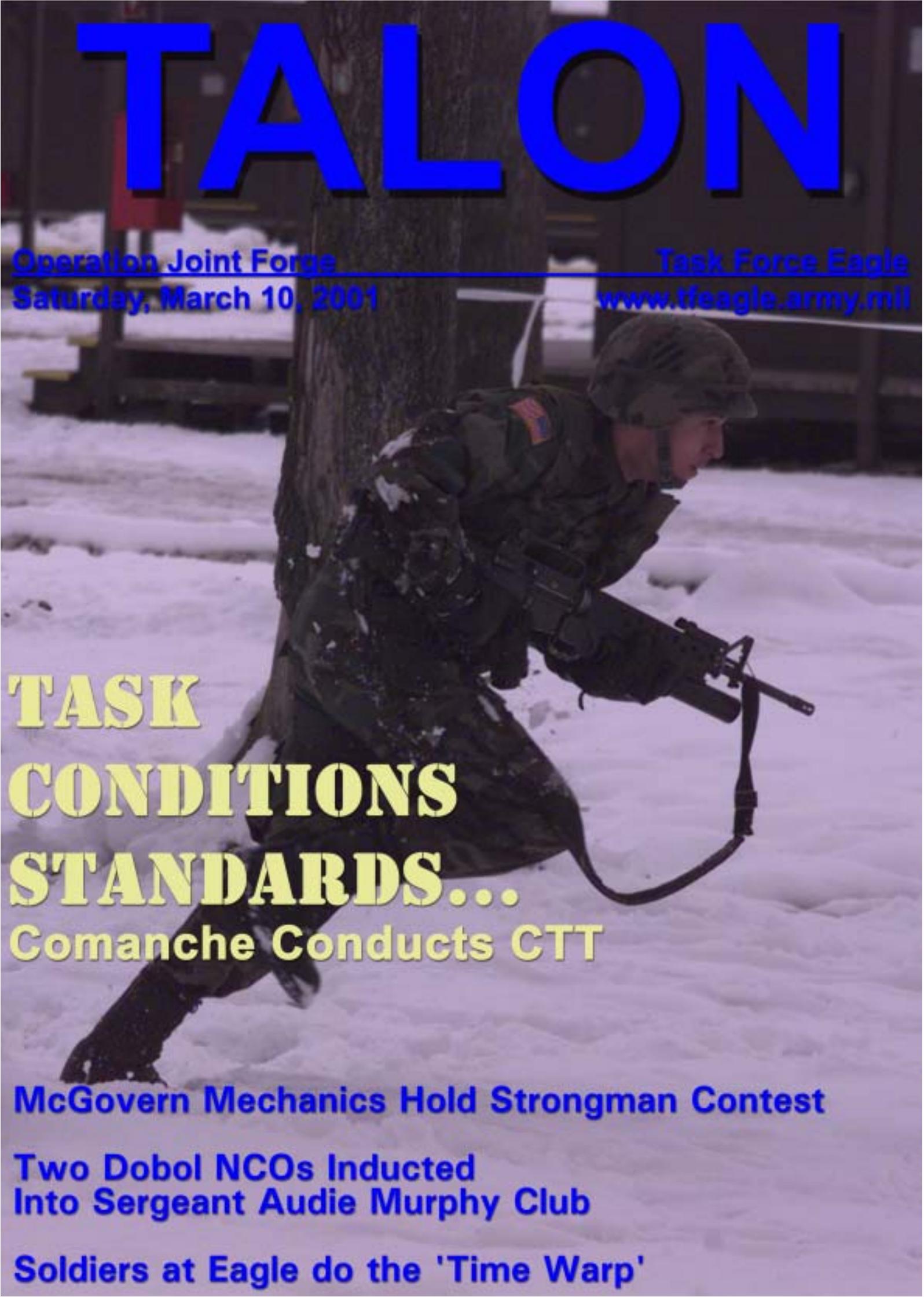


TALON



Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, March 10, 2001

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil

**TASK
CONDITIONS
STANDARDS...
Comanche Conducts CTT**

McGovern Mechanics Hold Strongman Contest

**Two Dobil NCOs Inducted
Into Sergeant Audie Murphy Club**

Soldiers at Eagle do the 'Time Warp'

COLLECTING TREASURES

I once knew an energetic card collector. I don't recall which cards he collected, but I remember the dollar *value* of the cards. The price stickers had inconceivable amounts. He assured me they were worth every penny paid. To which I thought, "Not to me." I had no interest in the cards, the characters on the cards, or the thrill of the search to find "the" card. The cards were pieces of paper with no value to me.

