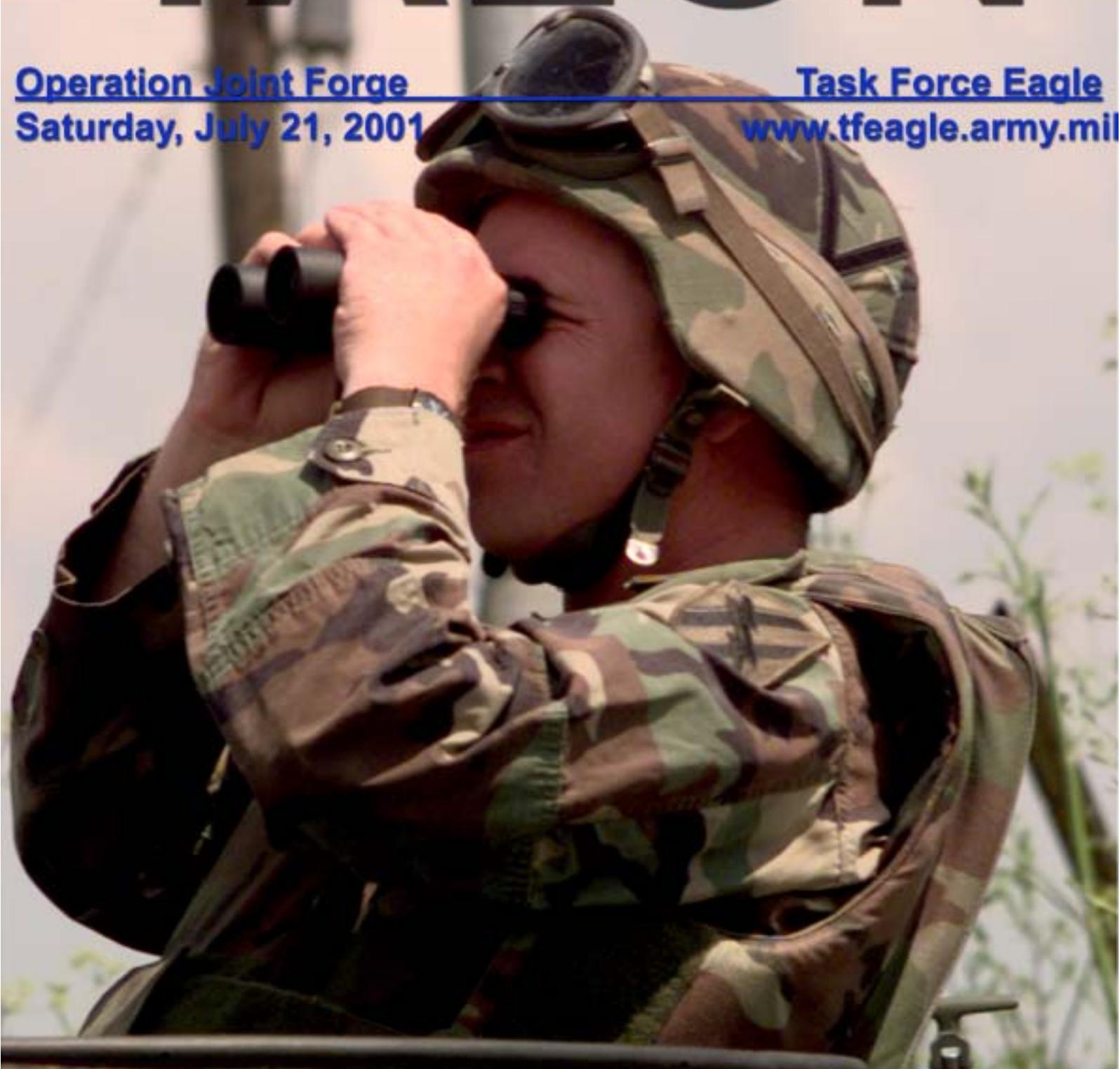


TALON

Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, July 21, 2001

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil



**MND(N) Soldiers Prepare
for Srebrenica Observance**

What Is That In Your Heart?

Someone asked me the other day, “Isn’t faith about getting along with other folks?” While our journey of faith is more than just getting along, no one would argue that it isn’t an important item in your kitbag.

The story goes that a preacher placed two identical jars on the table next to the pulpit. He quoted **1 Samuel 16:7**, “The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

These jars came from the same factory, were made of the same materials, and can hold the same amount. But they are different, he explained. Then he upset one and it oozed out honey. He turned over the other, and vinegar spilled out.