This reminds me of the idea of value or worth. I have a Bosnian 5 DM Konvertible Marke bill. Here it is worth exactly that amount. It pays for merchandise, a meal, or a haircut. When I return home, it will have value only as a souvenir. I can't use it for currency. The bill has no monetary value in the U.S.

We should consider *value* before we start collecting. We may discover that our collections are worthless. We may find that they are dangerous. Following the Gulf War several soldiers were killed or injured by ordinance they recovered from the battlefield. How tragic for soldiers to survive the war but die in an accidental discharge of a souvenir.

Jesus wisely counseled, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

This advice about collecting still applies. Our collecting should be for things that produce greater personal peace, deeper relationships, or a heightened awareness of the eternal and divine. While we are deployed away from spouses and family, some have collected materials or memories that may damage the important treasures of life. Jesus's words entreat us to never exchange the lasting and permanent, the eternal, for the transient, the passing, the corrupting.

As many prepare to return to home and loved ones, it is important to consider what you have collected while here. Only take home what is uplifting and of lasting value. If your behavior, habits or possessions are a problem, get rid of them. Seek spiritual restoration and renewal. Make a new start, ensuring that your treasures will last and will improve both your earthly and heavenly relationships. God Bless!

Thoughts For The Day

Saturday: Does God seem far away? Guess who moved!

Sunday: A child is more likely to see God as Father if he sees God in his father.

Monday: We keep eternity's goal in sight by walking daily in the light.

Tuesday: Sins concealed by man are never canceled by God.

Wednesday: Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

Thursday: Those who say "No" to God should not be surprised when the locusts come calling.

Friday: Give your time improving yourself and you will have little time for criticizing others.

**By Chaplain (Maj.) Phillip Conner
Aviation Brigade Chaplain**

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ON THE COVER

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Pfc. Michael Sukeforth, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, reacts to enemy fire during common task training held at Camp Comanche Feb. 27. (Photo by Spc. Christopher D. Carney)



MAINTENANCE SOLDIERS PROVE THEIR STRENGTH

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Camp McGovern maintenance soldiers hold Maintenance Strongman Competition. (Photo by Spc. Jodie M. Moore)



HONORING THOSE BEFORE US

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McGovern Drama Club honors Black History Month. (Photo by Spc. Jodie M. Moore)

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IT'S IN THE DETAILS ...



Command Sgt. Maj. George J. Ruo Jr.

By Command Sgt. Maj. George J. Ruo Jr.
Command Sgt. Maj., Multinational Division (North)

In my travels I have never seen a word stir such panic in others than this simple two-syllable utterance. When some think of this word, they may believe it to represent becoming 'bogged down' in bureaucratic unimportance or being afflicted with a well known form of "perspective-myopia" known as "not being able to see the forest through the trees" syndrome. Worse yet, some may think that paying too close attention to this makes you far-sighted, unable to focus on the "big picture." The word that I am speaking about is **detail**.

Many plans, operations, and organizational undertakings have come apart because someone did not consider the details. However, our military history is replete with instances where a little attention to detail made the difference during operations. Many of you have heard of the following story which shows what difference a little attention to detail can make.

During World War II, allied intelligence analysts learned of a local German factory that received a large order to produce a certain type of garment button. After some detailed analysis, the allies determined that the type of button that this company was asked to manufacture was only used on the winter coats of Wehrmacht soldiers. The allies determined that this large order of buttons would be required for a large quantity of coats, to be worn by a **large quantity of enemy** soldiers indicating a force build up for an impending German Army attack. This analysis, brought on by considering the details, provided the allies with the time and insight needed to prepare for an allied counteroffensive. All this derived from a servicemember paying attention to detail.

Attention to detail must be an integral part of our lives. If we are not cautious, our lives too can be like a house of cards falling apart around us. So, where can you pay attention to detail in your life? Here are a few areas you might consider.

In job performance. Just like the vignette described above, your attention to detail can have significant impact on the success or failure of the mission. Another example can be how much detail you put into the maintenance of your vehicles. On a winding road during a snowstorm, is not the time to figure out that you did not conduct a brake check. Attention to detail in this regard can mean the difference between life and death.