When a jar is upset, whatever is in it comes out. Until the jars were upset, they looked alike. The difference lay within, and could not be seen. When they were upset, their contents were revealed.

Until we are upset we put on a good front. But when we are upset, we reveal our innermost thoughts and attitudes, for as the Bible says, “out of the abundance of the *heart* his mouth speaks.” (**Luke 6:45**).

What if someone tipped you over today? What would flow out? Would you reveal the *honey* of grace and patience, or the *vinegar* of anger and sarcasm?

As we enter the home stretch of our mission here in Bosnia we would do well to hear and adhere to the words of the apostle Peter, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (**1 Peter 4:8**).

It might just make the days a little *sweeter* for you and the people around you!

What is that in your heart?

Thoughts for the Week

Saturday: Both enthusiasm and pessimism are contagious. Which one do you spread?

Sunday: “Let us not give up meeting together... but let us encourage one another.” (**Hebrews 10:25**)

Monday: “Envy takes the joy, happiness and contentment out of living.” (**Billy Graham**)

Tuesday: Deal with the faults of others as gently as with your own.

Wednesday: A friend: One who knows all about you and loves you just the same.

Thursday: People will be happy in about the same degree that they are helpful.

Friday: “Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstandings, mistrust and hostility to evaporate.” (**Albert Schweitzer**)

Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Durham
Eagle Base

TALON

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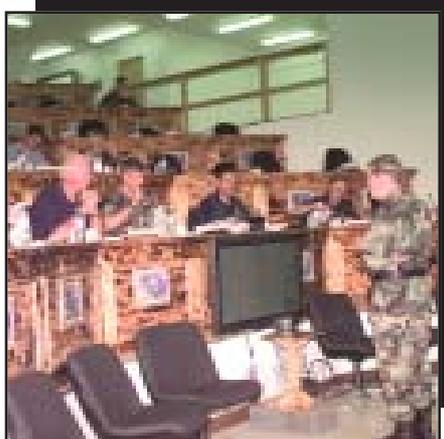
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Sgt. James Adams scouts for any disorder or movement while at an observation point during a rehearsal for the Srebrenica Observance. (Photo by Sgt. Rhonda K. Morgan)



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Georgia Congressional Representatives come to MND(N) to visit troops from their state. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lisa M. Dunphy)



WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE...

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CIMIC, 2-121 deliver drinkable water to a local town after heavy flooding. (Photo by Sgt. Nicholas Johnson)

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Watch Out for the Sun

By Chief Warrant Officer Mike Shea

Safety Officer

We have great weather in Bosnia, at times. When the sun is out, the temperature is often in the 80's or higher. While eating dinner one evening several weeks ago, I noted something that I haven't seen for a while. Several soldiers sat down at the table next to mine and I noticed that they all were sunburned. Most likely, these soldiers had been performing guard duty during the day and were exposed to the sun for a long period.

This situation concerns me. I am a cancer survivor. I was diagnosed with malignant melanoma in November of 1996. The cancer was serious enough that I spent the next eighteen months undergoing chemotherapy. I was lucky that they caught it early enough to do something about it but not so early that I could avoid treatment. As an Army aviator, this was one of the toughest periods of my life. I was grounded for almost two years. I was afraid I would never be able to fly helicopters again.

Malignant melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer. The incidence of melanoma has doubled in the United States in the last 20 years. Approximately 35,000 cases of malignant melanoma occurred in the United States in 1990 and it was expected to reach 47,700 cases in 2000 with 7,700 deaths. It is the leading cause of death from skin disease. It accounts for only four percent of skin cancer cases but 79 percent of skin cancer deaths. Deaths from complications of malignant melanoma are increasing at a faster rate than deaths from any other form of cancer except lung cancer (just a hint for you smokers out there).

Melanoma can affect people of any age. About half of all melanomas occur in people over the age of 50. However, young people in their 20s and 30s can also have melanoma. In fact, melanoma is one of the most common cancers in people younger than 30. It is the number one cancer in women under the age of 35.

Sunlight is the chief cause of all skin cancers, including melanoma. Many of us who are fairer skinned had the damage done 20, 30 or 40 years ago (sometimes more than 40 for some of us old guys). Did you ever say, "I'll tan next year" after spending a summer in the sun and all you had to show for it was a series of sunburns? Are you one of those people who never tanned? You are also at risk if you do tan but you use or used tanning booths to "enhance" the tan or you spend a lot of time in the sun developing a tan.

Melanoma most often appears on the trunk of fair-skinned men and on the lower legs of fair-skinned women. However, African Americans and other darker skinned individuals are not immune from melanoma. People with darker skin can have this cancer on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet and under the nails.