In dealing with others. The detail that you spend in terms of your military bearing and how you relate to others is very important as well. All it takes is one time when you are caught off guard that others will remember for a lifetime. Have you ever said to yourself, 'I wish I never did/said that!' Understanding the details of communication and the role it plays in your personal interactions will serve you well when dealing with others.

In personal relationships. Yes, personal relationships. Have you ever been approached by a significant other asking why you haven't written lately, or that you don't take time out for them, or remember the small things in their lives? These are examples of

how paying close attention to relationship-building details can play a major role in sustaining or unhinging life-long relationships.

In career planning. Attention to detail is especially important when deciding what type of job you need next, or what school you require to achieve the next rank. Also, the time you spend covering the details during board preparation can mean the difference between being selected or not. I am sure if you ask some of the senior noncommissioned officer leaders around your base camp, they will tell you that the reason why they are successful is because they "managed their careers very closely" and "paid particular attention" to their photo or enlisted record brief (ERB). Such is the wonder of attention to detail.

Post career planning. Planning for the future is of great importance during our careers. We will all leave our respective services sooner or later, and we must plan accordingly. We must be sensitive to the details involved in retirement planning, saving for the future, and the complicated transition to civilian life. It does not just happen. You must make it happen through understanding and paying close attention to the details of your post-career planning.

I hope you have seen that anything we do is really found in the details! The work you do is critical, requiring you to remain focused and take a hard look at the many complexities of conducting your mission. If you take a vested interest in assuring you are considering the details we will continue to be successful in providing a safe and secure environment for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Rock of the Marne!



STRONGMAN— (Left) Staff Sgt. Albert R. DeJesus, HHC 3-15 IN, pushes the weights up with ease. The chest press was one of the events in the Maintenance Strongman Competition held at Camp McGovern Feb. 24. (Bottom) Spc. John H. Velazquez, HHC, 3-15 IN, grimaces as he gives it all he has in the leg press portion of the Maintenance Strongman Competition held here.

TOP THREE FINISHERS

1. Spc. Billy Tullos, Bravo Company, 26th FSB
2. Pfc. Christopher Meyers, Alpha Company, 3-15 IN
3. Spc. Michael Becker, Bravo Company, 2-152AR

McGOVERN MECHANICS HOLD MAINTENANCE STRONGMAN COMPETITION

Story and photos by
Spc. Jodie M. Moore
318th PCH, Camp McGovern

For a mechanized battalion we can't move without you," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mark T. Baker, command sergeant major, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized).

This was high praise and recognition coming from Command Sgt. Maj. Baker to the mechanics here.

This is just how essential the maintenance bay is to 3-15 IN. When the infantry rolls out, they leave with the knowledge that their transportation has been maintained and kept in good working order by the mechanics.

The maintenance bay here decided that it was time for them to take time out to applaud and recognize each other with a Maintenance Strongman Competition held here Feb. 24.

It was a chance for the maintenance team to decide once and for all who is the strongest mechanic here.

The competition also served as a day to boost morale amongst the mechanics as they head into the final stretch of their deployment.

The mechanics participated in a two-mile run, sit ups, bench press, pull up and leg press.

After a weigh in, 35 mechanics lined up at the track. The cold weather and blinding snow that was coming down fast and furious on the day of the competition didn't stop the run. After all, this was a strong man competition.

"This was a true test to see where you stand," said Sgt. 1st Class Morris B. Lee, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, on running in the inclement weather.

The mechanics followed up the two-mile run with the strength portion of the competition. They pushed, pulled, and pressed for a chance to be one of the top three finishers.

The first place finisher in the competition received an Impact AAM (Army Achievement Medal), and a trophy. Second place received a coin, certificate of achievement, and a trophy. To the third place finisher, a coin and a trophy.

Although the prizes are noteworthy, the day wasn't all about winning. The win came in the recognition of a good job that the maintenance bay does, a job that is often taken for granted.

In the awards ceremony for the competition, Command Sgt. Maj. Baker spoke on the importance of the role mechanics play in the Army.

It's always good to recognize soldiers, said Command Sgt. Maj. Baker, especially soldiers who keep the fleet running. "By far, the hardest working people to me are the people who work in the motor pool. You guys are doing a great job," he said.

The maintenance workers were appreciative of the recognition of praise they received from Command Sgt. Maj. Baker.