What are some of the things to look for?

- **A mole where the edges are ragged or notched.**
- **One half of the mole does not match the other half (asymmetrical).**
- **The color of the mole is not the same all over.**
- **A mole's size, shape or color changes over time.**
- **A skin growth that bleeds.**
- **A skin lesion or growth that is a brownish color with darker speckles.**

None of these symptoms alone indicates that a person has cancer. However, if you have one or more of the above, a doctor, preferably a dermatologist, should check you.

What are some of the things you can do to protect yourself from this cancer?

The Battle Dress Uniform is one of the better tools that Army personnel have. Since the BDU cap is a required item of clothing, the brim will protect the face from the sun. The BDU uniform when worn with the sleeves down is also good protection. But what do you do when you start wearing the Army beret, or it's summer and you are allowed to wear the BDU with sleeves rolled up? Wear sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15. In fact, dermatologists recommend an SPF of at least 30. (I wear a 48).

The Task Force Med Eagle Pharmacy can help you with sunscreens. The doctors at Task Force Med Eagle can examine you if you exhibit any of the symptoms described above.

Take care of yourself. Go home to your family healthy. Don't let this cancer cut your career short.

If a friend or a spouse says, "I'd like you to get that mole checked", DO IT!

You'll be happy you did and even happier when the doctor says "It was nothing."

Congressmen Visit Bosnia AO

Ga. Representatives Check Welfare of Soldiers from Home State

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Lisa Dunphy
Eagle Base

Five Georgia members of the U.S. House of Representatives toured parts of Multinational Division (North) July 14 and 15, visiting troops from their home state.

Visiting were Reps. Sanford Bishop (D - 2nd), Saxby Chambliss (R - 8th), Mac Collins (R - 3rd), Nathan Deal (R - 9th) and Johnny Isakson (R - 6th).

Emphasis was placed on interacting with both active-duty soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Stewart, Ga., and Task Force 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation, Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.; and Georgia Army National Guard soldiers from the 48th enhanced Separate Brigade, headquartered in Macon; 148th Logistical Task Force, headquartered in Forsyth; and both 1st and 2nd Battalions, 121st Infantry, comprised of soldiers from throughout the state.

The congressmen toured Eagle Base, Camp Comanche and Forward Operating Base Connor, as well as visiting the Srebrenica cemetery memorial

site in Potocari.

Soldiers from the 148th LTF showed the visiting dignitaries their maintenance shop and work area. Maj. Gen Walter L. Sharp, commander, MND(N) commented that he wished he could say his maintenance crews at Fort Stewart had the same high percentage of road-ready vehicles as do the LTF at Camp Comanche.

Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Mojica-Prado, the 148th LTF's Standard Army Maintenance System 1 Noncommissioned officer in charge, ate lunch with Rep. Collins at Camp Comanche.

"It's always nice for our delegates to know how much hard work our soldiers do to make it successful," she said. "I hope (the delegates) let our people at home know how important military peace-keeping missions are."

Several of the representatives have been to the Balkans before.

All said they have much to take back to their constituents in Georgia and their colleagues in Washington.

Rep. Deal, a first-time visitor to Bosnia, compared the landscape he viewed with that of his home state.

"It's beautiful here -



Rep. Mac Collins eats lunch with Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Mojica-Prado, 148th LTF, at Camp Comanche.

reminiscent of northern Georgia," Rep. Deal said.

He noted, however, that the U.S. "has to come to a conclusion as to what our role is here. I can bring a much better personal understanding to my constituents now," he said.

On his fourth trip to Bosnia, Rep. Collins was "amazed" at the difference in living conditions and quality of life improvements - for both soldiers and the local population - since his last visit in 1997.

"The soldiers are serious. Morale is very strong. And now there are the sounds of peace instead of war," he said.

Rep Collins said he has recommendations for boosting the local economy, including establishing a civilian judicial system in BiH.

"We need to get to work on this now," he said.

"There is a marked change in the countryside," said Rep. Chambliss. "I see construction going on everywhere," he said.

He too was pleased with the many quality of life improvements made for the soldiers since his last trip to the region in 1997.

Rep. Chambliss, a member of the House Armed Services Committee,

plans to take his experiences in Bosnia to his D.C. colleagues as well as the people of Georgia.

"I am going to tell them our (National) Guard is trained extremely well. And I'll tell their neighbors, friends and family back home that they are doing a fantastic job representing our state and our country," he said.

A permanent member of the House Veteran's Affairs Committee, Rep. Bishop said the interaction with the soldiers was very helpful for him to understand the mission here. "It is great to see them at work as soldiers. We are proud of their work here, and proud of how our resources are being utilized," he said.

"Politically, it's very helpful (to visit) to help see why we are still here," said Rep. Johnny Isakson. He was on his second visit to the Balkans, having toured the Kosovo Force area in 1999.

"It is obvious to me that American presence is the presence holding this whole thing together," he said.

"The thing I kept hearing from the soldiers," Rep. Chambliss said, "is that they feel that the local population appreciates us being here and helping them maintain a decent quality of life.

"That, and they're looking forward to going home," he said, smiling.



Rep. Sanford Bishop (left) speaks with Lt. Col. Alan Dent, executive officer of the 148th Logistical Task Force and 1st Lt. Dwayne Clark of the Joint Visitors Bureau at Camp Comanche.

Soldiers Presence Helps Ceremony to Take Place “Without Incident”

Story and photos by
Sgt. Rhonda Morgan
Eagle Base

More than 82 buses were loaded and led to Potocari where an observance was held for those lost in the Srebrenica Massacre in July of 1995. There a cornerstone would be unveiled in a field that once served as a division line for Bosnian Muslim men and women. The grounds would later serve as a resting place for victims' bodies found. The memorial symbolized a new healing for the people and an innovative peace for the country.

Local law enforcement was given key responsibility for the safety of those participating in the observance, and key credit



Maj. Thomas Carden, operations officer, 2-121, gives final details to soldiers and local law enforcement officers in the field where the observance will take place the following day.



Soldiers in Humvees disperse to observation points during the Srebrenica Observance rehearsal held July 10. The observation points were spaced between three to five minutes of travel apart during the actual ceremony to help aid in the safety and security of participants.

for the end results. Stabilization Force soldiers were also prepared and on hand in case of incident, however the locals kept control of the observance and together, they succeeded in the eyes of everyone. “I thought the mission was extremely successful. The RS (Republica Srpska) police demonstrated a lot of professionalism in their planning and execution of the security mission. The coordination between the international community, Stabilization Force, the Federation and RS police was outstanding.” said Lt. Col. Dunn, commander of Task Force 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry.

“Obviously the mission was a success. The ceremony took place without incident. SFOR soldiers deployed and redeployed without accidents, injuries or loss of equipment. The credit belongs to the soldiers who executed the mission to the highest possible standards. The local police, International Police Task Force and the international community certainly played a big role in the success of this event,” said Maj. Thomas Carden, operations officer with 2-121.

Readiness and preparation paid off to those supporting and attending the ceremony.

“I think the mission went very smoothly because we (soldiers) always over plan for specific missions like this one. It’s good to be prepared for worst case scenarios, it makes for smooth operations and great accomplishments, such as this,” said Staff Sgt. Patrick Lackey, with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 3rd Infantry Division.

Although the RS brought in approximately 2,600 officers and SFOR included more than 700 soldiers, the main emphasis was still on those who came to mourn.



Numerous Humvees were used for the observance on July 10. For the observance, the Humvees were used to transport participants to the battery factory to the observance.

Continued on Page 12

Task Force Works Behind Scenes to Ensure Peaceful Event in Srebrenica

Story and photos by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan
Eagle Base

Soldiers with Task Force 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry came together for one last 'dress rehearsal' July 10, before the next day's Srebrenica Observance. The 'dress rehearsal' consisted of checking radio communications, moving to observation points, giving last minute details to participants and practicing worst-case scenarios.

Long discussions, lengthy meetings, intense training and even personal curiosity and research played a role for this specific mission.

"We took it upon ourselves to learn more," said Staff Sgt. Patrick Eaton, squad leader, Co. C, 2-121. "We read a lot of books and watched 'Cry from the Grave' which is a documentary on the Srebrenica Massacre," according to the British Broadcasting Corporation news website.

The Srebrenica Massacre is considered to be the worst massacre during the Bosnian war. During the summer of 1995, after being designated as a United Nations safe area, Serb forces began shelling the town. In the days to follow, buses arrived taking an estimated 23,000 women and

In the five days after Bosnian Serb forces took over the town of Srebrenica, an estimated 7,000 Muslim men are believed to have been killed.

"I read books about the Srebrenica massacre, and here, the Bosnians are very open to talk about it," said Lt. Col. Reed Dunn, commander of 2-121, "It's still very difficult for the people not to get emotional when they talk about it, but they want us to know about it too."