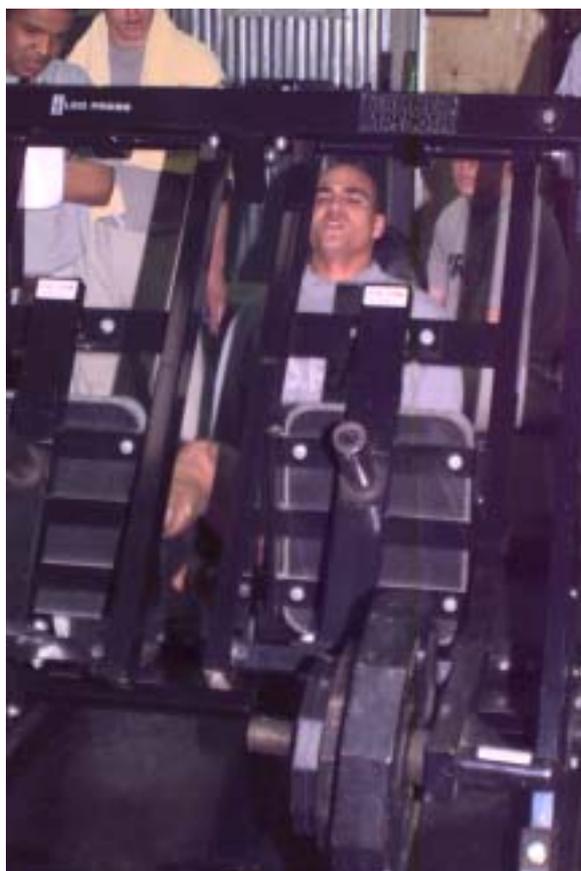
"It felt real good. It shows that I'm doing a good job here. It shows that I'm a leader," said Spc. Joel Perez, Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment.

Command Sgt. Maj. Baker also praised the Army and National Guard members that help make up the maintenance bay here at McGovern.

He noted that in these days and times the active duty Army cannot deploy without their citizen soldiers counterparts. Everyone's workload would be double without them, he said.

After commending the maintenance team, Command Sgt. Maj. Baker handed out his coin to the top three finishers as well as to the top finishers in each section.

Looking at the objective of the competition, Master Sgt. James Brooks, HHC 3-15 IN, was pleased. If the competition was to build morale in the platoon and battalion motor pool office, it served its purpose, he said.





UP AND OVER— When an obstacle presented itself, the soldiers reacted as if in a real-time situation by either going around or up and over.



NAVIGATION— During the land navigation exercise, soldiers determined points on a map. Here, a soldier points to Sgt. Aimee Easterly.



CLEANING TIME— Soldiers refreshed themselves with the take-down of their M-16 rifles and the importance of maintaining them.

REACTION— Pfc. Michael Sukeforth, (below and background) HHC, 2-3 Aviation, reacts to direct and indirect fire during the CTT session held at Comanche.



CTT AT

Story and photos
By Spc. Christopher D. Carney
318th PCH, Eagle Base

CONDITIONS- Given a tactical situation where your unit are participating in combat operations against enemy forces, you are armed with your weapon, wearing load carrying equipment (LCE), and following the standards of the Army. During the course of operations you take position in covered positions when fired upon by enemy and return fire, use low/high crawl or rush movement technique to move under enemy direct fire, warn unit of indirect fire attacks and move out of the impact area directed by your leader or prescribed in your unit's operating procedure. Negotiate obstacles without endangering yourself and without setting off boobytraps.

For anyone who is in the Army this may look very familiar. These are the conditions and standards of React to Direct and Indirect Fire, just one of the skills tested during the Common Tasks Training (CTT) session held at Comanche, Texas, on Tuesday Feb. 27, 2001.

"Today we are hosting CTT for all the units in the 3rd Aviation Force and the brigade headquarters units assigned to Comanche," said 1st Sgt. Marlin Smith, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment.

"We are running 14 stations today and tomorrow we are doing makeup for those on guard duty or on leave these days on the 6th and 7th," said 1st Sgt. Smith.



Navigation portion of the training, soldiers were shown how to use a map. Spc. Brandon Crawford shows his coordination to another soldier.



TRAINING— Soldiers react to fire (above) and vacate the area using the low crawl technique. MOPP training (below) was conducted moving soldiers from MOPP level 0 to MOPP level 4.

COMANCHE

to make sure when they go home they already completed this requirement so they can concentrate on block leaves and things like that. This is one of the steps, including getting PT current and getting them certified and completed so when they get back they can spend time with their families,” said 1st Sgt. Smith.