Emotions would be more visible the following day in the town of Potocari. In 1995 it was the location where the Women of Srebrenica saw their sons, brothers, fathers and husbands for the last time. Six years later, Potocari serves as a laying ground for a cornerstone in memory of those same men, and a cemetery for bodies recognized and claimed in the future.

Because Potocari is now an entirely Serb community, it allows for riots, demonstrations and possible harm among the Muslims making their way to the observance.

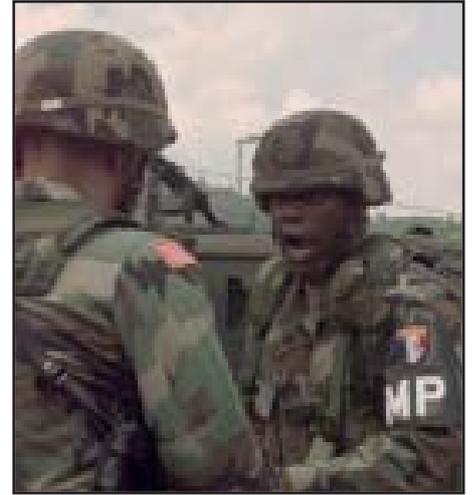
For such a ceremony to occur peacefully, communications between many organizations and dignitaries were strongly focused upon.

To help aid with communications, a 'rock drill', a meeting bringing the different military groups, non-governmental organizations, local government and international community together, was scheduled.

During the 'rock drill,' groups were given visual aids and demonstrations and discussed the

specific role they would play in the safety and security of those getting to and from the ceremony.

"The 'rock drill' was given to gain coordination and to set up an agenda to talk to each other," said Lt. Col. Dunn. "We're making sure that all efforts have an



"Get Back!" – Staff Sgt. Ernest Jackson, a squad leader with 223rd MP Co., demonstrates to members of his squad how to keep himself at a distance and push back any offenders.

understanding, and that they are talking and coordinating efforts to ensure the ceremony will go without incident."

"During the 'rock drill', and our discussions with the local police, we asked 'Have you thought of this?' and were able to give advice to enhance their job as professionals," said Maj. Thomas Carden, operations officer with 2-121.

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Humvees line up to move out to observation points during the rehearsal. During the rehearsal, four additional Humvees were stationed at the Potocari area to resemble Bradleys that would take their place the following day.

children to Muslim territory, while Serbs began separating men from the ages of 12 to 77 for "interrogation of suspected war crimes".

Approximately 15,000 Bosnian Muslim fighters were shelled while attempting to flee through the mountains. The following day, the first killings of unarmed Muslims took place in the village of Kravica, in a warehouse.



Sgt. Darrin Potter and Spc. Matt Johnson, 223rd MP Co., practice tactics with "shields" and "grenade launchers" during the July 10 rehearsal.

Srebrenica Memorial Honors T



Story by Staff Sgt. Ken Hudson
Eagle Base

More than 3,000 Bosnian Muslims converged on Potocari in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, an area that was once predominantly inhabited by Muslims. But since a massive ethnic cleansing campaign in 1995, it is now within the borders of Republica Srpska.

This was the sixth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, believed by many to be Europe's worst single incident of genocide since World War II. Exact numbers will remain unknown for years to come, as mass-graves are still being found; but the estimated number of men and boys killed in the massacre ranges from 5,000 to 8,000.



(Top) A Bosnian woman cries for those lost in the massacre. (Photo by Sgt. Randy Ray) (Above) A Bosnian woman covers her face. The majority of the mourners present were women. (Photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz) (Right) The cornerstone bears the inscription "Srebrenica July 1995" on its four faces.

In previous years the return visit of Muslim people to Potocari was marred by isolated incidents of stone throwing at the buses as they passed through certain villages in the RS. This year's ceremony was kept incident free by the presence of

approximately 1,300 Serbian police officers. Italian Carabinieri squads, officers of the International Police Task Force and soldiers of the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, out of Forward Operating Base Connor supported Serbian law enforcement.

Overhead an OH-58 Kiowa scout helicopter swept continuously over the hills and fields of Potocari to ensure the safety of those attending the ceremony.

Most of those returning to the Srebrenica area for the annual memorial observances are women who lost husbands, sons and brothers to the Serbian ethnic cleansing. Those women are now scattered throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the world for that matter. Many

chose to flee their country during the war, and restart their lives in other countries.

A key stipulation of the Dayton Peace Accords and the mission of the Stabilization Force is the safe return of refugees to their pre-war homes. To date, only a small number of Muslims has returned to the homes they once inhabited in Srebrenica.