The stations on Tuesday were skill levels one and two. Based on time, skill levels three and four may be done at the company level. Around 150 to 175 soldiers will have participated over the four days.

One of the main points of the instruction was to achieve a get down and dirty attitude. Anything that could be done without simulation was done.

“We’re simulating only what we absolutely have too. Anything we can do hands on we are doing. ‘Drinking from a canteen with a protective mask,’ ‘React to direct and indirect fire’ is outside. They’re taking down the weapons. On ‘Issued an Op Order,’ they are getting an order, reading it using the overlay on the map,” said 1st Sgt. Smith.

The instructors, who went through all the other stations throughout the course of the day, were well prepared to teach the skills.

“All of the instructors went through the training certification with Command Sgt. Maj. (Daryl) Lusk (2-3 Aviation command sergeant major). They presented their class and how they would run their station to the sergeant major for his approval,” said 1st Sgt. Smith.



McGOVERN DRAMA CLUB HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Story and photos by
Spc. Jodie M. Moore

318th PCH, Camp McGovern

"I Have Seen Them So Let The Story Be Told" was the title of the black history play staged by Camp McGovern's Drama Society Feb. 24.

Let the story be told of the origin, history and culture of blacks in America and throughout the world. A history that to some may seem at first foreign, but a true account none the less.

Beverly Cooper-Pete, MWR programmer here, has always believed that it was important for one to know their history, especially blacks. She therefore has always been knowledgeable on black history. However, Cooper-Pete did an extra two months of studying and research before writing the play. She felt this was important.

"I think a lot of people have a misconception of the origins of blacks, and blacks in general," she said.

To counter these misconceptions, Cooper-Pete drew the majority of her research from the Bible.

While the origin history may have been different from what was normally taught, it's a true depiction of black history grounded in facts, Cooper-Pete said.

It is important for everyone to know his or her true history. Especially blacks, who oftentimes have been left out of their history books.

The truth can be an eye opener. It can also be edifying.

"I wanted to enlighten, to tell the truth, not sugarcoat. I wanted to give black people something to feel good about," said Cooper-Pete.

The night of the play, Cooper-Pete and the Drama Society gave all of McGovern something to feel good about.



DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY— The Camp McGovern Drama Society performed the play, "I Have Seen Them So Let The Story Be Told." The Black History play paid tribute to some of the musical talents of Black Americans. In these scene soldiers dance to Cab Calloway.

The Drama Society portrayed everyone from Adam and Eve to Huey Newton. From privates to first sergeants, soldiers acted, sang and danced a tale dating back to the origins of human kind. The play showcased the vast contributions of blacks to history, music, dance, science and technology.

Actors portrayed the struggle for basic rights blacks fought for. Student protestors, Black Panthers, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. to Harriet Tubman, they all used different means of protest, but they had one common goal.

"We (blacks) just wanted what everyone else wanted," said Staff Sgt. Vivian E. Struph, 82nd Signal, Combat Camera.

Staff Sgt. Struph, who portrayed Harriet Tubman in the play, said the play showed the many gains blacks have made.

"Most of the accomplishments of blacks were left out of the history books and not taught in school. The play got across all the accomplishments we (blacks) have made," said Staff Sgt. Roger A. Bradley, HHC, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment. Staff Sgt. Bradley played Martin Luther King Jr. and a member of the Black Panthers in the play.

"We (blacks) don't only sing and play sports. Blacks are found in all areas. It's important for people to know that," said Staff Sgt. Struph.

The play provided highlights of some of the key black historical figures.

For instance, in the play Benjamin Banneker was spotlighted for his achievements in science and technology.

"When slavery was a part of life, I, Benjamin Banneker, showed the heights to which a black person could rise if given the opportunity," said 1st. Sgt. Jonathan C. Rackard Jr., Charlie Company, 3-15 IN during his portrayal of Banneker. "In mathematics I was self taught. I did not read a mathematics book until I was well into my 40s."

This was just one of the historical figures in the play, there are many more. One of them was George Washington Carver, who bettered the economy for the South at the turn of the 20th century by creating new uses for crops such as the peanut. Blacks' contributions to society are vast and limitless.

What makes the contribution of blacks so important?

According to Cooper-Pete, a person must at first know where they come from in order to know what they are capable of achieving.

Telling the true history of blacks will allow them to have a sense of pride in their accomplishments, accomplishments that took place before and after the civil rights era.

Despite a legacy of hardship, blacks have triumphed. That is something to be proud of.

"I don't know another race of people who have endured so much and were able to keep moving forward, said Cooper-Pete."

We have seen their struggles and triumphs we must let the story be known.



A MARCH FOR JUSTICE— Soldiers portray the Black Panthers during this scene of the Black History play held at Camp McGovern Feb. 23.

SERGEANT AUDIE MURPHY CLUB

MEMBERS INDUCTED AT DOBOL

Story and photos by
Sgt. Noreen L. Feeney
318th PCH, Camp Dobil

Sgt. Audie L. Murphy is one of the most decorated soldiers in U.S. history. He earned every medal for valor the U.S. Army had to offer. He is unquestionably a distinguished soldier.

In 1986, 20 years after his death, a club was formed that honors this soldier and the qualities that made him such. The name of the club is rightfully known as the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club (SAMC).

It is open only to those ranks of corporal through sergeant first class, and then only to those recommended by their first sergeant.

According to 1st Sgt. Gerald Peil, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), of those few that are recommended, a very small percentage are inducted.

As of March 1, two of the newest members of that very unique minority came from the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) while working for Task Force Eagle and stationed at Camp Dobil.

Staff Sgt. Duncan MacPhail, Bravo Company, 3-15 IN and Staff Sgt. Willie Grimes, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3d ID (M) were both inducted into the club after many months of

preparation.

Staff Sgt. MacPhail said he has been working hard for the seven and a half years he has been in the Army. "To be recognized like this – it proves that everything was worth it."

The Training and Doctrine Command Regulation 600-14 recognizes the club as an "elite organization of noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who have demonstrated performance and inherent leadership qualities and abilities characterized by those of Sergeant Audie Murphy.

1st Sgt. Peil, a SAMC member himself, saw such qualities in Staff Sgt. MacPhail.

"I sponsored him," said 1st Sgt. Peil. "I could tell he (Staff Sgt. MacPhail) had it in him."

"First Sergeant Peil got me started on it alright," said Staff Sgt. MacPhail. "He set me up for success. I owe him just for the sacrifices he made for me."

"First Sergeant Smalls (1st Sgt. Leroy Smalls, HHC 1-64 AR here) sponsored me," said Staff Sgt. Grimes. "He made sure I was ready mentally for this. I never studied so hard in my life."

According to the Forces Command Regulation 215-7, soldiers striving for membership must pass four phases of selection. They need to first be recommended and evaluated by their unit commander prior to appearing before the initial selection board. A SAMC

performance test is based on recorded accomplishments of the candidate and must be enclosed with the commander's evaluation as part of phase two. The initial selection board, made up of voting members of higher rank, then scores the candidate on a number of topics contained on a score sheet. This score determines who will continue on to phase four — the final selection board.

The final selection board then questions the candidates and determines who has reached a level of knowledge in a range of subjects to warrant induction. A large part of the process for the candidates is memorizing the Audie Murphy story – word for word.

"It took me two months to get totally confident memorizing the Audie Murphy story," said Staff Sgt. Grimes. "I'll never forget it."

"It was a lot of hard work, no doubt," Staff Sgt. MacPhail

recalled. "I opened up the MOS (military occupational specialty) library and learned everything – what to do professionally, what to do personally."

"The answer isn't always in books though," Staff Sgt. MacPhail added. "You also have to learn how to push the right buttons to get soldiers to do things."

"Much more is expected of them now," explained 1st Sgt. Peil. "They carry the extra burden of developing other NCOs. In my eyes, they must live up to a higher standard."

Both soldiers will now use their recognized talent to expand the skills and knowledge of those they feel will be capable of representing the best of the NCO corps.

Staff Sgt. MacPhail said he "will go on and try to find the same characteristics in another NCO and mentor him and help him to make it."

Staff Sgt. Grimes said now that he has accomplished the "biggest thing in his career so far," he plans on going to drill sergeant school to teach recruits the values he has learned.

"Everybody benefits," said 1st Sgt. Peil. "The Army, the NCO corps and the soldier."

For more information on the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, see the Tradoc web site at www.tradoc.army.mil. For more information on Audie Murphy, visit www.audiemurphy.com.



Staff Sgt. Willie Grimes, 1-64 AR



Staff Sgt. Duncan MacPhail, 3-15 IN

EAGLE BASE DOES THE 'TIME WARP'

Story and photos

By Spc. Danny C. Martin Jr.
318th PCH, Eagle Base

With just a jump to the left and a step to the right, your hands on your hips and your knees in tight, a pelvic thrust driving you insane can mean only one thing. You must be doing the 'Time Warp' again.