Returning to the Srebrenica area was no easy feat for memorial observers who endured bus rides lasting between four and eight hours in oppressive July heat. The convoy of buses that rolled into the small village of Potocari numbered just over 80.

Besides the difficulties of travel, the return to Potocari takes an emotional toll on returnees. Alma Salihovia, a woman in her early 30s said, "It means a lot to us to come back here but... it's hard."

Ms. Salihovia now lives near Sarajevo and hopes to return to Srebrenica for good one day, "but the process is very slow,"

she said.

Inside Potocari is a large cornfield where in 1995 more than 20,000 citizens of Srebrenica gathered for safety after fleeing their besieged city. This same field was chosen by the Muslim Bosniacs as the location for a cemetery in which they will bury the bodies of the victims of the atrocity.

In the July 11 ceremony, observers unveiled the cornerstone, a one-meter cube of white marble with only the inscription, "Srebrenica, July 1995" carved on its four faces.

Potocari is significant for another reason: refugees of Srebrenica sat on that open field for nearly three days with no food and little water or even any sanitation facilities before they were shuttled out of the region on trucks and buses.

It was in Potocari that Serbian soldiers separated the Bosnian Muslim men from the women, put them on separate vehicles, and drove them to separate locations.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Ken Hudson)

Those Slain in 1995 Massacre



That was the last time most of the women of Srebrenica ever saw their men.

Unlike six years ago, there were tank trucks with water as well as ambulances in case observers fell ill. Today SFOR vehicles patrol the roads leading to and from Potocari, insuring the residents' freedom to move about and practice the faith they choose.

The Muslim faithful participated in a traditional prayer ceremony and then heard a message delivered by a Muslim cleric, first in Serbo-Croatian, and then in English.

"Dear God, we come not here to indict, but we come not here to free from indictment," prayed the cleric over a loudspeaker system. "We come here to be clear that we will not give up justice. We come here to listen to those who have been calling for help to the heavens... that the sword be taken away from those who have been

killing."

The prayer of the cleric continued, "We believe that neither the weak nor the aggressive shall inherit the earth but the cooperative in good deeds... Dear Almighty God, we pray that the tyrant's sword be taken away and that the weak be given the power of faith in truth and justice. We pray that a mother's tears will become a reminder so that Srebrenica will never happen again to anyone anywhere."

Sadikovic Selim, an elderly gentleman who traveled from Vogosca in the north of Bosnia, and was never a resident of Srebrenica, said he participates in all events relating to the massacre. "I come because I feel sorry for the people here," he said.



(Top) A Muslim cleric says a prayer during the ceremony, before (Left) kneeling in prayer. (photos by Sgt. Randy Ray) (Above) A Bosnian woman stands watching the ceremony, grieving for lost loved ones. (Photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz)

NCO Scares Teens 'Straight'



Former Georgia Gov. Zell Miller presents Staff Sgt. Spears with the Valley Forge Certificate of Heroism after his actions during the bombing at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Story by Spc. Grant Calease
Camp Comanche

As an Army National Guard soldier, Staff Sgt. Gordon Spears has a day job like everybody else.

Well, maybe not like everybody else.

Staff Sgt. Spears, a Company C, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry squad leader, is here in Bosnia taking a break from his normal job as a corrections drill sergeant at Lee Arrandale State Prison in Alto, Ga.

"It's a maximum security prison for juveniles," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

"He is in charge of an intensive therapy program. It's modeled after a boot camp," said Sgt. David Croft, with Co. C, who also works at the correctional facility.

"It's for the kids who don't mesh well into the prison system," added Sgt. Croft.

Staff Sgt. Spears has appeared on TV talk shows in his drill sergeant role to help troubled teens.

"I've appeared on the 'Dr. Joy Brown Show' and most recently the 'Judge Hatchet Show'," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

"A mother asked the show to help her with an intervention for her two sons," he added.

"We call it 'Scared Straight'. The goal is to wake the kids up – to prevent them from going to prison or dying," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

Before he goes on the show, Staff Sgt. Spears studies a profile of the people he will be in charge of, he said.

"The first thing we do is teach them the position of attention and to say 'Yes sir' and 'No sir'," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

"We get their attention right off the bat and let them know what is going to happen

the rest of the day and how they are going to perform while you are in charge of them," he said.

Putting the troubled teens at the position of attention tends to take away some of their aggressiveness.

"A lot of these kids use their hands to talk. When you lock them up at the position of attention they can't move their hands," said Staff Sgt. Spears. "They find it harder to act up because they are not used to the position."