The 'Rocky Horror Picture Show' has invaded Multinational Division (North). With its third showing at Eagle Base since October, 'RHPS' has caught the attention of its dedicated masses, and attracted new ones.

'RHPS' was initially written and produced in London as a musical, but after its stage release in 1973, it quickly transitioned to film, and eventually captivated the world. For 25 years, it has been growing in popularity, capturing new fans each time it's played.

"I've seen it at least ten times and it's still a fun time for everyone every time," according to Sgt. Frank Saucier, 94th Military Police Company.

The show isn't typical of the average movie or play. Patrons at a common movie or play are asked to respect the other patrons and not talk or throw things in the theater, but during 'RHPS' movie and theater-goers are encouraged to interact with the production. Props such as toilet paper, toast, confetti, party hats, water and newspapers, are used throughout the entire show. The props are used at certain points during the show to simulate what's happening on the stage or screen.

Another other-than-average trait of 'RHPS' is talking, or in most cases screaming, at the screen, as if the actors can hear you. For example, the hero, Brad Majors, is constantly made fun of, by the audience, due to his boyish attributes and small-town attitude.

"It's a great way to relieve stress," says Staff Sgt. Michael Lee, with the 94th MP Company.

Kim Watkins, an MWR Programmer at Eagle Base, has organized the showings for SFOR 8. "I'm always getting e-mails asking when we're showing 'Rocky Horror' again," according to Watkins.

"It was all Command Sergeant Major (William) Gainey's idea," said Watkins. "He came to me and we set everything up."

During SFOR 4, 'RHPS' was shown every Thursday night, bringing in audiences to sing, dance and to just have a good time, according to Watkins.

From its roots in a small 60-seat theater London to the huge cinema in America, and now to the Eagle Base theater, 'RHPS' continues to captivate

audiences with its racy characters and outrageous plot. And still after seeing it numerous times, the masses still frequent the theaters to do the 'Time Warp' again. "I've lost count of how many times I've seen it," said Staff Sgt. Lee.



THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW



PARTICIPATION— Audience interaction during 'RHPS' is welcome and encouraged. At the end of the movie, a large spinning globe is on screen and the members of the audience go to the screen to spin it (above). When the movie's hero Brad Majors and his fiancée Janet Weiss meet the eccentric Dr. Frank-N-Furter, his servants and his "unconventional" conventionists, they are taught the 'Time Warp'. The audience (left) demonstrates the dance in hopes that Brad and Janet will catch on.

CUSTOMS UPDATE

Upon departure from Bosnia-Herzegovina, servicemembers are reminded that some materials cannot be brought into the United States. The U.S. Customs service has laid out specific guidelines that are to be followed. Along with U.S. Customs, the 560th Military Police Company (Customs) has also informed servicemembers of the items that can and cannot be brought back to the United States.

The regulations developed by U.S. Customs have the safety of the environment, security of the people, and the stability of the financial markets of the United States in mind when enforced.

Additional information on these categories can be obtained by calling the 560th MP Company (Customs), by visiting the U.S. Customs website at <http://www.customs.ustreas.gov>, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>, or by contacting the 560th MP Company (Customs) at 762-5156.

(*These items are considered "grey-area" items. You should visit one of the above websites or contact the 560th MP Company (Customs) for further guidance)

Some items that cannot go back to CONUS:

- Cuban Products (Including Tobacco)
- Gambling Devices
- Pornography
- Drug Paraphenalia
- Switchblad/ Butterfly Knives
- Personal Firearms
- Meat Products
- Skins, Tusks, Bone, Feathers, Eggs, Untreated Leather*
- Pirated Copyrighted Material*
- Fruits and Vegetables*



TAX TIP OF THE WEEK

By Capt. Ruth Semonian

Tax Center OIC

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Eagle Base

Q: I am paying back my student loans- are there any tax benefits out there for me?

A: Yes, taxpayers are entitled to an adjustment to income for interest paid on student loans during the first 60 months of repayment.

Q: Who can claim the student loan adjustment?

A: You, as the taxpayer legally obligated to make the interest payments pursuant to the terms of the loan, may claim the adjustment. Taxpayers who claim as a dependent one legally obligated to make the payments cannot claim the educational interest adjustment themselves. In addition, married couples must file joint returns in order to take the adjustment.

Q: When does this 60 month period start to toll?

A: This period begins with the month in which the loan first enters mandatory repayment status (i.e. after the 6 to 9 month grace period expires) and continues to elapse regardless of whether payments are actually made, unless the period is suspended for a period of deferment or forbearance. In addition, the 60 month period is suspended for any period when interest payments are not required on a qualified education loan because the borrower has been granted a deferment or forbearance (i.e. granted a hardship forbearance because of military service).

Q: How will I know how much I have paid in student loan interest this year?

A: Your lender should send you the interest information. If you do not, however, receive this, call your lender for the information.

Q: What is the maximum adjustment that I can take for student loan interest?

A: The maximum adjustment amount this year is \$2,000. Next year, it will increase to \$2,500. There is a phase-out on the adjustment when income exceeds \$60,000, and the adjustment completely phases-out at \$75,000.

Q: Where is this adjustment figured on the Form 1040?

A: The student loan adjustment is taken before reaching adjusted gross income (AGI) on line 33 of the Form 1040.

Q: How can I obtain more information about the student loan interest adjustment?

A: Visit the Tax Assistance Center located in Building 4, Eagle Base. The hours are:

Monday and Wednesday, 0900-1200, 1300-1600, 1700-2100

Tuesday and Saturday, 0900-1200 and 1300-1600

The telephone number to the Tax Assistance Center is 762-0344.



DOBOL NCO EARNS CSM RANK

Story and photos by
Sgt. Noreen L. Feeney
318th PCH, Camp Dobil

Many military careers are spawned in similar fashion; finish high school, enlist, do the time, tell family and friends of exploits and get out when the contract expires.

Many of the armed populace decide to stick it out and reenlist for another stint. Some choose to wet their whistle in officer country. Still, a number of people discover the Army is their niche in life and prefer to stay in for the long haul.

The Army is based off of a rank structure. For the enlisted, there is a start (private) and there is a finish (command sergeant major). Of those whom decide to make the Army their livelihood, not many can say they made it all the way from start to finish.

As of Feb. 8, Sgt. Maj. Dennis Oggs, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) here, is one of a few who can make such a claim.

The announcement of the forthcoming promotion to command sergeant major came during a tour of the live fire exercise the 3d ID (M) took part in at Glamoc and was made by Col. Louis Weber, 2nd Brigade commander, 3d ID (M).

"I was flabbergasted," said Sgt. Maj. Oggs. "I thought he was joking at first. I even asked him if he was (joking) when he handed me a Brigade Commander's coin."

Sgt. Maj. Oggs joined the Army in 1977, but he said at that time, he never dreamed of going anywhere.

"I thought I would only stay four years – four and out. I never considered a career out of it," he said.

With a brand new wife, Sgt. Maj. Oggs said he didn't think it would be a good idea to start looking for another job.

"I stayed in for a couple of reasons," he said. "One, because I was progressing (through the ranks). Two, there was a certain E-6 (Staff Sergeant) who told me I wouldn't amount to much."

"I don't know where he (the Staff Sergeant) is now, but I sure would like to run into him," he added.

Sgt. Maj. Oggs' 23-year career included jobs as an armored crewman, drill sergeant and NCOIC (noncommissioned officer-in-charge) of training and mobilization. He has been deployed six times, one of those in support of the Gulf War.

"I never made it to the Gulf base," he explained. "I was the mobilization coordinator at Fort Knox for Desert Storm. It was my job to get units and soldiers overseas as smoothly as possible. I also monitored training statuses

to ensure all requirements were met prior to mobilization."

According to Sgt. Maj. Oggs, that deployment was the most difficult.

"I took a lot of time. I worked so many hours," Sgt. Maj. Oggs remembered. "The job itself was difficult in that the plans were for full mobilization when the units were only mobilizing half strength. It took a lot of tweaking to get the job done."

His other deployments took him to Korea, Germany and Kuwait, but he said his Bosnia-Herzegovina tour has been the most special.

"When I decided to stay in the Army, it was my goal to make commandsergeant major. I still can't believe I did it," he said.

"This tops off my military career," he added. "It really won't get any better than this."

Sgt. Maj. Oggs said he expects to pin on his new rank sometime this summer and has no immediate plans to retire as of yet.



Sgt. Maj. Oggs escorts the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers (left) and Brig. Gen. Stephen Ferrell, assistant division commander, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) (center) on a tour of Camp Dobil.