"Communication is eye-to-eye. I get right in their face and let them know what I want. It's similar to the techniques used in the military," he said.

For the Judge Hatchet Show, Staff Sgt. Spears traveled to Chicago and took two teen boys to visit the city morgue, he said.

"Both of them had either been stabbed or shot before, so we showed them photos of people who didn't get a second chance," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

"They saw the bodies of people who had been stabbed, shot and died in car accidents. The ladies at the morgue showed them what would happen if they died and had them lay in a body bag," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

The purpose of this was because they were flirting with death.

"I spent eight hours with them and I was on them

all eight hours," he said.

Staff Sgt. Spears spent 12 years in the Marine Corps and has spent eight years in the Army.

"Both services have helped me out a lot. I've used a little from both services to get me where I am today," he said. "The training is to Army standards. We do drilling procedures like the Army and the fitness requirements are the same."

Along with helping troubled teens on talk shows Staff Sgt. Spears also was given an award for his actions at the Atlanta Olympics following the Centennial Park bombing.

"The National Guard was there handing out water and talking to people, said Staff Sgt. Spears.

"We heard the bomb and ran to the park after we heard what happened over the scanner.

"I could see the people spread out over the ground and bleeding," he said. "We tore down the fence so the ambulances could get into the park.

"After we helped load the injured into ambulances we established a line to keep the crowd away from the explosion sight," said Staff Sgt. Spears.

One year later, then-Governor Zell Miller awarded Staff Sgt. Spears and two other soldiers the Valley Forge Certificate of Heroism.

When Staff Sgt. Spears returns to Georgia he will resume his job at Lee Arrandale State Prison.

"I might do more TV shows in the future but nothing has been set up yet," said Staff Sgt. Spears.



Georgia media surround Staff Sgt. Spears after the presentation of the Valley Forge award.

CIMIC, 2-121 IN Deliver Water to Refugee Center

Story by
Staff Sgt. Lisa Dunphy
Eagle Base

Photos by
Staff Sgt. Nicholas Johnson
Camp Comanche

“Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink...”

That was the situation after rivers in Bosnia-Herzegovina burst their banks June 20, flooding large areas of the Tuzla canton, the Doboj and Banja Luka regions and the Brcko District. Due to flooded purification plants and wells, water was flowing down streets and into homes, but was unfit to drink. The swollen rivers also contributed to hundreds of landslides, which further degraded the water supply by destroying water pipes.

Enter the Civil Military Cooperation Battalion, specifically members of the Economic Action Group, and soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry,

Georgia National Guard, based at Camp Comanche. With the EAG’s civic savvy and 2nd Battalion’s water buffaloes and equipment, up to 3,000 gallons a day of potable water was delivered to the Karaula Refugee Center in Zivinice beginning June 29. The last delivery was July 5.

Although the EAG’s primary mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to interface with the local communities and government officials to promote economic development and support returnees, the water issue was too pressing to ignore.

“The roads were impassable, there were lots of missions cancelled,” said Capt. Kevin Lanigan, Officer in Charge for the EAG. There was only one fresh water tap serving the 600 residents of the center,” he said. The four-member EAG, consisting of soldiers from the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Riverdale, Md., and the 401st Civil Affairs



Smiling residents of the Karaula Refugee Center get water with the help of Sgt. Avery Hillman of 2-121 Infantry.

Battalion, Syracuse, N.Y., helped coordinate with G1, G4, the Staff Judge Advocate and Brown and Root, to try and figure a way Stabilization Force soldiers could assist. Although Capt. Lanigan admits to “significant legal and logistical constraints,” the EAG met with local officials, including the director of the center, Mehmed Vrtagic. It was decided to deliver potable water there twice a day. “We had no water besides what was going to be delivered to us and what the American Red Cross gave us,” Mr. Vrtagic said.

Capt. Michele Cecil and Sgt. Juanita Saez, the EAG project officer and noncommissioned officer, spearheaded the effort, and soldiers from 2-121 got the tasking to deliver water to the

center, which houses 600 people. Staff Sgt. Nicholas Johnson, 2-121, was named noncommissioned officer in charge of the mission.

Initially, the assignment did not amuse 1st Lt. Todd McLean, executive officer for Co. B. “I will be honest and say that my first reaction was ‘Great, another detail for my company’, but after the first mission the soldiers returned with a strange type of excitement,” he said.

And as the mission continued, the enthusiasm spread throughout the company, 1st Lt. McLean said.

“After the first day I had soldiers volunteering to participate. I still didn’t quite get it, until (an NCO) brought in some photos of what was taking place. I saw the soldiers getting extended interactions with the local people that they did not get on regular patrols,” he said. “The missions became the topic of discussion in the soldiers’ living areas and their calls to home.”

As the water supply in the town became more stable, the 2-121 soldiers were able to reduce the deliveries to 800 gallons once each morning and afternoon. Deliveries were finally discontinued seven days after they began.

“The people were so very thankful,” Mr. Vrtagic said. “After all that (the refugees) have gone through, it was a very humanitarian thing the SFOR soldiers did.”

“The soldiers gained renewed pride in the overall mission of SFOR,” 1st Lt. McLean said. “For some, the question, ‘Why are we here?’ was answered on this particular mission.”



Spc. Daniel Bailey, 2-121 Infantry, assists residents of a refugee center in Zivinice with filling their buckets with fresh water.

CEREMONY

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"There were no ill feelings. The people came into an area where they knew they weren't wanted and didn't have to leave. That was our focus. They were given a chance to concentrate on why they came. They could think about the real reason without wondering and worrying 'Do they (the Serbs) still hate us?'" said 2nd Lt. Alexander McLemore, 2-121.

The marbled stone unveiled during the observance reads, "Srebrenica July 1995." The cornerstone represents loss to the approximate 3,000 mourners who attended the ceremony. But to SFOR soldiers, it represents a move toward putting a country back together with, and in, its own hands. "We provided a presence to re-enforce the authority of the local officials. We never had to deploy a single soldier to do their actual jobs. This is the key to eventual redeployment of all peacekeepers from Bosnia. While this will take time, July 11 should be seen as another milestone on the road to our final objective," said Maj. Carden.

PREPARATIONS

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It was decided that the local law enforcers would primarily be responsible for the entire exercise with the support of Stabilization Force. The purpose for SFOR's presence was made very clear throughout the planning and preparation.

"We are here as facilitators, not as police. Our main focus is to maintain a safe and secure environment to allow the organizers of the event and the women who are mourning to conduct the ceremony without incident. Realistically, it is the same mission we have every day, allowing the local people to feel safe," said Lt. Col. Dunn.

"We are going to be there in case something happens," said Staff Sgt. James Alexander, squad leader, Co. B, 2-121. "We will be conducting road blocks throughout the route to the site and have a Quick Reaction Force ready if we need to get people out. We are basically there if the locals can't keep the crowd under control."

To ensure the safe and secure environment, soldiers underwent concentrated exercises. Some even began training for this specific mission before deploying to BiH.

"We trained for the task we're performing in advance, specifically nonlethal weapons training," said Lt. Col. Dunn. "We knew before deploying that this would be one of the most significant assignments while we were here."

This mission helps troops feel their training and participation really make a difference.

"This mission is a real-world mission," said Staff Sgt. Eaton. "We go on patrols and we ask ourselves, 'What are we doing miles away from our families?' Our interpreter made it pretty clear why. He said 'You guys are out driving around and wonder why nothing is happening. But nothing is happening because you are here.' I don't think the women of Srebrenica could have such a memorial if SFOR wasn't here."

"With this mission, soldiers understand, 'this is real,'" said Staff Sgt. Alexander. "Being in the National Guard and participating in a mission like this, you realize, it's not just a weekend anymore."

"It would be a negative thing if we had to do something. The locals need to take charge. If we have to push our soldiers into it, we missed something," said Maj. Carden.

Oddly enough, having a place where people can mourn becomes a success in the minds of those providing safety and security.

"We hoped the end state would be that there was no incident, that everyone did their job and we had a flawless day," said Staff Sgt. Eaton.

"I think that assisting with this mission makes a difference. That's why soldiers need to understand what happened so they can better understand why we're here," said Maj. Carden. "This mission also further enhances us to no longer be needed. Our job is to make it so we no longer have a job."

Soldier on the Street

"How has your lifestyle changed since being deployed?"

I quit smoking, and I'm definitely learning to handle my finances better here."

Sgt. Shai Bardfield
2nd Battalion, 82nd
Airborne Regiment



It really hasn't changed that much. This is my third rotation here, but it is a lot better than when I first got here."

Spc. Matt Broughton
Co. K, 148th LTF

It hasn't changed much. I don't have family back home, so it isn't that bad. You can learn more job skills, there are no distractions here."

Sgt. Brady Jones
HHC, 2-3 Cav.



There's a greater emphasis on physical fitness. I'm eating healthier food and putting more emphasis on my health."

Staff Sgt. Michael Rowan
223rd MP Co.

Compiled by Pfc. Michael Bennett